

10,000-year-old remains suggest dogs reached North America earlier than previously thought

The skeletal remains of three ancient dogs found buried in Illinois now represent the earliest evidence for the presence of domesticated dogs in the Americas. It's also the oldest known intentional burial of individual canines in the global archaeological record.

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Two of the dogs were found at the Koster site in the Lower Illinois River Valley and one was found at the nearby Stillwell II site. Direct carbon dating of the Koster and Stillwell remains yielded a date between 9,630 and 10,190 years ago, which is around 1,000 years earlier than conventional estimates.

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That sounds like a long time ago—and it is—but the first people arrived in North America around 15,000 years ago, if not earlier.

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“Dogs may have assisted migrating groups by transporting goods and people, working as hunting aids, serving as bed-warmers, acting as alarms, warding off predators, and as a food and fur source,” wrote the authors in the new study.

But as the new research shows, there's about a 5,000-year archaeological gap between the presence of humans in the Americas and the presence of domesticated dogs. This observation suggests one of two possibilities: Either dogs traveled to North America alongside humans and the archaeological evidence is lacking, or dogs arrived later during subsequent human migrations. Given the evidence (or lack thereof), both scenarios are plausible.

Read full, original post: [New Evidence Suggests Dogs Reached North America 10,000 Years Ago](#)