

**Volume 19**

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**History's Turning Points (6): Who Really Discovered America? – II**

**Lead: Historical study often helps reveal twists in the human journey. Consider history's turning points: who really discovered America.**

***Intro: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts***

**Content: Setting aside legendary, ethnic, and national enthusiasts, there are basically three candidates in the race for European discovery of the Western Hemisphere. Prior to the voyages of Columbus, who clearly laid the groundwork for the genocidal**

**destruction of native-American culture and the colonization by Europeans of the western isles, the second group to settle parts of America were Norsemen from Scandinavia. Until the 1800s, most scholars confined the Norse sagas firmly to the realm of legend. Then archeological discoveries made it clear that part of their narrative was true. The first to land in the West was Bjani Herjolfsson who missed his landing on Greenland and briefly touched Labrador. He shared his discovery with Leif Ericson, and in several attempts the Vikings tried to settle the flat, wooded country they called Vineland, but the Norse were not colonizers. They lacked the capital necessary to establish permanent settlements and soon cold, wolves, and**

**hostile natives caused them to abandon their attempts after about a dozen years.**

**To find the real Eurasian discoverers of America you have to go back to the Stone Age, when hunter gatherers, probably in search of game, sometime between 15,000 to 60,000 BCE crossed what was then the narrow tree-less Bering land bridge between present-day Russia and Alaska. It took probably another 1000 years for these explorers and their descendants to work their way south and east to become the original inhabitants or discoverers of North and South America.**

# **At the University of Richmond's School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I'm Dan Roberts.**

## **Resources**

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