

ARCHAEOLOGY

Indians Antedate Eskimos

► THERE were Indians living in the United States long before the first Eskimos of the North American continent.

This revolutionary finding, completely reversing the long-held opinion that the Eskimos came first and the Indians were derived from them, was presented to the National Academy of Sciences meeting in Schenectady, N. Y., at the new General Electric laboratory by Dr. William A. Ritchie, archaeologist for the State of New York at Albany.



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Eskimo culture, as shown by radioactive carbon dates, is "immensely younger" than that of the early Indians of New York and other parts of the United States, Dr. Ritchie reported. The radioactive carbon dates were determined through the radiocarbon atomic calendar which Dr. William F. Libby of the University of Chicago reported to the Academy meeting.

The Eskimos are not older than about 1,000 years. Pre-Indians of New York State lived there at least 5,000 years ago. Some Eskimo culture was derived from those early Indians.

Dr. Ritchie's finding does not change the idea that America was populated from Asia via the Bering straits. It does mean that these first Americans came over the Bering straits much earlier than the Eskimos as we know them now and as they are known from the earliest archaeological evidence.

The radiocarbon dates for the Eskimos and the earlier Indians were set from radioactive carbon found in remains of things used by these peoples, and from bones and the charcoal of their fires.

Science News Letter, October 28, 1950

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