



CANADA

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Introduction to History of Canada.

- It is generally believed that the ancestors of the Indians and the Inuit (Eskimos) migrated to North America across a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. The ancestors of the Indians arrived at least 12,000 years ago; those of the Inuit, about 5,000 to 8,000 years ago.
- At the time of contact with Europeans in the 16th century, there were about 300,000 Indians and Inuit in what is now Canada. The highest concentrations of Indians were in the St. Lawrence Valley and southern Ontario. The tribes there were of the Iro-quoian language family, and included the Huron, Petun, and Neutral. They had complex, highly organized societies, and had extensive contact with other tribes through trade and kinship, as well as through warfare. Their economy was based on agriculture.





- **Other areas of Canada, such as the north woods and the plains, were thinly populated. The Indians there had less complex societies and were predominantly food-gatherers. Major tribes in the northeast were Algonquian-speaking and included the Micmac, Algonquin, Montagnais, Ojibway (or Chippewa), and Cree. These tribes lived mainly on plants but also hunted and fished. On the plains, food was obtained by hunting, primarily for buffalo. Tribes here included the Assiniboin (Siouan-speaking), the Plains Cree and Blackfeet (Algonquian), and the Gros Ventre and Sarcee (Athabaskan).**

- The Indians of the Pacific Coast, such as the Tsimshian, Haida, and Kwakiutl, had economies based on fishing and trade. They developed a complex culture, and were master woodworkers and skilled sailors. The Inuit in the Arctic lived in small, usually family-based, nomadic groups. They moved with the seasons in search of game, mainly caribou and sea mammals.



European Exploration

- The first known European visitors to Canada were the Norsemen, or Vikings. They sailed southwestward out of Greenland and Iceland and landed in what is now Newfoundland, which they called Vinland. Archeological evidence indicates that settlement was made on the eastern coast as early as the 11th century near a site called L'Anse aux Meadows. The Norsemen did not remain long, and regular excursions by Europeans to the northern shores of Canada did not begin until the end of the 15th century.



- The voyages of Christopher Columbus first brought widespread attention to what came to be called the New World, and in 1497 John Cabot, an Italian seaman in the employ of England, reached what was probably Newfoundland. He took possession of the region for England; this act formed the basis of the English claim to North America.
- The first expedition to Canada by European explorers was led by a Frenchman, Jacques Cartier. In 1534 Cartier entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence and claimed the mainland for France. He led a second voyage the following year, sailing up the St. Lawrence River as far as the site of Montreal. He spent the winter of 1535–36 at Quebec (then an Indian village called Stadacona), but made no permanent settlement. A third voyage, in 1541, was made to prepare the way for a colonizing expedition by the Sieur de Roberval. In 1542 Roberval established a settlement on the St. Lawrence upriver from Stadacona, but the colony lasted only a few months. There were no other French ventures in Canada until the 1600's.
- In 1576 Martin Frobisher, an English explorer searching for a northwest passage (a water route across the northern edge of North America) to the Far East, reached what is now Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island, north of Labrador. He made two additional voyages to the region, in 1577 and 1578.

- Beginning in the mid-16th century, another commercial activity started—the fur trade. In order to promote its fur-trading activities in the region it called Acadia (the Atlantic coast of Canada), France attempted to settle colonists near trading posts it had built there. In 1598 the Marquis de la Roche established a colony on Sable Island east of present-day Nova Scotia. It did not flourish and was abandoned, as was an inland settlement founded by Pierre de Cahauvin de Tonnetuit at Tadoussac, at the mouth of the Saguenay River in what is now Quebec.
- Quebec City became headquarters for the fur trade, which was to be the main economic activity of New France, as French possessions in Canada were then called. Champlain made explorations into the interior and formed an alliance with the Huron and Algonquin Indians. This association soon involved the French in a war against the Iroquois, and they incurred the lasting enmity of the tribes of this powerful confederation.

- The French government encouraged settlement in New France, but initially few settlers came. In 1615 there were only about 50 French colonists in the St. Lawrence settlement. In order to bring Christianity to the Indians, Champlain invited Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries to New France. The French hoped to build a strong Catholic Indian state to block expansion by the English, who were colonizing to the south in what is now the United States. Missions among the Indians were established far into the interior, but few Indians were converted.
- Meanwhile, in 1627, England and France had gone to war in Europe, and the English began to make incursions into New France. In 1627 Sir William Alexander, a Scottish colonizer who had been granted title to what is now Nova Scotia (New Scotland) by King James I of England, established a settlement there at the abandoned site of Port Royal. In 1629 an English adventurer, David Kirke, seized Quebec. The city was restored to the French, as was Port Royal, by the Treaty of St. Germaine-en-Laye in 1632. . By the 1660's, however, there were only some 2,500 settlers in New France, as compared to more than 40,000 English colonists to the south. From 1627 to 1663, the Company of New France, a fur-trading company, controlled all activity in New France. In 1663 Louis XIV, who was determined to build a self-sufficient empire in North America, made New France a royal colony under his direct control.
- In 1672 Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, was appointed governor. For nearly 20 years, 1672–82 and 1689–98, he ruled New France with a firm hand. He expanded the fur trade to Lake Superior and Hudson Bay, established a number of military posts, defended the colony against attacks by the Iroquois, and conducted a series of raids against English settlements. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 18th century, the prospects for the survival of New France were not favorable.



- The final struggle between the British and French for control of the North American continent was the French and Indian War, 1754–63. (The European phase was called the Seven Years' War and began in 1756.) The decisive victory in this conflict was the taking of Quebec, the administrative capital of New France. During the battle on the Plains of Abraham in 1759, British troops under General James Wolfe captured Quebec, defeating French forces under the Marquis de Montcalm. The fighting continued until Montreal surrendered in 1760. Under the Treaty of Paris of 1763, which completed the British conquest of New France, the French ceded to Great Britain all of their territory in Canada except a group of islands, including St. Pierre and Miquelon, off Newfoundland. In Canada at that time, there were about 60,000 French settlers and some 500 Britons, most of the latter being fur traders working for the Hudson's Bay Company.

- In 1774 the British parliament passed the Quebec Act, which gave French Canadians important privileges. In order to encourage their loyalty to Britain, they were allowed to keep their own language, religion, and laws. The act also established new boundaries for the province; it was to include all the territory north to the Hudson's Bay Company lands, as well as the Indian lands southwest to the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. The claiming of the Indian lands angered many colonists in the Thirteen Colonies (the colonies that were to become the United States) and was a cause of the American Revolution.
- British settlers began coming to Canada in large numbers during the American Revolution. About 60,000 residents of the Thirteen Colonies who remained loyal to Britain moved to what are now New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the southern part of Ontario. These immigrants, known as United Empire Loyalists, and their descendants exercised a strong and lasting influence on Canada. They were the first large group of British settlers in the region and were mainly responsible for the creation of what was to become Ontario.

- Canada was governed from 1774 to 1791 under the terms of the Quebec Act. As the number of British settlers increased, however, it became clear to Britain that this act was no longer adequate. British institutions needed to be transplanted to British North America. This was accomplished by the Constitutional Act of 1791. The Constitutional Act divided the colony into the provinces of Upper Canada (now southern Ontario) and Lower Canada (now southern Quebec). It provided each province with an appointed lieutenant governor, appointed executive and legislative councils, and an elected legislative assembly. Upper Canada, which was English-speaking, had a population of about 20,000; Lower Canada, mostly French-speaking, had approximately six times that number. Not a part of the colony of Canada, and developing separately, were British settlements along the Atlantic coast—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland—and Rupert's Land, the territory to the west owned by the Hudson's Bay Company.

- Confederation—the creation of a federal system—had been suggested early in the 19th century and had been urged by the Earl of Durham. It was not until 1864, however, that steps toward that end were actually taken. First, a coalition government in Canada, composed of both reformers and conservatives and headed by longtime foes Macdonald and Brown, was formed in June to work for a federal union. Then, in September, representatives of East and West Canada met with the leaders of the Maritime Provinces at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Finally, in Quebec in October, a conference of delegates from Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island adopted a set of resolutions outlining a plan uniting British North America. These resolutions were contained in the British North America Act, which was passed by the British parliament in 1867 and came into force on July 1 of that year.
- The act created the Dominion of Canada, consisting of the four provinces of Ontario (formerly Canada West), Quebec (Canada East), New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. (Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island chose not to join at this time.) The capital of the new country was at Ottawa in Ontario.

Parliament Hill





Canada Coat of Arms



Stephen Harper –
Prime Minister of
Canada























