

# The kennewick man controversy

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The Kennewick man controversy holds strong stand points on the archeological disputes in the recent past of the American social science fraternity and the government. This is regarded the most important stories of the archeological advancement. The Kennewick story brings the controversy right from the time it come into the limelight of the general public. What he represents the efforts of the federal government to settle the case, the scientist's pressure to settle the research findings and the great opposition raised by the Native American society over the remains of the Kennewick man (Turner). The controversy is involving the American government, the scientist involved in the research of the fossils and archeological science and Native American population who are said to claim the ownership or the relation with the Kennewick man.

The nature of the work done on the remains and the scrutiny of the general public and the efforts of the federal government are the pillars of the controversy (Chatters). The American natives maintained that Kennewick man was predominantly a member of the society belonging to the American community this however cannot be determined by the scientific findings since the issue of race is actually not scientific but they are cultural and differ from people to people. While this is true that no scientific evidence can be drawn to favor the racial evidence of origin of Kennewick man, science maintains that the geographical affiliations can be estimated by simple DNA paleontological tests. The Difficulty of telling the race is a strong challenge to any other person, worse enough is when science too is not able to give exact estimates of the origin or the race of the fossils and peoples remains. This is the issue with the Kennewick man where origin and racial classification of

the scientific findings is causing public confusion right from the time of discovery of the remains in the late nineties.

Scientific discovery Kennewick man was first discovered during boat the race that took place in the Columbia River in Washington State in 1996. two of the spectators came across a skull of a human being on the shores of the river. The skull was sent to the archeologist James Chatters who later went together with his colleagues to the Columbia to retrieve the entire skeleton. They described the appearance of the skull to be of a man in his forties and had a long narrow face that they suggested that the man was of European origin. The teeth were suggestive they had not been ground so much which they suggested that the teeth had no cavities (About.com).

When Chatters and his associates sent the fossils for carbon 14 dating they were surprised that it was dated back to approximately 9000 years.

Considering the fact that the shore and the stretch of Columbia River is inhabited by the Umatilla tribe among other five tribes as their home land and also that the stretch is also maintained by the US Army Corps of Engineers. In line with the law of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act that was facilitated by President George H. Bush in the early nineties which states that when the remains of an individual are found on the federal ground of their ancestral claimed land and the cultural affiliation established the remains must be returned to the tribe it belongs. This made the Umatilla's claim the ownership and relation of these remains and demanded that they be allowed to assume the burial of the remains. The start of the repatriation process was started after the Army Corps agreed to this claim.

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Considering this, the Kennewick man controversy holds greater problem sidelined to the archeological need to set it right. It has always been known that the American people began to settle in the past 12000 years and they came in three groups on arrival they settled on the three regions relative to their origin and arrivals. But the most recent evidence shows that the arrival of other small groups gave rise to the controversy of the tribe and the migration patterns of the American people. However some of these groups later became extinct and can no longer be traced and their migration history not recorded. The Kennewick man is however considered too good not to let go without scientific analysis.

At least eight scientists have been sued for the patent security to analyse the Kennewick materials. By 2008 the bones were sent to the researchers at the Seattle museum following the judgment passed that the bones be studied. This evoked heated debate and the results of the study later reached the public in 2006.