

Mr. Aitken*Washington State History*

- How and when did humans first get here?

Land Bridge Theory

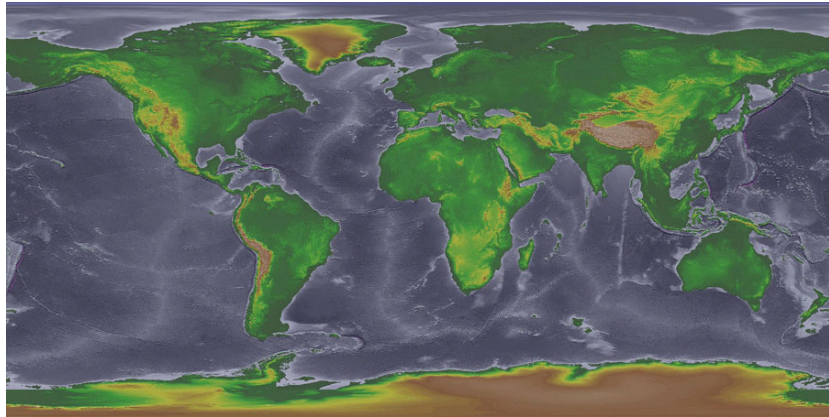
- The theory that humans crossed from Asia to the Americas by a land route thousands of years ago when the sea level was lower.

Land Bridge Theory

- If you look at a common map, Asia and the Americas look a long way apart.
- If you look at a globe, you can see how close Siberia (northern Russia) and Alaska actually are.

Land Bridge Theory*Beringia*

- The water between Siberia and Alaska is called the Bering Strait.
- The Bering Strait is only 160' deep. Part of it is only 35' deep.
- About 20,000 years ago, the sea level was about 390' lower than current sea level.



Land Bridge Theory

Beringia

- "*Beringia*" is the name of the land area that existed when the sea level was lower.



Land Bridge Theory

Beringia

- During the last ice age, the sea levels lowered.
- A lot of earth's water was piled up as snow, ice and glaciers on land.
- This left less water in the oceans.

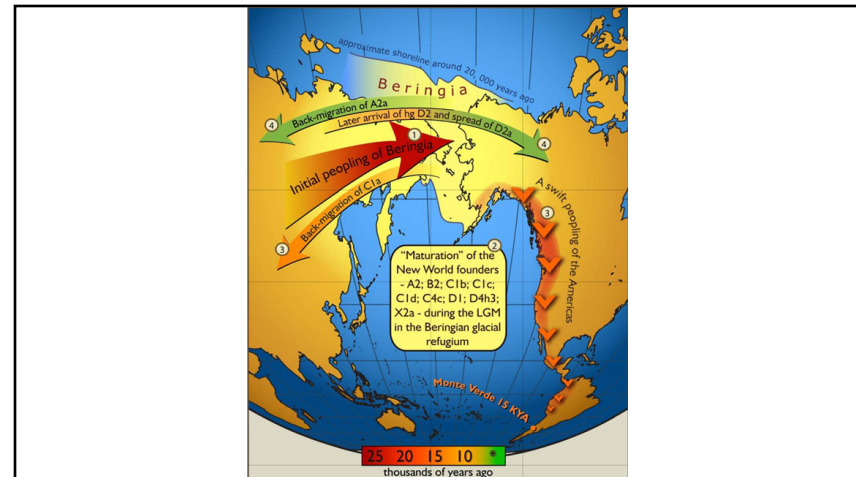
Land Bridge Theory *Beringia*

- Archeological evidence shows that a wide variety of plants and animals inhabited Beringia, beginning about 55,000 years ago.
- Hunter-gatherers from Asia were able to hunt, and gather plants and water in Beringia.



Land Bridge Theory *Beringia*

- About 25,000 years ago, ice sheets formed on both sides of Beringia.
- This trapped the people who had migrated there for about 5,000 years.
- Once ice retreated, people were once again able to cross back and forth.



Land Bridge Theory

Beringia

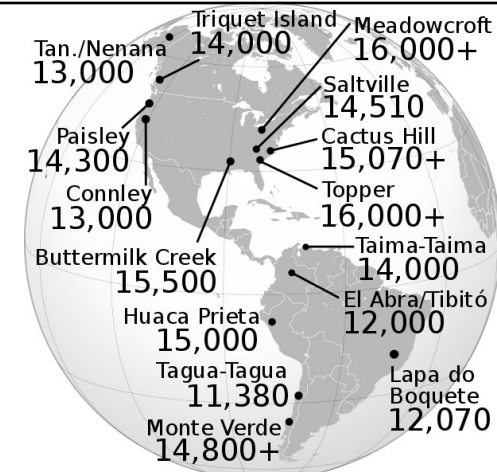
- Temperatures on earth began to rise, leading to an end to the last ice age.
- As ice, snow, and glaciers melted, sea levels began to rise.
- Rising sea levels formed the Bearing Strait, and cut off migration about 10,000 years ago.

Early Indians

- DNA evidence indicates that humans trapped on Beringia split into at least 3 distinct groups.
- These groups migrated into different parts of the Americas at different times.

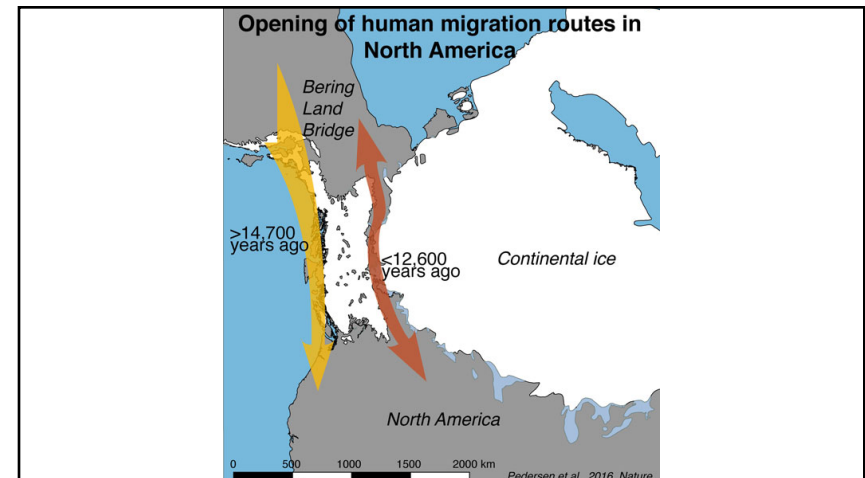
Early Indians

- Human skeletal remains have been found all over the Americas.
- Some of these are around 16,000 years old.
- These were the first early Indians, called *Paleo-Indians*.



Migration South

- Different theories exist to explain how and when Paleo-Indians migrated down into the North American continent.
- Some could have traveled down the coast using kayaks or boats.
- Some could have migrated over land by foot.



Migration South

- Archeological evidence indicates a viable land route wasn't open until about 12,500 years ago.
- If so, the very earliest Paleo-Indians probably traveled down the coast by boat, bypassing the ice sheets.

Migration South

- Scientists and archeologists revise and update these theories as they discover new evidence.