

## Gudrid

Viking stories tell about a woman from Iceland who came to North America 500 years before Christopher Columbus. Did she exist? And did she really travel to North America at that time? Signs point to yes.

According to the stories, a woman named Gudrid was born in Iceland in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. When she was 15 she traveled with her father to Greenland. Then, when she was 17, she sailed to Canada.

Stories say that Gudrid made eight ocean crossings. She went back to live in Iceland as an old woman. She traveled farther than any other Viking. She explored North America long before most other Europeans. She also traveled to Scandinavia and Rome.

Historian Nancy Brown believes that the stories of Gudrid are likely true. She says, "Viking women were as courageous and as adventurous as Viking men. There were far fewer limitations on the life of a woman in those times than we may think." She explains that the stories do contain facts, even though they also have dragons and trolls. They were written down in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but they had been told for more than 200 years before that. People knew about Gudrid. Nancy thinks that they would have made sure that the storytellers were speaking the truth about her.



Historical evidence backs up Nancy’s belief that Gudrid was real. Archaeologists say that Gudrid’s final home in Iceland is not like other Viking houses. Instead it looks the same as settlements in North America. Carbon dating at the Viking site in North America shows that it was built in Gudrid’s time. Tools for weaving also were found at the settlement. They prove that a woman was living there.

We may never really know if Gudrid was real, but it is possible. It is exciting to think that a Viking woman may have had such amazing adventures. She may even have walked the shores of North America long ago.



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which of the following was NOT mentioned as a place where Gudrid traveled?
  - a. Greenland
  - b. Canada
  - c. Rome
  - d. Greece
  
2. How were the Viking stories first told?
  - a. They were written
  - b. They were spoken
  - c. They were recorded
  - d. They were forgotten
  
3. Which of the following statements provides the best evidence that tools for weaving prove that a woman was living in the settlement?
  - a. Because weaving was done by women at that time
  - b. Because the tools were carbon dated
  - c. Because the tools were made in Iceland
  - d. Because women did not weave
  
4. Why is it interesting that Gudrid traveled to North America?
  - a. Because she was one of the first Europeans to make the trip
  - b. Because explorers at the time were usually men
  - c. Because little is known about her outside of the Viking stories
  - d. All of the above

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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