

Eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815 by Ray Pearce

Mount Tambora is situated in Indonesia but at the time of the eruption in April 1815 it was in the Dutch East Indies. Volcanologists (named after Vulcan, the Roman God of Fire) believe the Mount Tambora explosion was the biggest ever causing world wide disasters throughout the whole of 1816.



Painting by Turner of English sunset after eruption of Mount Tabora

On April 6th 1815 volcanic ash began to fall on nearby islands and the volcano began rumbling .On April 10th on the island of Sumatra, 1600 miles away, explosions were heard and the army was turned out as it was believed to be gun fire and they were being attacked. Eruptions intensified and the whole mountain became a mass of liquid fire. Pumice stones, 8 inches wide rained down on the village of Tambora which was destroyed. The main explosion happened the following day, it was heard 1600 miles away and the ash fell on islands 800 miles away.

Before the eruption Mount Tambora was 14,100 feet high, it literally blew its top and then stood at 9,354 feet. It was estimated that the force of the eruption was the equivalent to 300,000 tons of TNT explosives. The ash, smoke and sulphur went as high as 28 miles with world wide disastrous results.

All the vegetation on Sumbawa, the location of the volcano, was destroyed. Trees uprooted and washed out to sea where they mixed with pumice ash to form large floating rafts up to 3 miles across .Later that year, in October, two British ships found some of these floating rafts over 2,200 miles west of Tambora. The volcanic rumblings continued until July 1815 but there were smaller movements up to four years later. The death toll is unknown but scientists, many years later estimated it to be 88,000 in the surrounding islands.

The following year, 1816 was known as The Year without a Summer. The worlds climate was badly affected. In America snow fell in June and August and most of the agricultural crops failed in America and Canada. Other parts of the world suffered. The Indian monsoons failed for at least two years leading to famine with wholesale crop failures. A new strain of cholera struck in Bengal. Crops also failed in China. In Germany, following a

sharp rise in food prices, there was rioting and looting. Many in this country went hungry and people were begging for food. I think the above will give the reader some idea of how catastrophic was the eruption and explosion of Mount Tabora.



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