

The Origin Story

Long after the world was made, the Creator told all the people to come to one place. The people listened, and they did come to that place, but they did not know why they were called there.

When all the people were there, waiting, they saw that there was enough for Shinny Ball . . . ten and one people for one side and ten and one people for the other side. They played Shinny Ball and they danced and sang and visited.

One night, the Creator gathered everyone together again. “This is why I gathered all the people together. There are too many people in one place. I will send some across rivers. I will send some in different directions. There are too many people here.” The people listened and wondered where they would be sent.

The next day, the Creator gathered everyone together again. “Now I will send you to the new places. I will send you to your new homes.” And the Creator began sending the people to different places.

“This man and woman I will send to live on the Yakwina River. They will live there with their children and their children’s children will live there also.”

The next man and woman, I will send to the Alsi River. They will live there with their children and their children’s children will live there also.”

“Next, I will send this man and this woman to the Yahach River. They will live there with their children and their children’s children will live there also.”

“I will send another man and woman to live on the Siuslaw River. They will live there with their children and their children’s children will live there also.”

“The last man and woman, I will send to live on the Umpqua River. They will live there with their children and their children’s children will live there also.”

“For all these people in the Spring and in the Fall, I will send salmon up the rivers. In Summers, they will go to the valleys to pick berries and dig camas root. They will play the guessing game and they will all play Shinny Ball, and they will dance and they will visit a great deal with all the people whose language they share . . . The Yakwina, the Alsi, the Yahach, the Siuslaw and the Umqua.”

And so it is.

When Summer and Winter came, the people did certain things. They made medicine songs. They danced the dances of the seasons, They fished for many kinds of fish as the seasons changed. Soon, very few people became many. The tribes became larger and there was much friendship between the five tribes.

But soon the weather began to be very bad. Rains came and it was Winter all over the world. The people did not know what to do so they danced. They asked a Dreamer shaman what to do because they were very afraid of the rain and the cold Winter. The Dreamer Shaman said, “It will soon rain so hard that the water will come in form the ocean and it will come everywhere. Go to the highest mountains and you will be safe.”

The people listened and when the time came, the Earth was covered with water, except for the highest mountains. The people of the five tribes were there. They were safe.

And so it was.