

Dogs tell story of ancient human migration

Dogs successfully migrated to the Americas about 10,000 years ago, according to a new study. That's a long time ago but still thousands of years after the first human migrants crossed the land bridge from Siberia to North America. Dogs have been associated with humans in findings from 11,000 to 16,000 years ago.

Did humans not bring them at first? Did they die?

Ancient dogs split off from wolves likely because they learned to tolerate human company and as part of selective evolution – humans let the ones that protected them and were friendly stick around. Dogs benefited from the association: They gained access to new food sources, enjoyed the safety of human encampments and eventually traveled the world with their two-legged masters. Dogs were also beasts of burden and sometimes food, particularly on special occasions – that meant in times of extreme hunger too.

A new study looked at the genetic characteristics of 84 individual dogs from more than a dozen sites in North and South America – the largest analysis so far of ancient dogs in the Americas.

“Dogs are one of the earliest organisms to have migrated with humans to every continent, and I think that says a lot about the relationship dogs have had with humans,” said Kelsey Witt, a University of Illinois graduate student who led the new analysis with anthropology professor Ripan Malhi. “They can be a powerful tool when you’re looking at how human populations have moved around over time.”

Read full, original article: [Migration To America: Canine Genetics Tell The Story](#)