

Creation of the Earth

Once, long ago, before the time of the oldest people, water covered everything. The only living creatures above the water were some small animals and birds who occupied a log raft drifting about on the great ocean. Nothing else could be seen above the surface of the water.

Each day the occupants on the large raft looked in all directions, but all they saw was water and the sky. The birds would fly out from the raft hoping to find land, but always there was just water. Soon the occupants of the raft grew restless and began talking about how to find land. They chose Horned Owl to be their council chief.

During their discussion one day, Horned Owl said, "Land is somewhere beneath the water. We must make it appear or we will starve. Who will look for land?"

Beaver spoke first and said, "I am a good swimmer. I will try."

Then Beaver dived into the water and swam toward the bottom. He was a strong swimmer, and at first he moved rapidly through the water. The water was very deep, however, and after he had been swimming for a long time and still did not reach the bottom, he began to tire. Eventually he had to give up the search for land and return to the raft.

Horned Owl called for another volunteer. This time Frog said he would look for land. He jumped into the water and started swimming for the bottom, but Garfish chased him and forced Frog to return to the raft.

Again Horned Owl spoke with the raft creatures of the need to make land appear. At the end of his talk, Horned Owl asked Crawfish to look for land.

“Yes, I am ready,” answered Crawfish. “I will go now.”

Then Crawfish jumped into the water and swam toward the bottom. Garfish did not think he looked good to eat and did not chase him. Crawfish was also a better swimmer than Beaver and did not tire so easily, and so he came to the bottom of the great ocean.

Now Crawfish has a wide tail which he can use as a scoop. When he reached the bottom of the water, he used his tail to scoop mud into a great chimney. He worked rapidly, building it higher and higher, until the top of the mud chimney stuck above the water, where it began to spread and form a mass of soft earth.

The birds and animals on the raft looked at the new earth and agreed that Crawfish had done a good job, but they thought the earth was too smooth. So Horned Owl sent Buzzard out to shape the earth’s surface.

Buzzard was a huge bird with long, powerful wings. He flew along just above the soft earth, flapping his wings. When he swung his wings down, he made valleys in the earth. When he swept his wings up, he formed the hills and the mountains. During the time that Buzzard glided along without flapping his wings, he made level country and plains.

After the earth had hardened, the animals and birds left their raft and made homes in the new land, each according to his needs.