

Both Leif, Chris Are Latecomers

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While Norsemen and Italians argue aloud about who sailed first to the New World, archeologists have quietly unearthed evidence that the true discoverers may have walked here via the Aleutians thousands of years before Christ.

The news came from Froelich G. Rainey director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and a nationally prominent archeologist.

Rainey, in town for a museum executives meeting, told a reporter about excavations last summer in northern Alaska which turned up tiny flint blades dating to 6000 B.C., common to those found in both the Aleutian Islands and on the eastern coast of Japan.

"These discoveries lead to speculation that the first settlers in this hemisphere migrated by foot from the eastern coast of Asia via the Aleutians along the southern edge of a huge land mass that is now the Bering Sea," he said.

The theory of land migration from Asia to Alaska is not a new one, but previous speculation had it coming from Siberia, less than 100 miles over the Bering Straits from the Seward Peninsula. However, none of the artifacts found at the Alaska site compare with those discovered in Siberia, while they do compare with those found in the Aleutians and in Japan, Rainey said.

Archeologists at Brown University, which sponsored the excavation under the leadership of the late Louis Giddings, are now studying hundreds of artifacts uncovered at the Alaska site.

The site is on the Kobuk



FROELICH RAINEY

... tells of migration

River at Onion Portage, about 100 miles inland from the port city of Kotzebue. It is a river crossing for herds of migrating caribou and has been for thousands of years, according to evidence in the excavation.

Archeologists discovered eight distinct levels of activity which, with radio-carbon analysis, were shown to represent civilizations at thousand-year intervals from 6000 B.C. to the present.

Rainey, who organized the exhibit of Tutankhamen treasures in the United States a few years ago, said the Alaska excavation was unique for two reasons:

Rarely have such clear-cut activity bands been discovered in any digging, and this marks the first time researchers have been able to determine precise dates for artifacts in Alaska.