**Chapter 7**

*Chapter Summary*

Human populations moved into new territories during the last Ice Age and ultimately entered three previously uninhabited continents: Australia, North America, and South America. Australia was populated by coastally adapted southeast Asians. Using watercraft, by accident and perhaps through intentional exploration, they moved out into the western Pacific, inhabited the oceanic islands of Borneo, Sulawesi, and Timor, and eventually made landfall on Greater Australia: New Guinea, Tasmania, and Australia proper. Archaeological evidence offers a date for this habitation of 65,000 years ago—during a period of lowered sea level, when the trip by watercraft would have been easier than it is today. The first settlers maintained a tropical/coastal orientation to their economy, initially turning inland only along major rivers. The dry interior of the continent was settled about 20,000 years later.

During the Pleistocene, the New World was intermittently connected to the Old World by a vast land bridge, making it possible for interior- dwelling people in northeast Asia to travel through the interior of the land bridge into the interior of northwest America and for coastal people in northeast Asia to travel along the southern Beringian coast onto the coast of northwestern North America and from there south. The radiocarbon dating of butchered bones at Bluefish Caves in the Canadian arctic suggest a human occupation in a Beringian cul-de-sac as early as 24,000 years ago. Sites as distant from the land bridge as Monte Verde in Chile (dated to 18,500 B.P.), Meadowcroft Rockshelter in western Pennsylvania (dated to 13,400 B.P.), Cactus Hill in Virginia (dated to 15,000 B.P.), and the Debra L. Friedkin site in Texas (dated to 15,500 B.P.) show that the subsequent expansion out of Beringia occurred too early to have been the result of an icefree corridor. A route south along the Pacific coast was most likely. Many sites that would have been evidence of that coastal route to the south were long ago inundated by rising sea level at the end of the Pleistocene. Interior sites may be so ephemeral that finding them could be almost impossible. Several early sites in Alaska and the Canadian Yukon date to the period immediately after 12,000 years ago and bear lithic industries analogous to those in Siberia. Some of the early settlers moved south, perhaps through an ice- free corridor, into the American West, where they invented a new projectile point technology. These fluted projectile points allowed these settlers to expand across two continents. These Clovis people may not have been the first arrivals; some sites in both North and South America may be older. But Clovis represents the first broadly successful occupation of the New World.