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## Vikings Report

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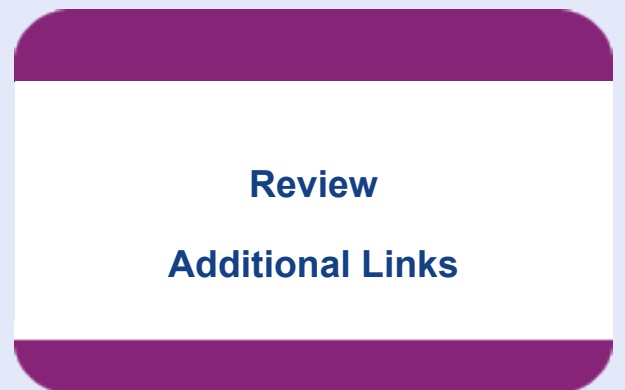
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[Updated 1/30/08]

### Vikings Summary

*The Urantia Book* states that the Native Americans of North America did not come in contact with the white Europeans until about 1000 A.D. When it was published in 1955, this was a contested issue because no artifacts or other physical evidence of the presence of the white race in the Americas existed from this time period. The story of Christopher Columbus discovering America in 1492 was the predominant theory.

A small minority of scholars professed a belief, based on writings from around 1300 A.D., that the Vikings landed in North America around 1000 A.D. When a Viking settlement was excavated at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, Canada in the 1960's, the issue was finally put to rest. There is now extensive archeological evidence from numerous sites that the Vikings arrived in North America around 1000 A.D and were in contact with the Native Americans.




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## Vikings Review

Prior to the publication of *The Urantia Book* in 1955, there was a controversy among scholars regarding when Europeans first came to the American continent. *The Urantia Book's* position on the subject is unequivocal. It supports what was then the minority position, but which is now considered by most all scholars to be historically accurate.

Regarding when the white race first made it to the North American continent, *The Urantia Book* states that the Native Americans in North America:

. . . remained almost completely isolated from the remainder of the world from their arrival in the Americas down to the end of the first millennium of the Christian era, when they were discovered by the white races of Europe. Up to that time the Eskimos were the nearest to white men the northern tribes of red men had ever seen.<sup>1</sup>

Excepting the Eskimos in North America and a few Polynesian Andites in South America, the peoples of the Western Hemisphere had no contact with the rest of the

world until the end of the first millennium after Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The predominant perspective in 1955 was that Columbus made the first successful voyage to the American continent in 1492 A.D.

However, there was also a minority opinion, asserting that Leif Eriksson and crew arrived by boat around 1000 A.D and established a settlement. Concerning the medieval time period from about the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, this white race of Europeans is commonly referred to as the Vikings. Vikings are also known as Norsemen, which means "people of the North," and were primarily from south and central Scandinavia. "They established states and settlements in areas which today are part of the Faroe Islands, England, Scotland, Wales, Iceland, Finland, Ireland, Russia, Italy, Canada, Greenland, France, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Germany."<sup>3</sup>

There was not much evidence to support the theory (before it was proven in the 1960's) that the Vikings settled in Canada. The written records, referred to as "sagas," were not created until after the story of the Vikings arrival and settlement in North America had been passed down by oral tradition for several hundred years.

Despite many years of searching the coastline from New England to Labrador, no evidence of a Viking settlement or any Norse artifact was ever found. Consequently, some historians doubted the sagas were true. They began to believe the thirteenth century writers had exaggerated the tales of Viking exploration and discovery. They also believed the famous Vinland map, a medieval-style map of the Old World found in 1440, was really a fake.<sup>4</sup>



Controversy around the authenticity of the map still exists. The map never received widespread public attention until it was acquired by Yale University and made public in 1965. Yale had tests performed in an effort to establish the authenticity of the map, which they felt they had verified when they made the public announcement. The sagas, not the map, were the basis for the minority position regarding whether the Vikings had arrived in North America hundreds of years before Columbus. By the time the map was made public, development of the archeological site in Canada, that has essentially put the issue to rest, had already started.

The map is a very intriguing topic in its own rite, even though a bit off topic. Readers who want to study this topic in greater depth can do so by reviewing the relevant links provided in the Raw Data section associated with this report.

Regardless of whether or not the map is genuine, it has been independently proven to general satisfaction that Greenland was settled by Vikings around 970, a settlement which lasted until the fifteenth century. In regard to the Americas, the archaeological finds in L'Anse aux Meadows in present day Newfoundland, Canada (exactly where the 16th century Icelandic scholar who drew the so-called Skálholt Map estimated Vinland to have been) show that there was a Viking settlement which, while admittedly unsuccessful and short-lived, predates by five centuries John Cabot's landing on the North American continental mainland in 1497.<sup>5</sup>



From the Smithsonian Institute website:

In 1992 school children across America celebrated the Quincentenary--the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyage to the New World, yet few teachers or their students probably took note of the earlier episode of European contact in the New World. A recent exhibition at the National Museum of Natural History, *Vikings: the North Atlantic Saga*, focuses attention on this earlier "discovery of America" and the wider contributions of the Vikings and their Norse descendants, who continue to inhabit North Atlantic regions into the modern day.

The exhibition provides the first comprehensive treatment of Norse exploration and settlement of the North Atlantic region between 860 and 1500, illuminating new research in archaeology, history and the natural sciences that is transforming our understanding of the Vikings and their impact on history. *Vikings: The North Atlantic Sage* tells the story of "West-Vikings," the hardy Norse who settled the Faeroes, Iceland, and Greenland, and from there traveled west to the North American lands they called Helluland (Baffin Island), Markland (Labrador, and Vinland (Newfoundland). The dramatic story of the Viking expansion across the North Atlantic is a chapter of North American history that deserves to be more widely known."<sup>6</sup>

The exhibit could not be more timely. Even today, Leif Eriksson remains at best a shadowy figure, mentioned only in passing in textbook accounts of the early history of North America. Fortunately, his exploits were passed down as oral literature for more than two hundred years, then were written down in the 13th century by Viking descendants in Iceland, in the *Saga of the Greenlanders* and *Erik the Red's Saga*. For generations, most historians discounted these sagas as valid sources, but in 1960 the discovery of the Norse settlement in northern Newfoundland changed the world's view of the Vikings in North America. An earlier *AnthroNotes* article, "Vinland Revisited: 986-1986," by Alison S. Brooks, offered a detailed description of these saga accounts and the archaeological evidence supporting Norse settlement in the New World:

For years, archaeologists searched for the original location of the Vinland settlement from Nantucket to Labrador. Finally, in 1960, at L'Anse aux Meadows on the northern tip of Newfoundland, a Norwegian archaeologist, Helge Ingstad, discovered remains of three long sod houses on a sheltered harbor, on land visited both by ancestral Eskimos before the Norse era, and by Indians. Greenland Norse houses had stone foundations. But these New World houses lacked such foundations and so could be explained as temporary dwellings. Furthermore, one of five small outbuildings contained a small amount of slag from an iron smithing operation. Radiocarbon determinations of charcoal associated with the slag suggest an age of around A.D. 1000. Over 100 objects of European manufacture were unearthed; a spindle whorl attests to the weaving of wool and to the presence of women. A cloak pin of bronze, a material unknown to Native Americans, was similar in style to those found in Viking settlements of the

British Isles. Finally, some wooden floorboards from a boat indicate directly the presence of Norse ships. The authentication of the L'Anse aux Meadows site as a Norse settlement of brief duration has been widely accepted by archaeologists (1986:4).

Since Brooks wrote her summary account in 1986, even more Viking objects have been found in archaeological sites from northern Maine to the High Arctic, indicating a wide zone of Norse activity and revealing a pattern of Norse exploration and native contacts that lasted for nearly 500 years.<sup>7</sup>

A brief, though extensively detailed, account of the discovery at L'Anse aux Meadows can be found on a webpage titled: Elementary Themes, *Discovering Vikings at L'Anse aux Meadows*.<sup>8</sup> For the sake of brevity and because these details are readily available by going to the website referenced in footnote 8, this additional information is not being provided as part of the Vikings Report. As well, these details of the find do not add anything to the fundamental importance and credibility of this archeological discovery that has not already been offered in the quote from the Smithsonian Institute website.

However, this site does note the following with regard to Viking interaction with the Native Americans:

As Leif's brother and his followers discovered, Vinland was already inhabited. According to the sagas, conflicts between the Vikings and the native people were not unusual. The Vikings usually found themselves outnumbered. Several deaths on both sides are recorded in the sagas.<sup>9</sup>

The Smithsonian Institute article similarly supports *The Urantia Book's* assertion that a "white race" of Europeans not only arrived in North America around 1000 A.D., but also had contact with the Native American population.

#### THE EXHIBITION

Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga focuses on the Vikings' little-known North Atlantic story, the inspiring tale of Viking sea-faring farmers who made the North Atlantic a Norse "lake" for one thousand years. It includes those who settled down and maintained a vibrant Christian Norse society in Greenland for 500 years, and those who explored and settled briefly in northeastern North America and maintained contacts with Native American Indians and Inuit for four hundred years before Columbus arrived in the Caribbean. None of this history is well known to North Americans or to Europeans because the historical and scientific evidence documenting this West-Viking story has only just begun to be published. New studies, including literary research into the Viking sagas, archaeological excavations of Norse and Native sites, and historical and environmental research, bring to life an exciting new picture of a western Atlantic portion of the Viking world that has until recently been neglected and unknown.

Notwithstanding that contemporary culture has been slow to appreciate what is now widely accepted by scholarship, the information provided on this subject in *The Urantia Book* has proven to be correct. What was a minority position in 1955, when *The Urantia Book* was published, is now embraced by the vast majority of scholars in this field.

#### Footnotes:

- 1) [UB 79:5.7](#) This mode of citation to *The Urantia Book* provides the chapter (referred to as "Papers" in *The Urantia Book*), then the section, followed by the paragraph number.
- 2) [UB 79:5.9](#) "Andites" is a term invented by the authors of *The Urantia Book* to designate a race that is not purely descended from Adam and Eve, but does have a significant inheritance from them. See the [Adam and Eve Report](#) concerning genetics research published in 2006 that has numerous correlations to *The Urantia Book's* recounting of this aspect of human history. The part of *The Urantia Book* that extensively covers this material can be found in Papers 73-80, especially Papers 78-80.
- 3) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norsemen> Wikipedia.
- 4) [http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v\\_lanse\\_1.htm](http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v_lanse_1.htm)
- 5) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinland\\_map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinland_map)
- 6) <http://anthropology.si.edu/outreach/anthnote/Fall00/anthnote.html>

- 7) <http://anthropology.si.edu/outreach/anthnote/Fall00/anthnote.html>, Brooks, Alison. 1986. "Vinland' Revisited: 986-1986." *AnthroNotes*, 8 (winter):1-4,14.
- 8) [http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v\\_lanse\\_3.htm](http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v_lanse_3.htm)
- 9) [http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v\\_lanse\\_6.htm](http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v_lanse_6.htm)

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## Vikings Additional Links

UB 79:5.6-9

[http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v\\_lanse\\_1.htm](http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/v_lanse_1.htm) encapsulated history

<http://anthropology.si.edu/outreach/anthnote/Fall00/anthnote.html> major report

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vinland/> extensive NOVA analysis of the map

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/07/30/tech/main516827.shtml> regarding map authenticity

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinland\\_map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinland_map)

<http://www.mnh.si.edu/vikings/1137.html>

<http://www.infohub.com/Articles/20000327.html>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/856709.stm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norse\\_colonization\\_of\\_the\\_Americas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norse_colonization_of_the_Americas)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27Anse\\_aux\\_Meadows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27Anse_aux_Meadows)

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