

# Indigenous Oral Histories & Disaster Preparedness Knowledge

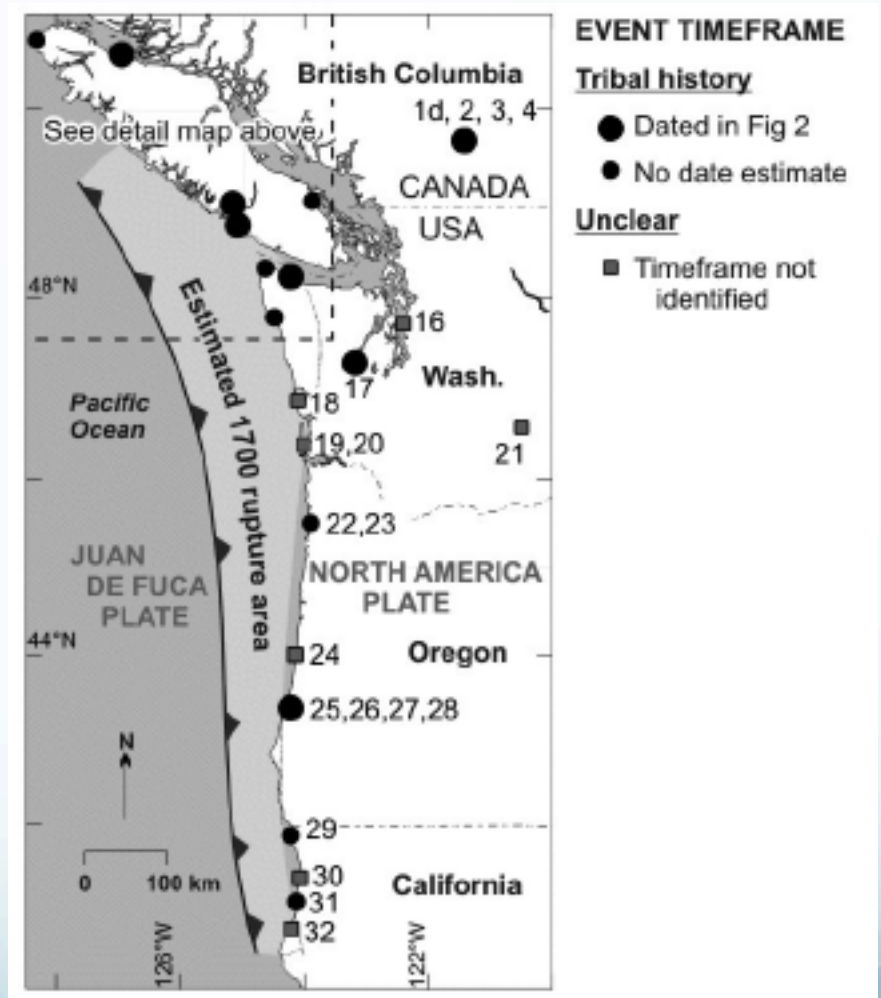
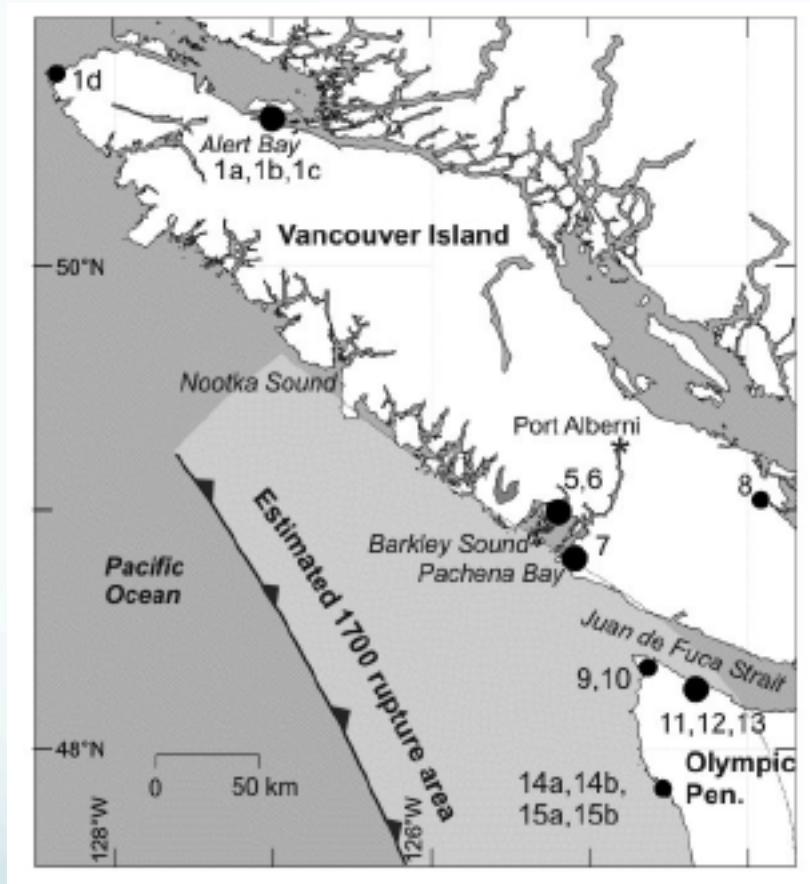
Beth Pratt-Sitaula  
CEETEP Workshop





Insert Thunderbird & Killerwhale video

# Coastal Cascadia Oral Histories



Source locations of accounts of earthquake-tsunami stories. Recorded 1860-1964. (Ludwin et al 2005)

# Coastal Cascadia Oral Histories

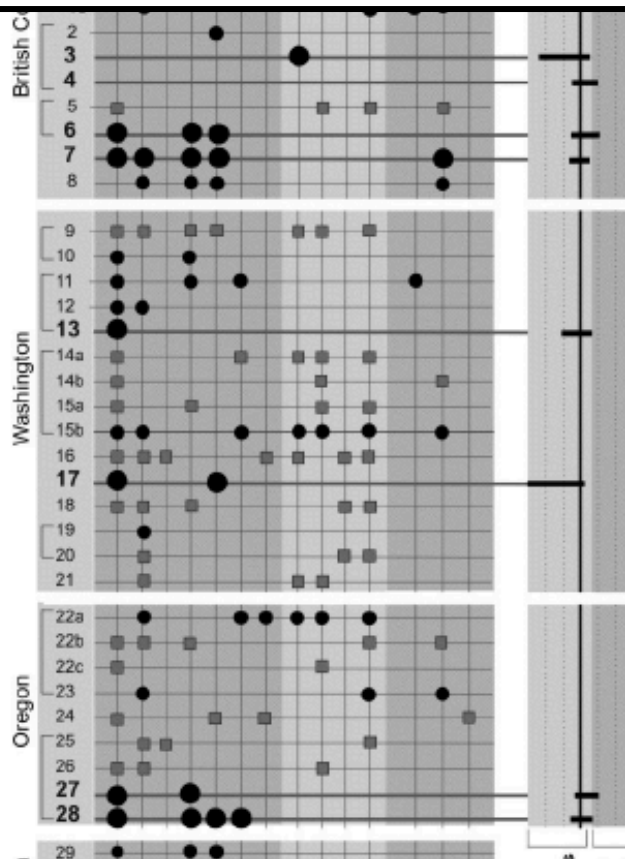
(A)	EFFECTS	MOTIF	ENVIRONMENT
	8 Destruction	bird	

(B)

## Estimated Date Range and Basis for Estimate

1650–1825 (1c). “This is not a myth ... my tale is seven generations old ...

**Tree-ring & Japanese-record estimated event time of January 26 1700, 9 pm**



1655–1814 (6). “The tide ... rushed up at a fearful speed. ... The Clayoquot who thus became chief was the great-grandfather of Hy-yu-penuel, the present chief of the Sheshaht ...” — *Unidentified informant in 1860.*

1640–1740 (7). “These are stories from my grandfather’s father (born c. 1800) about events that took place four generations before his time ... over 200 years ago” “... the land shook ... a big wave smashed into the beach.” — *Chief Louis Nookmis, age 84 in 1964.*


1600–1775 (13). “One old man says that his grandfather saw the man who was saved from the flood.” — *Unidentified informant c. 1875.*

1400–1715 (17). “... eight or nine generations from my grandfather there was a flood.” — *Frank Allen, age 60 in 1940.*

1690–1805 (27). “My grandfather saw one of the old women (survivors) who had been left alive. She had been hung up on a tree, and the limbs of that tree were too high up. So she took her pack line and tied it to a limb, and then when she wanted to go down by means of that, she fell, she was just a girl when she fell from it. Her back was broken from it (she had a humpback thereafter). That is what she told about the raised water.” — *Annie Miner Petersen, age 73 in 1913.*

1657–1777 (28). “... there was a big flood shortly before the white man’s time, ... a huge tidal wave that struck the Oregon Coast not too far back in time ... the ocean rose up and huge waves swept and surged across the land. Trees were uprooted and villages were swept away. Indians said they tied their canoes to the top of the trees, and some canoes were torn loose and swept away ... After the tidal wave, the Indians told of tree tops filled with limbs and trash and of finding strange canoes in the woods. The Indians said the big flood and tidal wave tore up the land and changed the rivers. Nobody knows how many Indians died. — *Beverly Ward, recounting stories told to her around 1930 by Susan Ned, born in 1842.*

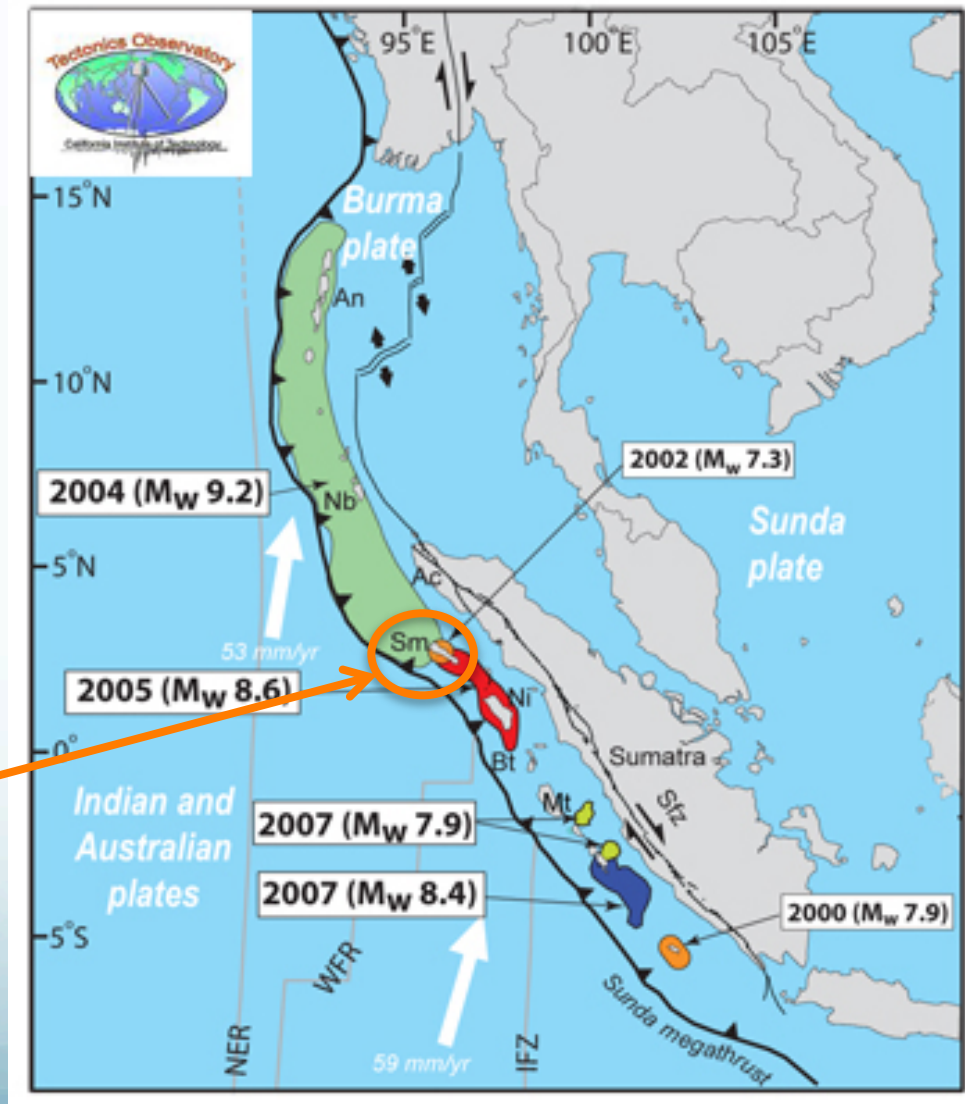
**Oral-history-estimated event time of 1690 AD**

A coastal scene with a dark, pebbly beach in the foreground. Several seagulls are scattered across the beach. In the middle ground, waves with white foam are breaking. In the background, a large, dark rock formation rises from the sea under a grey, overcast sky.

# *Run to High Ground*

# Langi village, Simeulue Island, Indian Ocean

- Account by tsunami geologist, Lori Dengler of Cal State Humboldt



# Thoughts & ideas

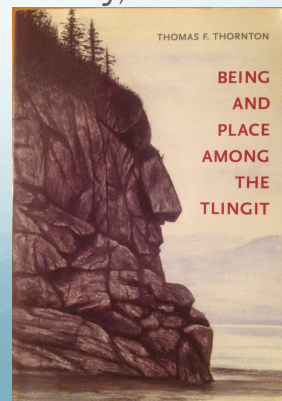
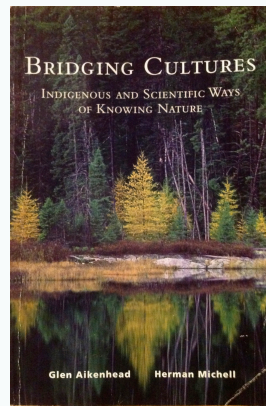
- Timeless/long-term region-wide stories that include a restless earth and ocean
- Oral history accounts that record specific event centuries-old
- Strong advice on how to live more safely in this restless location

# Thoughts & ideas

- Stories and histories in many cases belong to the teller. Consideration and respect should be exercised in repeating stories.
- Native American cultures are very grounded in Place.  
Ex. *“These lands are vital not only to our subsistence but also to our sense of being as Tlingit people.”* (Gabriel George, 2008)
- Attributes of indigenous ways of knowing nature: place-based, non/material world are one, relational, mysterious (all is not knowable), observational not experimental, cyclical time.

# References

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How would you use oral  
histories and native stories with  
your learners?