**The Legend of Queneesh**

Queneesh is the K’ómoks name for the gleaming white glacier which can be seen from all over the Comox Valley. The Legend of Queneesh tells us how a great white whale saved the K’ómoks people. It began long ago when the K’ómoks people still lived in big cedar plank houses along the shores of Puntledge River estuary.

One night an elder of the village, *Quoi qwa lak*, had a powerful dream. It warned him of a coming time when the rain would fall for many days and nights. In his dream he was told that this rain would cause a great flood and the K’ómoks people would be in danger.

In order for them to survive the flood, they would have to make canoes, cedar bark rope and clothing and preserve food for the coming disaster. *Gye gya janook*, Chief of the K’ómoks, directed all of the people of the village to work together so that they would be ready when the rain began to fall.

*Quoi qwa lak* himself supervised the making of a strong cedar bark rope that was many miles in length. The rope had to be long enough to reach from the village to the top of the glacier.

As foretold, the rains began to fall just as everything was ready. The river rose rapidly to flood stage. Young men carried the long cedar rope from the village to the mountains and attached it securely to the glacier. The people tied their loaded canoes to the rope so they wouldn’t get swept away to sea by the flood waters.

Soon the land was covered with water and still it continued to rain. The people were afraid as the water continued to rise up to the glacier where they had anchored their canoes. Suddenly the glacier began to float, breaking up through the rising waters like a giant grey whale breeching. The people were awestruck as they watched the glacier become a huge white whale.

“Queneesh, Queneesh!” they called. Queneesh almost floated free of the mountain, but the rain stopped and the flood waters began to recede. The K’ómoks people were saved. Some are still heard to whisper to him “Kwo la whee gai, Queneesh”. “Thank you, thank you.”