

A Living History
of Our World

AMERICA'S STORY

1

ANGELA O'DELL

From the Ancient Americas
to the Great Gold Rush



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*Dedicated to my favorite students,
who were also my teachers.*

I love you!

Soli Deo Gloria



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Welcome to America's Story! This book is a unique combination of storybook and history curriculum. It is written in the same style that I have used with my own children, and many of the stories are the same ones I have told them as we have woven our tapestry of historical knowledge throughout that time.

History truly does need to be taught as History... HIS story. However, you must know that not every person in American history was a Christian. That does not mean that God did not use these people for His plan and glory. Those people fit into God's picture just the way He needed.

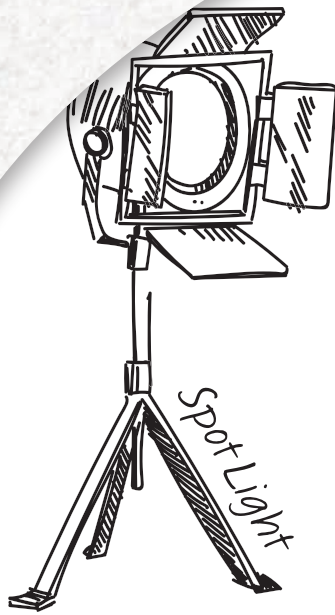
In our family, we firmly believe in providing a living education. This means making relationships with what we learn. It means that we learn about both heroes and villains. We learn about famous men and women and not-so-famous men and women. We make friends in history instead of just memorizing dates and names. We reach out and touch nature and learn to be observant of the small things in life. We see God's love for us in the flaming-red sunset, as well as in the busy little ants laboriously gathering their food. We work diligently to hide God's Word in our hearts.

Our goal is a living relationship with our Heavenly Father and wise hearts that love His world!

Blessings,
Angela O'Dell

CHAPTER 1

WHO LIVED HERE FIRST?



Starting Point: Following the events at the Tower of Babel, people groups moved throughout the world taking their languages and customs with them. Some of these people groups came to the Americas, where they formed a very diverse group of Native American cultures throughout the United States, Canada, as well as Central and South America well before Europeans arrived to colonize the lands.



Cahokia Mounds, Illinois

Mysteries of the Mound Builders: Today we find large Indian mounds, some in the shape of animals, throughout the midwest and eastern states. These are some sites of the mysterious Mound Builders that included a number of the Native American societies, including the Mississippian, Fort Ancient, and Adena cultures. These amazing builders chose dirt to make their monuments, and represent some of the largest cities, such as Cahokia, and advanced cultures in early history.



1. How do you think people first arrived in the Americas originally?
2. What do you think life was like in the Americas before visitors from Europe arrived?

God creates the universe, Earth, animal kinds, as well as Adam and Eve.

~4004 B.C.

The Ice Age begins that will last a few hundred years.

~2300 B.C.

Bering Land Bridge Crossing and Dispersal in the Americas

~2142 B.C. to ~1842 B.C.

Are you ready to enjoy an interesting story? This is the story of our great country and how it came into being. When I was a little girl, I used to wonder who had lived in my house before me. How many other children had climbed the trees I played in? What were they like, and what kind of clothes did they wear? I had a lot of questions. Do you ever wonder about these kinds of things?

Have you ever wondered who the first Americans were? Would you believe that there were millions of people living in *North* and *South America* by the time our Savior, Jesus Christ, was born? Well, there were! Historians (people who study history) believe that the first people came over from *Asia* through the *Bering Land Bridge*, which is now the *Bering Strait*, into *Alaska*.

Throughout hundreds of years, these people formed many nations. These nations are the ancestors of today's Native American Indians and the tribes that still exist in the jungles of South America. Artifacts have been found in both *North and South America* that are thought to be thousands of years old. These artifacts tell us a little about how these people lived. There really isn't any other way to know much about these people, for there are not many written records of their ways of life. They did not have pens, pencils, or paper like we do, and they all spoke in their own languages. Many of them did not have a written language, making it very hard to leave information for the following generations.



CONTINENT: a large body of land. The earth is divided into seven continents.



Corn husk doll

I think it is fun to contemplate the way the ancient American people could have lived. Can you imagine being a little boy or girl in those times? You would have had toys, but nothing like the toys you have now. These people had no plastic, rubber, or metal. Everything was made from animal skin, bones, wood, or even rocks. If you were a young boy, living in one of these tribes, you would probably own a toy bow and arrow. If you were a young girl, you might go to sleep at night cuddling your doll made from corn husks.

These people's houses were different from ours, too. Various tribes

had different types of houses; some were made from animal skins, while others were constructed from mud or wood. These homes were heated by a fire right in the middle of the floor. It is easy to think that there were only adults who lived in these houses, but all civilizations have children, too. Close your eyes and imagine being you, but living back in one of these ancient tribes. How different your life would be!

We know that there were fishermen, hunters, weavers, and priests in these ancient tribes. We also know that they did not worship the One True God like we do. Many of the tribes worshiped the crops that they grew and ate, while others worshiped nature, which was around them. They thought of themselves as “brothers” with the animals and plants.

These early American people moved around much of the time. If the tribe mainly hunted for a living, they followed the great herds of buffalo. The men would hunt and kill the animals with long, sharp spears. The women and children followed behind them carrying the tribe’s belongings. Do you know what Indian babies were called? They were called papooses, and they were carried on their mothers’ backs. What a fun way to ride! All the people in the tribe had responsibilities; even the children had jobs. Do you have chores? They are probably different from the early Indian children’s jobs.

If a tribe was mainly fishermen, they did not move around as much. However, their diet consisted mostly of fish. Do you like fish? Would you like to eat it every day for almost every meal? The farming tribes had to move to stay in warm enough places to grow their crops. These tribes, along with the hunting tribes, had smaller houses that were easier to move around. These houses were made from buffalo or deer skin stretched over long poles. You may have heard of these houses; they are called tepees. When I was a child, I used to make “teepees” by throwing blankets over chairs or tables. I used to sit inside my tepee and imagine I was an Indian. It’s fun to do this, but can you imagine not having a house that was made to stay in one place? How strange it would be to travel with your whole town from one location to another, but that is exactly what most of these ancient North American tribes did!



Papooses



NARRATION BREAK

Tell how the early Americans came to be here.

Not all ancient Indian nations were nomads (wanderers). Some of the South and Central American nations were highly advanced civilizations with cities and governments. The Incas (ING-kus) in Peru, the Mayans (MY-ins) in Central America, and the Aztecs (AZ-teks) of modern Mexico are some of these nations. They are very old civilizations! Maybe someday you will have the chance to explore the discovered ruins of temples and cities left from hundreds of years ago. You can learn more about these ancient Americans in resources from your local library.

You probably have heard the names of many of the Native North American Indian tribes, but I will tell you about some of them. The Ojibwa (o-JIB-way), the Iroquois (EAR-u-koy), and the Wampanoag (wam-pa-NO-ag) tribes made up the Algonquian (all-GON-quin) nation. These people lived around the *Great Lakes* and the *Eastern Coast of North America*. They mainly hunted and fished for their food. Their houses, called wigwams, were dome shaped and made out of wood, animal skin, and bark. They were similar to the tepee, but they were round instead of having a pointed top.

Down to the south of the Algonquian nation, lived the Seminole (SEM-in-ole) tribe. This group of people once lived in what is now *Georgia*. They were peaceful people who lived by farming the land. As more settlers from other parts of the world came to North America, the Seminoles ran away, leaving their farms to live in the *Florida* swamps. They had to change their ways of living to adapt to their new home. They became hunters and fishermen, and they built a different kind of house called a chickee. These houses had open sides and were built on stilts. Can you think of the reason the Seminoles built houses like this? What kinds of animals live in the Florida swamps, or as we call them, the Everglades?



Have you ever seen a buffalo or a bison? There are not very many of them now, but back hundreds of years ago, vast herds of them roamed the *Great Plains*. If your home is in one of the states right in the middle of our country, you have probably heard some of the names of the Indian tribes who lived there. In fact, they still live there on what is called reservations. Later, we

will learn more about the Indian reservations, but back in the time we are reading about now, the Plains Indians roamed about hunting buffalo for food.

The Blackfeet, Comanche (com-AN-chee), Cheyenne (shy-ANN), and Sioux (SUE) were great hunters. They used the buffalo for many things besides just for meat. They made clothes and houses from the skin, and they also used the bones. Have you ever seen a buffalo bone necklace? Many Native Americans wore them as decoration.

Other tribes, such as the Apache (u-PACH-ee), Hopi (HOP-ee), Pueblo (PWEB-lo), and Navajo

(NAH-vi-hoe) Indians lived in the south western corner of North America. These tribes made houses out of adobe (u-DOBE-ee), a straw and clay mixture dried hard by the sun. They were mostly farmers who grew corn and cotton as their crop. Just like in all the other tribes, everyone worked very hard. Women and children did most of the garden work, while men worked on building projects. Some of them made large cities out of hardened earth. Many of the houses in these cities were built right on the side of a mountain and were many stories high, similar to an apartment building.

There were many interesting people who lived on our continent for a very long time. As we wind our way down the path of American history, remember you too are a part of our great country's story. Would you like to learn more about the Ancient Americans?

NARRATION BREAK

*Tell what you learned about
the different tribes.*

*Group of Siksika (Blackfeet) men and
one woman singing in front of teepee*

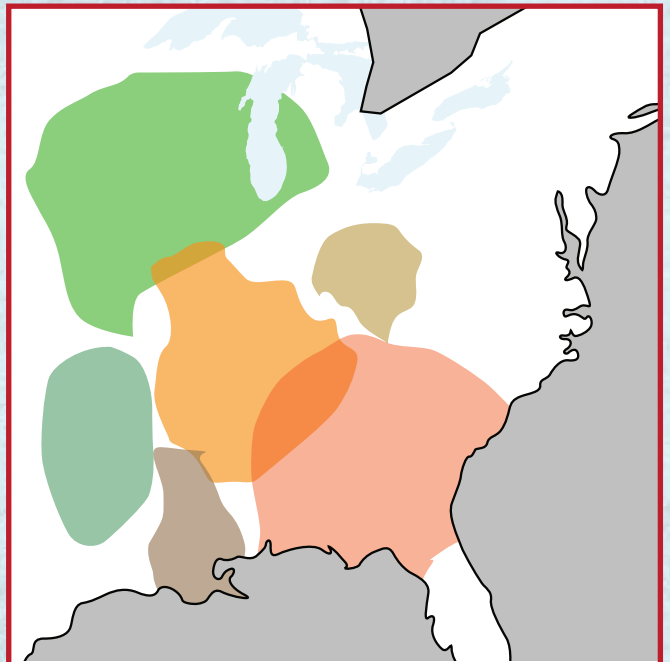
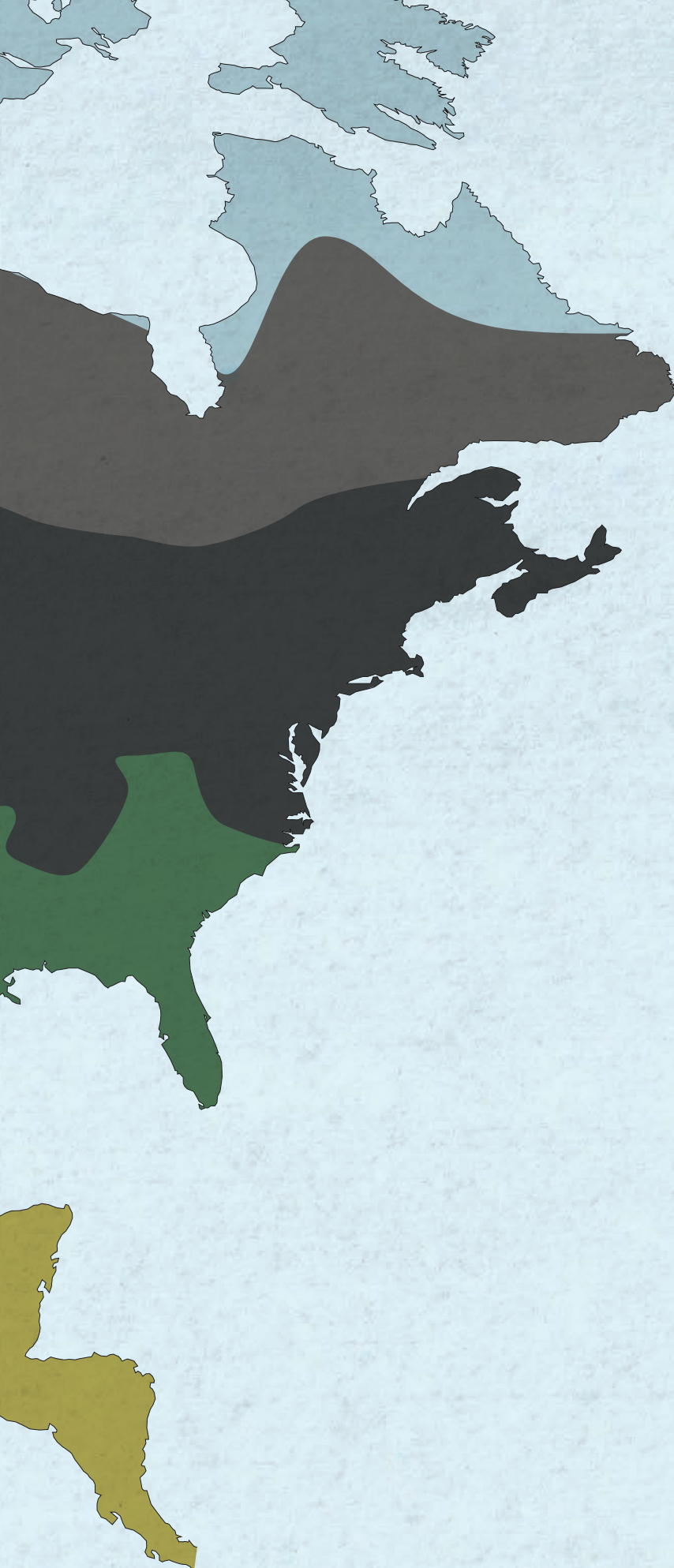


NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL GROUPS







c. 1600 Although there were hundreds of different Native American societies, they are usually organized by historians into cultural groups:

-  Arctic
-  Subarctic
-  Northwest Coast
-  Plateau
-  Plains
-  Great Basin
-  California
-  Southeast
-  Northeast
-  Southwest
-  Mesoamerican





This map shows the influence of the Mississippian culture, among those tribes that were mound builders in what would become America.

-  **Oneota**
-  **Middle Mississippian**
-  **Fort Ancient**
-  **Caddoan Mississippian**
-  **South Appalachian Mississippian**
-  **Plaquemine**

An example of a home, Cahokia



HOMES VARIED BY GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS



▲ Cliff Dwellings at Mesa Verde in southwestern Colorado

Example of ▶ a birch bark wigwam such as the Algonquian Indians used.



An example of a ▶ longhouse, similar to those used by the Iroquois



▲ A wattle and daub house, made of wooden strips and combination of soil, clay, straw, or sand, used by groups like the Mississippian culture.



▲ A hogan, an earthen house in the style of the Navajo



▲ An earthen house or lodge; styles varied among the Navajo, Sioux, as well as some tribes on the west coast of America.



▲ Teepees were designed to be moved and easily put up again.

Reconstruction of ▶ a Timucuan chickee on display at Ft. Caroline National Monument in Jacksonville, Florida



Native American recipes are part of the foods we eat today. Corn was a very important crop for many of the tribes and societies. Corn varieties were adapted for different growing seasons and areas of the country. There are many other areas of the Native American culture that you can learn about through reading and visiting nearby sites.



Native Americans raising corn



Different colors and varieties of corn

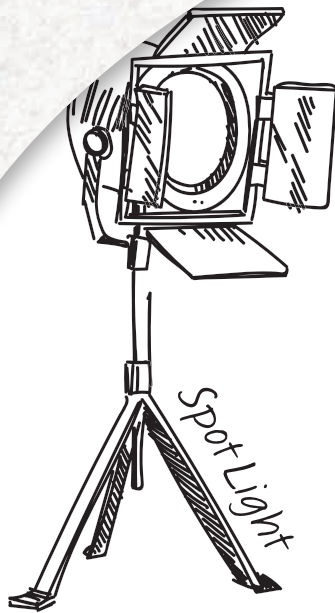
THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

1. We learned that people first arrived in the Americas by crossing over the Bering Land Bridge, which is now the Bering Strait. Although we cannot be 100% sure this is the route of their migration, archaeological finds largely support this theory.
2. Life for some Native Americans was mostly nomadic. We also learned how various tribes lived by hunting and farming, formed communities, and what types of abodes different groups lived in.

CHAPTER 2

LEIF ERICSON, THE CHRISTIAN VIKING


Starting Point: We learned in our last chapter how people have been living in North and South America for a very long time. We need to remember that back in the time of our story there were no televisions, radios, or computers. There was no easy way to get information across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean.



The Very Large Solar System: Ancient and Medieval scientist and philosophers taught that the earth was the center of the entire universe. Now we know that our solar system is a tiny but divinely significant dot in a universe too vast for comprehension.



1. What did ancient people believe about earth and its place in the universe?
2. Do you understand why they believed this?



Leif Ericson
journeys to
the Americas

1000 A.D.

European nations
(including Portugal)
search for new
ocean routes

~1400

Navajo, Apache, and other
native tribes move from
the north to the southwest
of North America

~1400

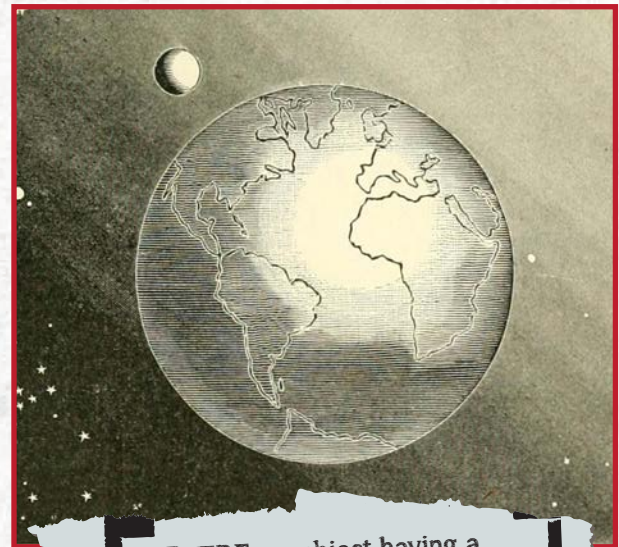
Many of the people on the other side of the world, in *Europe*, *Asia*, and the other, more “civilized” continents, did not even know that North and South America existed!

Most of these Europeans believed all kinds of things that might sound funny to us. We know that the world is round, right? Actually, it is a sphere, which means it is shaped like a ball. How do we know this? If you had never seen a globe or a picture of our planet Earth from outer space; if you had always been told that the earth is flat, and the sun goes around it, you would believe it, right? It is easy to believe something when you do not know any differently. These people did not know any better, so they made up all sorts of stories about the world. Some believed that the earth was a huge plate-shaped disc that was carried on the back of an even bigger turtle!

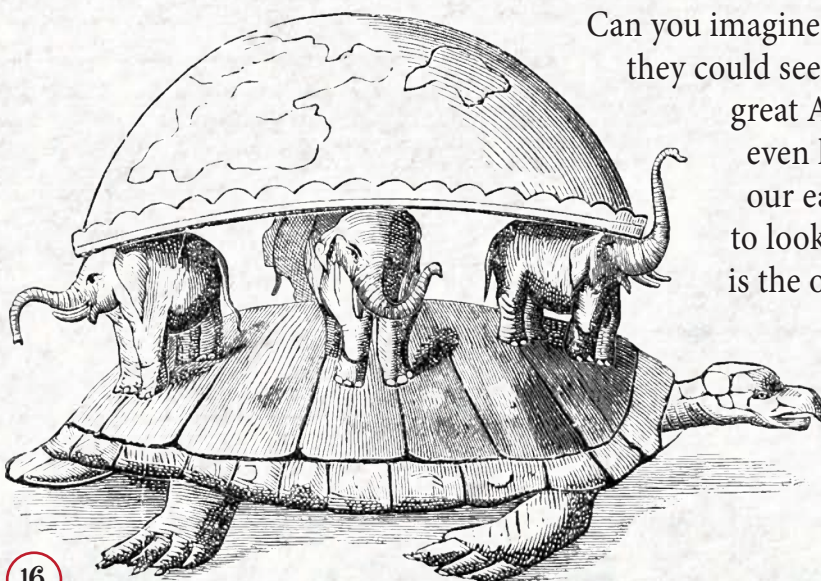
Other stories included being able to fall off of the earth if you went too far. Many people believed in giant sea monsters and dragons that could swallow whole ships. At that time, the very idea that you could set sail from Europe heading west and eventually come back around to your own continent, was a crazy thought! No one had ever done it before.

Can you imagine how surprised these people would be, if they could see our modern jet planes flying across the great Atlantic and Pacific Oceans? They did not even know that there are two huge oceans on our earth. Let's take a few minutes right now to look at a globe. Find the Atlantic Ocean; it is the ocean that lies between the continents of

Europe and Africa, and North and South America. Now spin your globe or look at your map at the other side of the Americas. That huge area of water you see is the Pacific Ocean.



SPHERE: an object having a round, solid, 3-dimensional shape like a ball.



Viking
ship
replica



Living around this time, in the countries of Norway and Sweden, was a tribe of sailing men. You may have heard their name before; they were called the Vikings. They were fierce people who believed in many gods. In this way, they were not unlike the Native American people about whom we have learned.

There are many varying stories about these people. Over the years, many of these stories have turned into legends. Legends are stories that are somewhat true with no one really knowing which parts are fairy tale and which

parts are factual. We do know that a Viking man named Leif Ericson “discovered” North America around A.D. 1000. This story has been passed down for many generations.

NARRATION BREAK

Tell what you have learned so far about what people thought the world looked like.

Leif Ericson
Discovers America



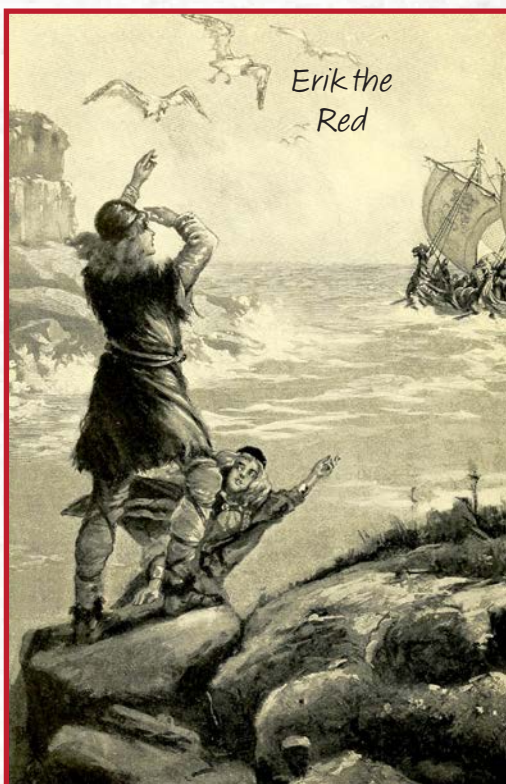
Among the Vikings, there lived a man named Erik the Red. He was even more fierce and worse tempered than the other Vikings. In fact, he was so ill-tempered, he was expelled from the country of Norway for picking fights! Erik moved his family to *Iceland*, where he built a farm. They lived peacefully for a while, but again, Erik's temper got the best of him. Again, he was punished and forced to leave for picking more fights.



This time, Erik decided to move to a place where he could live by himself with just his family. He chose to live in *Greenland*. When I was a young girl, I used to be very confused about Greenland and Iceland. I thought it was strange that Greenland is mostly ice, and Iceland is very green. Erik the Red chose Greenland because it was so icy, and he thought nobody else would want to live there. He wanted to be by himself with just his family. They called their new home in Greenland, Brattali.

Erik the Red had three sons. We are going to get to know his youngest son, Leif, a little better, for he is an important person to our country's history. Thankfully, Leif did not inherit his father's bad temper! He was a curious young boy, but he had a much more gentle spirit. As he grew, he became a wiser and more self-controlled man than his father was.

When Leif, who became known as Leif Ericson (also spelled "Erickson," "Ericcson," or "Erikson") grew up, he decided to sail back to Norway. He had heard of a wise and powerful king named Olav, who ruled in Norway at that time, and he wanted to meet him. While Leif was in Norway, he was converted to Christianity by King Olav, who indeed was a good man.



On his return voyage, Leif became lost in a fog storm and was blown off course for several days. When the fog cleared, he could see that he was nowhere near his icy home of Greenland. Instead, he was in sight of a place he had never seen before! This land had beautiful trees and thick vegetation.

Leif and his men went ashore to explore. What they found was the most remarkable land they had ever seen. There were wild berries and grapes growing everywhere, and the wild animals were plentiful. There was such abundance that they named this new land, Vinland or Wineland. They stayed and explored this land for several months.

When Leif and his men returned to Greenland, they told everyone about this strange and wonderful new land. Leif also told them about the new God, whom he had learned about in Norway. Erik the Red was not happy that his son did not worship the old Viking gods anymore, but Leif's mother soon became a Christian. This made Leif very happy.

Soon, other members of Leif's family decided to go to this new land that Leif had told them about. Within a few months, there were over one hundred people who had moved to Vinland. These Vikings had a big surprise though! They soon found that they were not the only inhabitants of this land. Remember the Native Americans we learned about in the last chapter? That is right — Vinland was actually the northeastern coast of North America!

At first, the Native Americans were friendly, but soon they realized that these pale-skinned, blue-eyed visitors thought that they owned this land. Fighting broke out between them, and the Vikings were outnumbered. They decided to return to their homes in Greenland where they had lived peacefully.

There, Leif became the new leader of his family after his father's death. It is said that the Norsemen (another name for Vikings) returned to North America to harvest trees and other natural resources, but none of them actually lived there again. As years passed, and generations came and went, the new land was all but forgotten.

The only memory of this land was kept alive through the legends and tales, which were told around the fires at night and passed down from generation to generation. North America was to remain a land shrouded in mystery for five hundred more years. However, God had a plan for the great continent, the future home of the United States of America.



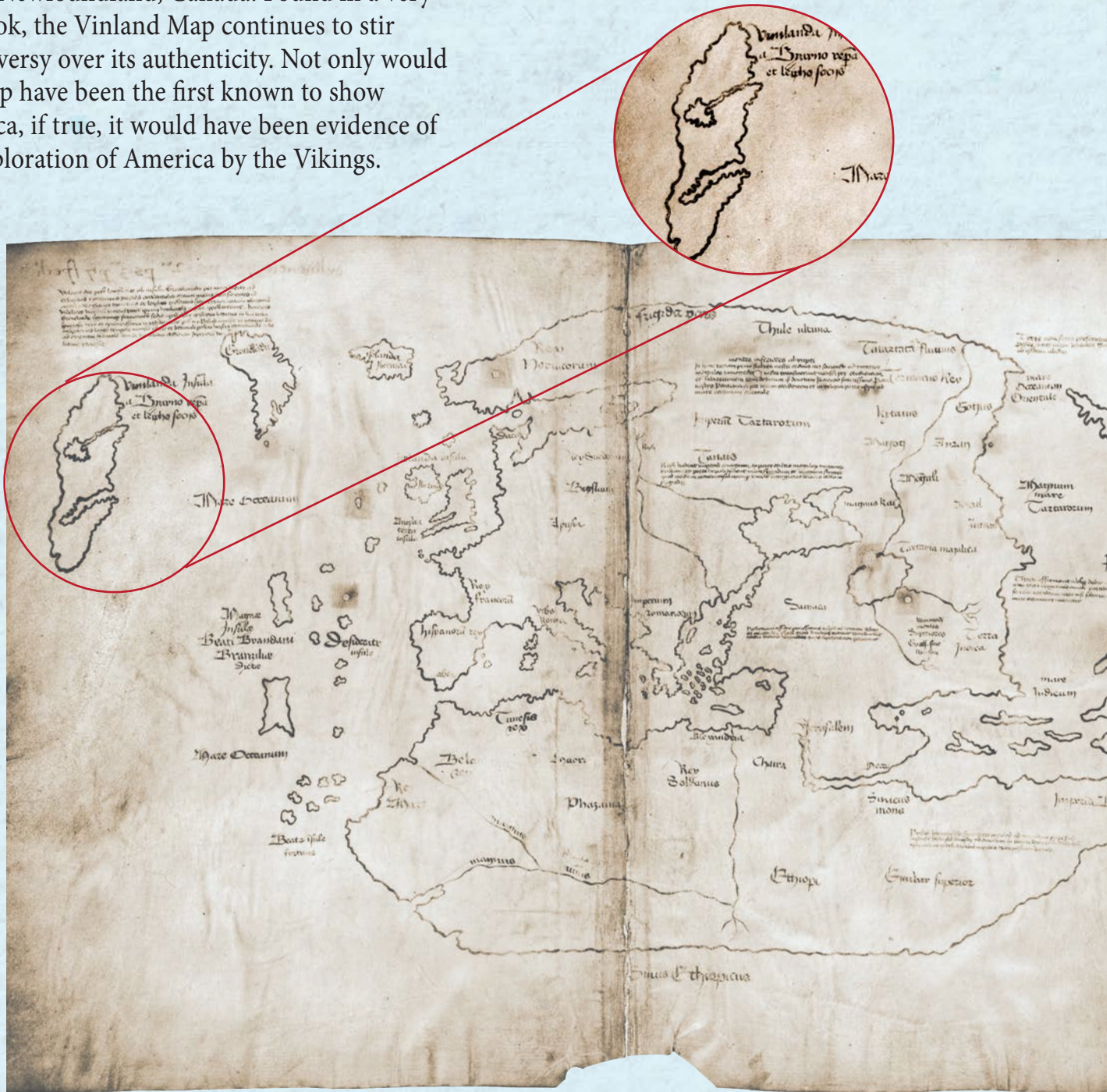
The last of the stalwartmen of the Great Dragon plunged into the sea.

NARRATION BREAK

*Retell the story of Leif Ericson,
the Christian Viking.*

THE VINLAND MAP

Fact or Fake? The Vinland Map caused a sensation when it was discovered in 1957, interestingly before the discovery of a Norse site in Newfoundland, Canada. Found in a very old book, the Vinland Map continues to stir controversy over its authenticity. Not only would the map have been the first known to show America, if true, it would have been evidence of the exploration of America by the Vikings.



There are few archaeological clues to how much of the Americas that the Vikings may have explored. Vinland is mentioned for the first time in a historical text written around 1075, and reveals that the name was connected to the abundance of grapes that grow there. It was described as an abundant land beyond which were no islands, just constant fog and ice.

HISTORICAL TIME PERIODS



Historians divide up the history of the world into time periods. There are a lot of different periods, but the simplest ones are:

4004 BC to 3600 BC

PREHISTORIC

A period before written history

3600 BC to 500 AD

ANCIENT HISTORY



Begins with the first written records and ends with destruction of several large empires



500 AD to 1500 AD

MEDIEVAL HISTORY

Also known as the Middle Ages when studying about Europe

1500 AD to Today

MODERN HISTORY

From the end of the Medieval period up to the present day



Historians and cartographers (people who draw and study maps) continue to debate various positions of whether or not the map is a fake or real, as they study the parchment, ink, lettering, marks, and other details.

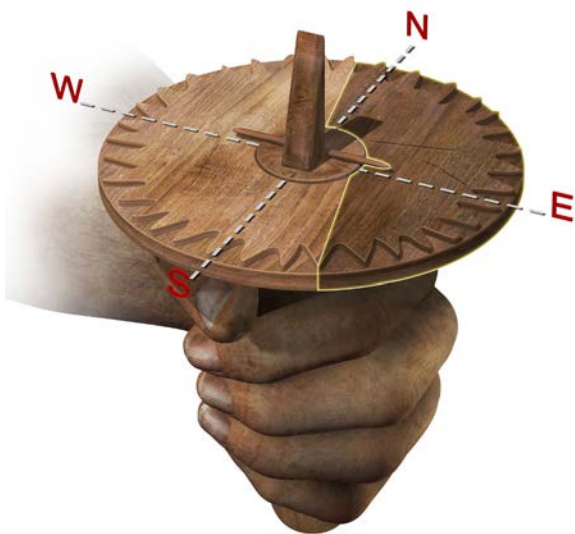
Church of Hvalsey, the best-preserved Nordic ruins in Greenland.



HOW DID THEY NAVIGATE?

Sailing across the ocean required strong navigational skills – but how did the Vikings do that? There have been hints of something called a sunstone in their sagas, the tales of great adventure and history, which helped sailors find the sun on cloudy days. Some feel these sunstones were a mineral, possibly Icelandic spar. ▶

An illustration of a Viking sundial, possibly used to navigate; the design is developed from a fragment found in Greenland in 1948. ▼



In addition to a possible sunstone, the Vikings could have used other clues to help find their way:

- The sun in relation to the horizon – how high or low
- Features of the coastlines
- Directions found in their sagas or narratives
- Weather patterns of rain or wind or even storms in certain areas

Crops were grown, homes were built, businesses thrived, as well as beautiful crafted items like clothing, swords, combs, musical instruments, and jewelry — artifacts of which have all been found.

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HOW DID VIKINGS LIVE ON LAND?

Trelleborg ▶

Reconstructed long house
in the Viking Museum in
Borg, Norway ▼

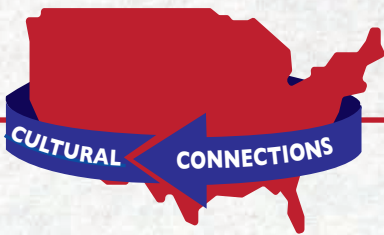


The Norse had a form of government and a social order — royal families, clan chieftains who were landowners and of noble blood, freemen who were owned smaller farms, or skilled craftsmen like shipbuilders or fishermen. At the bottom of the social order were the slaves. Many extended family groups lived together in large groups.

Example of a Viking ring fortress ▼



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Although the Age of the Vikings ended almost a hundred years before European explorers (whom you will learn about in our next chapter) set foot on the continents of North and South America, they still have an immense impact on our culture here in the United States of America. The Vikings not only came to North America and created settlements, but they also traveled broadly all over Europe. Some of their interactions with the peoples in these countries were friendly and productive to both parties, but many of them were raids. As we learned in this chapter, the Vikings were known for their pillaging and stealing! When they raided these countries, they sometimes overthrew the leaders and government, setting up their rulers instead. After centuries of this behavior, the Vikings had successfully planted themselves in England and France, spreading the influence of their Scandinavian culture and creating whole new family lines with all new mixed English/Viking and French/Viking surnames (last names). Years later, when the settlers from those European countries settled in America, they brought all of those customs and words with them! We can thank the Vikings for these words, which we still commonly use.

Club — a heavy wooden, blunt weapon.

Ransack — to rip a house/room apart in search of something.

Law — a rule meant for all people to follow.

Bug — an insect.

Reindeer — a large antlered mammal.

Dirt — the common ingredient of the ground.

Rotten — decay.

Did you know that you speak Norse (Viking)?



A Sami family in Norway, 1896. The Sami are a native people group that had interactions with the Vikings. Some involved trade, marriages, or even conflict.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

1 and 2. We learned in Chapter 2 that the ancients held the belief that the earth was the center of the universe. It is easy to see why they believed this — after all, we can't feel the earth moving as it spins and turns its way around the sun! It does indeed feel like the earth is the center with all other planets and stars circling around and around us.