



## PREFACE

## COLONIZATION OF AMERICA

America was populated through Siberia. This hypothesis, based on the likeness between the American Indians and the peoples of Asia, was put forward as early as in the 18th century. Reliable dating of the first traces of man in the New World, however, only became possible in the middle of the 20th century with the development of archaeology and the discovery of the radiocarbon dating method. The Clovis culture (13,500 – 12,000 years ago) is considered to be the earliest on most of the North American territories. It was the culture of bison and mammoth hunters who rapidly moved around the non-populated lands.

Meanwhile, the most ancient monuments of Central Alaska are around 1000 years older than the Clovis culture. At that time Alaska was connected with Chukotka by a land “bridge” – Beringia. The ancestors of the Clovis culture creators must have migrated south from Alaska following the ice-free interglacial corridor along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. There is no evidence of the people coming to America before 14-15,000 years ago, but such possibility cannot be completely excluded.



▲ *Population of America from Siberia*

## ANCIENT BERINGIA

In the periods of global cooling huge masses of water turned into surface glaciers and the ocean level fell. The territories of the continental shelf that are flooded today formed Beringia – a strip of land that connected Alaska with Chukotka.

Separated by glaciers from inner Siberia and North America, Beringia served as a jumping-off place to the New World.



▲ *Ancient Beringia*

## INDIGENOUS POPULATION

Indigenous peoples of America (except for the Eskimos and the Aleuts) are referred to as Indians. According to their anthropological type, they belong to the Mongoloid race. Typical Mongoloid features are most pronounced among the Tlingit people and the Athabaskans, whose languages are united into the Na-Dene family. Therefore, Na-Dene ancestors may have come to America somewhat later than the other groups of Indians.

Russian travelers, merchants and missionaries, who came to Alaska, rarely penetrated deep into the continent and mainly made contacts with the inhabitants of the coastal territories – the Eskimos and the Aleuts. The Tlingit people and the Dena'ina Athabaskans cooperated with the Russians too, as their territories were also located by the sea. In California, in Fort Ross, the Russians mostly communicated with the Pomo and Miwok Indians.

## DISCOVERY OF ALASKA



▲ *V.J. Bering*



▲ *A.I. Chirikov*

The Aleutian Islands and Alaska were discovered by the expedition headed by V.J. Bering and A.I. Chirikov in 1741. Among the participants was G.W. Steller, an adjutant of the Academy of Sciences, who was responsible for acquiring collections for the Academic Museum – the Kunstkamera. The participants of the expedition sailed on two ships – St.Peter commanded by V.J. Bering, and “St.Paul” commanded by A.I. Chirikov.

“St.Peter” dropped anchor by one of the Shumagin Islands (most probably, the Nagai Island). It was here that the Russians first made contact with the indigenous population – the Aleuts – who gave them two ritual rods and two wooden hats. “St. Paul’s” crew also met the Aleuts during their anchorage by the Adak Island, where the aborigines gave the Russian sea-farers several harpoons and a hat with a cap.

## COLONIZATION

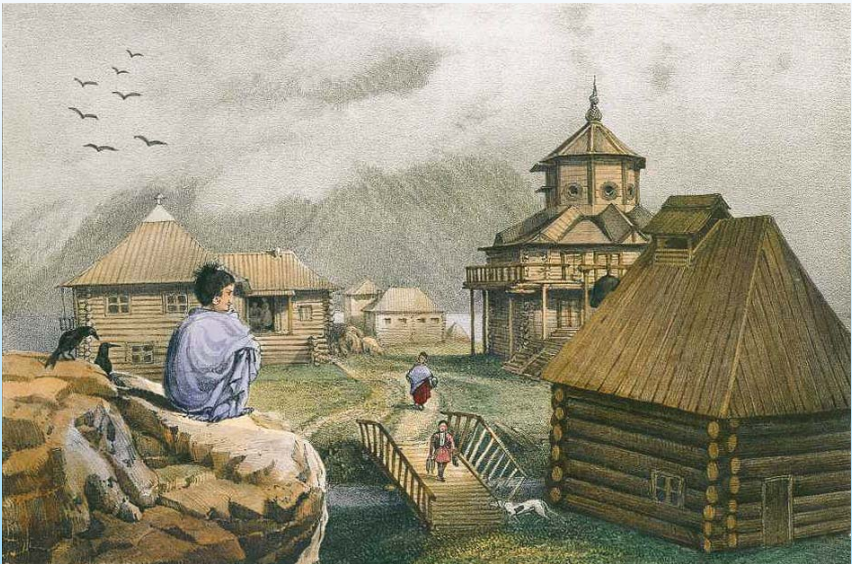
Spanish conquistadors were the first Europeans to reach the territory of the modern USA in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Colonization of the east of the continent by the French and the English began a little later – in the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russian travelers and merchants began to explore and develop North America.



In 1799 a monopolistic Russian-American Company was established to govern the Russian America: the Aleutian Islands, Alaska and a small region in northern California where in 1812 a settlement called Ross was founded. And in 1804 a town called Novoarkhangelsk (or New Archangel) was founded on Sitka Island that later became the administrative center of the Russian America.



▲ *Residence of the Governor of Russian America in Novoarkhangelsk. Drawing. 1827.*



▲ *View of the church in Novoarkhangelsk. Drawing. 1827.*

## GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL REGIONS

On the exposition dedicated to North America, the peoples are grouped according to the following geographical and cultural regions: the Eskimos and the Aleuts form the group of sea hunters and fishers of the Arctic and Subarctic zones; Alaskan and Canadian Athabaskans refer to forest hunters of the American north; the Tlingit, Haida and Kwakiutl people refer to fishers of the Northwest Coast of North America; the Dakota, the Cheyenne and the Comanche Indians – to hunters of the Plains; the Ojibwa and the Kikapoo – to gatherers of the Great Lakes; the Iroquois tribes refer to farmers of the Southwest; the Pueblo Indians – to the agricultural peoples of the Southwest; the Miwok, the Pomo, the Maidu and the Chumash Indians – to hunters and gatherers of California.



▲ *Geographical and cultural regions of North America*