

Greetings Friends;

Monday Evening- Jan. 26th - 10:00 pm

I've decided to tell you a story before I go to bed tonight. I know that when I awake in the morning, we will be traveling through the Darwin Channel in the Chilean Fiords. This story that I'm going to share with you took place just a little south of that channel over 180 years ago. Try to imagine yourself as one of the children or parents in the family that is found paddling their bark canoe from island to island. Although this family may seem to be very different than you, there are probably more similarities than not. Physically they looked very different and were able to adapt to the cold in a way that the American explorers couldn't understand but....they were a family who loved and cared for each other just like you love and care for your family. Sometimes when we see people who are different than us, all we focus on are the differences, but actually we are all more alike than not. One thing that traveling and history teach me, is that there are MANY different ways to live, not just our way-- and that we should appreciate each other for our differences rather than try to change people because of theirs.

I read about this in the book I'm reading called; Sea of Glory

America's first frontier was not the WEST, it was the SEA! In 1831 Lieutenant Wilkes set out to sea with 6 sailing vessels and a crew of hundreds, that included botanists, geologists, mapmakers, biologists, cooks, artists, doctors, etc.... Their goal was to cover the Pacific from Top to bottom. They discovered a new continent called Antarctica but that wasn't all they discovered. They discovered new people! These people were the local natives and called the Yahgan Indians. When Darwin had first seen these people he had been so shocked by their primitive state that he had written, "One can hardly make oneself believe that they are fellow creatures, and inhabitants of the same world!" One day Wilkes and his crew were caught in a terrible storm that lasted for weeks. They spent most of their time huddled in a little cove near "Tierra Del Fuego" Which means "Land of Fire." (named after all the fires that the native Indians built to stay warm) They did everything possible to keep themselves warm and alive. Can you imagine what they must have been thinking when they watched these Indians travel from island to island in their little bark canoes? It sure shows you what humans can adapt to!! These Indians had big torsos, long arms, and spiny legs with flaps of skin hanging down from their knees. They would travel in these boats with their entire families in a

single canoe; the mother and the eldest boy paddling, the father bailing out water and tending the fire that always burned on a few stones and ashes in the center of the hull as the infants and toddlers nestled in a bed of dry grass. Despite the horrendous weather, the Yahgan Indians wore little or no clothing! The Captain wrote in his journal a great story about a snowball fight his crew of men and the Indians had one afternoon. " One day it began to snow, and the sailors and the Indians enjoyed a snowball fight. We played in the snow together as if we had been old friends. They were naked and we were dressed with everything we could possible find. We presented as wide a contrast of a person and habit as could be met with any where in the world!"