

Journey to Pre-historic Times

by Beverly Wright

Hi! Start your imagination engines! Let's TIME TRAVEL! Set the controls for 30,000 years ago, during the Paleolithic era before the last advance of glaciers, during the stone age! Set us down in the Valley of Horses, and prepare us for pre-historic travel across what is now Europe, to live entirely off the land, using only stone and bone tools to find food, water and clothing! We travel by foot, or if on horseback with a wolf tagging along, striking fear in those we meet, who think we are creatures from the spirit world! (And perhaps we are!!!!) See a herd of woolly mammoths up close – the youngsters mimicking their parents breaking up iced-over waterfalls with their tusks! Watch and live off of animal and plant life, some now extinct! Cross raging rivers and a glacier in a frigid climate!

This time machine is named EARTH'S CHILDREN. It's a six-volume book series with over 700 pages in each, researched and written by Jean M Auel, and published between 1980 and 2011. Few people have time for that much reading; so let me take you along with me to catch a glimpse of what I saw of life in pre-historic Europe -- the land (geology), climate, people, plants and animals. (You can go to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth'sChildren for a quick glance.) Remember, this series is historical fiction but amazingly researched! I loved it! And the last volume, *The Land of the Painted Caves*, describes real prehistoric art in caves in modern-day France visited by the author and I believe some still open to tourists.

My thanks to my nephew Jake Vaught for the time travel idea for re-writing this. He's good at encouraging and bringing out the best in people! If your mind starts wandering, by all means, please skip to my last paragraph where I tell you what this series meant to me and why I love it so!

While I'd heard of *The Clan of the Cave Bear* which is the first volume, it was my love of horses that led me to notice while browsing in a 2nd-hand bookstore a yellowed old paperback called *The Valley of Horses*, which is Volume 2 and where our time machine sets down. Ayla is living there alone. By age 5 and born as an "Other," (*Cro-Magnons*, our ancestors), she had been orphaned and adopted by the Clan of the Cave Bear. They believed in animal spirit guides. Their "language" was mostly grunts and body language, no laughing; showing of teeth was a sign of hostility. No tear ducts, not much chin nor forehead, thus called "Flatheads" by the Others, and *Neanderthals* by our modern books. The men of the Clans are the spiritual and cave leaders.

Women had no rights at all in the Clan, but Ayla's adoptive mother taught her how to recognize different plants and their uses for food and healing. And she had secretly learned to hunt before she was banished from the Clan as a teenager for being different and thereafter considered dead to them. But she survived and lived alone in a cave in the Valley of Horses for at least 3 years before Jondalar (also an "Other," of the Zelandani tribe) came

into the valley on his travels. Injured by a cave lion and near death, Ayla nursed him back to health. Then he taught her his language, among other things.

I couldn't wait until the next book to follow these two fictitious but very real and beloved characters as they grew to love each other and traversed pre-historic Europe on their way back to his people through a unique-to-us climate, land forms, plants and animals,-- interacting with other "Others" settlements along the way -- showing us how people lived, their knowledge, beliefs, and making innovations that became more widespread during the Stone Age, such as starting fires more quickly with flint and iron pyrite, domesticating wolves and horses and inventing hunting devices to hurl sharp stone weapons at animals from a distance without the much more dangerous physical contact of hand-held spearing to kill animals for food and clothing. I have no doubt that much of what was known then about healing and food value has been lost to future generations. Who among us today would feel good about eating cattails? (Not the fluffy part -- they used that to stuff into animal hides for pillows and cushions.) They killed animals not just for food but for clothing, warmth, dishes, cups, containers, shovels, oars, ropes, glue, etc.

People then were hunters and gatherers. They survived by using but not abusing "Mother" Earth. Most of us would starve today if we had to live off of the land; but that was all they had, and they had to become experts at it to survive. In today's world, my daughter, Amy, makes a living by helping people manage and organize their many possessions; but these people had only necessities and what they could carry. Their only communication was person to person, although sometimes fire signals were used to warn nearby settlements of dangers.

The "Others" (*Cro-Magnons - our ancestors*) more closely resembled the people we know today. They spoke with words, but Ayla who had been trained to observe body language noticed that the meaning of words and body language didn't always agree in some persons. Unlike the Clan, women often had more influence than the men. They were sometimes the cave leaders, and most spirit guides were women. Their religion was centered on the "Mother spirit -- Mother Earth" that sustained them and must be respected. They believed in afterlife but didn't want to "walk there" yet.

The Zelandani tribes thanked Mother Earth for the pleasures of sex relations and the men assumed responsibility for their mate and *her* children. But until the last volume, the children were considered "*hers*," given to *her* by the whims of Mother Earth. They were unaware that the men were actually the "fathers" and necessary for a woman being with child. This revelation through the spirit guides gave the men more status and importance, increased the care and closeness between the children and the male of the household and tended to decrease the concept of "sleeping around."

While some people were bad and given to alcohol, most were good according to their standards, just as it is today. They understood the importance of working together and caring for each other -- just as today, except now, despite modern communication that keeps some of us closer, we are so separated from each other that we often don't even know our neighbors. Authority was all local, not like today. They were totally dependent upon the Earth for sustenance and shelter. We depend on grocery stores; most live in cities,

separated from Mother Earth (nature – God’s creations.) Many today do not see nature; many do not believe in a God. We make things, forgetting that all elements needed to make those things comes from “Mother Earth”--God. Earth was sparsely populated then; now there are many. And thankfully, it’s warmer now! I think it’s good that we could climb back into our time machine and dial it back to 2025. We have our problems now; but this is where we belong!

I think of the eons of time and of the changes to the earth and its climate. I think of all God has created, and the timelessness of His creation awes me. The winds blew then; they blow now. The rains come down, the wind blows, the earth still changes as God ordains it. Over eons of time! We are but one generation of a multitude of generations that have gone before us and will likely go after us! Nevertheless, each of us has been put in our own particular place and time as God has ordained. Each of us has our own purpose. It’s up to each of us to try our best to increase our understanding and align our will with God’s will – to fulfill our own purpose as ordained by God while we are here on earth. We have a very different perspective from those early people in that we know that the earth is only one tiny part of God’s creation! So much greater is our God than those people living then knew! May future generations honor God and remember the shoulders of others they are standing upon.