

Native Stories of Earthquake and Tsunamis Redwood National Park, California

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When considering the Cascadia Subduction Zone, one very telling piece of information comes to mind as the most indictive lack of faith in the Northern California Native Tradition. It was a small item in the Humboldt Times, dated April 14, 1855, a newspaper less than a decade old:

"THE INDIANS. -- The Indians of this Bay are now holding a general meeting at their Rancheria on Pattewott River (Mad River). They are offering sacrifices to the "good spirit to hold the earth still; " the shocks of earthquakes lately felt have frightened them so that they would have left for the hills if the "wagas" (whites) had not persuaded them there was no danger. The council lasted five days, which time has been spent, in the day by the old men in handing down tradition, and in the night by the younger ones in dancing, which they keep up all night. The Bay Indians have a tradition that this bay was produced by an earthquake which swallowed up the land, destroyed a large and powerful Indian tribe- only a few escaping-which statement is almost corroborated by the evidences presented to us, vis: trees buried to the depth of upwards of two hundred feet, and more palpable proofs in the immense fissures found in the hills to the southeast of this place, which appear to have been made within in a century."

Many similar stories exist within the boundaries of Redwood National Park and in this report I hope to retell them with deference to the talented storytellers of the past. These pages are especially for Tskerkr, whom Kroeber described as "of little use as ethnological informant because taking his culture for granted, he would explain its origins by appropriate myths instead of describing its facts." This is also for Ann, a strong woman who ultimately contributed to the oral tradition in an everlasting way in the story "How Prairie Became Ocean" Her descriptions of subsidence were the first key to my understanding how these stories relate to a "great " earthquake. Finally , to the Yurok men who offered the rancher at Oket'o (Big Lagoon) ten dollars to let the sacred sweathouse stand. They knew it was something great.

This report will begin in the southern geographic area of Redwood National Park and the stories will continue northward to southern Oregon.

Eunice White

Eunice White was interviewed in 1968 and 1972 by Ned Simmons of Trinidad, California. Both of these interviews are in the possession of RNP. Mrs. White was the daughter of Annie Frey, a woman previously the subject of a report prepared by Kathleen Stanton and Susie Van Kirk, 1995 for RNP. Eunice remembered many things pertaining to her mother's rich Indian heritage as part of a traditional Coastal Yurok family. Present at the 1972 interview were Eunice White, Ned Simmons, Ron Mastrogiuseppe, and Gertrude Schlagle, Eunice's live-in housekeeper. The interview was conducted at Eunice's house on the northside of Redwood Creek. Gertrude Schlagle begins with a question for Ned:

G: In your prowling around in Humboldt history have you heard of the time that the water came in, it must have been an earthquake.

N: A tidal wave, or?

E: Yes, a tidal wave.

N: Into where?

G: Into here.

N: No I haven't.

G: Tell him of that.

E: Well, that's ancient history. There's a low gap over here on our place, where the hill from the north and the hill from the south come.

N: You mean the one I can see through the window?

E: I don't know where you're looking. Anyway, they claim that the ocean poured through that gap and the people who lived down here in the village climbed to the top of the hill over there, and there used to be a spruce grove out there about where the Redwood Creek comes through now. I know it was for a fact because I've seen the old ancient roots down there at low tide. And they said those old spruce trees just waved in the water like weeds. But no one knows how long ago that was.

N: Was it dangerous for people living there too?

E: Yes. Of course there was always a wise man, a medicine man that could still the waters and fix things up.

This story is told in the Frey family in many forms. Descendents, Thelma Hufford of Orick, California and Esterfay Pfermmer of San Marcos, California remember a similar story told them by members of this family. The story is as follows: a wave came over the

saddle west of Annie Frey's house and the water was as high in the valley to have come approximately to the stoop on Ida Francis' house. Of course the house wasn't there at the time this occurred, as it supposedly happened a long while ago. This story was also told by Eunice, and the source was her mother Annie Frey. This house still exists on the Hufford property. Another telling of this story was to Eloise Nelson by Orick Bob, from the publication Orick: Then and Now.

"In a long ago time before the memory of any of even the oldest Indian settlers of Orick, a tribe once settled on the south side of the hill above Freshwater Lagoon. Nothing is known of that Settlement except that the oldest living Indians heard that the men buried in the graves were "big, tall men." This village was named Sec-gonoy." It is said that as the last settler left the village his pet deer was turned loose and told that if the Indian people ever settled on this hill again the deer must bring other deer across the hills so the people would always have meat. The pet deer was the leader, would never be shot, but the deer following would supply meat. Time has erased all signs of that long ago attempt to establish a home on that quiet hill overlooking the peaceful lagoon whose outer edge was the bar for the crashing surf. Years later on the north side of the same hill, other tribes made a settlement, this time overlooking the beautiful beach where Redwood Creek meets the sea. This settlement also died out and the remaining settlers moved to the flat beach between the hills and the mouth of the creek. About this same time another chose the opposite side of the creek mouth where a hill jets from the sea to shelter from wind and waves. This village on the north side of the creek was called Aw-tmek-quar or "where the water came rushing in," for it was here according to an old Indian legend that after 40 days and nights of the great flood that the water of the ocean came to the top of the hill and came rushing in over the land. All of the men of this village were old men and as they died their wives returned to their own tribes on the Klamath. So the village soon became extinct.

Shortly after, a great flood or tidal wave wiped out the settlement on the south side of the creek and the people who had settled on the beach were forced to high land again, and so once again a settlement was made on the side of the hill. Of this settlement one settler remains: "Oreck Bob."

The Orick area seems to have an inordinate number of recorded tsunami stories. There are several reasons for this. I initially began looking for stories which had two elements in the same story: earthquake and tsunami. I reasoned the two would be indicative of a "great earthquake". Other earthquake stories were found, but when they only mentioned earthquake I labeled them background stories. There were many inland stories which were eliminated because they lacked the coastal tsunami component. So, inevitably most considered stories were from coastal sources.

The Orick families sought by Kroeber and Waterman were initially from the coastal villages Espeu and Ossegen. The white intrusion in the Gold Bluff area during the Gold Rush of 1850 caused many Indian families to move to Orick somewhere between 1850 and 1890. Kroeber especially spent a great deal of time in Orick as he bought a piece of land on Lookout Point above the old village of Orekw. Laura, Tskerkr's daughter was married to Orick Bob, Kroeber's closest neighbor. Both figure prominently in his correspondence during this period as dear friends. Beebe White, Eunice's son is said to have a letter written to Orick Bob from Kroeber in his possession. Weitchepc Frank, Kroeber's main informant and interpreter, told stories he had heard from Mrs. Frey, but Kroeber maintains in his field notebooks he never used her as an informant personally. Fanny Flounder, her sister, was involved with the work Kroeber did with Robert Spott in the 1940's. Tskerkr and Ann of Espeu, are related to the Frey family through marriage post-1900. Both families told similar earthquake stories in the early 1900's to ethnographers. Eunice Frey told the tidal wave story well into the 1970's. Her housekeeper, Gertrude Schlagle was still alive as of December 1997, living in Eureka, and indicated she had heard the story several times while living with Eunice. She said Eunice said there was an element of premonition regarding earthquakes, as the dances would ward off an earthquake if done properly and at their respective time in the dance cycle. (personal communication, December 1997)

How The Prairie Became Ocean

The story How The Prairie Became Ocean was told by a Yurok woman named Ann to T. T. Waterman, an anthropologist from U.C. Berkeley in 1909. A L. Kroeber included Ann's story in his book Yurok Myths. He called her Ann of Espeu, to indicate her natal village. My research suggests Ann is the mother of Fanny Brown and Clara White. Margaret Lara, Ann's granddaughter, said Kroeber was wrong in his assumption she came from Espeu. She said Ann came from Ossegon (personal communication, 1992). Ann's brother Tskerkr is a contributor to Yurok Myths and his stories contain many of the same geographical and seismic elements. "Earthquake" is somewhat benevolent in this account, traveling up and down the coast "sinking the ground" until the prairies (marshland?) are submerged. This account of subsidence is especially remarkable because the locations identified by Ann are also sites where paleoseismic studies have found stratigraphic evidence of coseismic subsidence. These locations include Humboldt Bay, Big Lagoon, the mouth of Redwood Creek, and the coast north of the Rogue River in Oregon.

Excerpts from Ann's story:

"Then he (earthquake) started and arrived there, at Pulekuk, he and his companion.. And they arrived and he thought, "I will try.. Look at this. Here it is easy"--- speaking to his companion-" it will be easy for me to do that, to sink this prairie. So I shall do that first, said Earthquake. And he said, "Very well." So he ran about a little and the ground sank, there at Pulekuk.

"And then from there they went south. They said, "We shall have to go there: we two shall go together." They went south first and sank the ground. They were still together, those that (later) went back into the mountains. So they (two) went south with one another. And then he did that: he repeatedly caused the ground to sink in the south. He kept sinking it: every little while there would be an earthquake, then another earthquake, and then another earthquake: that is what he was doing. And then the water would fill those (depressed) places, the water coming from the mountains, at Osig."

"So they came to Perwerhkuk. He had partly done that, had partly sunk the ground, Earthquake had; and the other had the water in the abalone shells. So they had come to Perwerhkuk, they had gone around".

"Then they went north together and did the same: they kept sinking the ground. The earth would quake and quake and quake again. And the water was flowing all over".

"We have sunk the ground far off at Pulekuk."

Additional quotes from the story about various locations along the coast:

Sumig	"...for he (Earthquake) is there (at Sumig) who will aid us by breaking down the trees." "... returned to Sumig, and saw that the trees were down..." "...the ground sinks."
Osig	"... sink this prairie."
Pulekuk	"... making the ground sink, there at Pulekuk."
Opis	"(at Opis)... making the ground sink..." "...and he (Earthquake) sank the ground there,
Perwerhkuk	"... partly sunk the ground (at Perwerhkuk)..." "...sunk the ground far off at "... sink the crags just a little..." "...the Knolls grow, or they grow in(to) crags..."
Espeu	" Yaha! The brush sticks out (of the water), says Earthquake"

Earthquake and Thunder

The story "Earthquake and Thunder" was told to A. L. Kroeber between the years 1901-1907 by an elderly Indian named Tskerkr living below the the abandoned town of Orekw. He is described as "a typical Coast Yurok in origin as well as life. Born before the coming of the white man, he had remained a complete Indian at least in spirit, and still frequented his sweathouse." Kroeber considered Tskerkr a fine narrator.

Main Elements of Story

Tskerkr's story includes a great store of geographical information. "Earthquake" and "Thunder" travel together from the Yurok village Espeu, located slightly south of the Klamath River, to Erkier, described by Tserkr as "the last town of Human Beings" at the mouth of the Rogue River. The Yurok view of the world is eclipsed at this point and locations further north become increasingly vague. Geologic phenomena on their journey includes: tsunami, repeated periods of shaking, landsliding, warping and tilting of land, and a strong emphasis on the occurrence of the earthquakes at night. Pulekuk, the north end of the Yurok's world, is the first

destination as they leave Espeu, Tskerkr: "All the trees shook, some fell. Earthquake lived at Espeu, at the south end of town: that was his house. Then he started to go to Ossegen along the beach. He began to run and all the trees fell because he tore up the ground. Thunder was almost frightened. Earthquake was about to start from Ossegen. Then Thunder came. Earthquake said, "I shall go around this world".

Continuing on to the village of Requoi, "Earthquake" shakes the ground, and "Thunder" creates flashes in the sky in a great destructive competition. Tskerkr says, "It was like day because of the flashes." They reach the Klamath River, and there is concern with ferriage. Tskerkr tells how Earthquake solved this problem: "Sometimes when he shook, the earth nearly met, but the river washed it out again." Finally they cross and continue on to Omen, "... to where it looks level, as if there had been a stream, that is because Earthquake traveled there."

Tskerkr specifically comments at this point in the journey :

"Before he started he shook the ground. Wherever they stayed he did that before he started. Sometimes he shook it hard. Then he came to Kohpei. Then he looked back and saw the earth all torn behind and the trees sunk in the ground, sometimes one could see their tops, nothing more". They traveled further north to Nororpek shaking, causing landslides, warping and tilting of the land before finally arriving in Erkier at night.

The entire text of Tskerkr's story is quite long. Extracted below are selected quotes from the story that pertain to the locations he provided:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Quote</u>
Pulekuk	"trees shook, some fell" "shook the ground"
Ossegen	"all the trees fell because he [EQ] tore up the ground"
Requoi	"...he began to shake the earth..." "Now when it was night he shook night again" "It was like day because of the flashes." (from Thunder) "Sometimes when he shook, the earth nearly met, but the river washed it out again." [at the mouth of the river]
Omen	"...to where it looks level, as if there had been a stream because Earthquake traveled there."

Kohpie ref. Omen above.
"...looked back and saw earth all torn behind, and the trees sunk into the ground..." [view of coastal bluffs south of Crescent City]
"Well, I heard that you are the one who levels the earth, they [two men at Kohpie] said. "Yes," he [Earthquake] told them."

Henei "At night they started from Kohpei and came to Henei.
Wherever they started, Earthquake ran."
"...see the earth tilt, for you tilting [Earthquake] level it,..."

Nororpek "... they travel at night."
"...began to shake..."
"...great rock fall." [Topple of large coastal rock?]
"...see the earth tilt, ..."

Erkier "..at night."
"Then he [Earthquake] tried to shake the earth again. He felt it was as if the earth did not move. He shook harder. Then he felt it move a little ." [Suggests Gorda segment rupture]

not located "Level the earth for if you see it tilt slope, it will kill all people."

A Flood

The story A Flood begins as two men went into their sweathouse at Orekw to sleep and shortly after were awakened violently with their hair tied together. There is shouting and a fight ensues. A footnote inserted by A.L. Kroeber says: "When the old men started up from the outcry and bumped each other's heads, they probably considered themselves already attacked, and struggled fiercely in supposed self- preservation. As they could not pursue him that had victimized them, they caused the ocean to rise in flood and overwhelm the world". It is interesting to note that a Yurok custom of tying hair together is used in cases of drowning and in preparation for a dance. This may indicate the house was a place to prepare for ceremony. The presumed attack may have been the violence of the earthquake.

I am assuming the water covering the settlement of Siwitsu is a tsunami. Tskerkr says, "All the people of Orekw ran off to the top of the hill, wearing their woodpecker-crest headbands, they

were afraid". The immediate response in this situation was to try to perform a ceremony as they were heading up the hill. Kroeber writes: "A great ceremony - a jumping or deerskin dance-may be held outside its normal time and place in order to stave off an impending catastrophe: pestilence, flood, or earthquake. Even as they flee, the Orekw people have danced with the jumping dance accouterments" (Woodpecker-crest headbands).

The story continues with the realization that the water is surrounding the town of Orekw and the possibility of "making the world right " at this spot has slipped away; the sacred sweathouse is inundated and the people flee to the top of the hill with the dance regalia. Some of the survivors ran south to Oketo, (Big Lagoon, a distance of ~ 10 km) where another more powerful dance site existed. When they arrive at Oket'o they are asked if the people at Orekw are drowned. "Yes, I saw them drown, said he of Orekw, " but I am afraid the water will cover the whole land." And now the breakers were already dashing against one side of that sweathouse (at Oket'o). Then one began to speak his formula in that sweathouse. He had to do it hastily; therefore he used old boards to make the fire. Then the ocean went down." (The use of old boards was most unritualistic and clearly indicative of the brevity of the situation.). This story speaks of a devastating tsunami which impacted the coastal areas around Orick and Big Lagoon.

Kroeber wondered whether Siwitsu could exist as a village on such a low-lying area in the Yurok Myths version, yet admits Waterman has recorded its existence in his notes.

Tskerkr's wife Shiwash is noted to have come from Siwitsu. Yet, if this occurred " a long time ago " it seems unlikely this village still was in existence except as an intermittent fishing camp. The Marks family maintains a fishing camp at this site when the fish run and are descendants of Tskerkr and his sister Ann of Espeu. With Butch Marks and Blanche Blankenship's permission in the spring of 1995, a core was taken from the bog below the old Orekw village site. The sample confirmed the presence of a tsunami deposit carbon dated about 300 years ago.

Mau

The mention of a medicine man as the person responsible for the stilling of the waters is a frequent theme. Old Mau of Trinidad in the monograph World Renewal, discusses the role of the medicine man in the calming of the waters at Big Lagoon. Mau is listed as living in Trinidad between the years 1902-1907. Kroeber interviewed him in 1902: "From Old Mau at Trinidad. -- Long ago, an old man lived at Pi'npa and another near at Oket'o on Big Lagoon. Then once as people looked out over the ocean, they saw it stood high, like the hills, and all were afraid. They

thought the ocean would cover them. All of them ran to Oket'o, to the sweathouse there. From all over they came there, because they were afraid. Others ran up on the hills. But the two old men spoke to them. One of them said, "Awok, it is bad, I think everyone will be drowned." Then the other who had been lying down, sat up and said, " You all ought to be afraid, because always you have thought that sweathouse was nothing. But I have always thought it was something great. Well, let us carry sweathouse wood down to that other [sacred] sweathouse." All of them were crying, men and women, because the ocean was so high; but now they helped him carry sweathouse wood. The water was running all around the sweathouse. Then he began to make fire in it. It became night, but no one slept. All night the old men talked [recited]. When it was daylight, they saw that the ocean had gone down and was smooth. So all those who had run up onto the hills came back down. Axel Lindgren, Mau's great- grandson spoke of his grandmother Liza, Mau's daughter, as having the ability to still the ocean waters. She was the last Medicine Woman of Tsurai. (oral communication 1998)

The Inland Whale

Del Norte County stories include Requoí and Crescent City and are from a group of coastal Yurok and Tolowa families. These families include the Flounder/Meldon family, the Spott family, and the Mattz family. The Flounder/ Meldon earthquake stories survived through the 1970's in Fanny's niece Eunice White, the Spott family through Minnie McCumber (oral communication, 1995). Geneva Mattz was descended from the Brook's family which early on resided in Requoí, but later moved to Crescent City.

Fanny Meldon, nee Fanny Tipseh, lived in Requa during the 40's. She told the story of the "Inland Whale" to Theodora Kroeber. Theodora later published it in a short book called The Inland Whale. The story "The Inland Whale" was first told to A.L. Kroeber by Robert Spott and was included in the Spott and Kroeber monograph Yurok Narratives. The story in Yurok Narratives as told by Robert Spott is an allegorical tale of illegitimacy. He introduced the story to the Kroeber's, beginning with the words; " After the waters which covered the world went down a whale was stranded in Plu'l" (Fish Lake on the mountain above Weitchpec and Bluff Creek). There is no mention of an earthquake, and the flood is described as "when the waters covered the world." Later, the same story was told by Fanny Flounder to Theodora Kroeber, A. L. Kroeber's wife in a different vein during a visit to the mouth of the Klamath in the early 1940's. Theodora writes : "Spott's "aunt" Fanny Flounder, the last of a Yurok line of famous doctors, lived nearby in a house similar to Robert's. She and I were sitting on her terrace in the sun one day and looking down at the river which had only just broken itself a new opening through the bar. Fanny watched

intently as the surf from an incoming tide seemed to push back the river and to overspread the wide river mouth. " You see there what is wrong with the world, Fanny said to me, pointing to the breakthrough. "The earth tips too far and the ocean comes up the river. That is not good. Even whales could come into the river when it is this way. It happens because there are not enough Yurok anymore; not enough people dancing and stamping their feet down hard on the earth. That is what used to keep it from tipping, and what kept the whales outside where they belong." The tipping of the earth is an apt description of a large earthquake and the resultant tsunami.

Robert Spott did speak of a tidal wave as shown in the account from the Del Norte County Historical Society Newsletter dated July 27, 1965 Ruth Roberts, then President of the Del Norte County Historical Society wrote:

"My son Harry Roberts of Guerneville, California, recently added another tidal wave observation by Indian historians to our tidal wave stories. He reports that in about 1932 or 1933, when he was living next to Robert Spott on the hill above Rekwoy, that a group of cronies gathered in his home one Saturday night to talk about the old Indian days. The group included the late Sregon George, George Flounder, Jefferson Henry, and himself. According to their calculations there was a big tidal wave 500 to 1000 years ago that was larger than ever reported in their history. It was a calm day and the ocean smoothly and quickly receded from the ocean shore in a smooth mass, leaving the bottom exposed beyond Mile Rock. Fish were seen flopping about on the ocean bottom. The Indians moved up the hill to a point about where the Yurok family house stands, and waited. When the ocean receded it exposed a big sandbar, outside the mouth of the Klamath River, running parallel to the shore line. After a time the ocean moved back in a mass. It totally covered Black Rock, struck the long sand bar at the mouth of the Klamath with such force that it leveled the whole mass of logs and sand off and dumped it into the river. Then the wave moved up the river as far as they could see, which was as far as the Douglas Memorial Bridge".

Robert Spott's niece Minnie McCumber told a similar story about the ocean receding and exposing parts of the seabed outside the mouth of the Klamath. (oral communication 1995) She, unlike Spott's account, told of a signal before the wave which told people to move up the hill. She did not know what the signal was, but a large earthquake would certainly encourage such flight, and might imply such an event had occurred before.

Another account appears in the July 27, 1965 issue of the Del Norte County Historical Society Newsletter about Elk River Slough located south of Crescent City:

"It will be remembered that as far back as anyone can remember, there were huge redwood logs and stumps with roots, deposited in Elk Valley slough. These must have been carried by this same tidal wave. Mrs. Geneva Mattz reported to me that Freddie Charles of Crescent City, a Tolowa Indian, had told her of a tidal wave that struck Crescent City about 500 years ago and went accross Elk Valley as far as Howland Hill, destroying an Indian village at the base of the hill and everyone in it, except two women, who had been in the hills gathering hazel sticks, when the wave struck."

The Flood

A story was told to anthropologist/ linquist Pliny Goddard in the early 1900's. It is a particularly graphic story telling of a catastropic local earthquake and tsunami. Goddard neglected to provide the identity of his informants. Fortunately this story is still alive among Tolowa people. Recently Loren Bommelyn, a Tolowa man, fluent in Tolowa, retold this story, adding that he remembered his grandmother telling this story to white-missionary types as "her People's flood story"(personal communication 1994) The story has elements of shaking, liquifaction, tsunami, and subsidence. The story is called "A Flood" and is translated into English in the draft form of the unpublished paper, Tolowa Texts :

"It was in the fall of the year when there was an earthquake. It happened a second time. "Well something not good is happening, you had better watch," he said. The earth shook again. "Two of you run down to the beach" he told the young men, " and go across in a boat. If you sink into the sand the sea will rise up. If you find it that way return quickly. Then we will find out what it will do". The sea was perfectly calm, and there was no wind. They two started back and paddled across the water. This is the time it will happen, because it is that way. "We nearly sank into the beach," they reported. Then they put all the canoes in safe places. The earth shook again. "If the earth shakes east and west the sea shall rise up" he said. The earth did truly shake from the west and everything on the earth fell down. The water rose in the streams and came up over the banks. There was among them a girl who was in the adolescent period. Her brother went with her running up the mountains. They kept looking back as they ran and saw the water coming from the west. They saw that where they used to live everything was turning into snakes. Those who were changed that way ran into the water. They ran up the hill and the water nearly overtook them. Everyone that lived upon the earth was also coming up the mountain from the east side because all the streams were overflowing. All the people and animals were now floating up the mountainside, but whenever the water overtook them they began turning

into snakes. "Let us run up along the ridge" the boy said to his sister. Then they neared the top, they saw the water covering the whole world and (illegible) the water was about to reach the top of the mountain, the boy said to his sister, "Take that which is in the septum of your nose" (yellow hammer feather) and stick it in the ground and really the water stopped then. Then the young man made a fire. They were all standing there, those that had come from the east and the west, but they were not saved. It looked as if there were fog everywhere filling the valleys. The land could not be seen anywhere. They stayed awake all night, keeping the fire burning. When it was daylight, he looked about everywhere and only the tops of the hills were projecting above the water. They spent ten nights on the top of the mountain. The dangerous animals were also there. They were all afraid to go down again. After ten days the young man went down to look about and when he returned, he told his sister that all kinds of creatures both large and small were lying on the ground where they had been left by the sea. "Let us go down," his sister said. "All right" the brother agreed. They two went down but when they came into the valley, the girl was afraid. Her brother reassured her, saying, "Nothing will hurt you. These are all dead ones lying about. Don't be afraid of them. We had better go home". But when they came there, there was nothing, even the house was gone. There was nothing but sand. They could not even distinguish the places where they used to live. They wandered around everywhere but soon all the dead ones began to stink. "Where are we going to stay/" one of them asked. They decided that one place was as good as another. Then the boy said to his sister: "You stay here awhile. I am going down to see what I can find. Perhaps there are Indians there. Before he went, he gathered up food for her and stored it in a good place. They found the tail of a whale which had not spoiled. This they cut up and dried. "This food will be better than anything else for you" he said to his sister. Then the young man started away toward the south looking for people. He went on, seeing only the dead ones on the ground, but found no men anywhere. When he came to the corner of the world at the south, he turned toward the east and went on day and night. Here there was nothing lying about except that here and there were little lakes. Where there had been dry places there were now lakes. He went along by the east side of the world to the north, but found no people. He did not even see the tracks of deer. When he came to the corner, he turned toward the north. There he found Coyote tracks. Then he said to himself: "I think that a second mountain stuck up over the water and people may have been saved in another place. He thought this because he had seen the tracks of Coyote. "It will be good if I find people," he said to himself, and kept on going. He didn't see anything 'till he came to the shore of the ocean, which was all covered with sand. As he came down from the north along the shore there was nothing sticking up, not even a fir tree. Finally he did find a crab-apple tree. That was the only one

which had not been turned into a snake as the water washed over it. He went onward to the south but saw nothing again. When he was nearly home, he saw that the ocean looked like blood. Finally he came back to where his sister was sitting. "I can't find a man anywhere. They must have drowned every place. That is why I can't find anyone. All the water that flows down is not good. I went on for ten days and ten nights. I walked nights as well as day. When it was night the tenth time, I said I would like to find a young man to marry you. I also wanted to find a woman for myself. That is why I went entirely around the world. We may as well marry each other. Because there were no people living anywhere they married. They dug a round pit for the house in which they were to live. In time they had a son. "We ought to make a better house," the man said. It was at that time of year that he said: "Let us go down to the beach." They saw something floating out to sea. They stayed there all day watching it. They could still see it floating out to sea. It was nearly sundown before they started home, "Let us look again," the man said. The next morning as it was growing light they went outside. Really red-wood log was lying there. They went back shore ward again where the whale ribs and their bones were lying. "Let us split up the log," the man said. With these bones he split the log into boards; using the stone to pound the wedges with, he made many boards. He carried them in toward the shore and built a house with them. When a year had elapsed, they had a second child; it was a girl. These two children when they were grown, married. In this way it kept going on 'till there were many people. They scattered everywhere and in every place there was a man living with his wife.

Sikkili

Sikkili is story told by Robert Spott in the monograph Yurok Narratives. It is included here as there are several elements similar to the next story in this report. Both are highly symbolic, both involve dogs, and a sense of disaster pervades both accounts. A short synopsis of the story: Two men set off for a trip to the hills above the old village of Wahsek (a village located on the Klamath River) to gather yew wood. They separated to hunt along different ridges. One eventually stopped hunting to make camp while his partner continued to hunt. He made a fire and awaited the return of his partner. It became dark and then his dogs began to look about and act strangely, crowding together. There was a great noise, an explosive sound and one of the dogs was sucked up into the air by a great whirlwind. Soon all the dogs were sucked away. Spott tells:

"The young man never heard them fall. Then he heard a whispering in his ear telling him how to pray, so he spoke those words; and after the crash the whirlwind came as a mild wind,

although the earth shook. Then at last his partner arrived and everything was quiet. Then his partner said, "I will send you back to Wahsek, but I shall stay out in the woods. And when human beings are here on earth, if they do not know the prayer I just told you I will take them away as I took the dogs." Sikkili was his name. Now he is Lkeli-ni-tekw (a giant owl that lives underground). It was he flapping his wings that made the crashes and the whirlwind, when he killed all the dogs."

The "underground owl" is an apt name for an earthquake, as owls and dogs appear as bad omens in the Yurok view of the world. Kroeber comments: "An atmosphere of terror, of panic of the lonely woods, pervades this tale. Its evident purpose is to impart the formula or prayer which gives reassurance against the sense of impending catastrophe."

Tidal Wave

Anthropologist Cora Dubois published Tolowa Notes in 1932. Included in this work was a story called "Tidal Wave". Ms. Dubois does not include the name of her narrator. I include it in this compilation as it was normal for anthropologists at this time to not identify the name or location of their informants. Since Tolowa is the northernmost linguistic group within RNP I think it necessary to acknowledge Tolowa Notes in this report.

"Tidal Wave" is a highly symbolic story. The story describes a tsunami which overwhelmed the beach near the mouth of the Chetco River. The intriguing part of the story is the way the narrator builds up to the disastrous tsunami. The wave does not arrive without a "signal" of some type, and this is shown by the inappropriate behavior of the widow as she "cuts up" or laughs. The dogs begin jumping about happily and then one dog almost cheerfully volunteers, as Dubois notes: "Yes, you folks are going to see tonight what will happen to you tonight." Two children were sent to the top of Mt. Emilie (east of Brookings) by their grandmother 'to go as fast as they could and not to wait for anybody.' As they climb they look back, hearing the cries of the people. They watched the water come. When they reach the top all the animals were there with them. The next day they went down and everything was gone. I think the signal which caused the widow to act the way she did, and the odd dog behavior were reactions to an earthquake. The grandmother knew it was immediately imminent and was unable to make the trip with the children.

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Earthquake Stories - Redwood National Park

Earthquake Stories Story Informant/Recorder Yurok	Location		Geological/Tectonic Element								
			SGM	SFR	CS	CU	L	T	CL	N	AS
Earthquake and Thunder Tskerkr /Kroeber	Espeu to central Oregon Pulekuk	XX	?	-	-	?	?	X	XX	X	X
A Flood Tskerkr/Kroeber	Redwood Cr. Siwitsu Oketo	X	-	-	-	-	XX	?	X	-	X
How Prairie Becomes Ocean Ann /Kroeber	Orekw, Big Lagoon, Humboldt Bay region	X	-	XX	?	?	X	X	-	X	X
Legend of Orick anon./Nelson	Redwood Cr. Otmekwor	-	-	-	-	-	XX	-	-	-	X
Old Man at Trinidad Old Mau/Kroeber	Big Lagoon Oketo	-	-	?	-	-	XX	-	-	-	X
Sikkili Robert Spott/	Inland - Wahsek	XX	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	X
Spott and Kroeber Inland Whale Robert Spott/ Kroeber	Pecwan Klamath R.	X	-	?	-	-	XX	-	-	-	X
Interview, E. White 1972,	Orick	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tolowa											
The Flood anon./Goddard	Lake Earl, N. Cal. Coast	X	-	?	-	XX	XX	?	X	-	X
Robert's Story Robert's and others/ Crescent City Hist. Soc.	Mouth of Klamath R.	XX	-	-	-	-	XX	-	-	-	X
Charles' Story Charles/DN Co. Hist. Soc.	Crescent City	-	-	-	-	-	XX	-	-	-	X
Chetco											
Tidal Wave anon./Dubois	Mouth of Chetco R.	-	-	-	-	-	XX	-	X	-	X

SGM-Strong Ground Motion

SFR-Surface Fault Rupture

CS-Coseismic Subsidence

CU-Coseismic Uplift

L-Liquifaction

T-Tsunami

CL-Coseismic Landslide

N-Night

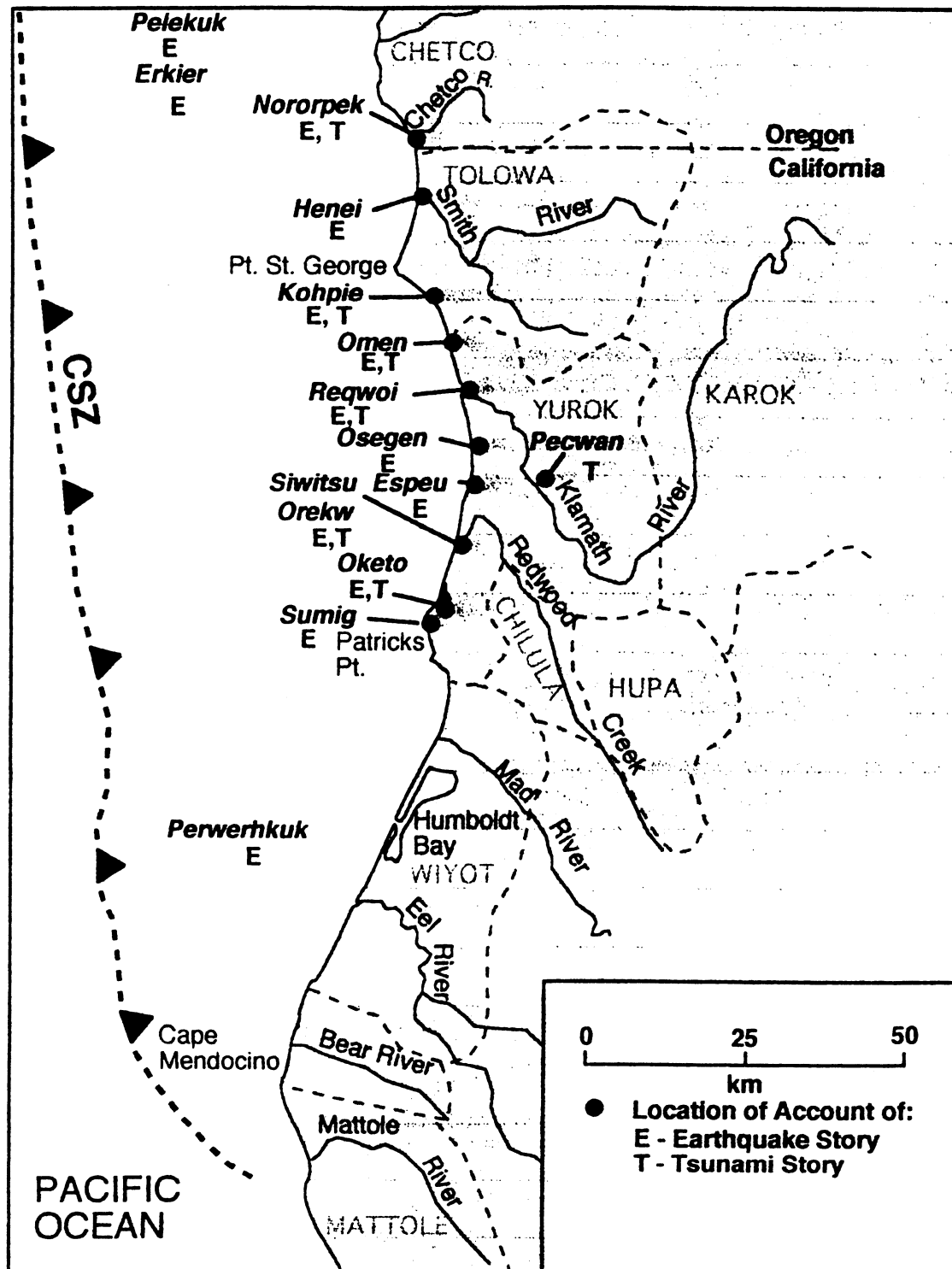
AS-Aftershocks

D-Damage and casualties

XX-Major story element

X-Important story element

?-Possible or minor story element



Locations of accounts of earthquake and tsunami stories in the vicinity of Redwood National Park.