Trading with the Hudson's Bay Company, a case study of the Nipigon House Post, 1828-1838

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Abstract
This thesis critically examines generalizations offered in the fur trade literature regarding the impact of the amalgamation of the Northwest Company and Hudson's Bay Company upon Aboriginal trade partners. There are essentially two schools of thought. One asserts that Aboriginal trappers had become dependent upon European technology by the time of the 1821 amalgamation, and were forced to continue the trade exchange accepting the changes imposed by the Hudson's Bay Company during the monopoly period. The second perspective holds that Aboriginal trade partners were not dependent upon European technology and were adaptable, choosing to opt out of the trade exchange, focusing instead upon subsistence hunting and trapping to satisfy finite wants and needs. The focus of this research project is to evaluate these competing ideas about the amalgamation phase of the fur trade, using the records of Nipigon House Post dating between 1828 and 1838. The fur trade is typically characterized by several predominant periods: the early fur trade, the competition phase, and finally the amalgamation phase. As each phase of the trade progressed, Aboriginal trade partners were affected in various ways. It is thought that in the post-amalgamation phase, there was a loss of Aboriginal bargaining power, and an extended time of hardship due to a widespread collapse in the viability of fur and food resources. This thesis examines how the Anishinabe community at Nipigon House Post was affected by the amalgamation. Data derived from the Journals of the Nipigon House are used to explore the Anishinabe community and their trade activities. Contrary to expectations deriving from the conventional fur trade literature that emphasize growing dependence upon the HBC, the Nipigon House data indicate adaptability to the monopoly period. This involved a limited demand for a narrow range of goods in keeping with the modest fur returns generated. Indeed many people focused heavily upon satisfying their subsistence needs, and sharply reduced their efforts at fur trapping. This contributed to a shift of the settlement system, with much more time spent along the lakeshore. These data suggest that the Lake Nipigon Anishinabe were not dependent upon European goods for survival. It can be concluded that reconsideration of generalizations about Aboriginal dependency during the monopoly phase of the fur trade is required.

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Hudson's Bay Company came into being after a pair of resourceful French traders, Pierre-Esprit Radisson and Médard de Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, established a fur-trading route to the interior of the North American continent, through the great inland sea of Hudson Bay. With the support of Prince Rupert, cousin of King Charles II of England, ships set sail from England in 1668 to exploit this discovery. 3 / 21. Sign of the Times by Fiona Paton (CC BY-ND). This is a list of Hudson's Bay Company trading posts. For the fur trade in general see North American fur trade and Canadian canoe routes (early). For some groups of related posts see Fort-Rupert for James Bay, Ottawa River, Winnipeg River, Assiniboine River fur trade and Saskatchewan River fur trade. U-Y Outpost. Former colonies and territories in Canada. List of French forts in North America. List of North American cities by year of foundation. Company post map - Hudson's Bay Company Archives. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC; French: Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson CBH) is a Canadian retail business group. A fur trading business for much of its existence, HBC now owns and
operates retail stores in Canada and the United States. In 2006 HBC was sold for $1.1 billion to an American businessman, Jerry Zucker, and as such is no longer a Canadian-owned company. The company sold most of its European operations by August 2019 and its remaining stores, in the Netherlands, were closed by the end of 2019. We argue that not only did the Hudson's Bay Company understand the agency problem but also put into operation strategies designed to attenuate opportunistic behavior. The company used employment contracts and control systems and established a social structure compatible with the company's aims.