

National Geographic Magazine

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

RESEARCH DIVISION

May 2, 1979

Dr. Donald Crabtree
Route 1, Box 210
Kimberly, Idaho 83341

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

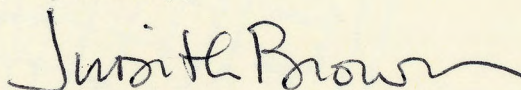
As you may know, the National Geographic is preparing for publication in a forthcoming issue an article on the "First Americans" by Thomas Canby.

It is our policy to double-check every statement of fact prior to publication, and I am therefore enclosing for your review an excerpt from Mr. Canby's manuscript in which you are mentioned. As you will see, I've noted a question or two in the margins, but please don't hesitate to call our attention to anything at all that strikes you as wrong or possibly misleading to our readers.

Since our deadline is almost at hand, can we hear from you as soon as possible? I enclose a self-addressed envelope for your convenience in returning the material to us.

Many thanks in advance for your help. We will look forward to sending you a copy of the issue in which the article appears.

Sincerely,



Judith Brown
Research Staff
202-857-7208

JB:kts
Enclosure

Ce 104.95.1

1 cent material. Often there's doubt if an arti-
2 fact was found in clear association with the
3 plant or animal remains used for dating it;
4 slumping soils or the burrows of digging ani-
5 mals can hopelessly jumble a site's strati-
6 graphy. We even face questions of whether a
7 stone or bone artifact is actually the work of
8 man, or if it's a geofact—a rock chipped by
9 natural process, a bone shaped by an ani-
10 mal's gnawing."

11 Despite this uncertainty, much is general-
12 ly accepted about these ephemeral ancestors
13 of today's Indians. For example:

14 • They came out of Asia, bearing with them
15 such Mongoloid traits as coppery skin, dark
16 eyes, straight black hair, wide cheekbones,
17 and distinctively curved teeth known to an-
18 thropologists as shovel incisors.

19 • They came by way of the Bering Strait, the
20 only place where the New World is visible
21 from the Old.

22 • They probably wandered across dry-
23 shod, in the period when a vast land bridge
24 linked Siberia and Alaska (although many
25 experts believe they could have traveled
26 those 55 miles by boat, just as other pioneers
27 sailed from New Guinea to Australia at least

Ce1.4.95.2

1 40,000 years ago, or they may have walked
2 across on pack ice that clogs the Strait some
3 winters).

4 • They were in all likelihood "modern" men,
5 members of our subspecies *Homo sapiens*
6 *sapiens*, possessing a full size brain and a
7 spoken language.

8 • They were a people of the Stone Age, but
9 their tools were not primitive. When Dr.
10 Donald Crabtree, dean of the nation's flint-
11 knappers, underwent open-heart surgery,
12 he equipped his surgeon with hand-flaked
13 obsidian blades whose edges were sharper
14 than the finest steel scalpels.

15 • They conquered the longest frontier ever
16 traversed—15,000 miles from Strait to
17 Strait. Not until man occupies another plan-
18 et, notes French prehistorian François
19 Bordes, will he explore a domain so vast.

20 • They came at seemingly the most difficult
21 time, when the 60,000-year deepfreeze of
22 the Ice Age gripped the planet and lay most
23 harshly on North America.

24
25 ~~WHAT A WILD WORLD it was! To~~
26 ~~see it properly we must board a time~~
27 ~~machine and travel back into the Ice~~

Let's ask surgeon if
he actually used this
blade. Astonishing if so.
ejl

I don't know whether Canby
read this somewhere or heard
it from another archaeologist.
Do you mind our using - it's
great stuff!

When was your surgery?
Surgeon's name and city?

CE 1.4.95.3