



The Legend of Moshup



Stan Murphy

Lesson:

- What is a Legend?
 - *A legend is a story passed down from generation to generation, they are one of the oldest and most powerful of all story forms. They often carry an important message for a culture or group, and explain why something/someone came to be. Legends traditionally were passed on by spoken word, and their function is to explain, to teach lessons, and to entertain.*
- Can you think of some examples of a legend? (Bigfoot, Robin Hood)
- Read The Creation of Noepe (below)
- Study the Stan Murphy painting above
 - What colors do you notice?
 - Do the cliffs look similar to that today?
 - What is Moshup doing in the painting?
 - Who is flying in the sky?
- Make your own artistic interpretation of Moshup, just like Stan Murphy did in his painting above. Watercolors are a great tool to use if you have them!

Learn more at: <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/>

The Creation of Noepe

<https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/ancientways>

Moshup is believed by our tribe to be responsible for the present shapes of Martha's Vineyard, the Elizabeth Islands, Noman's Land, and Nantucket. He is a benevolent being of gigantic frame and supernatural power. He was sometimes thought of as the devil by those who did not understand him. Moshup's favorite daily food was a broiled whale, which he usually ate whole at a meal. He also threw many whales on the coast for the supper of the Wampanoag.

In those olden times, whales came close to shore for they had not learned to fear pursuit. From near the entrance to his den on the Aquinnah Cliffs, Moshup would wade into the ocean, pick up a whale, fling it against the Cliffs to kill it, and then cook it over the fire that burned continually. The blood from these whales stained the clay banks of the Cliffs dark red. The coals of the largest trees (which Moshup plucked up by the roots), the bones of the whales, shark's teeth, and petrified quahogs that are still found today in the Cliffs are the refuse from Moshup's table. The Aquinnah Cliffs are a sacred place to our tribe. They are imprinted with one hundred million years of history.