

VOLUME 1: NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

ECHOES of ARARAT

A COLLECTION OF OVER 300 FLOOD LEGENDS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

Nick Lignosi

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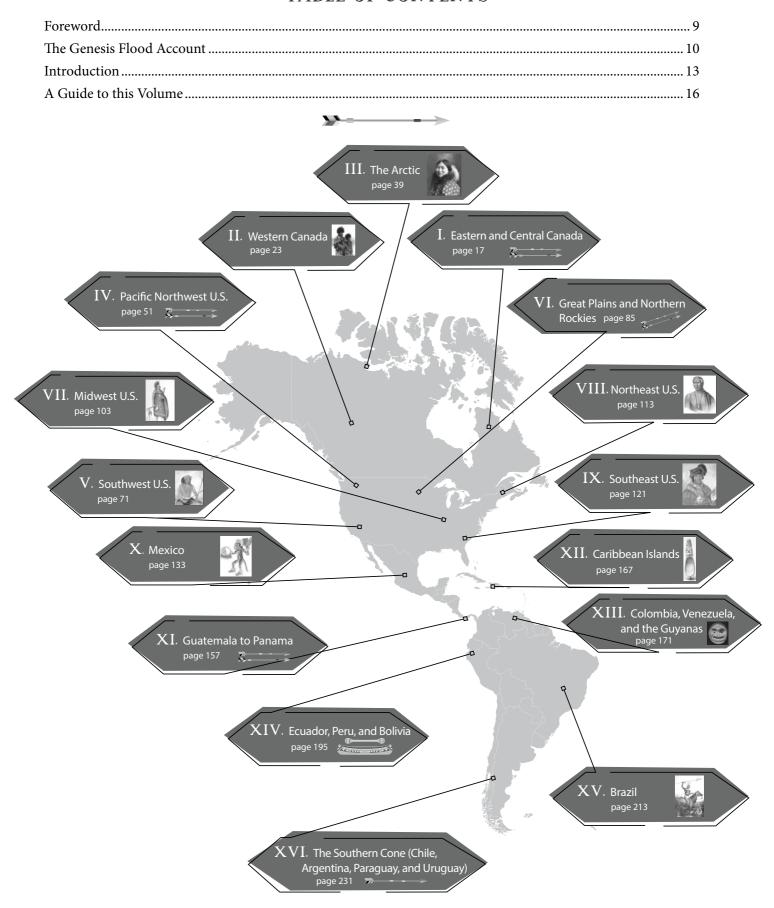


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Nick Liguori has systematically undertaken a remarkable amount of research on the First Nations peoples of North and South America. From original sources, he has masterfully documented Flood legends and even several Tower of Babel-like stories from various tribes across North and South America.

It is truly eye-opening to learn how natives were able to preserve so much of the early history of the world as it was passed down through their ancestors. This discovery is nothing less than extraordinary.

As Noah's descendants scattered from Babel to the far reaches of the globe, they took their history with them. We would anticipate that some of the historical accounts would be lost to time, embellished, mis-transmitted, incorporated local geography and fauna, etc. Naturally, there were deviations in many accounts — as we would expect.

Some of these deviations related to incorporating their local mountains, animals, boat types, and terrain into their accounts. But overall, we were very impressed with the number details they recorded, based on the true (inspired by God) Genesis account that they managed to retain. Seeing how elders of many tribes continued the knowledge of a global flood, including such things as doves and ravens being sent forth from the ship and so on, the reader is given a powerful testimony to the true account of Noah's Flood recorded in the Bible.

As a point of note, since we are all descendants of Noah, all of us are thus related — we are all one race — the human race. We have all sinned and need Jesus Christ as our Savior to save us from sin and death — which originated in the Garden of Eden recorded in Genesis, with our mutual grandparent, Adam.

Whether we live in Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and other places, we are all blood relatives — cousins if you will—and as Christians, we need to look after one another. It is a good exercise to understand and honor our heritage going back to Noah and Adam.

Reading this book should be eye-opening as it powerfully confirms the historicity of the Scriptures. Our hope is that Mr. Liguori's book helps you realize that the history recorded in the Bible is true and that the gospel (the good news of Jesus's once-for-all death, burial, and resurrection) founded in the same book is also true.

Now, it's time to dive into the Flood legends!

THE GENESIS FLOOD ACCOUNT

The following is the account of the Flood from the Book of Genesis, 6:1 through 9:19. Genesis 11:1–9, which contains the history of the Tower of Babel, is also presented.¹

Chapter 6:

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was

Key Points in the Genesis Flood Account

- 1. Takes place in ancient past
- 2. Divine judgment upon human evil and violence
- 3. A prophet (an old man) is warned by God to prepare for the coming Flood
- 4. He warns the people, but is not believed (2 Peter 2:5)
- 5. He survives in a massive, enclosed wooden ship
- 6. Pairs of animals are brought on board, along with many foods
- 7. Global Flood covers all the earth, even high mountains
- 8. Water bursts forth from subterranean springs below, and from sky above
- 9. Rains for 40 days and Noah remains inside ark one year and ten days
- 10. All land-dwelling, air-breathing life drowns except for a few survivors
- 11. The ark comes to rest on a high mountain in Ararat
- 12. A raven and a dove are released to search for land. The second time the dove is sent, it returns with a fresh olive leaf in its beak
- 13. The survivors wait for the earth to dry, then return to repopulate the world
- 14. Many nephilim ("fallen ones," possibly giants) were present in pre-Flood world
- 15. Rainbow is given as a sign of promise that God will never again destroy the entire world with a flood
- 16. The multiplying and confusion of languages (Tower of Babel) takes place not long after Flood

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corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark — you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them." Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

Chapter 7:

Then the Lord said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time. You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made." Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him.

Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth. Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood. Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were

opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark, they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed it behind him.

Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

Chapter 8:

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased. In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible.

Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he

put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.

Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God spoke to Noah, saving, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Chapter 9:

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.,Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."

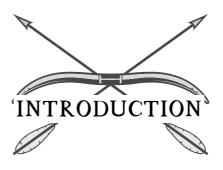
Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him,

saying, "Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

Chapter 11:

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.



In tribe after tribe across the world, we find oral traditions of a great flood that happened in ancient times. These tell that a man was forewarned by God, or the Great Spirit, of a coming flood. This man prepared a large wooden vessel for the salvation of his family and the animals. The flood came and destroyed all life that was on the earth, except for those saved in the boat. Finally, the boat landed on a high mountain. The waters began to recede, and the man sent forth a raven and a dove to discern whether there was dry land. The dove returned, carrying a fresh leaf in its beak. The man took this as a sign that the flood was coming to an end. Then they came down and inhabited the land again, and repopulated the world.

In this volume, I have documented over 300 flood traditions from the First Nations peoples of North and South America, similar to the Genesis account both in general outline and specific details. Overall, it can be said that nearly every tribe—at least those whose stories we have access to—possess a memory of the Flood.

This universal testimony to the Flood must somehow be accounted for. It can no longer be ignored. I submit that the only satisfactory explanation, in light of this augmented body of evidence, is that the Flood actually happened, just as Genesis says it did.

And if that is true, then that radically changes everything. It changes our understanding of ancient history, and it changes how we study archaeology and geology. It also changes how we think of God, ourselves, the meaning of life, and what kind of lives we live.

"Amongst one hundred and twenty different tribes that I have visited in North and South and Central America, not a tribe exists that has not related to me distinct or vague traditions of such a calamity, in which one, or three, or eight persons were saved above the waters, on the top of a high mountain.1 (George Catlin, early 19th century explorer and painter)

Who Cares?

Someone will say, "I'm a Christian. Who cares if the Flood happened? Who cares if Genesis is literal history? We just need to focus on Jesus."

My response to that is, I agree that we need to focus on Jesus. He is the Savior and the source of eternal life. Jesus is what it's all about. In fact, Jesus is why I have written this book.

What do I mean by that? I mean that if we as Christians really love Jesus, then we have to live out the faith. And if we live out the faith, then we have to interact with reality. And if we interact with reality, then we will meet and interact with real people. And then we will quickly realize that many people do not take Jesus seriously at all, and do not take the Gospel seriously.

One reason they do not take Jesus and Christianity seriously is because they subscribe to a Darwinian view of history and science, which they were taught in school. According to this, evolution over billions of years is true, man is only a material being, with no soul, the book of Genesis is myth, miracles do not happen, the Bible is false, and Jesus is irrelevant.

You see, many non-Christians understand the Bible better than Christians do, which is a shame. They understand that if you destroy the foundation—which is the book of Genesis—then the entire building collapses, Christianity is meaningless, and Jesus is irrelevant.

If the basic claims of Genesis are not true—that God created, that it was good in the beginning, that death came after sin and not before, that man is more than a material being, that God is active in the world, that God is a personal God who judges sin—then there is nothing for Jesus to save us from! If the Genesis worldview is false, then Jesus died in vain, and His death is meaningless. But if Genesis is true, then Jesus' death means everything!

We Christians need to wake up. We need to stop bringing a knife to a gunfight. We need to stop retreating and surrendering when skeptics and university professors raise objections about science and history. To retreat there is to invalidate Christianity itself.

But we don't have to retreat. The truth is on our side. All the evidence is on our side. It's about time we used it. So we need to start realizing that an assault on Genesis, Exodus, or any other book of the Bible is an assault on Jesus and the good news of Christianity itself.

Therefore, I have written this book, to show that the book of Genesis is true. To remove intellectual barriers that are blocking people from taking the claims of Jesus

^{1.} George Catlin, O-Kee-Pa: A Religious Ceremony and other Customs of the Mandans (Philadelpha: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1867), p. 1–2.

seriously. Even if this book is but one small piece in that puzzle, I hope it will help promote an environment where people take the claims of Jesus seriously.

A Theory in Crisis

Darwinian evolution is a theory in crisis. It is now more vulnerable than ever, as scientific advances have failed to offer the support that Charles Darwin hoped for, when he expressed hope that future discoveries would confirm his theory. Recent discoveries have damaged Darwin's theory, rather than supporting it. Today, the theory is haunted by new discoveries, impossible barriers, and a world of evidence that supports the opposite side. Billions more fossils have been found, but there is still no fossil evidence of complex life arising from primitive lifeforms, and no evidence of transitions having occurred from one type of animal to another. Worse yet, we have no mechanism for evolution to occur. The discovery of DNA and genetic information has shown that macroevolution cannot happen.

And so, while evolution continues to be inculcated to the nation's youth by teachers speaking confidently, and while textbooks trot out the same old arguments in favor of evolution—like peppered moths, fruit flies, the Miller-Urey experiment, and Australopithecus—the scientists performing the research are far less confident, and all these "icons" of evolution have been refuted.

In fact, an increasing number of scientists and scholars are breaking away from the Darwinian, evolutionary paradigm. Many scientists such as Michael Behe, Robert Carter, and Kurt Wise are performing groundbreaking research, which confirms intelligent design, and initial creation by God. Today, a powerful and persuasive body of scientific evidence exists in favor of intelligent design and the biblical view. In fact, creationism is not only proving to be defensible, but it is showing predictive value—unlocking further insights in microbiology and genetics.

A similar thing is unfolding in the field of geology. The uniformitarian view of Charles Lyell has seen its best days long ago. There is a growing recognition that slow and gradual processes are insufficient, and that catastrophic processes are necessary to account for many of the earth's features and formations. In fact, the conventional view of earth's history has difficulty explaining many aspects of the earth's surface and the geologic column—things ranging from the Grand Canyon, water gaps and wind gaps, knife-edge boundaries between flat sedimentary layers that stretch for hundreds of miles horizontally, to folded rock layers and the formation of coal beds. Creation scientists and geologists such as Andrew Snelling and Steven Austin are making revolutionary discoveries which show that a biblical history—one which acknowledges the Genesis

Flood, with its enormous geologic impacts—is the only one that can explain the rocks beneath our feet.

The same can be said about the minimalist or skeptical view of the Bible's accuracy. Discoveries of the last 75 years have confirmed, time after time, the historical accuracy of the books of the Bible. New archaeological discoveries, manuscripts, and historical insights continue to pour in. Today, biblical scholars and archeologists such as Stephen Collins, Joseph Holden, and Douglas Petrovich are making important discoveries which confirm the accuracy of the Bible, from Genesis to the books of the New Testament. Every new discovery confirms the Bible's historical accuracy, rather than contradicting it.

It is an exciting time to be alive, for the Christian scholar or scientist. Indeed, for any person interested in science or history, it is an exciting time to be alive.

Global Traditions of the Flood

It is in the context of the above-mentioned growing body of evidence, which supports the Bible, that I humbly offer this book. The Noahic Flood is a subject of enormous importance to the book of Genesis, and to the Bible in general. And so we must ask: Is the Genesis Flood account true and accurate? The answer to that question will go a long way to determine whether the Bible can be trusted, whether a secular or biblical worldview is true, whether God exists and intervenes in the world, whether God judges, and whether Christianity is true.

There is, in fact, very strong evidence to confirm the truth of the Noahic Flood, and the truth of the book of

Genesis. That's because it happens to be true. We are living in God's world. We did not create ourselves. One of those lines of evidence—besides scientific and historical evidence—involves Flood legends. Nearly every tribe or nation has a legend, a historical tradition, or even a written history claiming that a great Flood took place in the ancient past. And these

Some Christian leaders and teachers are ashamed of the book of Genesis, especially the first 11 chapters. They water down, ignore, and marginalize Genesis in favor of the world's view about history. That is a mistake.

traditions usually sound very similar to the Genesis Flood account. That is the main point of my book. And that is the sort of thing that defies an explanation—unless the Genesis account is true.²

I have not yet told you why I chose to write a book on the subject of Flood traditions. Well, I was always interested in Christian apologetics. I love exploring evidence, and learning about all of the scientific,

^{2.} For my responses to naturalistic attempts to explain the existence of Flood traditions, see Appendix D.

historical, and experiential evidence which confirms the truth of the Bible, the existence of God, and the truth of Jesus Christ. My experience on a very liberal college campus probably had something to do with it. There was much skepticism, atheistic evolutionary teaching, and hostility to Christianity, which heightened my interest in studying apologetics.

However, it was several years after graduating college that I became interested in Flood legends. I was studying it, like any other area of biblical research, by finding the best books on the subject and reading them. It began to dawn on me that I had stumbled upon an area of much unfinished work. There were Flood traditions here and there, in various books, in various articles, but it was piecemeal. It was fragmentary. In other places there was a lot of anecdotes and second-hand sourcing. I felt that this was a very potent area of evidence for the Bible, just waiting to be tapped.

So it seemed to me that there was a need for this project. Many people reading this are already aware of the existence of Flood stories from different parts of the world. However, I believe the full weight and significance of this data is under-appreciated, because Flood traditions have been under-reported and under-documented. I submit that these Flood traditions are even more pervasive and more compelling than previously thought! I believe their significance now needs to be reassessed. That is why I have sought to document these Flood traditions in a comprehensive and well-sourced manner. I have presented these in an open-handed manner to allow the reader to judge their significance for himself or herself. I trust the information speaks for itself.

I am nothing compared to the Ph. D. scientists cited in the previous section. I always thought that someone far more qualified, far more seasoned, and far bettersuited for this subject ought to have written this book. And it ought to have been written many decades ago, I believe. Yet here we are, and the work was unfinished, so I stepped forward, albeit reluctantly. Much more remains to be found and written on the subject, but I hope my book (and my forthcoming second volume) is a step in the right direction, expanding our knowledge of the ubiquity of native Flood traditions.

Flood stories are not the only subject of this book. Many tribes also have ancient accounts which touch on Genesis accounts, including the creation of the world, the creation of man and woman, the Garden of Eden, and the Tower of Babel. These are documented as well, although doubtless there are many others that have escaped my notice. This is the first edition of this book. I hope that additional material can be found and included in future editions.

The Sources

The ultimate sources for the material contained in this volume are the tribe members and elders and chiefs from the First Nations peoples who have lived in North and South America from ancient times. Their histories and oral traditions have been recorded in a variety of settings, by a variety of individuals, at times ranging from the late 1400s to the present century. Those who recorded the information are historians, scientists, indigenous writers themselves, government officials, missionaries, ethnographers, and many others. As to the Flood traditions themselves, some are clearer than others. Some bear uncanny, specific resemblance to the Genesis account. Other Flood traditions are vague or fragmentary. Much has already been lost, due to the decimation of entire cultures, and due to the forgetfulness of time.

I do not claim to have located all these sources myself. I am thankful to the various historians and researchers whose work has made this volume possible, and who have provided very helpful leads in locating original sources. Many of these have been documented already. Others I found in the midst of thousands of hours of research, whether online or at countless libraries across multiple states, or in rare books obtained from foreign countries. But overall, the goal of this book was to assemble all of the relevant material so that it could be evaluated in a comprehensive manner.

I considered it very important to locate primary sources, which give the earliest and most direct access available to the information in question. Also, it was essential that the oral traditions of the Flood be aboriginal, rather than influenced by Christian or European ideas. I screened out and discarded those Flood traditions which had obvious signs of influence by settlers and missionaries. For instance, any oral traditions with biblical names such as Noah, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, or the familiar Genesis phrase "forty days and forty nights" obviously bear the marks of Christian influence, and were thus discarded.

Overall, this process of searching netted over 300 significant Flood stories from North and South America, which the reader can consider and evaluate. Now if we love the truth, we must ask ourselves one important question: why? Why are there so many native, oral traditions that sound so similar to the Genesis Flood? Is such a finding possible in an atheistic universe? I emphatically say no. I contend that the only explanation that can truly account for all these flood traditions, which are so similar to the Genesis account, is that the Flood happened, just as Genesis says.

A GUIDE TO THIS VOLUME

The more than 300 Flood traditions and other Genesis-related traditions in this volume come from all over North and South America, and the neighboring islands, including the Caribbean and Greenland. They are organized by regions, beginning in Canada, and proceeding southward to the other end of this hemisphere.

I would also encourage the reader to check out the material in the appendices, which contains further information on several related topics. These include:

- **Appendix A:** Expanded Texts
- **Appendix B:** The Historicity of Genesis, Comparisons with the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and North American Flood Traditions
- Appendix C: Earth Diver Stories and Other Variants
- Appendix D: Naturalistic Explanations of Flood Traditions
- **Appendix E:** Bibliography
- Appendix F: Recommended Reading
- **Appendix G:** Biblical Connections
- Appendix H: Index by Tribe, Nation, or Locale

While the focus of this volume is traditions of the Flood, scattered throughout this book are also numerous traditions of the Tower of Babel (and the resulting confusion of languages), Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Fall, and even a few Native American prophecies of Jesus and of the coming message of salvation.

I hope you find the content of this book interesting. I pray that this book increases your faith in God and your confidence in the scriptures, including the book of Genesis. Genesis, like so many books of the Old Testament, prophesied of the coming Savior of the world, God in the flesh—Jesus, who would come to make atonement for sin and provide the way to a right relationship with God.

Finally, Jesus acknowledged the global Genesis Flood (Matthew 24:37-39). It is important that we believe in it too. Denial of the Bible's message about historical, earthly things (including the global Flood) leads to denial of the Bible's message about spiritual things. Let us heed the warning of Jesus, the ultimate author of all the Bible, who said the following:

"If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John 3:12).



EASTERN AND CENTRAL CANADA

The native peoples of Canada, like all nations on the earth, have passed down traditions of a great Flood. Let us begin with the Cree people, a great tribe that settled

a vast section of Canada. Their tradition states that a good man named Wesaketchan built a large raft, which he boarded with his family and a pair of all kinds of birds and animals. The man sent out a duck and a muskrat, the latter of which returned carrying some soil in its mouth.

The Montagnais or Innu of eastern Canada say the survivor of the Flood was one of their deities, Messou, "the Great

Hare." He sent a raven to try to find earth.

The Ojibwe, another tribe of Canada and the Great Lakes

area, tell that their patriarch built a giant raft and rescued all sorts of animals and birds upon it. The Wyandotte or Huron attribute the Flood to a dispute between divine

Regional Tribes

- 1. Cree (Central Canada)
- Montagnais (Quebec and Labrador Provinces)
- 3. Ojibwe (Ontario and Great Lakes Area)
- 4. Wyandotte (Ontario)
- 5. Ottawa (Ontario)

brothers, in which one shot an arrow into a giant bag of water in the sky containing all the world's waters, which drowned all the world except those led to safety by the benevolent deity. The Ottawa, around the year 1770, told fur trader Alexander Henry about their ancestor Nanibojou who originally lived "toward the going down of the sun." Being warned of the Flood in a dream, he built a raft to save his family and all types of

animals, floating upon the waters for many moons before he created land and mankind anew.

Central Canada

The Cree nation occupied a vast section of Canada south of the Hudson Bay. Their tradition about the Flood was recorded by an ethnologist named Émile Petitot in 1869. The tradition went as follows:

A gigantic fish tried to destroy Wesaketchan, with whom he had quarreled. With his jumps and jolts he caused an inundation which covered the whole earth and even the highest mountains.

But Wesaketchan built a large raft on which he boarded all his family, as well as a pair of all the birds and all the animals. It was thus that he preserved his life.1

Another relevant Cree text was reported by the Catholic Bishop Henri Faraud in 1864:

As tradition, the Crees have a little confused idea of the creation of man, of his fall, and especially the flood; they say: "There was a time when men had become so large that they would no longer obey God and the Almighty destroyed them by raising the water. One man fashioned a large boat, called Micinapikivan (large canoe). Thus the flood arose, and all the men perished with the animals. After a certain period of time, the rescued man grew tired of floating on the water. Believing he saw a small island, he set free a raven, who did not return. To punish him for his disobedience, the raven, who was white, became black. A white dove was sent a while later; it returned with a piece of clay in its legs. The man concluded that the earth was quite dry, and he landed. That's about the tradition of the Cree and Ojibwa""²



Cree Man, 1903

Wesaketchan built a large raft on which he boarded all his family, as well as a pair of all the birds and all the animals.

MONTAGNAIS—

Quebec and Labrador Provinces

The Montagnais, or Innu, have anciently inhabited eastern Canada, including much of what is now Quebec and Labrador. They were northern enemies of the Iroquois nations. The Montagnais held to a tradition of the Flood, which the Jesuit missionaries recorded in their annual report in 1634:

As to the Messou [the Great Hare], they hold that he restored the world, which was destroyed in the flood; whence it appears that they have some tradition of that great universal deluge which happened in the time of Noë, but they have burdened this truth with a great many irrelevant fables. This Messou went to the chase, and his Lynxes, which he used instead of dogs, having gone into a great lake, were held there. The Messou, seeking them everywhere, was told by a bird that it had seen them in the midst of this lake. He went in, to get them out; but the lake overflowed, covering the earth and swallowing



Reindeer Hunting in Labrador

^{1.} Émile Petitot, Traditions Indiennes du Canada Nord-ouest (Paris: Maissonneuve Fréres, 1886), p. 475-476.

^{2.} Ibid., p. 387.

up the world. The Messou, very much astonished, sent a raven in search of a little piece of ground, with which to rebuild this element [the earth], but he could not find any; he made an Otter descend into the abyss of waters, but it could not bring back any; at last he sent a muskrat, which brought back a little morsel, and the Messou used this to rebuild this earth which we inhabit. . . . [Messou] married a muskrat, by whom he had children who have re-peopled this world.³

God, being angry with the giants, commanded a man to build a large canoe.

A second Flood tradition, from another subgroup of the Montagnais, was recorded by the aforementioned Henri Faraud in 1864:

God, being angry with the giants, commanded a man to build a large canoe. The man did so, and when he had embarked in it, the water rose on all sides, and the canoe with it, till no land was anywhere to be seen. Weary of beholding nothing but a heaving mass of water, the man threw an otter into the flood, and the animal dived and brought up a little earth. The man took the earth or mud in his hand and breathed on it, and at once it began to grow. So he laid it on the surface of the water and prevented it from sinking. As it continued to grow into an island, he desired to know whether it was large enough to support him. Accordingly he placed a reindeer upon it, but the animal soon made the circuit of the island and returned to him, from which he concluded that the island was not yet large enough. So he continued to blow on it till the mountains, the lakes, and the river were formed. Then he disembarked.

Ontario and Great Lakes Area

"Before the general deluge," the Ojibwe elders told Peter Jones, "there lived two enormous creatures, each possessed of vast power." One was a great horned animal. The other was a giant toad, which possessed all the world's waters in his body, and which was in charge of watering the earth. "Between these two creatures, there arose a quarrel, which terminated in a fight." The horned animal rushed at the toad and pierced its side, "out of which the water gushed in floods, and soon overflowed the face of the earth."

At this time Nanahbozhoo [the Great Hare] was living on the earth, and observing the water rising higher and higher, he fled to the loftiest mountain for refuge. Perceiving that even this retreat would soon be inundated, he selected a large cedar tree which he purposed to ascend should the waters come up to him. Before they reached him he caught a number of animals and fowls, and put them into his bosom. At length the water covered the mountain. Nanahbozhoo then ascended the cedar tree, and as he went up, he plucked its branches and stuck them in the belt which girdled



Sha-có-pay, The Six, Chief of the Plains Ojibwa

his waist.6

Paul le Jeune, "Relation of What Occurred in New France in the Year 1634," The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, vol. 6 (Cleveland: Burrow Brothers, 1898). p. 156.

Mgr. Faraud, "Missions de l'Amérique du Nord," Annales de la Propagation de la Foi, vol. 36 (Lyon: 1864), p. 388–389.

^{5.} Rev. Peter Jones, History of the Ojebway Indians (London: A.W. Bennett, 1861), p. 33.

^{6.} Ibid.

For a time, the tree grew upward at the same pace as the water. But later Nanahbozboo saw that the water would soon overtake him. He knew that he needed to construct a great raft, on which he could float along with the animals that were with him. Thus he built the raft, using the branches he had plucked. "On this raft he floated about for a long time, till all the mountains were covered, and all the beasts of the earth and fowls of the air, except those he had with him, perished."

Next, the tribal elders told Mr. Jones how Nanabozhoo sent the animals to dive for mud, which he then took and extended to form the new earth. He then traveled across the new world which he had made, and here and there he created various tribes of peoples. He placed them in their respective parts of the earth, and gave them different cultures, ways, and beliefs.8

In the 1860s, Émile Petitot recorded another Flood tradition from the Ojibwe peoples, which tells that a "deluge of snow" took place in the most ancient times. Instantly it turned into a great flood of water, after some mice released a reservoir of heat onto the earth. These waters "covered the earth to the tops of the highest firs, and it raised so greatly the level of the waters that they inundated our planet and rose above the Rocky Mountains."9

A single man, an old man, who had foreseen this catastrophe, had vainly warned his countrymen. "We will seek refuge in the mountains," they said. They were drowned there. He himself had built a large canoe, and began to sail about, collecting on his passage all the animals which he met. But, as he could not live long in this frightful condition, he made the beaver, the otter, the muskrat and the Arctic duck dive by turns in search of the earth. The latter alone returned with a little mud in its claws.¹⁰

Yet another Flood tradition, from the Tamigami branch of the Ojibwe, records the unleashing of a global Flood, and the construction of a great raft to save the animals. The man releases two birds (a crow and an owl) to fly to measure the earth. The crow abandons its mission and feasts on a dead animal, just as we find in Genesis.¹¹



Boy Chief - Ojibbeway

He knew that he needed to construct a great raft, on which he could float along with the animals that were with him.

Ontario

The elders of the Wyandotte, or Huron, told William Connelley the following: There was a quarrel between two divine brothers, Sesta and Skareh. In the night Skareh stole all the earth's waters and held them in a giant bag in the sky. The people cried out for lack of water. Sesta, being concerned for the people's survival, took as an arrow a giant trunk of a pine tree, and shot it into the sky, piercing the bag. Yet now he had another problem, for the water spilled upon the earth and covered everything, even the hills. "The Lower World was destroyed by the flood," they told. Then Sesta led his people to a heavenly forest above the earth, using the rainbow as a bridge. In that beautiful place they lived until the waters returned to their proper boundaries, leaving habitable dry land. 12



Three Huron - Wyandotte Chiefs

^{7.} Ibid.

^{8.} Ibid., p. 34-35.

^{9.} Émile Petitot, Monograph of the Dene-Dindjie Indians, trans. Douglas Brynner, p. 147. Retrieved from: https://archive.org/stream/cihm 15864.

^{11.} Frank Speck, "Myths and folk-lore of the Timiskaming Algonquin and Timagami Ojibwa," Geological Survey of Canada Memoir, vol. 71, Anthropological Series (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1915), p. 36-38.

^{12.} William Elsey Connelley, Indian Myths (New York: Rand McNally, 1928). Retrieved from: http://www.wyandotte-nation.org/culture/folk-lore-and-myths/indian-myths/.

Ontario

The Ottawa (or Odawa) shared their traditions with an English fur trader named Alexander Henry (1739–1824). In their Flood tradition, they replace Noah with their deity Nanibojou, "the Great Hare."

Traditions related of the Great Hare are as varied as his name. He was represented to me as the founder, and indeed creator, of the Indian nations of North America. He lived originally toward the going down of the sun, where being warned, in a dream, that the inhabitants would be drowned by a general flood, produced heavy rains, he built a raft,



Mid-18th Century Sketch of an Ottawa Family

on which he afterward preserved his own family, and all the animal world without exception. According to his dream, the rains fell, and a flood ensued. His raft drifted for many moons, during which no land was discovered. His family began to despair of a termination to the calamity; and the animals, who had then the use of speech, murmured loudly against him. In the end, he produced a new earth, placed the animals upon it, and created man.13

According to his dream, the rains fell, and a flood ensued. His raft drifted for many moons, during which no land was discovered.

^{13.} Alexander Henry, Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the years 1760 and 1766, Part 1 (New York: J. Riley, 1809), p. 212-213.



Group of Crees

Section



WESTERN CANADA

In western Canada, we find a multitude of tribes affirming this ancient Flood. Among these are the Kwakiutl, the Nootka, and the Haida. The Lillooet people in 1905 told anthropologist James Teit their sacred tradition. A man named Ntci'nemkin built a very large canoe, saving himself and his family, and several young children whose parents begged him to take them, thinking nothing of their own survival. The waters covered all the high mountains except one called Split, and the survivors later descended to repopulate the earth. We have a remarkable Flood memory told by Squamish chief Joe Capilano, recorded in this volume, and one from the Sarci, whose elders told in 1888 how one man and one woman escaped the Flood on a giant raft, together with all sorts of animals and birds which they had collected.

The Tsimshian, living in coastal British Colombia across from the Haida Gwaii Islands, around the year 1850, told one Mr. Duncan how a few people escaped the ancient Flood at the top of one of their high mountains. The Bella Coola remember not only the Flood, but also have a vague tradition of the confusion of languages. So do the Cowichan, of whom we have an early tradition of how their ancestors had dreams forewarning about the coming Flood. They built a giant raft and survived the Flood, having anchored it to a rock at the top of Cowichan Mountain by means of a cable of cedar rope. The Coastal Salish say that a man named Xals, and his wife and daughters escaped in a large canoe, and when the Flood ended, they went down into the Fraser River valley. The Carrier told that a boy survived the Flood on a

Regional Tribes

- 6. Lillooet (British Columbia)
- 7. Squamish (Southwestern British Columbia)
- 8. Saulteaux (Southern Manitoba)
- 9. Sarci (Alberta)
- 10. Western Cree (Alberta)
- 11. Beaver (Alberta)
- 12. Kwakiutl (Vancouver Island)
- 13. Nootka (Vancouver Island)
- 14. Thompson River Tribe (Pacific Northwest)
- 15. Kootenay (British Columbia)
- 16. Haida (British Columbia)
- 17. Tsimshian (British Columbia)
- 18. Bella Coola (British Columbia)
- 19. Shuswap (British Columbia)
- 20. Cowichan (Vancouver Island)
- 21. Coastal Salish Tradition (British Columbia)
- 22. Carrier (British Columbia)
- 23. Tahltan (British Columbia)

The Tahltan mention that a wise man was forewarned of the coming Flood, sent by God due to the wickedness of mankind. Their tradition also mentions a race of fallen beings (possibly giants) that existed in those days, and a confusion of languages that occurred after the Flood. The Tsetsaut said that children were placed in hollow trees, which were sealed watertight (we are not told how they breathed), and later repopulated the earth. And we have the Flood traditions of

other tribes besides, including the Shuswap, Kootenay, and Beaver tribes.

The Western Cree say that the Great Spirit sent the Flood after mankind grew wicked. One man survived, and an otter, beaver, and muskrat with him. He sent the muskrat diving into the water, and it returned with a piece of earth. They also recognize the rainbow as "the mark of life," the sign that the Great Spirit will not again destroy the earth with a flood.

The Saulteaux tribe told a similar version to Lieutenant Hooper around the year 1850. Like Noah, their patriarch sent a raven to survey the size of the newly appeared earth.

British Columbia

The Lillooet people lived along the Lillooet River, which is in British Columbia north of Vancouver. Around 1905, they told James Teit their tradition about a great flood and dispersion that took place in the ancient past:

All the Lillooet people lived together around Green Lake, and for some distance below it on Green River. At that time there came a great and continuous rain, which made all the lakes and rivers overflow their banks, and deluge the surrounding country. When the people saw the waters rise far above the ordinary high-water mark, they became afraid.

A man called Ntci'nemkin had a very large canoe, in which he took refuge with his family. The other people ascended the mountains for safety; but the

water soon covered them too. When they saw that they would probably all be drowned, they begged Ntci'nemkin to save their children. As for themselves, they did not care. The canoe was too small, however, to hold all the children; so Ntci'nemkin took one child from each family, a male from one, a female from the next, and so on.

The rain continued falling and the waters rising, until all the land was submerged except the peak of the high mountain called Split. The canoe drifted about until the waters receded, and it grounded on Smimelc Mountain. Each stage of the water's sinking left marks on the sides of this mountain.

When the ground was dry again, the people settled just opposite the present site of Pemberton. Ntci'nemkin with his wives and children settled there, and he made the young people marry one another. He sent out pairs to settle at all the good food-places through the country. . . . Thus was the country peopled by the offspring of the Green Lake people.¹



St'at'imc (Lillooet) Nation, 1865

falling and the waters rising, until all the land was submerged except the peak of the high mountain called Split.

The rain continued

^{1.} James Teit, "Traditions of the Lillooet Indians of British Columbia," Journal of American Folk-lore, vol. 25 (Lancaster, PA, and New York, NY: 1912), p. 342.

Southwestern British Columbia

Pauline Johnson interviewed a Squamish chief named Joe Capilano (1854–1910), one very rainy February day, when the subject of the Flood arose:

One time, there was no land here at all; everywhere there was just water....

It was after a long, long time of this — this rain. The mountain-streams were swollen, the rivers choked, the sea began to rise — and yet it rained; for weeks and weeks it rained.

It rained for weeks and weeks, while the mountain torrents roared thunderingly down, and the sea crept silently up. The level lands were first to float in sea-water, then to disappear. The slopes were next to slip into the sea. The world was slowly being flooded. Hurriedly the Indian tribes gathered in one spot, a place of safety far above the reach of the on-creeping sea. The spot was the circling shore of Lake Beautiful, up the North Arm. They held a Great Council and decided at once upon a plan of action. A giant canoe should be built, and some means contrived to anchor it in case the waters mounted to the heights. The men undertook the canoe, the women the anchorage. . . .

Then, with the bravest hearts that ever beat, noble hands lifted every child of the tribes into this vast canoe; not one single baby was overlooked. The canoe was stocked with food and fresh water, and, lastly, the ancient men and women of the race selected as guardians to these children the bravest, most stalwart, handsomest young man of the tribes and the mother of the youngest baby in the camp — she was but a girl of sixteen, her child but two weeks old; but she, too, was brave and very beautiful. These two were placed, she at the bow of the canoe to watch, he at the stern to guide, and all the little children crowded between.

And still the sea crept up, and up, and up. At the crest of the bluffs about Lake Beautiful the doomed tribes crowded. Not a single person attempted to enter the canoe. There was no wailing, no crying out for safety. "Let the little children, the young mother, and the bravest and best of our young men live," was all the farewell those in the canoe heard as the waters reached the summit, and — the canoe floated. Last of all to be seen was the top of the tallest tree, then — all was a world of water.

For days and days there was no land — just the rush of swirling, snarling sea; but the canoe rode safely at anchor, the cable those scores of dead, faithful women had made held true as the hearts that beat behind the toil and labour of it all.

But one morning at sunrise, far to the south, a speck floated on the breast of the waters; at midday it was larger; at evening it was yet



Chief Joe Capilano

It was after a long, long time of this — this rain. The mountain-streams were swollen, the rivers choked, the sea began to rise — and yet it rained: for weeks and weeks it rained.

larger. The moon arose, and in its magic light the man at the stern saw it was a patch of land. All night he watched it grow, and at daybreak looked with glad eyes upon the summit of Mount Baker. He cut the cable, grasped his paddle in his strong young hands, and steered for the south. When they landed, the waters were sunken half down the mountainside. The children were lifted out; the beautiful young mother, the stalwart young brave, turned to each other, clasped hands, looked into each other's eyes — and smiled.

And down in the vast country that lies between Mount Baker and the Fraser River they made a new camp, built new lodges — where the little children grew and thrived, and lived and loved; and the earth was repeopled by them.2



A Sarcee Man and Woman

Southern Manitoba

The Saulteaux tribe lived south of the Crees, to the north of Minnesota and North Dakota. They also held a tradition of a universal deluge, which they told to a Lieutenant W.H. Hooper between 1849 and 1851. They told of a medicine-man named Wis who built a big canoe in which he put all classes of animals. A great deluge occurred and covered all land, hills, and trees. Finally, he sent animals diving into the water, each with a rope tied to its leg, in search of a piece of earth with which he could form land. First a diver bird, then an otter, then a beaver, and finally a rat. The rat returned to him, clutching a piece of earth in its paws. The man blew on it, and it magically grew to become a vast expanse of land. He thought it was large enough, so he sent out a wolf to explore, but the wolf returned quickly and said it was too small. Then he blew on the earth again, and it enlarged further. He sent out a crow and, when it did not return, he concluded it was now large enough for all to inhabit. So he and all the animals got out from the boat.3



Three Saulteaux Men, c1882

Earth-Diving Animals. The tradition above contains an example of the "earth diver" motif, where typically a man sends a few animals diving into the floodwaters in search of some mud. The reader may notice similarities between this motif and in Genesis, where Noah sends first a crow, followed by a dove, on a test flight to see whether there is any dry land. Indeed, the similarities run very deep. As we proceed, we will see plenty of evidence that these two themes are intimately connected. There is zero chance that these two elements coincide merely by chance. Further, I present in Appendix C evidence that the "earth diver" motif originated from the memory of Noah's dispatch of the birds, combined with a memory of the Creation event as told in Genesis.

They told of a medicine-man named Wis who built a big canoe in which he put all classes of animals. A great deluge occurred and covered all land. hills, and trees.

^{2.} Emily Pauline Johnson, Legends of Vancouver (Vancouver: David Spencer, 1911), p. 53-58

^{3.} W.H. Hooper, Ten Months Among the Tents of the Tuski (London: John Murray, 1853), p. 285–292.

Alberta

In 1888, the Reverend E.F. Wilson interviewed a Sarci chief — a tall and powerful man named Bull's Head — together with other leading men. Wilson mentioned their belief concerning the Flood:

They also have a tradition of the flood, which accords in its main features with that of the Ojibways, Crees, and other Canadian tribes. They say that when the world was flooded there were only one man and one woman left, and these two saved themselves on a raft, on which they also collected animals and birds of all sorts.⁴

After this, the man sent down several animals in search for a fragment of earth. Finally, a muskrat returned with a little mud. The man used it to remake the earth, and he created upon it rivers, mountains, trees, and everything else we see.



The Historical Tribal Territory of the Sarcee

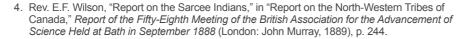
10

WESTERN CREE-

Alberta

The fur trader and surveyor David Thompson (1770–1857) found an oral tradition of the Flood among the Western Crees in Alberta. This was told to him around the year 1800 by a group of older Cree men:

After the Great Spirit made mankind, and all the animals, he told Weesarkejauk to take care of them and teach them how to live, and not to eat of bad roots; that would hurt and kill them; but he did not mind the Great Spirit; became careless and incited them to pleasure, mankind and the animals all did as they pleased, quarreled and shed much blood, with which the Great Spirit was displeased; he threatened Weesarkejauk that if he did not keep the ground clean he would take everything from him and make him miserable but he did not believe the Great Spirit and in a short time became more careless; and the quarrels of men and the animals made the ground red with blood, and so far from taking care of them he incited them to do and live badly; this made the Great Spirit very angry and he told Weesarkejauk that he would take everything from him, and wash the ground clean; but still he did not believe; until the rivers and lakes rose very high and overflowed the ground for it was always raining; and the Keeche Gahme (the Sea) came on the land, and every man and animal were drowned, except one Otter, one Beaver, and one Muskrat. Weesarkejauk tried to stop the sea, but it was too strong for him, and he sat on the water crying for his loss, the Otter, the Beaver and the Muskrat rested their heads on one of his thighs.





Cree Chief

... In this sad state, as he sat floating on the water he told the three animals that they must starve unless he could get a bit of the old ground from under the water of which he would make a fine island for them.

He sends the Otter, the Beaver, and the Muskrat to dive for mud. The latter succeeds, and from this the man remakes dry land earth.⁵

The Western Cree also associated the rainbow with the Flood. Thompson told that in late May 1806, an unusually heavy period of rain occurred for three weeks, causing them much anxiety. He told of their reaction when the rain ceased and the clouds parted, giving way to a rainbow. The parallel with the Genesis account of the rainbow is truly stunning.



A Dane-zaa Trapper Sells Pelts to the Hudson Bay Store, 1900

All was anxiety, they smoked and made speeches to the Great Spirit for the rain to cease, and at length became alarmed at the quantity of water on the ground; at length the rain ceased, I was standing at the door watching the breaking up of the clouds, when of a sudden the Indians gave a loud shout, and called out "Oh, there is the mark of life, we shall yet live." On looking to the eastward there was one of the widest and most splendid rainbows I ever beheld; and joy was now in every face. The name of the rainbow is Peeshim Cappeah (sun lines). I had now been twenty two years among them, and never before heard the name of the Mark of Life given to the rainbow (Peemah tisoo nan oo Chegun) nor have I ever heard it since; upon inquiring of the old men why they kept this name secret from me, they gave the usual reply: you white men always laugh and treat with contempt what we have heard and learned from our fathers, and why should we expose ourselves to be laughed at.⁶

Alberta

The Beaver, or Dane-zaa, lived in the northern parts of what is now British Columbia and Alberta, especially along the Peace River. In a letter dated December 1, 1808, a fur trader named George Keith wrote of a Flood tradition that an old woman of the tribe narrated to him:

In former times, when people were very numerous upon the earth, it happened that the sun ceased to give heat or light. An unremitting fall of snow threatened to annihilate every living creature upon the earth; the tops of the loftiest trees were already almost buried in snow, and it was with great difficulty fire wood could be obtained.

In order to discover the cause of this dreadful phenomenon, a party of Indians agreed to go upon discoveries, and after having marched many days without observing any difference in the climate, discovered a squirrel's nest.

They had not proceeded many days upon their return when they were threatened with a deluge arising from the impression that the heat of the sun made upon the snow.

^{5.} J.B. Tyrrell (editor), *David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1917), p. 85–86.

^{6.} Ibid., p. 88–89.

... They had not proceeded many days upon their return when they were threatened with a deluge arising from the impression that the heat of the sun made upon the snow. The waters increasing more and more, our adventurers redoubled their pace in order to get to the summit of a very high, rocky mountain. Unfortunately only two of them, a man and his wife, reached the top of the mountain, all the rest were drowned in the waters. Upon the summit of this mountain were gathered two of every living creature (male and female) that liveth upon the Earth, many of the drowned people transformed themselves into fowls of the air and had the sagacity to retire to this place.

The waters continuing a long time, reduced those creatures to great extremities for want of food. It was at length proposed by the canard de France, the petit plongeux and the buzzard to dive into the waters in order to try to find ground. . . . After remaining some days inactive, they again dived, and the buzzard alone, after appearing upon the surface seemingly in a lifeless state, had his bill full of earth, which showed that the waters were decreasing.⁷



Kwakiutl Girl

Vancouver Island

The Kwakiutl lived on Vancouver Island and neighboring parts of British Columbia. A chief of the tribe told a surveyor named George Dawson their Flood tradition in 1878:

Very long ago there occurred a great flood, during which the sea rose so as to cover everything with the exception of three mountains. . . . Nearly all the people floated away in various directions on logs and trees. The people living where Kit-katla now is, for instance, drifted to Fort Rupert, while the Fort Ruperts drifted to Kit-katla. Some of the people had small canoes, and by anchoring them managed to come down near home when the water subsided. Of the Hailtzak there remained only three individuals: two men and a woman, with a dog.

One of the men landed at Kâpa, a second at another village site, not far from Bella-Bella, and the woman and dog at Bella-Bella. From the marriage of the woman with the dog, the Bella-Bella Indians originated.⁸

Nootka on the Shore

Vancouver Island

The Nootka lived on Vancouver Island and the Olympic Peninsula of Washington. An elderly, blind Nootka man told Edward Sapir this tradition concerning the Flood:

Two brothers were the chiefs of the village. They had killed a whale and were preparing it for a village feast. This ritual preparation consisted of cutting off the dorsal fin, which

- 7. Louis Rodrigue Masson, "George Keith Letters to Mr. Roderic MacKenzie," *Les Borgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, vol. 2 (Quebec: Imprimerie Générale a Coté et Cie, 1890), p. 80–83.
- 8. George M. Dawson, "Notes and Observations on the Kwakiool People of the Northern Part of Vancouver Island," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for the Year 1887* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1888), p. 82–83.

was believed to contain the animal's soul, and singing to it for four days. Once this requirement was fulfilled, they believed the whale's soul departed its body, allowing for the feast to begin. However, as the ruling brothers were performing this ritual in their canoes, the whale's fin started singing back. The brothers joined in the singing, as did the people of the village. At the same time, a great flood ensued. The flood was not due to the whale, but to Thunderbird. The earth was not seen, for the flood was high and the mountains were under water, except that the big mountains stood dry above water.⁹

Yet they were protected during the storm by the whale, to which they had sung. After many days of drifting, they came to the peaks of some mountains, and the brothers agreed to go to separate mountains. The older brother grew tired and fell asleep, and had a dream. And just as his dream foretold, he awoke to find that serpent which formed the belt of Thunderbird, coiled under him and singing. When he awoke, the snake glided away, but the man struck its tail and cut it off. The man took the tail and used it as an amulet. Thunderbird having been defeated, the flood began to go down slowly. The brothers landed when the earth was dry enough, having consumed most of the provisions which they had taken in their canoes.¹⁰



Nootka Woman Selling Baskets that She Made

14

Pacific Northwest

The Thompson River tribe, dwelling in southern British Columbia and northern Washington, told James Teit the following tradition around 1899.

There was once a great flood which covered the whole country excepting the tops of some of the highest mountains. It was probably caused by the Qoa'qlqal (three magic-working brothers), who had great power over water. All the people were drowned except the Coyote, who turned himself into a piece of wood; and three men, who went into a canoe, and reached the Nzuke'ski Mountains, but who, with their canoe, were afterwards transformed into stone, and may be seen



Members of a Nlaka'pamux (Thompson River Tribe) Community

sitting there at the present day. When the waters subsided, the Coyote, in the shape of a piece of wood, was left high and dry. He then resumed his natural form, and looked around. He found that he was in the Thompson River country. He took trees for wives, and the Indians are said to be his descendants. Before the flood there were no lakes or streams in the mountains, and consequently no fish. When the waters receded, it left lakes in the hollows of the mountains, and streams began to run from them. That is the reason that we now find lakes in the mountains, and fish in them.¹¹

Edward Sapir, "A Flood Legend of the Nootka Indians of Vancouver Island," *Journal of American Folk-lore*, vol. 32 (Lancaster and New York: American Folklore Society, 1919), p. 352–353.
 Ibid., p. 355.

^{11.} James Teit, *Traditions of the Thompson River Indians* (Boston and New York: Houghlin and Mifflin, 1898), p. 20.

Alexander Catcott (1725–1779) on the Certainty of the Flood

With regard to the certainty of the Flood, I may argue in the manner of Aristotle, 'What seems true to some wise men is somewhat probable; what seems so to most or to all wise men is very probable; what most men, both wise and unwise, assent unto, doth still more resemble truth. But what men generally consent in hath the highest probability, and approaches near to demonstrable truth.'

Surely then, what men universally agree in, what, I may say, all nations (otherwise differing in opinion, customs, language, religion, and even ignorant of one another's existence) have, throughout all known ages, assented unto, may well pass for an established axiom and a demonstrable truth. And such I have shown is the state of the case with regard to the knowledge of the deluge.

Again, the report of the Flood must have come from some quarter or other, and when or wherever it was first published, the relation of a fact so extraordinary, would naturally raise the curiosity of the first hearers, and excite them to inquire into the truth of it. Now if they discovered that the report was false or groundless, the history would have been immediately discredited, and the relater and his story no more heard of. But the tradition prevailing universally, it is certain that such an event did happen — and moreover that it was universal in its effects, else it could not have been universally believed.

Which (second) article is further evident from the afore-cited testimonies themselves. For in all those that are tolerably full and explicit, we find a method mentioned by which a few escaped out of the general destruction, from whom the world was afterwards peopled, which is a plain confession that according to their opinion the whole race of mankind (except the few allowed to be saved) was destroyed; and so the deluge universal.

But farther yet, a universal deluge is not an article of mere speculation, or a point, the certainty of which might be provide only by properly examining the asserter thereof, but is an Event, or Fact in Nature, and of such a peculiar kind that, did such ever happen, it could not but have left undeniable marks of its existence on every part of the earth; and so the relater of such an event might have been confuted or his adversaries convinced on the spot.

Especially was this confutation or confirmation easily to be established in the first ages of the world; or rather, this is a point which could not but be then settled. For as men began to multiply after the flood, they would of course separate and divide, and so repeople the earth. And as they thus separated, they could not fail of knowing whether the Flood was universal or not. For, if they could find no human inhabitants in the countries to which they came, nor any marks of their former works, as houses, palaces, temples, gardens, etcetera, and could see nothing but ruin and devastation in the things that did remain, they would certainly conclude that the deluge was universal. On the contrary, if, as they dispersed or endeavoured to disperse, they found the neighbouring countries still full of inhabitants, the lands cultivated, etcetera, they would as certainly conclude that the deluge had not been universal.

And from this infallible and unavailable means of knowing the truth, the relation of the flood would have been handed down to posterity. But posterity all over the world speak of it as universal, or allow that there has been a deluge, which comes to the same thing; for had it been partial, or extended only over a few countries, the remaining part of the world would have been utterly ignorant of such an event, or at least if they spoke of it, they would not have acknowledged, as they generally do, that it happened in their own country, and have supposed that a king, or an eminently righteous person of their own nation (including some others) was preserved from the destruction. All this abundantly proves that the deluge was universal.¹²

British Columbia

Alexander Chamberlain went to the Kootenay people of southeastern British Columbia in 1891. He heard the following story several times, which contains a memory of the Flood. As we proceed southward into Central and South America, we will find many similar versions in which the Flood commences after a woman is ravished by a serpent or a monster:

Sukpeka, the wife of Intlak, is forbidden by her husband to go to a certain lake, to drink of its waters, or to bathe in it. One day her husband goes out after deer and repeats the warning before leaving. Sukpeka busied herself picking berries, and, what with climbing the mountain and being exposed to the hot sun, she feels very warm, and

goes down to the lake. Suddenly the water rises, and a giant called Yawoenek comes forth, who seizes the woman and ravishes her. Intlak is very angry when he learns of this, and, going to the lake, shoots the monster, who swallows up all the water, so there is none for the Indians to drink. Intlak's wife pulls the arrow out of the giant's breast, whereupon the water rushes forth in torrents, and a flood is the result. Intlak and his wife take refuge on a mountain, and by-and-by the water sinks to its proper level. 13

Very long ago there was a great flood by which all men and animals were destroyed, with the exception of a single raven.



Kootenay Girls

British Columbia

The Haida live on the Queen Charlotte Islands 70 miles off the coast of British Columbia. They told their origin story to George Dawson in 1878, which began like this:

Very long ago there was a great flood by which all men and animals were destroyed, with the exception of a single raven. This creature was not, however, exactly an ordinary bird, but — as with all animals in the old Indians stories — possessed the attributes of a human being to a great extent. His coat of feathers, for instance, could be put on or taken off at will, like a garment. It is even related in one version of the story that he was born of a

the land, and the people settled themselves in the various spots

whither they had

been driven.

The waters went

down again; the

canoes rested on

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^{12.} Alexander Catcott, Treatise on the Deluge (London: E. Allen, 1768), p. 123-126.

^{13.} Dr. A.F. Chamberlain, "Report on the Kootenay Indians of South-eastern British Columbia," in *Eighth Report of the Committee on the North-Western Tribes of the Dominion of Canada*, in *Report of the Sixty-Second Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science Held in Edinburgh*, 1892 (London: John Murray, 1893), p. 575.

TSIMSHIAN —

woman who had no husband, and that she made bows and arrows for him.14

The tradition goes on:

When the flood had gone down, Ne-kil-stlas [the raven] looked about, but could find neither companions nor a mate, and became very lonely. Finally he took a cockle [a type of bivalve mollusk] from the beach. In time, a woman came out of it and he married her. All the peoples of the world are descended from this pair.¹⁵



Haida House Exhibit

British Columbia

The Tsimshian tribe, dwelling on the coast opposite the Haida Gwaii Islands, told their Flood story to a local missionary some years prior to 1857:

The Tsimsheans say that all people perished in the water but a few. Amongst that few there were no Tsimsheans; and now they are at a loss to tell how they have reappeared as a race. In preaching at Observatory Inlet he [Mr. Duncan] referred to the Flood, and this led the chief to tell him the following story. He said: "We have a tradition about the swelling of the water a long time ago. As you are going up the river you will see the high mountain to the top of which a few of our forefathers escaped when the waters rose, and thus were saved. But many more were saved in their canoes, and were drifted about and scattered in every direction. The waters went down again; the canoes rested on the land, and the people settled themselves in the various spots whither they had been driven."16

British Columbia

The Bella Coola tradition of the Flood contains also an echo of the Tower of Babel event, where God confused the people's language:

The following is said about the flood: After the sun was formed in the heavens, Masmasalaniz had connected the earth and the sun with a long rope, which kept both at a fixed distance from each other, and prevented the earth from sinking into the ocean. Once, however, he began to stretch and stretch the rope, and as a result the earth sank deeper and deeper, so that the surface of the waters covered all the land up to the peaks of the mountains. A terrible storm at the same time swept over the earth, and many people who had saved themselves into their boats were killed, while others were carried away. Masmasalaniz finally cut back the rope. The earth emerged from the floods and the

^{16.} Richard Charles Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island (London: John Murray, 1862), p. 273-274.



Totem Pole in Bella Coola

^{14.} George M. Dawson, Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1880), p. 149.

^{15.} Ibid., p. 149–150.

people spread anew. But while the Stiksauas (Tinne tribes) had formerly lived on the ocean, they had now moved to the interior of the country. The Bilballa, who had previously lived there, now settled in the old home of the Stiksauas, and likewise the Vilzula and the Niskuali of Naztaz had changed their habitations, for the Vilzula had previously been in the south, the Niskuali in the north used. At the time, many different languages were formed, since all tribes had spoken only one language. 17

19 B

British Columbia

In 1900, several older men of the Shuswap tribe shared their origin story with James Teit. It preserves only a vague memory of the Flood:

The Chinook (warm) wind was kept in a bag by the people of the south. The Fox and Hare stole the bag and liberated the wind, so that all people might be benefited. The people of the south, in revenge, tried to burn the world by a great fire, which spread over nearly all the earth. The latter was flooded — some say by the musk-rat or beaver — to drown the fire, and many people perished by either flood or fire. ¹⁸



Cowichan Girl, 1913

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Vancouver Island

The Cowichan are another tribe from Vancouver Island. They told their Flood history to Martha Harris sometime in the late 1800s, of which she later wrote:

In the days after "Sowittan, or the Grumbler," the people were so numerous that they spread all over the land, till the hunting became scarce. The Cowichan, Saanich, Kuper Island and Nanaimo people increased so rapidly that they began to quarrel over their boundaries. They had also increased their store of knowledge, and were becoming skilled in the art of shaping paddles, weaving baskets, dressing skins, and making dresses from cedar bark, which they wove into stout material for the purpose. . . .

They also had wise men, who had power to foretell the future, and these men were greatly troubled on account of certain dreams, which foretold destruction of the people, if they were true. One man said, "I have dreamed a strange thing," and the others were eager to hear what he had to say. "I dreamed that such rain fell that we all were drowned."

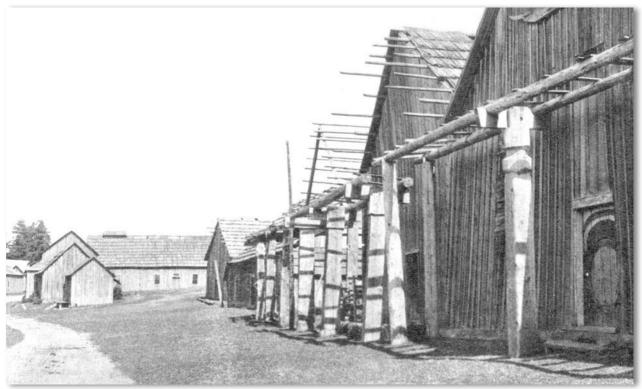
"I," said another, "dreamed that the river rose and flooded the place, and we were all destroyed."

"So did I," chimed in another. "And I too." They could not understand what these dreams could mean; so they called a council to decide what they had better do. At last they decided to build a huge raft of many canoes tied together, the like of which was never seen before. So they set to work, amidst the jeering of the people who would not believe in these dreams. After many months they finished the raft and tied it with long cedar-bark ropes and made a huge rope of cedar bark that could reach the top of Cowichan Mountain, where they passed it through the middle of a huge stone, to serve as the anchor. The stone is still there, as a witness of the truth. They were a long time at work. At length all was ready. The

At last they decided to build a huge raft of many canoes tied together, the like of which was never seen before.

^{17.} Franz Boas, "Mitteilungen über die Vilzula Indianer," Original Mittheilungen aus der Ethnologischen Abtheilung der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1885), p. 179.

^{18.} James Teit, "The Shuswap," *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, editor Franz Boas, vol. 2, part 3 (New York: G.E. Stechert, 1909), p. 598.



Cowichan Village, 1912

raft floated in Cowichan Bay, a wonderment to all about. Not long afterwards the rain commenced. The drops were as large as hailstones, and so heavy that they killed the little babies. The river rose and all the valleys were covered. People took refuge in the mountain, but that was soon under water. When the rain began, the wise people, and the friends who believed, took their families and placed them on the raft and took food and waited. By and by the raft rose with the water, and was the only thing seen for many days. How terrified they all were, and could not divine why this terrible calamity had been sent for.

They prayed to the Great Spirit for help, but none came. As the rain fell, they were kept busy bailing out the rain with their cedar-bark bailers. At length the rain stopped, and they felt the waters going down, and their raft rested on the top of Cowichan Mountain, being held by the anchor and cedar rope. Then they saw land, but what desolation met their eyes! How their hearts were wrung with anguish! It was indescribable, but they took courage and landed, and went to where their old homes had been. They began to rebuild the village and take up their old life again. After this they increased rapidly, and soon filled their lands with people. Then they quarreled among themselves so bitterly that they agreed to separate, and in this way was the world peopled. ¹⁹

At length the rain stopped, and they felt the waters going down, and their raft rested on the top of Cowichan Mountain, being held by the anchor and cedar rope.

"The history and legends of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest is especially interesting from the fact that they have not been so long or so closely in touch with the white races as the other aboriginal inhabitants of North America."

—Martha Harris, author of History and Folklore of the Cowichan Indians)²⁰

Martha Harris, History and Folklore of the Cowichan Indians (Victoria, BC: Colonist Publishing, 1901), p. 10–12.

^{20.} Ibid., p. 4.

British Columbia

An elderly member of the Coastal Salish told the following Flood tradition to James Teit around the year 1916:

At one time there was a flood that covered the earth, and most of the people were drowned. When the waters rose, the people fled to the mountains; but some were overtaken and drowned on the way, and others were drowned on the tops of the lower mountains. All the land was flooded except the tops of a few very high mountains. Xals and his wife and daughters escaped in a large canoe. They were chiefs. After paddling about for many days and nights, they became very tired. They drifted against the top of Qotselis Mountain, and there they made a hole through a stone, and moored their canoe by passing a heavy cedar-bark cable through the hole. Here they stayed and gauged the increase and decrease of the water with stakes as marks. After flowing and receding several times, the water at last receded, and they cast off their canoe. The flood now subsided rapidly, and they found themselves in the Lower Fraser Valley. Some say they had drifted there from the south. Now all the water was gone, excepting some that remained in the form of lakes and ponds, filling up the hollows and depressions.

After this Xals travelled over the world, and taught the survivors of the flood how to act and how to work. He was very wise, and taught the people how to pray, and do every kind of work. He travelled among all the neighboring coast tribes.²¹



Salish Wooden Carvings at the Field Museum in Chicago.

British Columbia

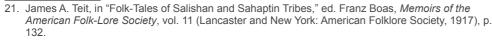
The Carrier (also known as Dakelh) are a tribe of central British Columbia. In 1895, a woman of the tribe narrated a lengthy tradition to Reverend Adrien-Gabriel Morice, which concluded with a story of the great Flood.

A core of truth consistent with the Genesis narrative can be clearly seen, even with the mythical elements which are added in this version:

The child then put his brother-wolf on his raft and set out in company with a muskrat and a young beaver. The water was soon noticed to rise up at a prodigious rate. It rose and rose until it covered the highest mountains. Rising still higher, it almost touched the sky, when the child, striking at it with his dagger, the flood began gradually to subside.

He waited a long time, and then sent down in search of land both the muskrat and the young beaver. Very long after, they both came up to the surface, dead. The young beaver had his paw clutched, but empty, while the muskrat's contained a little mud. This the child took out and kneaded with his hands so as to extend it into an island. After additional handling, it became a large island on which he and his brother-wolf landed.

He then sent his brother-wolf to see how the land was. On taking leave of his brother, the wolf said: "If I come back silent, you shall know thereby that the land is not yet inhabitable. If I howl from a very long distance, it shall be a sign that the land is well." Then he added: "Know you also that you shall die before me."





Adrien Gabriel Morice

The water was soon noticed to rise up at a prodigious rate. It rose and rose until it covered the highest mountains. Rising still higher, it almost touched the sky, when the child, striking at it with his dagger, the flood began gradually to subside.

So he said, and went. Long thereafter he came back in silence, as the land was not yet inhabitable. But the second time that he had set out to explore the island, he was heard howling from a very great distance. Therefore Estas settled definitely. As for the wolf, he is still in existence, while Estas is no more.22

British Columbia

The Tahltan tribe lived along the Telegraph Creek and surrounding foothills in northern British Colombia. Around the year 1900, they told James Teit many of their traditions, including this remarkable account of the Flood and of the confusion of languages (Tower of Babel):

Very long ago, when the world was very young, all the people were together in one country. They talked one language, and were of one race. Many of them were highly gifted with knowledge and magic, while others knew very little. In some respects the people were very wise; and in other respects they were very helpless, simple, and ignorant. In appearance they were similar to the people of today, and most of them were well-meaning and good. Besides these people, there were many others in the same country who were not altogether human, but more like animals with human



Tahltan Men on Boat to Go Hunting

characteristics. They were nearly all highly gifted with certain kinds of knowledge, and possessed of magical powers of many kinds, often of a high order. Besides these humans and semi-human beings, there were many kinds of animals, some of them of immense size, and different from any on the earth at the present day. Most of the semi-human beings were very wicked, and some of them were cannibals. There were also giants in those days.

A wise man of the people said, "Something is going to happen, maybe a great flood will come;" but the people would not believe him. Now the animals became very tame and came into people's houses. They seemed to have a foreboding of something. Then the people said to one another, "Something is going to happen. See how tame the animals are!" Many people laughed. They said, "Let the flood come! We shall save ourselves on rafts." Others said, "We shall climb the trees. We shall climb the mountains." Yet others said, "We shall subdue the flood with our magic. We shall escape by our magical powers." At last a heavy rain set in, and it rained for many days and nights. The creeks and rivers overflowed their banks, and the ocean rose and flooded the land. At the same time the earth tipped, and the water ran to that place where the people dwelt. Now there was a great flood, and the waters rose so rapidly that people were surrounded in many places and could not escape. Some climbed trees and rocks and hills and mountains; but the water overtook them, and they were drowned. For ten days it rose continually and rapidly. The rain and flood were accompanied by storms, high winds, and darkness. The sun, moon, and Dipper stars were lost. The whole earth was covered by water excepting the highest peaks. Only two peaks in the Tahltan country were not covered by the deluge, Takitstsitla on the west side

^{22.} Reverend Adrien-Gabriel Morice, "Three Carrier Myths," Transactions of the Canadian Institute, vol. 5 (Toronto: Canadian Institute, 1895), p. 10.

of Chesley River, and Tsetoxtle on the south side of the Stikine River. Some people tried to save themselves on rafts, large and small. In the darkness the wind and sea drove them hither and thither. They all became separated and lost. They did not know where they were. Some saw mountain-peaks exposed above the water, and tried to reach them. Some succeeded, and others did not. Some rafts were driven off a very long way; others went to pieces, and the people on them died or were washed off. Rats and mice got aboard some of the large rafts, and gnawed the wires binding the logs together; so that they came apart, and the people were drowned.



Tahltan Tribe Members

Some people reached the two mountains in the Tahltan country, and went ashore. Some others went ashore on the high peaks which were not submerged in other countries. However, only a few were saved, and they were at widely-separated points. They became the ancestors of all the people in the world at the present day. Very few of the wicked semi-animal people survived, and only a few giants. Some animals escaped by taking refuge on the high unsubmerged peaks in various countries, but most of them were drowned. Some kinds of animals became extinct. The surviving animals spread afterwards from the high peaks into neighboring parts of the country, and

After ten days the flood subsided; the rain, storms, and darkness lessened; and in another ten days the waters had receded completely. The people who survived the Flood increased in number at the several points where they had located, and gradually spread over the country. In time some of them migrated here and there into other districts in search of better living-conditions; others did likewise when they became too many in one place.

After a long time, some people came into contact with others at certain points, and thus they learned that there were people in the world besides themselves. When they met, they found that they spoke different languages and had difficulty in understanding one another. This came about by their

being separated and living isolated for a long period of time. That all the people were one originally, is evidenced by their many customs, beliefs, and traditions which are common to all (the narrator instanced several beliefs regarding bear and salmon held in common by all the neighboring tribes). These customs survived the Flood. ... Some people say that the Flood came to destroy all the bad people that were on the earth long ago.²³

multiplied. They are the animals now known to us.



Tahltan Girls

^{23.} James Teit, "Tahltan Tales," Journal of American Folk-lore, vol. 32, no. 124 (1919), p. 232-234.