

Northeast Asia (Siberia) is generally accepted by anthropologists as the place from which the ancestral Native American (Paleoindian) stock originated. The Paleoindian hunter-gatherers, either individually or in small groups took advantage of the land bridge that connected Siberia and what is today the continent of North America. The bridge resulted from sea level lowering occasioned by large volumes of water being locked up in the extensive and thick Pleistocene ice sheet that blanketed the northern portion of North America. Thomas Jefferson, 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States, suggested a northeast Asia source for the Paleoindians when he noted the physical resemblance between the Asian peoples and North American Indians. Recent genetic studies support that assessment. With respect to arrival time of the Paleoindians on North American soil, genetic evidence suggests that it occurred sometime between 20,000 and 12,000 years before the present (BP). The actual date has been conjectured to be nearer the more recent one. Archaeologists and anthropologists have used the abundance of the radioactive <sup>14</sup>C isotope in organic remains from human habitations as a measure of the time elapsed between the arrival of humans at a site and the present. The radiocarbon method has dated remains at a site in New Mexico as 11,000 BP and at a site in what is now southern Michigan as 9,000-10,000 BP. Numerous sites in southern Michigan indicate that the Indians there were hunting the large elephant—like mastodon as late as 7,000 BP. Genetic data also support the Carbon dating results. Dates much earlier than the 13,000 BP for entry of Paleoindians to North America have been proposed (32,000 BP for a site in Brazil) however the earlier dates are largely unconfirmed and the date of 20,000 BP appears to represent an early limit.

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