This globe of the Earth shows the locations of historical tsunami sources extracted from NCEI’s Global Historical Tsunami Database (ngdc.noaa.gov/hazard). A tsunami is a series of traveling waves of extremely long length and period, usually generated by disturbances associated with earthquakes occurring below or near the ocean floor. Volcanic eruptions, submarine landslides, and coastal rockfalls can also generate tsunamis, as can a large meteorite impacting the ocean.

The underlying color shaded-relief image was generated from NCEI’s ETOPO1 “Ice Surface” (ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/global). ETOPO1 is a 1 arc-minute global relief model of Earth’s surface that integrates land topography and ocean bathymetry. Bathymetry is largely from estimated seafloor topography derived from sea-surface satellite altimetry measurements.