Labour Records of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1821–1870

Philip Goldring

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Fur trade Era Hudson’s Bay Company Business Records. Many types of business records were created at Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) posts, districts, departments, and ships. Rupert’s Land – The territory granted to HBC by its Royal Charter of 1670 and incorporated into the Dominion of Canada in 1870, after the Deed of Surrender of 1869. It was the area drained by the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay: northern Ontario, Québec, the southern Northwest Territories, southern Alberta, most of Saskatchewan, and all of Manitoba, including the valley of the Red River south to Lake Traverse in the United States. The name honours HBC’s first Governor, Prince Rupert. Papers on the Labour System of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Volumes 1-3, Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1979-1980. The Hudson’s Bay Company, a fur-trading enterprise headquartered in London, began operations on the shores of Hudson Bay in 1670. During the next century and a half, it gradually expanded its network of trading posts west across Canada. In 1821, it merged with its prime rival, the North West Company out of Montreal, thus acquiring several posts in the Pacific Northwest. The Bay Company directors did not pursue any further plans for establishments west of the Divide until 1821, when they completed negotiations to merge with their chief rival, the North West Company. The joint concern assumed the name of the Hudson’s Bay Company, with most of the former employees of both companies retaining their positions. "The Hudson’s Bay Company relinquish the claim preferred by them for damages sustained by them, arising from the obstruction presented by the Russian authorities to an expedition fitted out by the Hudson’s Bay Company for entering the Stikine River." The agreement was continued after the expiration of ten years, but the rental fine changed from a supply of otters to a money payment of 1,500l. a year. The Hudson’s Bay Company, as we have seen, pushed their posts down the Yukon River, and only withdrew them after Alaska, in 1867, passed into the possession of the United One of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s fiercest early competitors was North West Company, established in 1779 by a Scottish-Canadian group of nine traders that moved into the Canadian interior around 1780 and claimed to be the rightful successor to the early French traders who had opened up the land. North West Company had two types of shareholders: the eastern partners, merchants in Montreal and Quebec who supplied the venture capital, and the “wintering” partners, who became responsible for exploratory and sales operations. The following year, Ogden returned east. In 1821 the two companies merged under the name of the Hudson’s Bay Company after the Nor’westers learned that their company was in poor financial condition.