

Conversations with Archaeologists and Researchers

Dr. Peter Storck, Archaeologist, Royal Ontario Museum

[title screen reads: Conversations with archaeologists and researchers. Where the past meets the present and the people behind it. Fades to black.]

[Fades in to a man talking to the camera sitting in a black room. Title screen reads: Peter Storck. Archaeologist.]

Peter Storck: My name is Peter Storck. I worked in Ontario for the ROM. Mainly in central Ontario from east of Toronto to north as far as Georgian Bay and the time period was the late Ice Age. The people who lived in Ontario after the retreat of the final ice sheet. So that's about 11,000 years ago. These were the first people that migrated into the province.

[Edit] Storck: The easiest way to describe it is to say that I was a pioneer in the research in this region. And I say that word pioneer with a sense of humility, pioneers are usually often regarded as someone bigger than life, I don't think of myself in that way, I am just simply mentioning I was one of the first people into this area of research in Ontario. And in some respects that by being the first, then I set the direction for other work. So everything that was learned was new. And what we now know is that 10 or 11,000 years ago, the Paleo-Indians in this province were hunting caribou and they were living in a spruce-parkland environment.

I mentioned the Clovis site in New Mexico which is the same culture and the same time period, those people were hunting elephants and they were living in a desert landscape. So that alone is telling us that the same people across North America were very adaptable culturally and they could respond to different environments. In the far west they were hunting and gathering quite different things than they were in middle North America or in New England or in the Yukon or in Alaska. We didn't know this. When I was in graduate school, we were taught that Paleo-Indians were big game hunters across North America. And as a result of my work and more recent work of a lot of other people in North America, we are now realizing that these people – where ever they did come from – and we still don't know, they expanded throughout North America in a time of 500 or 1,000 years and they changed their culture and that's amazing.

[ROM sound sting and animation]