

The native peoples found in the areas accessible to Europeans came to be called Indians because of Christopher Columbus's confusion. The name "Canada" is believed to have originated with the first inhabitants, since the Huron-Iroquois Indians used the word *kanata* to describe a settlement. The word was misheard and understood to be the name of the country.

Historically, a European consciousness of Canada began to form at the end of the fifteenth century. Heading an English expedition, John Cabot claimed Newfoundland and the east coast of Canada in the name of King Henry VII of England in 1497. However, it was Jacques Cartier, from St. Malo, France who in 1535 sailed up the St. Lawrence River as far as the Indian village of Hochelaga, today the site of Montreal. While he failed to find the passage to Asia he was seeking, he opened the interior of Canada to French fur traders and later colonizers.

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Map of North America in 1667 shows Canada's French and British origins.

-  English
-  French
-  Spanish
-  Disputed