

SS10 – “The Merger of the HBC and the NWC” pp. 147-150

- By 1820, both companies suffering financially.
- Law suits dragged on for 3 years in British courts, and at great expense.
- Fur trade rapidly depleting and profits shrinking.
- 1821 – HBC and NWC decided the only way to survive was to merge = The Hudson's bay Company.
- 100 shares, NWC controlled 55 shares, HBC 45.
- British parliament gave them control over not only Rupert's land but land extending over the Rockies.
- NWC had more shares but HBC no intention of giving up control.
- Still used the more efficient Hudson Bay shipping route.
- By 1825, the Montreal fur partners had sold back their shares in the new company back to HBC.
- Downsized workforce after merger and relied on Native people as trappers, translators, guides, map-makers. Also built, repaired and paddled the canoes which were still used for lighter hauls.
- At the posts, Native women and young people (fam members of Native traders) pitched in to help downsized staff.
- During summer, a post could have as few as 2 employees with many chores to do daily.
- George Simpson – new head of HBC – new little about furs but understood trading.
- Simpson in charge of all HBC operations in N. America.
- He was hands on and travelled around checking out the territory he controlled.
- Preferred to arrive without warning to trading posts, ensure post met standards.
- Went on rest leave in 1829 and returned in 1830 with his 18 yr. old bride.
- Simpson already had kids in RR, did not want them to meet new bride.
- His new wife said she would not socialize with the Metis relatives of HBC employees.
- Simpsons soon found themselves isolated as a result of racism.
- 1832 – Simpson's infant son died and he and wife left RR the next yr. back to England.
- Returned to BNA and settled in Montreal, he and Frances found society more to their liking.
- Knighted in 1841 for services to HBC, continued to travel and died in 1860.