



*Hunter, stone and ivory, from Port Harrison.*

little is known about them, and in particular it is not yet known whether their culture evolved in the Eastern Arctic or whether they were immigrants there. Radio-carbon dating indicates that the Dorset culture began over 2500 years ago. A number of Eskimo legends refer to a strange people called the Tunit who lived in stone houses and were gradually dispossessed by the present Eskimos. It has been thought that the Tunit were the Thule Eskimos, but the evidence indicates rather that they were the Dorset people.

Signs of a fourth and still earlier people have been found recently at several places in the Arctic, especially in north Foxe Basin. We do not know whether these people were Eskimo or not, but they were probably the first people to spread widely over the Canadian Arctic and arrived there some four or five thousand years ago, probably not long after the ice had retreated from the land.

[HISTORY]

When the Vikings discovered Greenland in the tenth century they did not see any Eskimos, but

they found signs of earlier inhabitants. The first contact between Europeans and Eskimos probably took place during the Vinland voyages in the first years of the eleventh century when the Vikings visited Labrador and possibly Baffin Island. They found and fought with a race whom they called Skraelings and who seem to have been Eskimos. The next heard about the Eskimos is in the fourteenth century when they moved south down the west coast of Greenland and met the Norse colonists. Some time after this the contact between Greenland and Europe was broken. When it was restored at the end of the sixteenth century, the Eskimos were in complete possession of Greenland. Mystery surrounds the fate of the Norse. They may have died out, they may have been killed by the Eskimos or by pirates, they may have been absorbed into the Eskimos, or they may have returned to Europe. A few ruins were all that was left of the Norse colonies in Greenland which at one time had a strength of eight or nine thousand people and had included sixteen churches, a bishop, a monastery, and a convent.

The first contact with the Eskimos in the Canadian north was when Frobisher discovered the Canadian Arctic in 1576. He met a number of Eskimos during his three voyages, but his relations with them were unhappy. He captured some of them, and they captured some of his men, and each side developed a hearty dislike for the other. Frobisher was followed by other explorers, many of whom met the Eskimos and left accounts of them so that the limits of the country they occupied were more or less known by the end of the eighteenth century. It was Perry's second expedition in 1821-3, however, that seems to have been responsible for arousing popular interest in the Eskimos. He spent two winters in Foxe Basin in the centre of the Eskimo country and both he and his second in command, Lyon, left excellent accounts which were widely read in England and

*Bear, whalebone, from Arctic Bay.*

