

# A Bridge to a New World

by Mirigo Usher

## Set Your Purpose

Who were the real first settlers in the Americas?

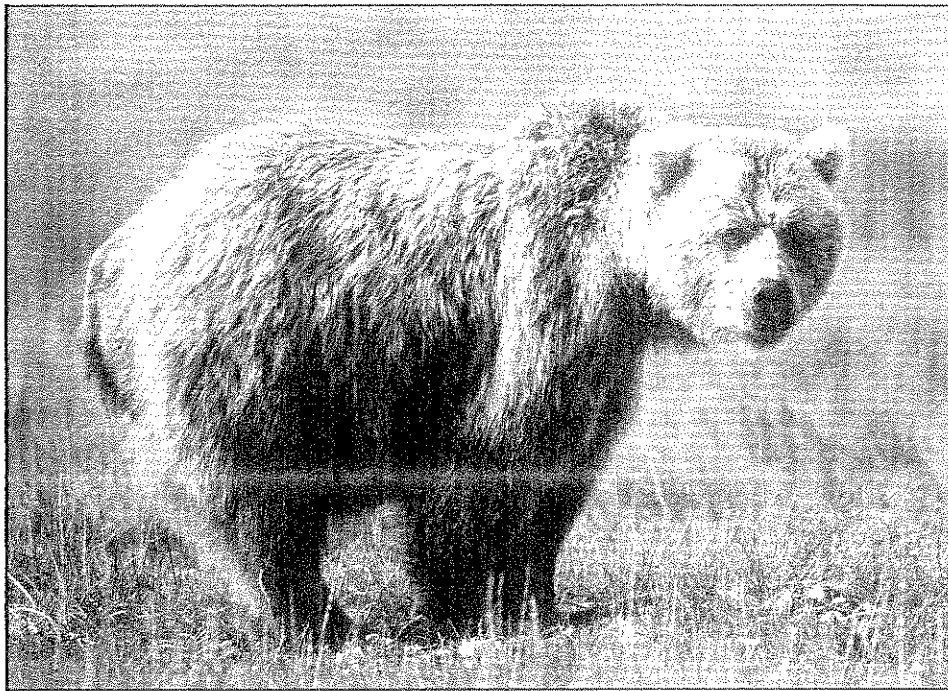
Read this article to find out.

Where they may have walked then, there is ocean today. Most likely, they didn't set out to discover anything. They were just following their next meal as their ancestors had done for **centuries**.

It probably all began innocently enough. Slowly, people started moving east across what is now Asia, traveling in groups of several families. The weather was cold, but thick furs of wolf, caribou, and bear kept them warm. Their clothing was sewn with bone needles and rawhide thread.

Their tools were of bone or wood or stone. Their spear points were long and sharp. Food was heated by placing it into skin bags with hot stones. Around the fire, they told jokes, sang, and made tools or scraped animal **hides**. The children played games and cuddled the pups too young to stand guard. The hunting dogs kept watch nearby.

They were a people of the seasons. When winter came, they made camp. In some sunny spot, they built **sturdy** huts of brush and skins. They ate dried meat, roots, berries,

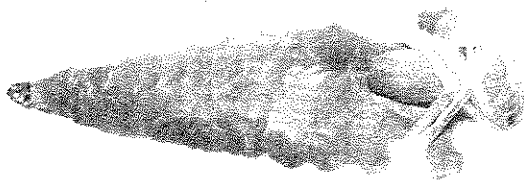


and seeds stored up from the summer. Hopefully, there also would be fresh meat.

Come spring, flowers bloomed, and bears came out of their dens. The caribou, musk ox, and moose had their calves. There were fresh greens to eat and birds' eggs to gather. It was time to move on.

Years passed. The people probably followed the wandering herds farther and farther east. One day, they may have crossed over to the land we call Alaska. Most likely, it was not a great **event**. The people probably just went on walking.

Today, scientists try to re-create their journey. It's not easy. The scientists have different theories about whether the first people in the Americas crossed over a land bridge from Asia or came there another way. As we study the bits of bones and fragments of huts and **belongings** these people left behind, we can only imagine their world and the lives they led.



Tool used by the first people in the Americas

## Think About It

How did these ancient people survive for centuries in a harsh environment?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Check Your Understanding

Fill in the letter with the best answer for each question.

- What were two ways the ancient hunters solved the problem of staying warm?
  - They wore fur and ate berries.
  - They joked and told stories.
  - They wore fur and used fire.
  - They had dogs and used fire.
- How did they cook without pots?
  - They ate their food raw.
  - They heated food in skin bags with hot stones.
  - They cooked in ovens.
  - They warmed food between their hands.
- How did they kill game for food?
  - They used bows and arrows.
  - They used bone needles.
  - They threw stones.
  - They used spears with sharp stone points.
- What was the main reason the people kept dogs?
  - The dogs were great pets.
  - The dogs woke them up in the morning.
  - The people used the dogs for hunting and protection.
  - The people used them to carry their children.
- The reason the author doesn't call these people by name is probably because
  - the author forgot their name.
  - no one knows what they called themselves.
  - no one is allowed to say their name.
  - the name is too long to print.

## Vocabulary

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Fill in the letter with the best definition of the underlined word.

- They hunted for their next meal as their ancestors had done for centuries.
 

(A) a few months	(C) hundreds of years
(B) cents and dimes	(D) thirty days
- Around the fire, they made tools or scraped animal hides.
 

(A) to beat	(C) animal noises
(B) to stay out of sight	(D) animal skins
- In some sunny spot, they built sturdy huts of brush and skins.
 

(A) too large	(C) made quickly
(B) strongly made	(D) built in a square
- Most likely, coming to Alaska was not a great event.
 

(A) way to hunt animals	(C) land bridge
(B) happening	(D) scientist's idea
- Scientists study the belongings these people left behind.
 

(A) animal bones	(C) things owned
(B) bells and whistles	(D) sciences

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Word Work

**Antonyms** are words that have opposite meanings. For example, *hot* and *cold* are antonyms.

Read the sentences and the words below. Write the word that means the opposite of the word in dark type.

die    descendants    sturdy  
clumsy    celebrated

- flimsy** To prepare for winter, the hunters built \_\_\_\_\_ huts.
- accomplished** At first, the children were \_\_\_\_\_ at making tools, but they learned fast.
- ancestors** Elders were expected to pass on their wisdom to their \_\_\_\_\_.
- grieved** When spring came, everyone \_\_\_\_\_.
- survive** If members of the group did not work together, they might all \_\_\_\_\_.

Read each sentence. Fill in the letter of the antonym of the underlined word.

- Scientists are confused by the different evidence they are finding.  
 (A) certain of                      (C) quiet  
 (B) embarrassed                (D) colorful
- They used to believe people came to the Americas over a land bridge from Asia.  
 (A) trust                              (C) disbelieve  
 (B) shout                             (D) scold
- Then the people gradually moved down through North America and into South America.  
 (A) slowly                            (C) carefully  
 (B) quickly                         (D) noisily
- But scientists found settlements in South America that are too old for that theory to work.  
 (A) damaged                        (C) recent  
 (B) clean                              (D) ancient
- Now they believe some early people used boats to sail along the coast of the Americas.  
 (A) beach                             (C) waterline  
 (B) shore                             (D) inland

## Write Now

In "A Bridge to a New World," you read about the lives of early people who lived thousands of years ago. A word web like the one at right could be used to organize the information you learned in the selection.

- Plan to write a description of the daily life of an early hunter family. Copy the word web and complete it with information from the selection. Make a note if something happens only in a certain season.
- Write a description of a day in the life of an early hunter family. Tell what they do in the morning, afternoon, and night. Be sure to tell what season it is. Use the details from your word web to help write your story.

