Grade Level: 5-9

Learner Objectives:

Students will:

- Recognize that humans and volcanic activity at Mount Rainier coexisted during the past 10,000 years
- Recognize how people have used metaphors to interpret volcanic activity
- Identify and interpret the main points of a story

Setting: Classroom

Timeframe: 50 minutes

Introducing the Native American Tribes near Mount Rainier

Exploring Native American Interpretations of Geologic Events

Materials:

Introducing the Native American Tribes near Mount Rainier

- Graphic ***"Map of Native American Tribes near Mount Rainier"***

USGS
science for a changing world

Living with a Volcano in Your Backyard-An Educator's Guide with Emphasis on Mount Rainier

Prepared in collaboration with the National Park Service

General Information Publication 19

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

Overview

Native American oral traditions chronicle geologic events in the recent history of Mount Rainier. These stories are read, interpreted, and illustrated by students with the use of storyboards.

Teacher Background

This activity provides information about how some of the earliest human inhabitants in the Pacific Northwest witnessed geologic activity at Mount Rainier. Native Americans used oral, rather than written, communication to pass down historical information, heritage, and traditions (see sidebar on ***"Story Telling as a Talent")***

Native Americans Settle near the Cascade Volcanoes

The first humans to live in the vicinity of the Cascade volcanoes arrived during a period of climatic warming at the end of the last great Ice Age approximately 10,000 years ago. Early inhabitants west of the Cascades encountered a landscape undergoing a vast transformation from glacial to vegetative cover. Gigantic glacial floods abated east of the Cascades, which permitted revegetation of freshly scoured land surfaces and river channels.

These first inhabitants consisted of foragers who ranged widely across the landscape and had the skills to utilize a variety of plants and animals from their local environments. Approximately 3,000 to 4,000 years ago, most people settled into villages along the waterways where they had easy access to their canoes and nearby food sources, especially salmon. Villagers became expert at seasonal harvesting and preserving.

- Graphic ***"Early Observer Views Mount Rainier and a Lahar Spreading over the Valley Floor"***

Exploring Native American Interpretations of Geologic Events

- Copies of ***"Fire, Flood, and Fury-Native American Stories of Mount Rainier"*** student page
- Copies of ***"Fire, Flood, and Fury-Native American Stories of Mount Rainier"*** teacher discussion questions

Vocabulary: Lahar, metaphor

Skills: Communicating, presenting

Benchmarks:

History:

1. – The student examines and understands major ideas, eras themes, developments, turning points, chronology, and cause-of-effect relationships in United States, world, and Washington history

1.3 – Examine the influence of culture on United States, world, and Washington history

Reading:

2. – The student understands meaning of what is read

2.1 – Comprehend important ideas and details

2.3 – Expand comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthsizing information and ideas

Communications:

2. – The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively

2.1 – Communicate clearly to a range of audiences for different purpose - communicate using different forms of oral presentations

Native Americans Witness Volcanic Eruptions

Volcanic activity at Cascade Range volcanoes has been frequent and dramatic throughout the last 10,000 years. Most volcanoes in the Cascades have lit the skies with eruptions during the period between the beginning of settlements and the present. Mount Rainier experienced remarkable changes during this period. Hundreds of eruptions produced volcanic rock and ash that enlarged the volcano. At one point, a large piece of the volcano disappeared during a massive landslide, but the mountain rebuilt itself. Rock debris from ***lahars*** (volcanic mudflows) buried valley floors repeatedly, sometimes as far away as 100 km (60 miles) from their source on Mount Rainier.

The ancestors of people now affiliated with tribes such as the Cowlitz, Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Puyallup, Muckleshoot and Yakama observed many volcanic events and depicted them through stories in an attempt to understand the world. People on the west side of the Cascades told their stories in various dialects of the Salishan language, while those on the east side spoke in dialects of the Sahaptin language. The name of the mountain varied with the dialect—Tacobed, Taqo'men, Takhoma, and Tahoma. These words are interpreted most often as "the mountain," but have also been expressed as "snow peak" or "water/young person." The stories provided in this activity are selected from broader collections available in local bookstores and libraries. From the descriptions, we can understand the kinds of geologic events that happened in the past, though the timing is less well known. These stories provide early human narratives about volcanic impacts in the Pacific Northwest—the same hazards facing people today.

Benchmarks: continued...

2.3 – Use effective delivery - speak at a volume and pace appropriate to the situation - use facial expression and body language to heighten and emphasize message

Sidebar 1 Who were the Native Americans That Lived near Mount Rainier?

Survival in the Pacific Northwest required continuous hunting, gathering and storing food. The land on and around Mount Rainier provided much for their daily needs.

West of the Cascades

Inhabitants on the west side of Mount Rainier (now members of the Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Puyallup, Cowlitz and Muckleshoot Tribes) lived with relative ease most of the time. Everything required for their livelihood was found in abundance in the world around them. Cedar trees supplied wood for construction of their multi-family longhouses, canoes, articles of clothing, and household goods. They obtained food easily because nearby rivers, wetlands, and shorelines teemed with life. Salmon was their staple food, but meats, shellfish, berries, bulbs, roots, and other wild plants were also eaten.

SQUAXIN

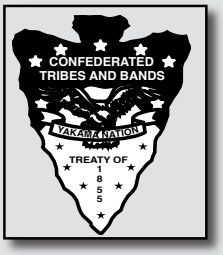
ISLAND

East of the Cascades

Inhabitants on the east side (now primarily affiliated with the Yakama Nation) hunted on the high ground where deer and elk were plentiful. They harvested berries, bulbs, roots, and other wild plants from the land around them.

People from both sides of the Cascades ventured to the slopes of Mount Rainier for foraging and hunting. Because the rock at Mount Rainier was not suitable for making sharp-edged implements, the people carried most tool-making materials with them. Goat wool, highly sought for clothing, was obtainable at Mount Rainier. All of the tribes recognized the mountain as a source of water, life, and inspiration.

YAKAMA



Sidebar 2 Commentaries on the Native American Stories in this Activity

THE LAKE ON MOUNT RAINIER — PUYALLUP

A young man carried shell offerings to the mountain's icy summit and camped by a lake within the crater rim. The presence of lake water at the summit impressed him, and he became convinced that the lake would one day drain. When the lake did drain, water swept away trees from where the city of Orting now exists, and left the area covered with stones. Some believe that this story refers to a lahar (volcanic mudflow) that swept across the Puyallup River valley.

THE MOUNTAINS — COWLITZ

This classic story of jealousy between two wives (two mountains) is used to explain how Taqo'men (Mount Rainier) lost its original summit. The reference to an event where the volcano's "head broke off" could refer to one or more large landslides that removed summit rocks.

THE HUSBAND AND WIFE ARGUMENT — COWLITZ

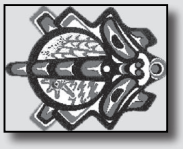
According to this story, feuding Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens erupted simultaneously. The suggestion that Mount St. Helens knocked the top off Mount Rainier is intriguing.

TACOBED AND CHANGER — PUYALLUP

The story speaks of Tacobed (the Puyallup name for Mount Rainier) growing taller and broader, like a monster devouring people who harvested berries on its slopes. The people asked their divine being (the Changer) to rescue them. After a contest with Changer, Tacobed's blood vessels burst causing streams of blood that rushed down her sides, followed by rivers of water, then quiescence. Some people interpret the blood as lava and the rivers that followed as lahars (volcanic mudflows) and/or present-day rivers.

THE MISER OF MOUNT RAINIER — NISQUALLY

(For more advanced readers who can do research). Volcanic activity serves as the impetus for life transformation in this classic story of personal conversion from greediness to benevolence.



Sidebar 3 Storytelling is a Talent

Stories can be told by anyone. A storyteller changes the focus or emphasis of a story in an elastic manner, depending on the audience's needs. Native Americans developed skills and talents such as, hunting, tool making, healing or storytelling that were beneficial to the entire tribe. Individuals born into families with specific gifts were groomed to use and bequeath that knowledge. Storytelling still plays a major role in passing down the traditions, heritage, and history of Native American tribes.

Storytelling and legends taught native people lessons they needed to know—the way to live safely and harmoniously within their society and nature. Often, the vehicles Native Americans used were metaphors to relate these stories to everyday life. In using metaphor to teach aspects of culture, Native Americans did not always distinguish the sacred from the secular. Characters in stories who personify human traits are as sacred as characters who personify non-human deities or elements. In one personification, native people saw Mount Rainier as a mother providing bounties of food and medicinal plants, cedar and yew materials, meat and fur-bearing animals. In an alternate incarnation, Mount Rainier was the hallowed residence of spirits, a place where intruders who climbed above an invisible line were punished with death.

Native people who lived in the Mount Rainier area told many stories that recorded geologic events and warned of the hazards of living in a volcanic area. For example, the Puyallup Tribe tells a story of conflict between Tacobed (Mount Rainier) and Changer (the creator of all things). Tacobed and Changer hold a contest to see who can be the highest. The story shows people's awareness of the growth of a volcanic cone. In the story, Changer builds a fire inside Tacobed until the grease inside begins to drip and her insides get smoky. After a time, she ceases to move and Changer pronounces her dead. The dying fire may describe native people's observation that Rainier, compared to more eruptive volcanoes in the Cascades, had grown quiet. Other stories describe the 500-year-old Electron Mudflow that inundated the land near Orting (see The Lake on Mount Rainier).

Through the use of metaphor, native people explained natural history and geologic events at Mount Rainier, and understood these events as shapers and transformers of human affairs. Their oral traditions survive today and provide an important record of ancient historical events.

Europeans who first settled in the Pacific Northwest roughly two hundred years ago also observed volcanic activity at Rainier. They communicated their stories through written documents, journals, and mass media publications. Today, geologists use scientific methods to study and decipher Mount Rainier's geologic record, expanding the scope of knowledge beyond anecdote. We can benefit from interpreting the rock formations and oral traditions of the Native Americans by discovering and understanding the evidence of past geologic and volcanic activity at Mount Rainier in anthropological and scientific terms. In this way, we can more effectively anticipate the kinds of eruptive events common to Mount Rainier and prepare for the future.

The New World Dictionary describes "metaphor" as "a figure of speech containing an implied comparison...where a word or phrase usually and primarily applied to one thing is applied to another." Native Americans used metaphor commonly to describe and catalog events in the world around them. Take the time to introduce your students to the concept before conducting the activity. The sidebar "Story Telling as a Talent" provides background information about their use of metaphor.

Procedure

Introducing the Native American Tribes Near Mount Rainier

Introduce the Native American tribes that lived near Mount Rainier by using the map and teacher-led discussion.

Display the graphics ***"Map of American Indian Tribes near Mount Rainier"*** and ***" Early Observer Views Mount Rainier and a Lahar Spreading over the Valley Floor"***

1. Use information in the background section and sidebars to guide students in a discusion about why they think Native Americans may have lived near Mount Rainier.

2. Point out the Native American groups and their tribal symbols on the map. Tribal names represent the modern remnant of previously larger populations.

3. Ask students to explain what the symbols tell us about features of importance to each Native American group.

4. Query students about why Native Americans ventured onto the slopes of Mount Rainier. What animals, plants, and rocks from Mount Rainier's slopes might these people have used?

5. Did Mount Rainier hold spiritual value? How does Mount Rainier hold value for inhabitants of the region today?

6. Discuss the definition and examples of metaphors. How might Native Americans have used metaphors in their stories about events?

Consider inviting a local Native American storyteller, members of your local storytelling guild, or your school's drama/theater group to read aloud or act out the stories in this activity.

Exploring Native American Interpretations of Geologic Events

Examine and interpret five Native American stories about geologic events at Mount Rainier by making a storyboard.

It is highly recommended that the teacher read the story or stories used before class. Some stories may not be appropriate for younger students.

1. Divide the class into groups of 5 to 6 persons.

2. Provide each group with one of the stories in ***"Fire, Flood, and Fury—Native American Stories of Mount Rainier"*** student page.

3. Instruct each group to read their story aloud within their group.

4. Choose the level of discussion and activity below that is most appropriate for your students.

5. Use the ***"Fire, Flood, and Fury - Native American Stories of Mount Rainier"*** teacher discussion questions to foster additional thought.

Option 1: Instruct students to make a storyboard depicting their story.

- Explain that a storyboard is a cartoon rendering of the story. The storyboard is divided into frames, and each frame contains a student illustration depicting a scene.
- The storyboard should include 2-5 illustrations of scenes from the story.
- Students decide which scenes to include that will depict their interpretation.

Option 2: Direct students to make a storyboard, explain the storyboard to the class, then narrate or perform the story as a skit from their storyboard renderings.

Adaptations

- Instead of using a storyboard, discuss and read the stories aloud as a class.
- In place of the storyboard, instruct each student group to write their interpretations of the story. Ask each group to share their interpretations with the class.
- In classes for younger students, draw a storyboard on large poster paper. Display the storyboard while reading the story, and then discuss the scenes with students.
- Use stories about volcanic activity at other Cascade volcanoes. Students can find these stories using the Internet and library resources.

Extensions

- Learn all you can about the Native Americans living near Mount Rainier using computer research or library resources.
- Interview a Native American who lives near one of the volcanoes in the Cascades about the significance of the volcano in their culture.
- Make a poster-size version of the ***"Map of Native American Tribes near Mount Rainier."*** Attach to the poster stories, photos, and drawings of people interacting with Mount Rainier to the poster.
- Write your own explanation to describe a volcanic eruption in the Cascades.
- Interview people in your family about geologic events (e.g., volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, large floods) that they remember happening in their lifetimes.
- Use video, audiotapes, photos and written records to assemble a record of uncommon and extraordinary natural events that have occurred in your community.

Assessment

For assessment, review the storyboards and look for evidence of student recognition that humans and volcanic activity have coexisted at Mount Rainier for many millennia; that people have used metaphor to interpret volcanic activity; and that students can identify and interpret the main points of a story. Assess application to real-world situations by assigning an additional storyboard that depicts current natural events.

References

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Clark, Ella, 1953, Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest: University of California Press, Berkeley, CA., 225 p.

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Refer to **Internet Resources Page** for a list of resources available as a supplement to this activity.

Credits

Drawing ***"Native American Views Mount Rainier and a Lahar Spreading over the Valley Floor"*** by Linda Feltner, Seattle, Washington, used with permission.

Teacher Discussion Questions

General Questions

Q: What might scientists hope to learn from these stories?
A: ***Native stories provide very general information about the occurrence of volcanic events and how the events affected local populations. In some cases, Native stories tell us about events that either left no geologic deposits or deposits that are hard to find.***

The Lake on Mount Rainier

Q: Tacobed tells the grandfather that Tacobed's head will burst open. What is the fate of water within the lake at the mountain summit? What does this mean for the land below.
A: ***The lake on Tacobed will drain and pour down the flanks of the volcano, carrying away rock debris and vegetation that will bury the valley floor.***

Q: Geologists know that a lahar (volcanic mudflow) gushed from Mount Rainier, poured over the land, and flooded the present site of Orting around 500 years ago. Does this story describe first-hand knowledge of the flood?
A: ***The story describes the mudflow that settled in the present site of Orting, but it is not first hand knowledge. Each generation of inhabitants delivered the story orally to the next, the story perhaps changing in detail.***

The Mountains

Q: What characters are the mountains? What are their relationships?
A: ***White Mountain or Patu is Mount Adams. He is the Husband of two wives—Taqo'men (Mount Rainier) and Lawelatla (Mount St. Helens).***

Q: What do you think the fighting between these characters describes?
A: ***The fighting describes two mountains (Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens) erupting in the same general period of time.***

Q: What happens to Taqo'men? What do you think that symbolizes?
A: ***Taqo'men is hit on the head and her head falls off. This could symbolize the change in shape of Mount Rainier's volcanic cone caused by a volcanic eruption or landslide.***

The Husband and Wife Argument

Q: What is the rumbling heard by Xwa'ni? What is its source?
A: ***Xwa'ni heard rumbling from Lawelatla (Mount St. Helens) and Takhoma (Mount Rainier). The two volcanoes erupted (fought, as told in this story).***

Q: Lawelatla blows her top. What could this symbolize? Takhoma's head is knocked off. What does that communicate?

A: ***Lawelatla's blowing her top symbolizes Mount St. Helens erupting. Takhoma's head being knocked off describes how Mount Rainier's volcanic cone changed shape after the eruption. The description may indicate that part of the volcano was removed by eruption of rock fragments or by collapse in a landslide.***

Q: This very old story describes simultaneous eruptions of Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens. The story of eruptions at multiple volcanoes was told long before scientists discovered physical evidence of their occurrence. How might the reports of these simultaneous eruptions be of value to scientists and planners who wish to prepare for future events?

A: ***Scientific evidence enables scientists and planners to theorize that the eruptions were "simultaneous" within a human generation. These "simultaneous" eruptions of Mount St. Helens and Rainier could have occurred around 2,500 to 2,600 years ago, between 1480 and 1583, or between 1843 and 1850. Multiple volcanoes have erupted during the same general time period in the past; they could do so again.***

Tacobed and Changer

Q: Native people respected and feared natural forces. Why do you think they created this story? How did this story help them understand nature?

A: ***All cultures seek explanations for the origin of features and events familiar to them. They created this story to comprehend the origin of the two mountain ranges (Cascades and Olympics) and to explain why Mount Rainier erupted in the past but not at the time when the story was told.***

Q: Why is Tacobed getting bigger?

A: ***Tacobed is getting bigger because it is erupting and depositing volcanic materials on its flanks.***

Q: What might have made native people change their opinion of Tacobed and see her as a monster?

A: ***An eruption that destroyed the land might have caused native people to change their opinion of Tacobed.***

Q: Before Tacobed turned into a monster, she provided life-sustaining substances to the people. What did she give them?

A: ***She provided food (salmon) and water.***

Q: When Tacobed draws in a very deep breath, she bursts her blood vessels, and the blood gushes and pours down her sides. What does blood do for a body? Why does this native story see the gushing fluid as blood?

A: ***Blood and hot lava can both be red. Blood gives the body life. The gushing fluid coming from Tacobed is described as blood because the life and activity of the mountain is taken away and the mountain becomes harmless.***

Q: The blood is changed into rivers of water. Why is water important? What promise does Changer make about the water?

A: ***Water is necessary for humans. Changer promises that Tacobed will remain harmless; fish will return to the rivers. The story tells how a volcano, after an active period, regains its calm. Wildlife and plants will return to the volcano's slopes and provide sustenance.***

Q: Do you think Tacobed is dead or napping?

A: ***Tacobed is napping.***

The Miser of Mount Rainier

Q: The old man takes all the hiaqua he can find. Why does this make Sahale angry? What is the punishment?

A: ***This made Sahale angry because he did not leave any hiaqua as an offering to the tamanowas powers that helped him discover the treasure. Sahale punished the old man by causing a great storm, burying the man in snow, sending demons, erupting fire and ash, and causing water to pour down the slopes of the volcano from the lake at the summit of the volcano.***

Q: What evidence in the story tells us Mount Rainier is a volcano?

A: ***Sahale erupted fire (perhaps lava and pyroclastic flows) and the air became thick and hot (ash). Water flowed from the summit, which may have been the summit lake draining or lahars (mud flows).***

Q: What changes does he see in the mountain?

A: ***The mountain lost its top and generally changed shape.***

Student Page

Fire, Flood and Fury -
Native American Stories of Mount Rainier

Native Oral Traditions from the Puyallup Tribe
The Lake on Mount Rainier

When the grandfather of my grandmother was a young man, he climbed Tacobed. He climbed to the top in search of spirit power.

Before he started, he made five wedges of elk horn. After he reached the snow line, he used the elk-horn wedges to cut steps in the snow and ice. When one wedge wore out, he threw it away and used another one. At the end of a day of climbing, when he reached the top of the mountain, the fifth wedge was worn out.

On the mountaintop he saw a small lake. He made camp beside it and stayed there all night. Next morning he swam and washed himself in the lake. There he gained spirit power. He felt strong and brave and wise.

Then the mountain spoke to him. 'Because you have stayed one night with me, I can talk to you. You will become an old, old man, because of your spirit power. When you are very old, moss will grow on your knees and on your elbows. Moss will grow on your head after your hair has fallen out. At last you will die of old age.

At the time of your death, my head will burst open. The water from the lake here will flow down my sides into the valleys below. I, Tacobed, have spoken. All things will come to pass even as I have prophesied.'

When the mountain stopped talking, the young man picked up five shells and started home. Before he had gone far, snow began to fall.

'Oh, I have displeased Tacobed. He does not wish me to carry shells away,' the young man said.

He threw one shell down, then the other four, one at a time. The snowing stopped. With empty hands but with strong spirit power within him, he returned home.

Years passed. The man became old. When he was very old, everything happened just as Tacobed had prophesied. His hair fell out. Moss grew on his knees, his elbows, his head. To his people he said, 'When I die, look up at the mountain. Tacobed's head will burst open. The water from the lake on top will spill down the mountainsides.'

The old man died, and it was as he had said. Tacobed's head burst open, the lake on top spilled out, and the water rushed down. It swept the trees from where Orting now is, and left the prairie covered with stones.

White people have never seen the lake on Tacobed. My grandmother, who told me the story, remembered when the lake burst and spilled out.

from Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest
by Ella E. Clark

Fire, Flood and Fury -
Native American Stories of Mount Rainier

Native Oral Traditions from the Cowlitz Tribe

The Mountains

White Mountain was a man (Patu-Mount Adams). He had two wives and stood midway between them. The two women became angry with one another and started to fight. The one at the south threw fire at Mount Rainier (taqo'men). The fire hit taqo'men but she threw it back at her rival. They kept this up. Finally, taqo'men got struck very badly and her head broke off. The other woman got the best of her.

from Legends of The Cowlitz Indian Tribe
edited by Roy I. Wilson

The Husband and Wife Argument

Once in the long ago time Xwa'ni was going up the Seqiku (Toutle River), and he heard a great rumbling. He perked up his ear and soon realized that it was Lawelatla (Mount St. Helens). He could tell that she was very angry. Soon he heard another great rumbling coming from another direction. He perked up his other ear and soon realized that this was Takhoma (Mount Rainier). He was also very angry. They were having a husband and wife argument and fight, and he was in between them. Then he saw Lawelatla blow her top and knock the head off of her husband Takhoma.

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Student Page

Fire, Flood and Fury -

Native American Stories of Mount Rainier

Native Oral Traditions from the Puyallup Tribe

Tacobed and Changer

Long ago, the peaks of Ho-had-hun were people. White people call Ho-had-hun the Olympic Mountains. One of the warrior peaks there was named Swy-loobs. He married a maiden peak, Tacobed.

Even after they were married, they and the other peaks kept on growing. They became so large that after a while they were crowded in their small space. Tacobed especially was growing both taller and broader. At last she said to the others, "I will move to a place not so crowded. Then there will be more room for the rest of you."

She spoke to the rising sun. "The people over there have no mountains. I will move across the water and give myself plenty of room. I will take salmon and berries with me, so that the people over there will have plenty to eat."

The peaks of Ho-had-hun had grown so close together that Tacobed found it hard to get loose from them. But she freed herself and moved across the Sound. There she had plenty of room. She grew taller and taller, broader and broader, until she became a giant mountain.

After she had been on the east side of the water for a while, she turned into a monster. She devoured the people who came up on her slopes for berries. She devoured those who came to her forests for deer and elk. She sucked into her cavelike stomach all the people who came near her. Then she devoured them. Their friends and their tribesmen lived in great fear.

At last they asked the Changer to come and rescue them from the mountain monster. When the Changer came, in the form of Fox, he decided to challenge Tacobed to a duel. But first he made a strong rope by twisting twigs of hazel bushes and tying them together. He tied himself to a mountain near Tacobed and then called out to her, "O mountain monster, I challenge you to a sucking contest. I defy you to swallow me as you have swallowed your neighbors."

Tacobed drew in one deep breath after another. She sucked in rocks and boulders and trees, but she could not make Fox move. Again and again she tried, but Fox did not even stir. The rocks which rolled by scratched and bruised him, but he could not be moved. At last Tacobed drew in such a deep breath that she burst her blood vessels. All over her body, rivers of blood gushed forth and flowed down her sides.

Then the mountain monster died, and the Changer made a law. "Hereafter, Tacobed shall be harmless. The streams of blood shall turn to rivers of water. The waters shall have plenty of fish, for the good of all the people who come to the lakes and rivers on the mountain."

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Fire, Flood and Fury -

Native American Stories of Mount Rainier

Native Oral Traditions from the Nisqually Tribe

The Miser of Mount Rainier

There was an old man living near the Mountain who was very avaricious and desirous of obtaining much 'hiaqua'—which is shell money still common among Indians of the Sound. This old Indian was on very intimate terms with Sahale and kept begging him to supply him with more money by magic, for the long and laborious processes of saving and hoarding were too slow for the old Indian. Sahale, however, was aware that his greed for hiaqua was liable to make the old man a victim of Kahahete, the chief of the demons, and therefore he always refused to grant him any magic power.

But Moosmoos, the Elk divinity, obtained a tamanowas [spirit] power over the old Indian and whispered magic in his ear, telling him that on the summit of the Mountain he might find much hiaqua and become the richest man in the world. Going back to his camp, he informed his wife that he was going on a long hunt—but in reality he was setting forth for the summit of the Mountain. The first day he climbed almost to the top, and next morning at the rising of the sun he stood upon the crest. He discovered that there was a great valley on the summit, filled except in one place with snow. Here was a lake of black water, and at one end of the lake there were three black rocks. The old man was confident that those were the tamanowas rocks; for one was shaped like a salmon's head, another like a camas root, and the third like the head of his own totem or divinity, Moosmoos, the elk.

The old Indian, observing these symbolic rocks, concluded that this must be the place where the hiaqua was secreted. He began to dig at once with the elk horn pick which he had brought for the purpose, at the feet at the elk shaped rock. At this gesture, a number of otter came out of the lake and gathered around in a circle. When the man had struck the ground a number of times equal to the number of otter, they began to pound the ground with their tails. Still he continued to dig, and about sundown he overturned a large rock under which he discovered a large cavity completely filled with hiaqua—great strings of it, and enough to make him the richest of all men.

But now the greedy adventurer made a great mistake. He loaded himself with the strings of hiaqua and left not a single shell as an offering to the tamanowas powers by whose magic he had made the discovery. Sahale was greatly displeased at such ungrateful conduct, and all the tamanowas powers combined to show their wrath. Skamson [Wha-quoddie], the thunder bird,

Fire, Flood and Fury -
Native American Stories of Mount Rainier

Native Oral Traditions from the Nisqually Tribe
The Miser of Mount Rainier continued

Tootah, the thunder, and Colasnass, the snow god, all swooped down from the clouds, turned the sky black and blew the old man with the strings of hiaqua about him across the rocks causing him to lose his way and finally burying him in the snow. out of the darkness came the terrible voice of Sahale, denouncing his wickedness. Also the terrified Indian began to hear the mocking voices of Kahatete and his attending demons. The whole framework of nature seemed about to disrupt; for after the snowstorm there came a burst of volcanic fire from the summit, the air became thick and hot and streams of water poured down the mountainside.

In spite of all of this confusion of nature, the Indian retained his consciousness, and he began to think of how he might propitiate the offended deities. He dropped one of the strings of hiaqua as an offering—but this seems to have been a mere mockery, and the demons kept howling at him in derisive tones, 'Hiaqua! Hiaqua!' then the Indian flung away one string after another until they were all gone, and fell upon the ground exhausted and entered into a deep sleep. When he awoke, he found that he was at the same place where he had fallen asleep on the night before he set out for the summit.

Being very hungry, he set about gathering camas roots with which to refresh himself, and while eating he began to have many thoughts in regard to his life and doings. His 'tum-tum' (heart) was much softened as he contemplated his greed for hiaqua. He found that he no longer cared for it, and that his mind was calm, tranquil and benevolent. Moreover, when he looked at himself in a pool, he discovered that he had changed marvelously. His hair had become long and white as snow. The Mountain itself had changed its form. The sun shone brightly, the trees glistened with new leaves and the mountain meadows were sweet with the perfume of many flowers. Birds sang in the trees, and the great mountain towered calm, tranquil and majestic into the deep blue sky, glistening with the fallen snow. All nature seemed to rejoice and the old Indian found that he was almost in a new world.

Then he seemed to remember where he was, and he made his way without difficulty to his camp. There he found an old woman with white hair whom he did not recognize at first, but soon he discovered her to be his own 'klootchman' (woman). She told him that he had been gone many suns and

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moons, and that in the meantime she had been digging camas and trading for hiqua, of which she had accumulated much. The old Indian now perceived all the mistakes of his former avaricious life and settled down on the banks of the Nisqually in peace and contentment. He became a great tamanowas man and a counselor and advisor to the Indians in all kinds of trouble. He was worshipped by them for his wisdom and experience and benevolence, as well as for his strange experience upon the summit of the Mountain."

from Where the Waters Begin, Cecelia Svinth Carpenter,
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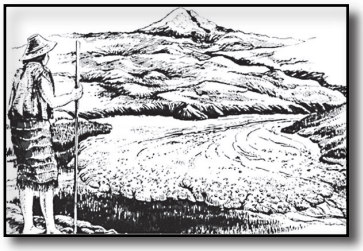

Native American Tribes near Mount Rainier

Early Observer Views Mount Rainier and a Lahar Spreading over the Valley Floor

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