

Day.^[15] The term *Dominion* was used to distinguish the federal government from the provinces, though after the Second World War the term *federal* had replaced *dominion*.^[16]

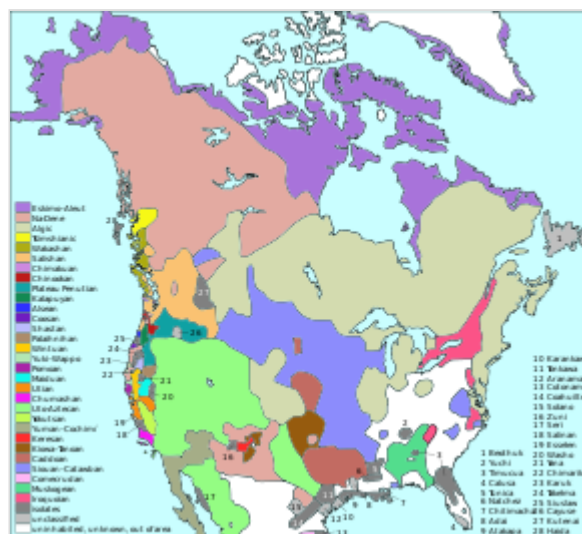
History

Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples in present-day Canada include the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis,^[17] the last being of mixed descent who originated in the mid-17th century when First Nations people married European settlers and subsequently developed their own identity.^[17]

The first inhabitants of North America are generally hypothesized to have migrated from Siberia by way of the Bering land bridge and arrived at least 14,000 years ago.^{[18][19]} The Paleo-Indian archeological sites at Old Crow Flats and Bluefish Caves are two of the oldest sites of human habitation in Canada.^[20] The characteristics of Indigenous societies included permanent settlements, agriculture, complex societal hierarchies, and trading networks.^{[21][22]} Some of these cultures had collapsed by the time European explorers arrived in the late 15th and early 16th centuries and have only been discovered through archeological investigations.^[23]

The Indigenous population at the time of the first European settlements is estimated to have been between 200,000^[25] and two million,^[26] with a figure of 500,000 accepted by Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.^[27] As a consequence of European colonization, the Indigenous population declined by forty to eighty percent and several First Nations, such as the Beothuk, disappeared.^[28] The decline is attributed to several causes, including the transfer of European diseases, such as influenza, measles, and smallpox, to which they had no natural immunity,^{[25][29]} conflicts over the fur trade, conflicts with the colonial authorities and settlers, and the loss of Indigenous lands to settlers and the subsequent collapse of several nations' self-sufficiency.^{[30][31]}



Linguistic areas of North American Indigenous peoples at the time of European contact^[24]

Although not without conflict, European Canadians' early interactions with First Nations and Inuit populations were relatively peaceful.^[32] First Nations and Métis peoples played a critical part in the development of European colonies in Canada, particularly for their role in assisting European coureurs des bois and voyageurs in their explorations of the continent during the North American fur trade.^[33] These early European interactions with First Nations would change from friendship and peace treaties to the dispossession of Indigenous lands through treaties.^{[34][35]} From the late 18th century, European Canadians forced Indigenous peoples to assimilate into a western Canadian society.^[36] These attempts reached a climax in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with forced integration through state-funded boarding schools,^[37] health-care segregation,^[38] and displacement.^[39] A period of redress began with the formation