

Unigkuat

Kodiak Alutiiq Legends

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For all Alutiiq storytellers

A'ula'at
Big Foot Tales

Teglegta The Thief

We had moved to **Kasukuak–Akhiok**, where I had no trapline. So I asked the people in *Kasukuak* if anybody trapped in Deadman’s Bay and they said, “No, people don’t go there. It’s a bad place.” I went in there by dory, and it turned out to be a pretty nice trapping ground, so I used it. My brother Alex and my brother Lawrence hunted there for a couple of years. We had a cabin there, and one night, it had snowed about an inch. I got up in the morning and it was still dark. So I just opened the door and I reached around.

There was a box by the wall, and I looked for the bacon. I had a big slab—a full slab and then a half slab. I couldn’t find the bacon, so I just made sourdough hotcakes. I got my brothers up, and my brother Alex said, “How come you didn’t cook bacon?”

“Well,” I said, “I guess we finished it!” He said, “No, there is a slab and a half there.” So then I reached for the bacon. I didn’t step out onto the porch. There was an extra foot of snow. He got up and opened the door and said, “My God! What is this?”

I said, “What?”

He said, “What’s the tracks? There’s tracks about the size of my foot, but they look like they were wrapped with either gunny sacks or canvas.”

Then I remembered that the people told us not to come into the bay, so I got mad. I told Alex, “Let’s eat and track him to the beach. He came from the saltwater. He came to the porch.”

He took our bacon and he followed the dry streambed up. I told my brother, "Go get your **nutek-gun**, and we'll track him." We tracked him maybe five hundred yards and then the tracks disappeared—it looked like he flew away. We back tracked him. He didn't step off anyplace. The tracks just stopped, so we came back about a week later. The same tracks were on the porch in the morning and the rest of my bacon was gone.

He came from the bay again, from the sea. So this time I told my brother Alex, "You get your *nutek* loaded, take plenty of shells. He went up the dry streambed again." I told him, "If we see him, shoot him, whatever it is." We walked maybe five hundred to six hundred yards up and the same thing happened. The tracks went and then disappeared. He took a slab and a half of my bacon. Whatever he wrapped up around his feet, I don't know, it could be gunny sacks or canvas, but his strides were about the same as a human being's. We didn't see it or anything, just his tracks. In Old Harbor, they call it **a'ula'aq-big foot**. They talk about Big Foot, whatever he was. It was not a human being.

Adapted from a legend told to Mary Anne Wilson and Teresa Carlough by Walter Panamarioff in 1977, published in *Iluani (Elwani)* magazine 1(3&4):33.

Amitatuu'ullria The Stranger Who Was a Weasel

I had an **angayuk-partner**, and we were trapping in Red River. We lived at the mouth of the Red River. His mother and stepfather lived there, where I stayed with them. We had a four-day trapline. It was getting close to Russian Christmas and my *angayuk* said, to save time, "You go one way, and I will go the other, and we'll meet up in the river," which was an eight-hour walk. I got back to the cabin in Old River, that's on Red River Beach, and I looked at the traps. We didn't have anything. Anyway, I came back to camp, made supper, and then went to bed. At midnight somebody was knocking at the door. I said, "Who the heck is that?"

He said, "It's me, your *angayuk*." I jumped up and opened the door.

I told him, "What are you doing here? You're supposed to be up in Red River."

He said, "Walter, something happened. I killed a man."

I asked him, "You killed a man?"

He said, "Yes. I cooked supper, laid down. Then somebody knocked on the door. I said, 'Come in'; I thought it was you. Then a little man came in. He was about four feet high with a white beard. I gave him some tea, some bread, and some leftovers. He ate that,

but he wouldn't eat the bread. He wouldn't touch it."

So my *angayuk* got to thinking that it wasn't a human being. So he told him to lie down in my bunk and my *angayuk* lay down in his, but he had his rifle with him under the blanket.

He pretended to be asleep and snore. The **a'ula'aq-big foot** got up and picked up a stick from the wood pile. He was just going to hit my *angayuk* with it, but my *angayuk* shot at him while he was facing away. He had a box of shells, which is twenty shells. He shot him twenty times, with every shell he had. My *angayuk* ran an eight-hour walk from his camp to my camp in three hours, he was that scared.

He told me all about it, and I told him let's go back. He told me to cook something to eat. He was hungry and tired. I told him we've got to see what the heck he saw. He said, "No, it was a little human being with white hair, white beard, and long hair." After he ate, we started back slowly. When we got back to the **ciqlluaq-sod house**, he wouldn't go in. So I loaded my gun, and I kicked the door open, but there was nothing in there but an **amitatuk-weasel**. The *amitatuk* was shot all to pieces. But my *angayuk* swore up and down it was a man. It was a man who had turned into an *amitatuk*.

Adapted from a legend told to Mary Anne Wilson and Teresa Carlough by Walter Panamarioff in 1977, published in *Iluani (Elwani)* magazine 1(3&4):33-34.

Amitatuk-The Weasel. Drawing by Marlise Lee, 2021.



Uqtugmi A'ula'aq A'ula'aq in Olga Bay

I went to **Uqtuk–Olga Bay**, by Alaska Packers Cannery. My brother was gone. He was also in the village and with him was an old man. The old man lived close to us. He was gone too. So I was alone there and across the river were two cannery watchmen. One dark morning, I got up. It was really brisk, so I thought I'd go up to Akalura Lake and track **kaugya'at–foxes**. There were two and a half feet of snow. It only took twenty minutes to walk to the lake. I picked up a fresh *kaugya'aq*–fox fur. I hadn't even walked a hundred yards when all of a sudden, I just got sick. I sat in the snow, just completely sick. I felt fine when I got up that morning but now, I could just barely make it back home.

Around noon, I cooked some bacon and eggs and it made me sick to look at them. I left them on the table, and I left. The cabin had three rooms, all in a row—the kitchen, a bedroom, and another bedroom. I was in the middle bedroom. I undressed and went to bed. I was really sick. When I woke up, it was dark. I had a coal oil lamp burning and I was lying on the bed, but it wasn't that bright. Then I saw something round with probably fifty to sixty sets of feet. It just went right by me into the other empty bedroom. I just lay there and thought, "What in the world is that?"

I had a pistol lying there. I took it and I loaded it. With the lamp, I went into the other bedroom. There was nothing in there but beds with springs and an empty trunk. "What the heck's the matter with me?" I thought I was just imagining it. So, I sat down and there's that thing coming out of that empty bedroom again. It went back to the kitchen. I could see its tracks.

It was about four feet tall and completely black. I got my pistol, grabbed my lamp, and went into the kitchen. I looked everywhere for it, even in the oven and on the ceiling. Nothing! I went back and sat down on the bed. I was just about to put my feet up when I saw a piece of firewood coming right at me. It threw it at me, and I ducked! It just missed my lamp. I was always told never to get scared. Well, I was a little nervous, all alone in the dark. I just covered myself with a blanket and waited for him to come back.

It never did come back, so I just fell asleep like that with my gun loaded and the safety off. I got up in the morning and looked all over for it, but I couldn't find it. What was it? That piece of firewood was right where I saw it fall, so something must have thrown it. But I never found out who threw it.

Adapted from a legend told to Mary Anne Wilson and Teresa Carlough by Walter Panamarioff in 1977, published in *Iluani (Elwani)* magazine 1(3&4):34-35.