

February 8, 1985

Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre  
Newsletter Number One

It has been some time since the Colloquium held at the University of Winnipeg in May and a great many things have happened. There has been good news and bad news. Perhaps the bad news first. At the Colloquium it was announced that the Company was going ahead with its commitment to publish Volume 34 by Richard Ruggles and the Centre would attempt to continue with the Frits Pannekoek and John Foster volume based on Duffield's Moose Fort Journals. Very shortly however, members of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, approximately 1400 in all, will be receiving a letter from the Company announcing the withdrawal of Company support for the Society and including a refund cheque for 1984 dues. The refund is necessary because the Company has decided to forego publication of the Ruggle's volume. The decision was reached because it was apparent to them that the volume would not be completed for two years and they had a very bad financial picture that required drastic cuts. It is unfortunately the case that the arts are the most vulnerable and, in the short term at least, seen as the least damaging thing to cut.

It had been our plan to continue the Society with other funds and under a revised system. Unfortunately this has been made very difficult by concerns and stipulations that the Company has set forth. We have come to the conclusion that a completely new approach is necessary. Based on the response to the questionnaire, which is summarized below, and the discussion that took place at the end of the Colloquium it is our opinion that some form of Society is necessary for publication of Fur Trade material and particularly the material of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. We therefore propose that a new Society be formed under the auspices of the Archives Research Centre with the name The Rupertsland Record Society. There are several distinct advantages to this approach, not the least of which is the wider scope for publications that will be possible. Details of the new Society are being worked out and will be made available as soon as possible. Suffice to say that it will be modelled upon the Champlain Society. We would appreciate it if you would fill out and return the brief form at the end of this Newsletter indicating your willingness to participate in the new Society. Note: There is no commitment with this form; however it will allow us to determine the degree of interest.

Many of you will have seen the advertisement for a new Editor for the Beaver magazine. This is sad news for those who have much appreciated the professional efforts of Helen Burgess; however it must be seen as good news for it means that the Company intends to continue the

February 6, 1985

Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre  
Newsletter Number One

magazine, at least for a little while longer. This last comment is made pertinent by the news that many of you will not have heard, namely that the Company is closing the Library at Hudson's Bay House to the Public and Researchers and have terminated the position of the Company Historian. It is difficult to accept these moves because they narrow the commitment of the Company to its history; they are apparently an inevitable result of cost cutting in light of a weak financial picture. All of these events seem to give urgency to our plans, particularly because of the cuts already made by the Federal Government and the expected cuts of the upcoming budget.

A series of Occasional Papers is under way and the first may be ready in time for the Fur Trade Conference in Montreal in May. It will serve as an enticement to membership in the Society and demonstrate our intent to keep things going. Jennifer Brown is editing Victor Lytwyn's Masters Thesis which analyzes the historical geography of the fur trade of the Little North and its expansion into the East Winnipeg Country to 1821. This publication will be a high quality paperback production. Other theses and large papers are being brought to our attention so that it appears that there will be no shortage of material. However, don't let that deter you from bringing work to our attention that you think should be published.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the Colloquium was a financial success achieving a moderate profit which is already being used to develop the next Colloquium. Other monies have been received from the Canadian Shield Foundation, thanks to the kindness of our Patron the Right Honourable Edward Schreyer, and from the University of Winnipeg as part of SSHRC grants to small universities. One or two private donations have been received and application has been made to two Foundations for sufficient monies to allow the creation of the Rupertsland Society, and the publication of the Volumes mentioned before. Again, if you have any suggestions please let us know so that we can guarantee survival.

There have been several requests for research assistance, some directed to us by Shirlee Smith and some through knowledge of the Centre. One inquiry came from West Germany which indicates that the word is spreading. If you or anyone that you know has need for research assistance the procedure is to contact Shirlee Smith at the Archives. Any work that Shirlee and her excellent staff are not able to deal with is directed to us at the Centre. We are developing a list of students capable of researching

February 8, 1985

Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre  
Newsletter Number One

most areas. We will provide a list of these researchers and their capabilities on request and you then make arrangements directly with them or through us as you wish.

Rendezvous: Selected Papers of the Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1981, Thomas C. Buckley, Editor, is available by writing to the North American Fur Trade Conference, 240 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102.

It would appear that plans for the next Fur Trade Conference in Montreal are well under way and that there will be an excellent selection of interesting papers and topics for discussion. Jennifer Brown advises me that the American Society for Ethnohistory meetings in New Orleans were very successful and has kindly provided a list of papers that will be of interest to our readers.

Courtesy of Jennifer Brown: The program of the American Society for Ethnohistory meetings in New Orleans, 8 - 11 November, 1984, included the following presentations which may be of interest to our readers.

Arthur Roberts (Simon Fraser University): "Paleo Indian Man-Land Relationships"

Patrick Julig (University of Toronto): "Precontact Occupation of the Western James Bay Lowlands of Northern Ontario"

Victor Konrad (University of Maine): "Soils Analysis and Iroquoian Prehistory"

Nancy L. Woolworth (University of Minnesota): "The Transformation of the Mdewakantonwan Dakota, 1640-1700"

Robert Brightman (University of Wisconsin): "Ethnohistory and Ritual Performance: George Nelson's Description of the Shaking Tent"

Victor Lytwyn (University of Manitoba): "The Fur Trade and Resource Depletion in the Western Interior of Canada: Analyses of the Spatial and Temporal Dimensions before 1850"

J. E. Rea (University of Manitoba): "Treaty Rights, Government Policy and the Ethno-historian"

Frank Tough (University of Saskatchewan): "The Impact of Commercial Fishing on Native Fisheries: The case of Northern Manitoba"

February 8, 1985

**Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre**  
**Newsletter Number One**

- Dianne Newell (University of British Columbia): "Indian Participation in the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry"
- Arthur J. Ray (University of British Columbia): "The Native Economy of the Gitskan-Wet'suwet'en-Babine Area of British Columbia: The Native European struggle for Control, 1821-1915"
- J. Frederick Fausz (St. Mary's College of Maryland): "Sonnets of Wrath: The Impact of the Beaver Trade and Anglo-Indian Interest Groups on the Development of the Early Chesapeake, 1620 - 1660"
- Neal Salisbury (Smith College): "Social Relationships on a Moving Frontier: Natives and Settlers in Southern New England, 1640 - 1675"
- Nancy L. Hagedorn (College of William and Mary): "Mediating the Exchange of Cultures: Indian Interpreters among the Iroquois, 1740 - 1774"
- Michael J. Mullin (University of California, Santa Barbara): "William Johnson's Formative Years as a Cultural Broker with the Iroquois"
- Jennifer S. H. Brown (University of Winnipeg): "Death and Rebirth of the Canadian Metis, 1885 - 1985"
- Antoine Lussier (University of Saskatchewan): "The Question of Identity and the Constitution: The Metis of Canada in 1984"

The 1985 meetings of the Society will be in Chicago, Illinois. The Program Chair is Professor Raymond Fogelson, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago.

---

**An unusual year of climate on Hudson Bay**

1755 appears to have been a year with a very wet summer along the shores of Hudson Bay. At York Factory it rained on 15 days in August and 17 days in September, while at Churchill there were 10 days with rain in July 12 in August and 12 in September. This was all capped off with rain falling on 3 days in November at Churchill and once at York. The daily journals for both sites comment on the mild weather in November. The

February 8, 1985

Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre  
Newsletter Number One

Churchill journal also comments on the lack of game, a comment that was going to become much more frequent by the end of the century. The cause of the increased rainfall was a change in the general circulation that resulted in extremely unusual wind patterns. In November York had westerly winds 85% of the days while at Churchill there were westerlies for 76% of the time and south winds for a further 13%. This change in the climate was the beginning of a world wide change that resulted in increased precipitation and an increase in the size of the glaciers in Europe.

A particularly detailed study of the summer seasons along the East Coast of Hudson Bay during the nineteenth century has been written by Cynthia Wilson and published by Atmospheric Environment Services, Downsview, Ontario. The actual publication might not be of direct interest to other researchers of this time period; however, it does provide detailed information about the extreme conditions that resulted from the eruption of the volcano Tambora in the fall of 1815. This resulted in 1816 being known as the year with no summer.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Some useful references about climatic and environmental conditions during the fur trade era are as follows:

- Allsopp, T.R. 1977: Agricultural Weather in the Red River Basin of Southern Manitoba over the period 1800 to 1975. Canadian Atmospheric Environment Service, CLI-3-77, p.28.
- Ball, T.F. 1983: The Migration of Geese as an Indicator of Climate Change in the Southern Hudson Bay Region between 1715 and 1851. Climatic Change. 5: 85-93.
- Ball, T.F. and Kingsley, R.A. 1984: Instrumental Temperature Records at Two Sites in Central Canada: 1768 to 1910. Climatic Change. 6: 39-57.
- Catchpole, A.J.W. 1980: Historical Evidence of Climatic Change in Western and Northern Canada. In: Climatic Change in Canada. 2. C.R. Harington (ed.), Syllogeus No. 26, p. 17-60 National Museums of Natural Sciences, Ottawa.
- Catchpole, A.J.W. and Ball, T.F. 1981: Analysis of Historical Evidence of Climatic Change in Western and Northern Canada In: Climatic Change in Canada. 2. C.R. Harington (ed.) Syllogeus No. 33, p. 48-96. National Museum of Natural Sciences, Ottawa.

February 8, 1985

**Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre**  
**Newsletter Number One**

- Catchpole, A.J.W., Moodie, D.W. and Milton, D. 1976: Freeze-up and Break-up of Estuaries on Hudson Bay in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Canadian Geographer*. 20: 279-297.
- Catchpole, A.J.W. and Faurer, M. 1983: Summer Sea Ice Severity in Hudson Strait, 1751-1870. *Climatic Change*. 5: 115-141.
- Lamb, H.H. 1977: *Climate: Present Past and Future*. Methuen, London. Vol.2, Climatic History and the future. p. 835.
- Lamb, H.H. 1982: *Climate History and the Modern World*. Methuen London. p. 387.
- Mackay, D.K. and Mackay, J.R. 1965: Historical Records of Freeze-up and Break-up on the Churchill and Hayes Rivers. *Geographical Bulletin* 7: 7-16.
- Rannie, W.F. 1983: Breakup and Freezepup of the Red River at Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada in the 19th Century and some Climatic Implications. *Climatic Change*. 5: 283-297.

XX

**Regrettably absent papers**

Abstracts for the recent Colloquium (May) are still being gathered and should be together in time for the next Newsletter. Due to a variety of reasons two presenters, whose papers were accepted for presentation, were unable to attend. It would seem valuable to bring their work to the attention of others by reproducing their abstracts here. The first is by David G. Anderson, Senior Lecturer in Geography, Luton College of Higher Education, Luton, England: The second is by Elizabeth Mancke, 3033 Del Rio Drive, North Vancouver, B.C. V7N 4C3

---

The Development of Settlement in the Sandwich Bay area of Southern Coastal Labrador: an Analysis of the Cartwright Post Records 1886-1929. David Anderson. Senior Lecturer in Geography Luton College of Higher Education.

In the Sandwich Bay area of Labrador, the juxtaposition of land and sea has produced an environment of considerable spatial diversity. Such differences are augmented by intense climatic changes which seasonally transform the regional environment. Coupled to this physical heterogeneity are spatial and temporal variations in the distribution of marine and land

February 8, 1985

Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre  
Newsletter Number One

based resources. This diversity facilitates the assigning to each locale specific resource attributes. Area resource endowment has consequently influenced the development of settlement in the Sandwich Bay region and in particular has stressed the importance of the land-sea interface for the location of settlement.

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives provide a particularly rich source of information for an analysis of the relationship between resources and settlement. For the period for which Hudson's Bay Company records are available for the Cartwright post, 1886-1929, detailed analysis has been directed towards six themes for investigation: the reconstruction of an annual cycle of activity; identification of resource areas, their production and productivity levels and the organisation of resource production; the dynamics of seasonal settlement and associated resource patterns; the functioning of the settlement network through a time-series analysis of population flows, resource transfers and boat movements; the structure of trade and its organisation; the reconstruction of ice surfaces (freeze over and break-up) and the impact of variable ice and snow conditions on patterns of resource exploitation.

Supplemented by other research it has been possible to generalise upon the nature and intensity of contact between Sandwich Bay and areas to the north and south. An area for further research is to extend the detailed analysis, as undertaken at Cartwright, to other Labrador Company posts. This would provide a more complete reconstruction of the spatial organisation of human activity for central and southern Labrador during the second half of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth centuries.

-----HBCARC-----

The Management of the HBC: Research Approaches.

Elizabeth Mancke (M.A., University of British Columbia)

My research is an examination of the early business structure of the Hudson's Bay Company as a case study in management of long-distance trade in the early modern period. By looking at accounting procedures, price structures, quality and quantity control of trade goods, price stabilization on the London fur market, it is possible to gain considerable insight into the increasing sophistication of the commercial practices of the Company between 1670 and 1730. Methodologically this work rests on two premises: one, that certain business procedures like accounting reflect organizational structures and business objectives; two, that prices

February 8, 1985

Hudson's Bay Company Archives Research Centre  
Newsletter Number One

reflect economic behavior. When assembled in sufficient detail, patterns emerge suggesting transitions that cannot easily be discerned or documented in the qualitative record. The HBC records are particularly good for research into management techniques because of the richness of both the quantitative and qualitative record. While my research is heavily dependent on statistical data taken from the journals and ledgers, it is possible to check many of my conclusions against the literary record.

Conceptually this work fits into current scholarship on the commercial expansion of Europe being done by historians such as Steensgaard, Chaudhuri, and Braudel. They argue for structural revolution in commercial practices as significant in longevity and success in high-risk long-distance trade. Using this historiographical perspective, it therefore becomes possible to re-evaluate the success of the Hudson's Bay Company in the North American fur trade.



A SELECTION OF COMMENTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE CIRCULATED DURING THE COLLOQUIUM HELD IN WINNIPEG IN MAY 1984.

All those responding to the questionnaire were willing to participate in any continuation of the Society. Most held several Volumes and had been members for some years, although there were one or two newcomers to the Fur Trade experience. A majority were subscribers to The Beaver and approximately half were also members of the Champlain Society.

Everyone indicated a willingness to have an minimum increase of annual fees to \$25:00 and this is reflected in the figure for membership given above.

In response to a question about ways that the HBCARC could move to obtain improvements or changes in the research facilities, access, and support services the following comments are most salient;

- a) Extend hours of service to the evening to allow out of town researchers to make the most of their limited time.
- b) Furnish a list of reasonable accommodations close to the Archives.

(Note: This is available through the HBCARC now).

- c) Furnish better reading facilities in the microfilm room.
- d) Replace some of the older poor quality microfilm.
- e) Improve better conservation facilities to allow more safe consultation of original documents.

It should be noted that most of these concerns hinge upon more funding from the Provincial government, Department of Cultural Affairs. We hope that the activities of the HBCARC and a steady growth in the use of the Archives, particularly by people from outside the province, will result in greater leverage, serving to demonstrate the economic and public relations value of these treasures.

----- cut here -----

**Name**.....

**Address**.....

.....

.....

.....

**Institution/Affiliation**.....

**I am interested in being a member of the Rupertsland Society**

**Mail to : Dr. T.F.Ball,**

**Department of Geography,**

**University of Winnipeg,**

**515 Portage Avenue,**

**Winnipeg, Manitoba,**

**Canada, R3B 2E9.**