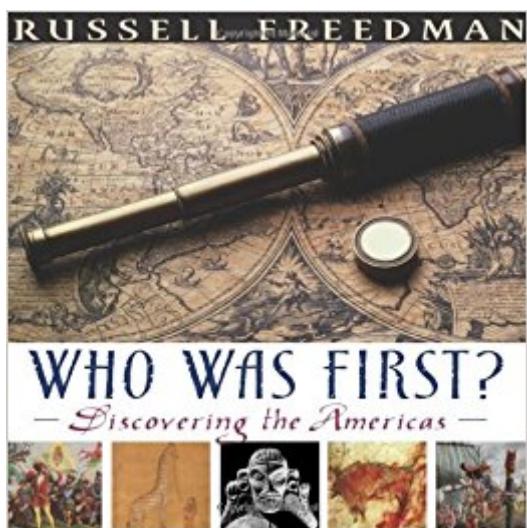


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# Who Was First?: Discovering The Americas (Bank Street College Of Education Flora Stieglitz Straus Award (Awards))



## Synopsis

Many generations of American schoolchildren were taught that Columbus discovered America, and a holiday reminds us every October. But historical investigation in recent years has shown us otherwise. There is evidence that adventurers, explorers, traders, and nomads from various parts of the globe set foot on American soil long before 1492. And expeditions that landed in the Americas reported people already living there—indicating that America had been “discovered” before. Russell Freedman brings his legendary skills as researcher and storyteller to this fresh and intriguing look at the American past. Colorful legends and first-person accounts are woven into the riveting narrative, which also illuminates the way historians and mapmakers have gathered, evaluated, and recorded information throughout the ages.

## Book Information

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Series: Bank Street College of Education Flora Stieglitz Straus Award (Awards)

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Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #147,454 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Exploration & Discovery #1076 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

"Clear and packed with interesting details ... [t]his engaging work presents history as a story still being written." Kirkus Reviews, Starred  
Students will discover fascinating information as well as a fine example of the research process in this thought-provoking work. School Library Journal, Starred  
"A well-researched, intelligent account of America's 'discovery.'" Booklist, ALA, Starred  
Review: "This well-designed, clearly written book looks at various ideas about the discovery of the

Americas, including the famous voyages of Columbus in 1492, the claims that fifteenth-century Chinese explorer Zheng He may have salied to the Americas, and the now-documented settlement of Vikings in Newfoundland around the year 1000." Book Links, ALA "Freedman has done it again, providing a well-organized, lucid, and engaging explanation of an important subject for middle-grade and middle school readers." Horn Book, Starred Freedman provides an intriguing, fresh, and compelling view of traditional American history, taking readers beyond the familiar story of Columbus as the 'discoverer of America' and presenting new theories and possiblities about who might have come to the Americas first and why. VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates) A variety of illustrations from maps and models to dioramas and paintings embellish the text; a bibliography, index, and specific sources for quotations are also included. Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

Russell Freedman received the Newbery Medal for LINCOLN: A PHOTOBIOGRAPHY. He is also the recipient of three Newbery Honors, the Sibert Medal, and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, and was selected to give the 2006 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture. Mr. Freedman lives in New York City.

Thought invoking and informative.

My daughter needed this book for a report and it was exactly what she needed..

Purchased for school. Didn't hear any complaints (and believe me I would) so assume they are happy.

The lay-out is attractive, type-face is easy to read, and the information provides a comprehensive introduction, appropriate for use for students from grades 5 and up.

I loved it! The book was filled with so much factual information. It is very good to use in a history class.

as an elementary teacher and history lover, this book is not to be missed. it is beautifully illustrated and well written. easy for young readers (upper elementary) and engaging enough for adults. intriguing and thorough!

In this concise little book, Freedman covers the well known opposing theories as to who discovered America. He begins with a narrative covering the voyages of Columbus. He then moves on to the Vikings and the voyage of Leif Erikson. Next, he discusses the theory that China may have arrived first. Finally, he moves on in the last section of the book to the natives themselves, giving us a survey of the civilizations that existed before the massive influx of Europeans began in the fifteenth century, and those civilizations that existed deep in the past of Native history. Each section is well researched. Even though Freedman knows the answers, he still presents his information in a way that allows the reader to go on a voyage of discovery too. Near the end, he makes the statement that that theory that humans first arrived here 13,500 years ago via the ice corridor that existed over the land bridge has now been proved inaccurate by further archeological finds. People have lived in the Americas for 20-30 thousand years, he says, having come by boats along the coast line from Siberia, and then eventually moving inward. There are other theories of contact between the natives and other cultures, and he does mention them in passing, such as the one that Africans made it here sometime in the BC era, or that the early Chinese dynasties influenced the art of the Maya. But, there is little or no proof of this with the exception of similarities of art forms, and he treats it as such.

This large and well-illustrated book makes good reading for your upper-grades student. There are three big theories being examined: 1) Columbus's expedition was not the first time Europeans set foot in the New World. 2) Ancient people's migration across the Bering Straights land bridge was neither the first nor last time the Americas were peopled. 3) Ancient Meso- and South-American cultures did not arise spontaneously but were sparked by Asian culture contact (and possibly African). Whether research is conclusive or inconclusive, Freedman says so. This offers a good look into modern analysis of archaeology and written accounts. Very interesting.

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