

MOUNT SHASTA AND THE GREAT FLOOD

*As told by William Speer, Sr. , Shasta Indian Nation
and written by Ella E. Lark, "Indian Legends of The Pacific Northwest"*

The Indians of the Pacific Northwest and those of some other areas also, believed that before the first Indians were created, the world was inhabited by a race of animal people. In some tribes, chiefly those between the Rocky Mountains and the Cascade Range, the shrewdest and most powerful of these people was Coyote. For further explanation of this belief, see "The Animal People of Long Ago."

Once Coyote was traveling around, carrying his bow and arrows with him, when he came to a body of water where an evil spirit lived. Seeing Coyote, the evil spirit rose out of the water and said, "There is no wood." Then the evil being caused the water to rise and overflow the land until Coyote was covered.

After a time, the water went down and the land dried off. Coyote sprang up, took his bow and an arrow, and shot the evil spirit. Then Coyote ran away.

But the water followed him. Coyote ran to higher ground. The water followed him to higher ground. He started up Mount Shasta. The water followed him up Mount Shasta. He ran to the top of the mountain. The water followed him and became very deep, but it did not quite reach the top.

On the top of Mount Shasta, Coyote made a fire, on the only ground left above the water. Grizzly Bear saw the fire and swam to the top of Fire Mountain. Deer saw the fire and swam to it. So did Elk, Black Bear, Gray Squirrel, Jack Rabbit, and Ground Squirrel.

Badger, Porcupine, and Raccoon saw the fire and swam to it. Fish, Wolf and Cougar swam there. All the animal people stayed on top of Mount Shasta until the great flood was over. At last the water went down, leaving dry land in the midst of lakes and marshes.

Then the animal people came down from the top of Mount Shasta and made new homes for themselves. They scattered everywhere and became the ancestors of all the animal people on the earth.

