

1

00:00:00,732 --> 00:00:10,728

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:10,728 --> 00:00:20,724

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

3

00:00:30,720 --> 00:00:37,718

In the year 986, a Viking ship penetrated arctic ice guarding the coast of an unknown land.

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00:00:43,715 --> 00:00:46,714

The frigid waters teemed with life.

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00:00:49,713 --> 00:00:56,710

A Viking colony was established at the very edge of the known world, in a country the settlers named Greenland.

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00:00:57,710 --> 00:01:02,708

Three and a half centuries later, a ship from Europe put into the settlement.

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00:01:02,708 --> 00:01:08,706

The sailors found the colony empty, abandoned, desolate.

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00:01:08,706 --> 00:01:11,704

Why had the Viking settlers vanished?

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00:01:27,698 --> 00:01:30,697

A bronze warrior marks the saga's beginning.

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00:01:30,697 --> 00:01:38,694

A thousand years ago, Eric the Red led a fleet of Viking ships from this Icelandic harbor west into the unknown sea.

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00:01:38,694 --> 00:01:42,692

It is a story that ends in mystery.

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00:01:46,691 --> 00:01:53,688

History's tides have swept past man's fainter tracks, leaving only scattered patterns that seem to lead nowhere.

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00:01:53,688 --> 00:01:57,687

Time has almost obliterated the adventures of one particular man.

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00:01:59,686 --> 00:02:06,683

Eric the Red was an old-style Viking, earthy, wild, fiercely independent.

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00:02:06,683 --> 00:02:12,681

Ten centuries ago in Norway, Eric killed some king's men in a bloody fight.

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00:02:12,681 --> 00:02:14,680

He fled to Iceland.

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00:02:15,680 --> 00:02:18,678

He found the land already settled.

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00:02:19,678 --> 00:02:24,676

Then, as now, its people were sheep farmers and fishermen.

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00:02:24,676 --> 00:02:32,673

They had recently become Christians, and with the zeal of converts built churches over the holy sites of their pagan days.

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00:02:32,673 --> 00:02:40,670

The cults of the Old Norse faith were savagely suppressed, but Eric the Red continued to worship the Norse god Thor.

21

00:02:41,670 --> 00:02:46,668

July 1978.

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00:02:46,668 --> 00:02:52,665

A small crowd gathers at a solitary farm in a rural district of western Iceland.

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00:02:52,665 --> 00:02:58,663

They have come to witness secret rites banned since the days of Eric the Red.

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00:02:59,663 --> 00:03:05,660

Svendjorn Bintyne has revived the Old pagan faith.

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00:03:05,660 --> 00:03:10,658

His followers call him Allshärja Godi, High Priest.

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00:03:10,658 --> 00:03:15,656

We have old gods in our religion.

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00:03:15,656 --> 00:03:22,654

Our Vikings, the Old Vikings, they are the gods of the Old pagan faith.

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00:03:22,654 --> 00:03:31,650

They asked the spirit, sea god, and battle god, fight god, and they will celebrate and we drink for your health.

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00:03:31,650 --> 00:03:34,649

This is a Thor's hammer.

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00:03:34,649 --> 00:03:38,647

Thor's hammer symbolized the Old Norse faith.

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00:03:38,647 --> 00:03:43,646

It represented a thunderbolt, a mystic sign venerated by the gods.

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00:03:43,646 --> 00:03:51,642

Svendjorn Bintyne leads his followers into a mountain sanctuary far from the roads and towns of modern Iceland.

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00:04:14,634 --> 00:04:20,631

The Vikings worship the primal forces of nature.

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00:04:20,631 --> 00:04:27,628

Chief Deity was the sky god, ruler of storms, wielder of thunderbolts.

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00:04:27,628 --> 00:04:34,626

After ten centuries of suppression, a horn of mead is once again offered to mighty Thor.

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00:04:57,617 --> 00:05:05,614

On the plain near Thingvalir Falls, the past is celebrated.

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00:05:05,614 --> 00:05:11,611

Modern Icelandic farmers assemble as their ancestors did in the summer of 982.

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00:05:11,611 --> 00:05:15,610

Horses are judged today.

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00:05:15,610 --> 00:05:21,608

A thousand summers ago, the Vikings were the first to gather in the country.

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00:05:21,608 --> 00:05:26,606

The Norse freemen gathered here to politic, to settle disputes.

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00:05:26,606 --> 00:05:32,603

Times were changing, life was becoming more orderly, civilized.

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00:05:32,603 --> 00:05:37,601

That spring, Eric's axe had swung in another bloody brawl.

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00:05:37,601 --> 00:05:41,600

Eric the Red was outlawed.

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00:05:41,600 --> 00:05:45,598

Eric fled.

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00:05:45,598 --> 00:05:50,596

He sailed with his horse and went to the river.

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00:05:50,596 --> 00:05:56,594

He sailed west, west into the unknown.

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00:05:56,594 --> 00:06:05,590

From northern mists loomed a massive island, ice-bound, uninhabitable, but for a narrow strip of land on its southwest coast.

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00:06:05,590 --> 00:06:12,588

Here, Eric's people settled, optimistically calling their new home Greenland.

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00:06:12,588 --> 00:06:18,585

They homesteaded, building houses and barns and closing pastures and fields.

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00:06:18,585 --> 00:06:23,584

But even in Greenland, Eric the Red did not find complete refuge.

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00:06:23,584 --> 00:06:27,582

Eric's wife raised Greenland's first church.

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00:06:27,582 --> 00:06:31,580

She barred Eric from their home until he agreed to give up pagan ways.

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00:06:31,580 --> 00:06:37,578

But evidence suggests the old Vikings' conversion was not complete.

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00:06:37,578 --> 00:06:41,577

Greenland's fjords could not sustain the colony.

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00:06:41,577 --> 00:06:43,576

Crops would not grow.

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00:06:43,576 --> 00:06:47,574

The land's wealth was to be reaped only in its wilderness.

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00:06:47,574 --> 00:06:55,571

Small groups of Norse hunters fanned out through a vast expanse.

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00:06:55,571 --> 00:07:11,565

Arctic seas soon wrecked their long ships, but they pressed on in small open boats on voyages that must have lasted years.

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00:07:11,565 --> 00:07:23,560

Music

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00:07:23,560 --> 00:07:27,559

Rarely were European ships able to journey to distant Greenland.

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00:07:27,559 --> 00:07:33,556

Years elapsed between visits, but a few arctic treasures lured traders to venture west.

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00:07:33,556 --> 00:07:36,555

One of those treasures was the Jire Falcon.

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00:07:36,555 --> 00:07:41,633

The sultans in Caliph offered coffers of gold for a live Greenland Falcon.

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00:07:41,633 --> 00:07:46,551

Arab court geographers told them this fierce and most valuable hunting bird came from

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00:07:46,551 --> 00:07:52,549

world's end, from the fabled Ultima Tule, the land farthest north.

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00:07:59,546 --> 00:08:03,545

North's hunters pushed beyond the edge of the known world.

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00:08:06,544 --> 00:08:11,542

The great horned whale of the high Arctic.

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00:08:24,537 --> 00:08:29,535

In distant Europe, medieval alchemists sold the whale tusk as unicorn's horn,

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00:08:29,535 --> 00:08:32,533

ground into magical potions.

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00:08:33,533 --> 00:08:37,532

A single narwhal could make a hunter rich for life,

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00:08:37,532 --> 00:08:43,529

if he survived the vast uncharted wilderness and succeeded in making his way back to Greenland.

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00:08:45,528 --> 00:08:47,528

Few returned.

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00:08:49,527 --> 00:08:51,526

Fewer ships arrived from Europe.

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00:08:51,526 --> 00:08:57,524

The North's Greenlanders sank into ever deeper isolation and were lost to history,

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00:08:57,524 --> 00:09:00,523

except for a single brief reference.

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00:09:00,523 --> 00:09:05,521

In 1300, church annals noted that a Greenlander had been burned at the stake

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00:09:05,521 --> 00:09:08,520

for secretly practicing the old faith.

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00:09:08,520 --> 00:09:12,518

After that, there is only silence.

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00:09:14,517 --> 00:09:19,515

In the summer of 1342, a ship put into the western settlement.

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00:09:19,515 --> 00:09:26,513

It carried a bishop sent from Europe to investigate why the Greenlanders had fallen behind in their church tides.

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00:09:27,512 --> 00:09:31,511

The North's farms were empty, abandoned.

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00:09:31,511 --> 00:09:35,509

There was nothing else, no messages, no signs of life.

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00:09:35,509 --> 00:09:38,508

The settlers had simply vanished.

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00:09:38,508 --> 00:09:45,505

For the last 600 years, the fate of the North's Greenlanders has remained one of history's most baffling puzzles.

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00:09:45,505 --> 00:09:51,503

In 1921, archaeologists dug near Cape Farewell at Greenland's southern tip.

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00:09:51,503 --> 00:09:58,500

They found a church graveyard and the huddled remains of hunchbacks, dwarves, sterile cripples.

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00:09:58,500 --> 00:10:00,499

Was the mystery solved?

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00:10:00,499 --> 00:10:06,497

Had the North's colony died out from inbreeding and malnutrition, from severist cultural isolation?

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00:10:06,497 --> 00:10:15,494

At the cemetery's edge, pointing west toward America, was a coffin nearly seven feet long and empty.

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00:10:15,494 --> 00:10:22,491

The withered end of Eric's people were only the poor and weak left behind.

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00:10:31,487 --> 00:10:37,485

The search for the lost Vikings of Greenland leads us to the northern coasts of Canada.

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00:10:37,485 --> 00:10:41,483

Here, even in summer, Arctic seas rage.

93

00:10:41,483 --> 00:10:48,481

Travelers peer anxiously into the distance, looking for the signs of safe harbor that mean Pain Bay.

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00:10:52,479 --> 00:10:59,476

Pain Bay, swept by fierce tides, frigid, remote, yet teeming with life.

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00:10:59,476 --> 00:11:03,475

The richest caribou lands in Canada's eastern Arctic.

96

00:11:03,475 --> 00:11:08,473

Bear, trout, char, seal, and whale.

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00:11:08,473 --> 00:11:13,471

High above Pain Bay, visible at sea for many miles, stand three beacons.

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00:11:13,471 --> 00:11:19,469

It is believed they predate Columbus's first voyage to North America by centuries.

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00:11:19,469 --> 00:11:25,466

A 500-pound rock crowns 15 feet of carefully laid stone courses.

100

00:11:25,466 --> 00:11:31,464

Yet the primitive Eskimo who roamed here when these sea beacons were built were four feet tall

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00:11:31,464 --> 00:11:35,463

and lived in holes roofed with whale ribs and animal skins.

102

00:11:39,461 --> 00:11:44,459

Professor Thomas E. Lee of Quebec's Université Laval has spent 12 years

103

00:11:44,459 --> 00:11:48,457

seeking the builders of Pain Bay's curious ruins.

104

00:11:48,457 --> 00:11:52,456

Lee has developed a theory not accepted by some experts.

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00:11:55,455 --> 00:12:01,452

The modern Canadian Eskimo community of Pain Bay has proved a rich source of information

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00:12:01,452 --> 00:12:04,451

and has led Lee to develop his unique theory.

107

00:12:05,451 --> 00:12:07,450

Hello, Thomas Lee.

108

00:12:08,450 --> 00:12:14,447

Modern technology has overwhelmed the ancient lifestyle of the Inuit community.

109

00:12:14,447 --> 00:12:18,446

Where once the young learned the ways of the Eskimo from their fathers,

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00:12:18,446 --> 00:12:25,443

now state-run schools provide education and gradually the old ways are becoming dim memories.

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00:12:26,443 --> 00:12:32,440

Vaguely remembered are the legends of dwarves and giants that roam the land, the tunic.

112

00:12:39,438 --> 00:12:44,436

Legends that reach deeply into the Inuit past.

113

00:12:44,436 --> 00:12:47,435

This is my grandmother, Minnie Anahata.

114

00:12:47,435 --> 00:12:50,433

Her grandchild, Lolly Anahata.

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00:12:50,433 --> 00:12:57,431

Mrs. Minnie Anahata was born 79 years ago in the igloo of an Inuit winter hunting camp.

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00:13:01,429 --> 00:13:07,427

Professor Lee records tribal memories he believes date back nearly 800 years.

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00:13:07,427 --> 00:13:11,425

His parents, Anahata got this story from his parents

118

00:13:11,425 --> 00:13:16,423

and they got this story from the Inuit who lived in Sackluck.

119

00:13:16,423 --> 00:13:19,422

That's why they got this story.

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00:13:19,422 --> 00:13:21,421

And they could lift big stones.

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00:13:21,421 --> 00:13:25,420

Yes, they've heard that they were fairly strong.

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00:13:25,420 --> 00:13:27,419

And what kind of people were they?

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00:13:27,419 --> 00:13:30,418

There were two kinds.

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00:13:30,418 --> 00:13:34,416

Big and small one, even though small one they were still strong.

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00:13:34,416 --> 00:13:39,414

So there was almost a giant tunic and also the small tunics.

126

00:13:39,414 --> 00:13:42,413

You know why they were scared of hadlamas?

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00:13:42,413 --> 00:13:47,411

Because it was the first time they met hadlamas with white skin and boshi.

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00:13:50,410 --> 00:13:53,409

They were different than Inuit.

129

00:13:53,409 --> 00:13:56,408

They had different colors.

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00:13:56,408 --> 00:14:01,406

Maybe they had boshi eyebrows and etc.

131

00:14:01,406 --> 00:14:05,404

I first saw Pammy Ack Island in 1966.

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00:14:05,404 --> 00:14:09,403

I had two Eskimo or Inuit with me,

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00:14:09,403 --> 00:14:13,401

one of whom was an old man by the name of Zachari Ezi.

134

00:14:13,401 --> 00:14:16,400

I was born in the 19th century.

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00:14:16,400 --> 00:14:19,399

I was born in the 19th century.

136

00:14:19,399 --> 00:14:22,398

I was born in the 19th century.

137

00:14:22,398 --> 00:14:25,397

I was born in the 19th century.

138

00:14:25,397 --> 00:14:28,395

I was born in the 19th century.

139

00:14:28,395 --> 00:14:31,394

I was born by the name of Zachari Ezi.

140

00:14:32,394 --> 00:14:39,391

Professor Lee has made a series of spectacular discoveries in this seldom visited region of Arctic Canada.

141

00:14:39,391 --> 00:14:44,389

He believes that he has identified the legendary tunic.

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00:14:44,389 --> 00:14:48,388

Near the Payne River's mouth lies Pammy Ack Island.

143

00:14:48,388 --> 00:14:54,385

When I first saw it was in a wild and beautiful setting in sort of an amphitheater.

144

00:14:54,385 --> 00:14:59,383

It was extremely impressive because of its great size and setting.

145

00:15:06,381 --> 00:15:14,378

Well, Zachari Ezi took me across the island and then left me and pointed in the direction in which I should go.

146

00:15:14,378 --> 00:15:16,377

He said it was built.

147

00:15:16,377 --> 00:15:22,375

Well, he would express it by saying before, before, before, before.

148

00:15:25,373 --> 00:15:31,371

The central buildings in ancient communities were the longhouses, communal sleeping quarters.

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00:15:31,371 --> 00:15:37,369

The Pammy Ack Island longhouses provide Dr. Lee with a basis for his theory.

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00:15:40,368 --> 00:15:47,365

This enormous longhouse was 83 feet long and 20 feet wide inside dimensions.

151

00:15:47,365 --> 00:15:53,362

It was rather ship shaped with the walls out curving a little bit.

152

00:15:53,362 --> 00:15:58,361

And this is the north room, the sleeping quarters.

153

00:15:58,361 --> 00:16:03,359

The stones in the walls were very heavy.

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00:16:03,359 --> 00:16:07,357

This particular stone weighs over a thousand pounds.

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00:16:07,357 --> 00:16:14,354

And here we enter the Great Hall with 11 fireplaces down the center.

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00:16:14,354 --> 00:16:20,352

And since there were 11 food storage pits on the outside of the building,

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00:16:21,352 --> 00:16:25,350

I think it is very obvious that there were 11 families.

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00:16:25,350 --> 00:16:31,348

And if we suppose that there were five people in each family,

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00:16:31,348 --> 00:16:39,345

then we have approximately 50 or 55 people living in this longhouse.

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00:16:39,345 --> 00:16:44,343

And that, of course, means social organization far beyond the scope of the eskimo.

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00:16:44,343 --> 00:16:50,340

People who lived in this house were, in my opinion, Norsemen.

162

00:16:50,340 --> 00:16:54,339

I think that they were hunters from Greenland.

163

00:16:54,339 --> 00:16:57,338

Came here just the men alone.

164

00:16:57,338 --> 00:17:04,335

And probably they married native women and had half breed children.

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00:17:04,335 --> 00:17:09,333

This was a very rich hunting place. It still is.

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00:17:09,333 --> 00:17:13,331

Professor Lee believes that a handful of Viking hunters cut themselves a drift

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00:17:13,331 --> 00:17:18,330

from the dying Greenland colony and settled here in North America,

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00:17:18,330 --> 00:17:22,328

eventually fathering a tribe of mixed bloods.

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00:17:22,328 --> 00:17:25,327

Lee's theories have been hotly attacked.

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00:17:25,327 --> 00:17:29,325

His opponents claim the longhouse was built by eskimo.

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00:17:29,325 --> 00:17:34,323

Yet the nearest forests that could have supplied beams for its caribou skin roof

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00:17:34,323 --> 00:17:37,322

lie 150 miles to the south.

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00:17:37,322 --> 00:17:42,320

They could only have been brought by ships, which the eskimo never had.

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00:17:42,320 --> 00:17:45,319

The eskimo were well adapted to this environment.

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00:17:45,319 --> 00:17:48,318

Never would they have built such a drafty, cold structure.

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00:17:48,318 --> 00:17:52,316

Lee believes it served as a primitive palace.

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00:17:52,316 --> 00:17:57,314

That longhouse was a part of a complex which extends up the coast all the way to Diana Bay,

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00:17:57,314 --> 00:18:00,313

about 70 miles further north.

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00:18:00,313 --> 00:18:04,312

You find these longhouses at intervals along that distance.

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00:18:04,312 --> 00:18:08,310

And I have thought about this as being a sort of a kingdom.

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00:18:08,310 --> 00:18:13,308

An Arctic kingdom whose leaders were Norse and whose followers were Stone Age eskimo.

182

00:18:13,308 --> 00:18:18,306

The remains of their crude tent rings still crowd around the longhouse.

183

00:18:18,306 --> 00:18:22,305

The eskimo had much to learn from Iron Age Europeans.

184

00:18:22,305 --> 00:18:29,302

Excavating carefully, Professor Lee found the weathered blade of a Norse battle axe.

185

00:18:29,302 --> 00:18:37,299

If we put out from this small bay and sail on a course that is due east

186

00:18:37,299 --> 00:18:43,297

with a favorable wind, in one week's time we will come directly into Erich's fjord

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00:18:43,297 --> 00:18:47,295

on the southwest coast of Greenland.

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00:18:47,295 --> 00:18:53,293

Did a remnant of Erich's people at long last find refuge here in this Arctic fastness?

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00:18:53,293 --> 00:18:57,291

Set on a ridge not 50 yards from the great longhouse,

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00:18:57,291 --> 00:19:01,290

these stone tombs crowned Professor Lee's sensational findings.

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00:19:01,290 --> 00:19:06,288

In them he discovered what he believes are the remains of a primitive eskimo,

192

00:19:06,288 --> 00:19:10,286

a mixed blood, and that of a medieval white male,

193

00:19:10,286 --> 00:19:16,284

the first and only pre-Columbian European skull ever found in the Western Hemisphere.

194

00:19:16,284 --> 00:19:19,283

Lee's discoveries have stirred fierce controversy.

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00:19:19,283 --> 00:19:22,281

Textbooks are not easily rewritten.

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00:19:22,281 --> 00:19:27,280

Old theories tell us that past cultures lived and died in strict isolation,

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00:19:27,280 --> 00:19:33,277

but new ideas suggest that mankind's evolutionary steps may have been closely linked.

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00:19:33,277 --> 00:19:38,275

In death, the Norse Greenlanders gave birth to a new kind of eskimo,

199

00:19:38,275 --> 00:19:45,273

bigger, stronger, more skillful, whose descendants still hold the land farthest north.

200

00:19:53,269 --> 00:20:08,264

A day's journey upstream from the pain river's mouth, modern Inuit pitch a hunting camp.

201

00:20:08,264 --> 00:20:13,262

Yeah, I saw a lot of tracks. This is the only one we saw.

202

00:20:13,262 --> 00:20:18,260

Centuries pass, but arctic life does not change.

203

00:20:18,260 --> 00:20:22,258

Hunters still travel the river in search of caribou.

204

00:20:22,258 --> 00:20:28,256

I think that we have just begun to get at the answers to the Norse presence in Angava.

205

00:20:28,256 --> 00:20:34,254

We've just scratched the surface. We have not finished with the pain lake evidence

206

00:20:34,254 --> 00:20:38,252

by any means. We need at least one more expedition in there.

207

00:20:38,252 --> 00:20:45,249

And along the coast of Angava out this way, we have reports of longhouses

208

00:20:45,249 --> 00:20:52,247

that we have not been able to see. I think there may be a great deal of evidence remaining.

209

00:20:52,247 --> 00:20:57,245

In fact, I suspect that we will find more things in the interior someday

210

00:20:57,245 --> 00:21:00,243

when we do some thorough searching.

211

00:21:00,243 --> 00:21:06,241

On the heights above the camp stands a beacon that points deep into the North American interior.

212

00:21:06,241 --> 00:21:11,239

I would say that this was made by the Inuit or the Eskimo.

213

00:21:16,237 --> 00:21:22,235

But as you can plainly see, this is a Thor's hammer.

214

00:21:29,232 --> 00:21:34,230

Coming up next, did the Chinese discover America 1,000 years before Columbus

215

00:21:34,230 --> 00:21:39,228

in search of continues with a journey into the unknown to meet some daring ancient explorers.

216

00:21:39,228 --> 00:21:45,226

Then 20th century with Mike Wallace reports on the rise of new hate groups in America.

217

00:21:45,226 --> 00:21:51,224

And later tonight, History's Mysteries opens the Odessa file in pursuit of escaped Nazi war criminals.

218

00:21:51,224 --> 00:21:55,222

At 8, here on the History Channel, where the past comes alive.