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part of the world they be,' sailed in a Bristol ship THE MATTHEW, and first planted the flags of England and Venice on the 24th of June 1497 on the north eastern seaboard of North America, and by his discoveries in this and the following year gave to England a claim upon the Continent which the colonizing spirit of her sons made good in later times.... So it was that in 1897 the Royal Society of Canada refrained from officially adopting any one of the theories with respect to Cabot's landfall in 1497, although a committee of the Society emphatically expressed their opinion that "the greatly preponderating weight of evidence" indicated the easternmost cape of Cape Breton Island as the landfall. That attitude of the Royal Society of Canada in 1897 is sufficient to turn our attention to the voyage of 1497. At the outset one is struck by the fact that in the past there has been much confusion of thought about the early voyages to North America by John Cabot and his son Sebastian. That confusion arose from the meagre character of the official record, which has had to be supplemented by information from secondary sources, much of it conflicting.... Cabot's voyage of 1497 was, at least in part, a continuation of the English search for the Western Islands. Western Islands, some real and others imaginary, appeared on maps in the late Middle Ages. The real islands were the Madeira and Azores, and the imaginary ones included Antilia or Island of the Seven Cities, St. Brandan's Island and Brazil. Antilia was usually represented as a very large island far to the west of Africa, and was sometimes associated with the legendary island of the Seven Cities, which was supposed to have been colonized in the eighth century by seven bishops and their followers, who had fled from Spain and Portugal on account of the Moslem invasion, each bishop founding a separate city. St. Brandan, abbot of a Benedictine monastery in Ireland, was supposed to have made an extended voyage out into the Atlantic in the sixth century in search of an ideal island, revealed to him in a dream.

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