

**Lecturer name:** James M. Adovasio

**Lecture Title:** Early Human Populations in the New World: A Biased Perspective

**Recommended Audience Level**

Lecture for mixed audience of professionals, students, and laypersons

**The speaker's main current research is summarized in this lecture**

This lecture will be delivered in **English**

**Lecture Summary**

On October 11, 1492, the soon-to-be-styled Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Cristoforo Colon, landed on San Salvador and almost immediately encountered its aboriginal inhabitants, the soon-to-be-extirpated Taino. He, either directly or more likely through the medium of his crew, posed a series of questions which in one way or another have been asked ever since: Who are these people; Where did they come from; How did they get here; and perhaps most vexatiously, When did they arrive? Discoveries at Folsom, New Mexico in 1926 indicated that the First Americans were contemporaries with now extinct Ice Age fauna and subsequent discoveries at Black Water Draw demonstrated a human presence at least 11,500 radiocarbon years ago. Since that time, more than 500 archaeological sites have been claimed to be older than the widespread Clovis horizon, though very few of them have stood up to scientific scrutiny. A review of the handful of sites which have withstood the criticism, including Meadowcroft Rockshelter in Pennsylvania and Monte Verde in Chile, indicates that not only have humans been in the New World considerably earlier than the 11,500 year-old Clovis horizon but that they were leading lifeways radically different than those posited for the so-called Clovis hunters. Current answers to Columbus' questions are assessed and evaluated, and a very different picture is presented about the initial occupation of the New World than that favored in the Clovis-first scenario.