The first humans to reach Guyana belonged to the group of peoples that crossed into North America from Asia perhaps as much as 35,000 years ago. These first inhabitants were nomads who slowly spread south into Central America and South America. Although great civilizations later arose in the Americas, the structure of Amerindian society in the Guianas remained relatively simple. At the time of Christopher Columbus's voyages, Guyana's inhabitants were divided into two groups, the Arawak along the coast and the Carib in the interior. One of the legacies of the indigenous peoples was the word Guiana, often used to describe the region encompassing modern Guyana as well as Suriname (former Dutch Guiana) and French Guiana. The word, which means "land of waters," is highly appropriate, considering the area's multitude of rivers and streams.