ABSTRACT

Great earthquakes along the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) have been taking place for thousands of years. The most recent CSZ earthquake (estimated magnitude 9) occurred on January 26, 1700. The exact date was determined from historic records of a tsunami that struck Japan, and confirmed by tree-ring studies of coastal trees killed when land-level changes plunged their roots into tidal water.

A search of Native American myths, stories, and traditions has revealed an abundance of accounts from Washington and Oregon that may be connected to Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquakes.

SEARCHING FOR NATIVE STORIES ABOUT CASCADIA SUBDUCTION ZONE EARTHQUAKES

NATIVE AMERICAN STORIES

Thunderbird and Whale

Thunderbird soared far out over the placid waters and waited for Whale to come to the surface. As quick as a flash the powerful bird struck, and the whale was swallowed up in the sea, leaving the ground для the tribe did not feel good, the ground was made bad. (Boas, 1935)

PASSING BEYOND THE OCEANS

The waters receded and again rose. The water of the Pacific through what is now the cove and prairie westward from Neah Bay on the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Pacific, making an island of Cape Flattery. Again the waters suddenly receded and numerous sea monsters and whales were left on dry land. Each time the waters rose, the people took to their canoes and floated off as the waves and currents washed him. As the waters receded, many animals came down in trees and were destroyed, and numerous lives were lost. (Composite of several stories from Reaugh, 1924 and Reaugh and Wallen, 1933)

Tsunami Sand and Archaeological Site

Tsunami sand associated with the 1700 earthquake covering a Native fire pit on the banks of the Salmon River. The drifted gravel, charcoal and other debris, 30 feet thick, buried the fire pit that you see dug into the sand. (Swan, 1864)

REFERENCES


Sapir, Edward, and Morris Swadesh, 1939, Nootka Texts; Tales and Ethnological Narratives with Grammatical Notes

Swan, James, Diary of James Swan JANUARY 1864 Tuesday 12th, Native Informant: Billy Balch, Manuscripts, Special Collections and University Archives, H. R. Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago. http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/cmceng/ghhe5eng.html

OTHER COOS REFERENCES OF INTEREST:

1. "her ancestor saw the lightning serpent at the time of the flood. "  - Nootka (Roberts and Swadesh, 1955)


OTHER COWICHAN (SALISH) REFERENCES OF INTEREST:

1. "her ancestor saw the lightning serpent at the time of the flood. "  - Nootka (Roberts and Swadesh, 1955)

2. Stories about earthquake lights (see below) also suggest a nighttime event.

OTHER TILLAMOOK REFERENCES OF INTEREST:

1. "It became so cold that the children died. " - Clallam (Gunther, 1925)

2. Stories about earthquake lights (see below) also suggest a nighttime event.

OTHER CUUS REFRENCES OF INTEREST:

1. "Chief Wakas held a winter ceremonial. When he gave a winter ceremonial long ago the deluge came." - Kwakiutl (Boas, 1900)

2. "When the people lived in the land of the marmots, there was a great deluge. " - Kwakiutl (Swartz, 1939)

YUROK (SPOTT AND KROEBER, 1942, P. 227)

1. "The great thunderbird finally carried the weighty animal high into the air, dropping it to the surface where it struck the water. The great bird continued to fly over the land, striking the water with terrible energy. High into the air the bird carried it over the land. The waters of the Pacific through what is now the cove and prairie westward from Neah Bay on the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Pacific, making an island of Cape Flattery. Again the waters suddenly receded and numerous sea monsters and whales were left on dry land. Each time the waters rose, the people took to their canoes and floated off as the waves and currents washed him. As the waters receded, many animals came down in trees and were destroyed, and numerous lives were lost. (Composite of several stories from Reaugh, 1924 and Reaugh and Wallen, 1933)

TEN SUKAN IT WASHON BAINS

The waters receded and again rose. The water of the Pacific through what is now the cove and prairie westward from Neah Bay on the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Pacific, making an island of Cape Flattery. Again the waters suddenly receded and numerous sea monsters and whales were left on dry land. Each time the waters rose, the people took to their canoes and floated off as the waves and currents washed him. As the waters receded, many animals came down in trees and were destroyed, and numerous lives were lost. (Composite of several stories from Reaugh, 1924 and Reaugh and Wallen, 1933)

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