

Snow Boy

Anonymous
Told to M. R. Harrington

One time long ago a young girl had a baby boy. No one knew who was his father was. They say he had no father. When he was old enough to crawl around, he would get angry at the other children sometimes and when angry would take hold of their hands and suck their fingers. It was seen that their fingers turned black and stiff as if frozen from cold when he had sucked them.

When he got a little older, he told the people that he could stay with his mother no longer, that he did not belong there, he must go. "My name is snow and ice," he said. He said he had been sent by those above to show them how to track anything -- people or animals. And he told them how to do it.

"When I come again," he said, "you can track anything: remember when snow falls that it is I who come to visit you." Then he told his mother to take him down and put him on a piece of ice -- to go down the river, for it was early spring.

They took him down and put him on a cake of floating ice. And beside him they put a bark vessel full of sweetened, pounded parched-corn, kahamakun, for they thought he might need food. Then he drifted away down the river.

Until recent years the Delawares would go down to the river with a little bark vessel of kahamakun as an offering to the Snow Boy. When a large piece of ice appeared, they would give two or three whoops, and the ice would swing in towards the shore.

Then they put the little bark boat on the ice and talk to Snow Boy. They tell him they are glad to see him again and tell him to take this corn with him. Then they ask him to help them in tracking game.