

## The Frog Mountain Story

The frog mountain story is the land survival story of the Sinixt people and it's a story about a time when many years ago, many generations ago, native people who lived on this land experienced an extreme drought. And it didn't rain for years and they didn't receive good enough moisture in the land for the plants to grow, for the wildlife to be abundant. And after many years of experiencing this drought, many people died. Many people started moving away from this land because they thought it would never come back. A lot of people moved away because it was sad for them to be here in a place where many of their friends and their family died, and there wasn't much here.

In a Sinixt village, the villagers decided that they needed to move away and to enable the group to survive. So they decided to pack up all the valuables from the village and to away from this place. There was an elder who was in charge of the village and he made sure that everybody had packed everything to get ready to go. He had decided that he wasn't going to go. He wasn't going to leave this place. He was going to stay and, if necessary, he was going to die where his ancestors were buried in his homeland. He got everybody packed up and ready to go and then he told them he was not going with them. All the people in the village began to cry and carry on. They didn't want to leave their elder, who was their leader, behind. None of them wanted to leave.

The elder said, "No, some of you have to leave because if we don't survive someone from our group has to survive." They took all the valuables and made a decision of who was going to leave. That was based on what kind of skills they had, survival skills, knowledge and someone as a guide. Someone who had other skills, like medicine knowledge. A group of people were determined and got ready, and left. Everybody were feeling really bad because their friends and family had left. The elder decided that he was going to go off and pray. He didn't think that the people would be able to survive with the drought the way it was. He was going off to pray and to fast and ask for guidance for his people. He told his group that he was going to go away and pray. He went off for many days, fasted, didn't eat anything, didn't drink anything, and after awhile a frog came to him.

The frog spoke to him and told the old man, "You go and have your people dig caves into the banks of the river. If you do this your people will be ok." The frog left and the elder decided he would go back and tell the people what he saw. He sat all the people down and said, "I had a visitor, and the visitor was a frog, and he told me that if we built caves into the banks of the river then we would be ok." So the people agreed and they started digging the caves in the banks of the river. The elder was thinking that it has been so sad and we are not going to be able to make it, but at least the caves would be a proper burial place for the people when they die. When winter came all the people moved down into the caves. As their food ran out, they weren't able to gather much to stay alive.

The frogs came up from the ground, from the river bed, into the caves and offered themselves to the people. The people ate the frogs until one day this frog came into the cave and said, "Don't eat me. There is food on the land for you now and everything is going to be ok. You have to go out and make it." He said, "You'll make it now. I am going to show you that some species, some being, that doesn't seem to threaten life, doesn't seem to impact life in anyway, some being that seems very weak in comparison to many mighty species has shown you through our love and our offering. We are going to give you a symbol to remember us by and to learn to respect us, and insignificant things because that is important." The frog hopped and grew, hopped and grew, and he became a mountain. Frog Mountain. Frog Mountain is a symbol to the Sinixt people of the kindness and generosity of the frog species who gave their lives in offering to the Sinixt people so they could survive through a severe drought.

The end.