

*The Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company**

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Résumé

Les archives de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson conservées aux Archives provinciales du Manitoba sont essentielles à l'étude de plusieurs aspects de l'histoire canadienne et fournissent aussi un excellent modèle pour une histoire des archives d'une entreprise. Cet article examine l'histoire de la gestion des archives de la compagnie depuis la fondation de Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson en 1670 à ce jour. Le problème de l'accès au fonds a constitué un thème majeur de l'histoire de la compagnie au XXe siècle. Comme les archives étaient à Londres, les historiens nord-américains trouvaient difficilement accès à ces archives jusqu'à ce qu'un projet de micro filmage des documents soit mis sur pied par les Archives nationales du Canada et que les documents soient éventuellement transférés à Winnipeg.

Abstract

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba is indispensable for the study of many aspects of Canadian history and it provides an excellent model for the study of a business archives history. This paper surveys the history of the company's management of its archives from the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 to the present day. A major theme in this history is the problem of access which the archival holdings presented to the company in the twentieth century. With the location of the Archives in London, North American historians were frustrated in their attempts to gain access until a microfilming project with the National Archives of Canada and, eventually, the transfer of the Archives to Winnipeg opened this treasure chest of Canadian history to them.

All varieties of material in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives have been researched and presented in numerous articles and books, but no official history of the company has been written and no previous study has been made of the history of the archival preservation of this large and unique national treasure. This paper is not a history of

the Hudson's Bay Company. Several, albeit unofficial, histories have been written of the company, most notably E.E. Rich's two-volume work published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society (1958-59) and Peter C. Newman's three-volume popular history published by Penquin Books (1985-91). I refer readers to those histories for an understanding of the role the company played in the history of Canada.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the significance of the administration of the company's archival material and its efforts to make its records available through public access and publication. Key to the information contained herein are the administrative records of the Archives Department dating from about 1920 to the present and arranged and described in Record Group 20.¹ That record group consists of two sets of records: those amassed in London from c.1920 to 1974, and those gathered in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba since the move of the Archives from London to Winnipeg in 1974. Although these two groups are distinct in provenance, they represent a continuous record of the administrative activities and programmes of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives from 1920. The administrative records of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives are ongoing—as are the records of the company—and are now scheduled, according to the Government Records Authority Schedule, as an administrative unit of the Province of Manitoba. Record Group 20 is made up of twelve series. Of particular interest to the history of the Archives itself is Series 5, Archives Department Records Control and History 1873-1976, which includes notes compiled on the history of the Archives Department in 1920 and 1968, procedures manuals on records control, and register books recording public access to the records in London and in Winnipeg.

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives contains the business records of the Hudson's Bay Company collected, preserved, and protected for over 325 years as evidence of the company's legal and professional obligations to its shareholders, its employees, the monarchy of England, and the government of Canada. They contain rare and unique evidence and information of business, scientific, historical, political, and archival significance.

The Hudson's Bay Company came into existence in London, England on 2 May 1670 with the granting of a Royal Charter by Charles II to the "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Tradeing into Hudsons Bay and their successors."² Details of the earliest activities of the committee of seven plus the Governor, who were to direct the voyages and manage the business affairs of the company, are recorded in Minute Books beginning in 1671. Nine thousand linear feet of records, including the original vellum and leather bound Minute Books, are now maintained in air-conditioned and humidity controlled space at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

Throughout the first two hundred years of its operations, the Hudson's Bay Company had been predominantly interested in, and was a prominent element of, the fur trade in North America. The search for new fur supplies and resultant exploration and mapping led to the gradual expansion of the company in all directions from the shores of Hudson Bay; however, by the end of the nineteenth century, the fur trade in Canada was drawing to a close. The role of the company as "true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors" of almost half of the North American continent, as defined in the Royal Charter, ended with Canadian Confederation in 1867. Under the Rupert's Land Act of 1868 the vast empire of the company reverted to the Crown to be transferred

to the government of Canada. In the Deed of Surrender the company received payment of 300,000 Pounds Sterling and retained seven million acres of land.³ At the same time, outside competition from independent fur traders, expanding transportation and communication systems, and settlement of the west radically changed the business of the Hudson's Bay Company. Competition encouraged cash fur purchasing and a cash economy was quite different from the dependent economy of the previous two hundred years. As a result, the company shifted its emphasis from furs to land sales and, eventually, retail trade. The last half of the nineteenth century saw immense growth and expansion of population throughout North America and the company was well established in almost half of the continent. The isolation and independence of the old company was irrevocably altered and it became more difficult to manage the increasingly complex operations from London. The company established a Canadian head office in Red River (later Winnipeg) in 1860 and a Canadian advisory committee in 1912 as the weight of the administration of the North American interests of the company shifted. The records of the company from 1870 on reflect these changes in control, internal communication, and reporting structures. The flow of paper was towards Winnipeg, and from there to London, and from London to Winnipeg. Recurring reorganizations, alternating between centralization and decentralization of responsibilities, and the gradual relinquishing of control from London to Canada saw the appearance of new forms of documents and filing systems as well as in-house publications and newsletters.

Interest in the company's historical records by the Canadian government was first shown in 1898 when Joseph Pope, former Secretary to John A. Macdonald and Under Secretary of State to Wilfrid Laurier, approached the company in search of records of Canadian historical significance for the Public Archives of Canada. No records were relinquished but a programme of copying company records was started in the 1920s by Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist. In 1932 the company itself took an interest in transferring the archives to Canada. It had briefly considered handing the archives over to either Oxford University or the Canadian government as a response to fiscal restraints brought on by a drop in business in the 1930s.⁴ Nothing was done at the time, but that passing reference to a Canadian home for the archives was a premonition of what would occur forty-two years later. Four years after the transfer of the company's head office to Winnipeg in 1970, the Archives followed.

Overcoming the problems of making and keeping records in isolated obscurity throughout much of North America, and then accumulating those records in London for over three hundred years was no trivial feat for the Hudson's Bay Company. For most of that time, there were no computers, photocopiers, fax machines, or telephones. There was, if luck was with them, a once-a-year voyage from England to Hudson Bay which picked up the yearly journals and left behind new ones to be filled by the post manager or clerk. It was not unusual for two years to pass without contact between the company in London and the posts in North America. The survival rate of business documents in Britain prior to 1800 was quite insignificant.⁵ That changed increasingly through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the Hudson's Bay Company was already 130 years old in 1800 and its first inventory of records had been completed in 1796. Board minute books, letterbooks, bookkeeping journals and ledgers, registers of members, and staff records are augmented by archival records collected during, but outside, the activity of business such as the original charter, maps, ships' logs,

photographs, post journals, and diaries. There are also almost one thousand rare books in the Archives, remnants of the Fur Trade Libraries,⁶ and an impressive fine art collection.

Sir Hilary Jenkinson, the British archival authority, has explained that archives are not brought together or kept for historical reasons. They are a natural product of an administration but they are eventually used by historians for purposes quite different than the original.⁷ Following Jenkinson's theory, the archival value of these records is enhanced by two major principles: provenance and original order. The fact that the Hudson's Bay Company has been in business for so long and has been keeping records over that entire period of time adds even more to their importance. The interpretation of records is first reliant on the reasons for making the record, and secondly on the interrelationships between the records and the whole of the collection. The importance of the information in the record is increased by the importance the owner put on keeping it. In the case of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, the provenance has never been lost. Of course, not all of the records of the earliest years of the company have survived. Many were unfortunately lost or destroyed, and a few have strayed into other archives. The conditions of making and keeping the records in London and in Rupert's Land in the early years were not easy to control. Storage of the records which made their way back to London was initially quite haphazard, but many moves and inconsistent storage conditions seem to have had little effect on the preservation of the records represented in the Archives today.

Some concern for the records is evident throughout the Minute Books of the committee,⁸ but this concern was not consistent and, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there are decades when no mention of the records is made. The first minute book, dated November 1671, recorded that the committee:

Ordered that Mr. Rastel doe forthwith give an account of this Committee not only of the whole charge of Setting out the Shippes & Stocks of the Adventurers this last voyage to Hudson's Bay, but also of the charge of all former Voyages beginning from the first joynt Stocke of the Adventurers, & that there bee a true state of the Whole business & every particular man's interest duely sett forth & entered in fayre Vellum bookes against tuesday next the 14th day of this instante November, if it can bee Soe Soone done.⁹

The company had received its charter a year and a half earlier but Rastel's work is truly the beginning of the record-keeping process. The job was not to be "Soe Soone done."

From time to time, the committee in London laid down rules for keeping account books and journals. As early as 1683, the committee directed the factors of the posts on Hudson Bay to keep "Journalls of what hath been done in the respective factories & of all occurances that have happened to them the yeare past."¹⁰ These daily journals were sent to London yearly with the returning fur cargoes. As well, "Journals of discoveries" were kept and taken to London by the captains of vessels sailing into Hudson Bay for the company. The first arrangement of the records and resulting inventory from 1796 lists the records alphabetically. That "Inventory of Books, &c,"¹¹ which forms the foundation of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, also includes a layout chart of their position in the bookcases at the time, an indication of an emphasis on order and accessibility. There is no record of the extent of the archives at this

time. During the first decade of the company's history, the committee had met in London at various establishments including the Tower, the Mint, Prince Rupert's house, and Garraway's coffee house. The records of the Company of Adventurers moved with the committee in an iron bound chest with lock. The first permanent lease of premises was taken in 1696, where the company stayed until the move to Hudson's Bay House in 1794, almost one hundred years later. Its next move was in 1865.

This stability probably aided the keeping of the archives and credit must be given to the Hudson's Bay Company for voluntarily maintaining custody and providing some preservation for the records it had kept from the date of its founding. Somehow, without any specific management programme, the records were kept together and stored in a way that made it possible to complete an inventory and index without any further comment in the minutes about their condition or lack of arrangement. The company's reasons for keeping its records were related to legal and business concerns rather than a strong commitment to preservation for historical purposes. Legal actions by former employees regarding wages (one of them being Pierre-Esprit Radisson), wars and treaties with France, individual philosophies of different British monarchs, definition of jurisdiction of the Northwest Company, and fluctuating stock market returns indicate the range of concerns affecting the company legally and fiscally. But, the fact remains, the company has kept a continuous record of its day-to-day business in both London and North America from 1670. Throughout most of its first 200 years, accusations were made at various times regarding the company's use of land, its treatment of the native people, and its commitment to settlement and exploration. The charter always proved to be the primary document in any legal discussion of the company's activities. An example of the use of its records to defend against its attackers is the well-documented confrontation with Arthur Dobbs in the mid-eighteenth century. A committee of inquiry was appointed by Parliament in 1749 following Dobbs' complaints of the company's abuse of its charter and its inadequate efforts to find a northwest passage. The company was required to present to the committee the following: lists of stockholders, forts and settlements, ships and their cargoes; instructions to captains of company ships; values of exports and imports to and from Hudson Bay; original stock holdings; correspondence and orders regarding discovery of the northwest passage; orders regarding government of the factories; and Kelsey's journal of discovery.¹²

The history of the Hudson's Bay Company reflects British archival traditions over the same period of time. Archival science as an independent subject has really only been recognized in this century. How is it, then, that the huge accumulations of public, private, and ecclesiastical records of even greater antiquity, not to mention the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, survived in Britain? The *Public Record Office Act* in 1838 had focused on the public record, leaving considerable numbers of valuable religious, secular, and business records in private hands, at the mercy of time and the environment. Other records survived simply because no one bothered to destroy them. Jenkinson noted: "... as for the older documents accumulated by Companies in their own keeping, preservation has been ... a matter of chance while the Companies survived ..."¹³ The survival of the Hudson's Bay Company meant the survival of its records.

In 1920 the organizers of the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of the company's founding officially acknowledged the old records belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company as significant historical documents and set the stage for the organization of an official archives. A journalist, Sir William Schooling, was hired to write a history of the company. In fact, the book, *The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay during Two Hundred and Fifty Years 1670-1920*, contained only a brief historical outline. But, before the end of 1920, Schooling had convinced the company to let him write a multi-volume history of the company from the wealth of material in its archives. During the six years of Schooling's efforts, he had a secretary and as many as four assistants, provided by the company, who indexed and extracted many of the records in a format which has provided future staff of the Archives quick and efficient access to volumes of information. Schooling strongly encouraged the establishment of a formal archives and publication programme. Unfortunately, his overly ambitious attempt to publish a company history was unsuccessful, but it was the key to discovery of the company's archives and the opening of that treasure chest.

The organization of an official Archives for the Hudson's Bay Company was, in fact, a gradual process, but the 1920s finally created a suitable environment for the company to make a formal commitment to the historical records which had been more or less ignored for 250 years. In considering this period in the history of the Archives it becomes obvious that three main factors influenced the company's action at this time. First, repeated lobbying from outside researchers, predominantly from North America,¹⁴ pressured the company for access at least to published copies of early records from the company's archives. Secondly, the growth in the amount of paper records produced by a modern business as extensive as the Hudson's Bay Company in coping with the management of interests as diverse as land sales, settlement, retail stores, and fur trade required planned and organized arrangements. Thirdly, Confederation, and the interest of the Canadian government in the records, made the company increasingly aware that it had a responsibility to share the archival material it had accumulated over its years of operation both in England and in Rupert's Land. Historically, it had to be accountable for its activities in the fur trade and for its role in the early development of Canada.

While he had the company's records available to him for the writing of the history, Schooling was frequently approached by historians for access to material relating to the company's role in North America. As a result, the Board resolved in 1924 to "publish such of its archives as may be expedient."¹⁵ Two years later, soon after Schooling's history project was abandoned, Canada's Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty, with the permission of Prime Minister Mackenzie King, was engaged by the company, on contract, to direct the classification and arrangement of the records as a step towards a publishing programme. During the next four years, Doughty worked with the staff left after Schooling's project to prepare the records for a series of publications under an arrangement made with the Canadian History Society of England. William Smith, also from the Public Archives, prepared five volumes of documents from the Hudson's Bay Company archives for this phase of publication readiness, but only one volume of George Simpson's journals reached the editing stage before this publication scheme was abandoned. The early 1930s, and a worldwide economic downturn, took the company's attention away from its old records.

But, although the work on publication had been discontinued, the archives were better organized for future schemes. The company had all its records in one place and had knowledge of exactly what made up its documentary possessions.

One of the team of four staff members who had read, arranged, and extracted material for Schooling's history and had assisted Doughty and Smith was Richard H.G. Leveson Gower. For ten years, from 1921 to 1931, he—and whatever other staff was working on the records—was directed and redirected to special projects, none of which were completed and none of which encouraged use of the archives by outside researchers. This state of affairs disturbed Leveson Gower to the point that in 1931 he suggested the company consider making its records accessible to students in lieu of the suspended publication programme.¹⁶ The board accepted this proposal and Leveson Gower became the first company Archivist.¹⁷

Within a year, in preparation for opening them to scholars, Hilary Jenkinson was one of two consultants invited to inspect the archives.¹⁸ The theories of selection, arrangement, and description of archival material as set out in Jenkinson's *Manual of Archive Administration* were the basis for the classification scheme formally set up in 1933 for the archives dating prior to 1870. The arrangements and resulting finding aids made at that time are the same ones used today in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

This is also a significant turning point in the history of access to the archives. For the first time, as a matter of formal policy, researchers were to be allowed direct access to records created before 1870. They were still not granted the right to publish information from these records without company approval but this major change in access regulations ended the tight control over the right to publish information from the archives which all the company governors had heretofore retained. The board decided to delegate implementation of the access policy to the company Archivist, who was a strong advocate of liberal terms of access to researchers. A series of articles about the Archives was written by Leveson Gower for the popular company magazine, *The Beaver*, between 1933 and 1935.¹⁹ The company had established an accessible Archives Department and was finally willing to publicize information about its holdings and the work that had been accomplished in organizing them for research purposes.

By this time the Hudson's Bay Company fully appreciated the importance of its archives both for historical research and for favourable publicity. Although it was prepared to encourage interest from outside the company, the location of the archives in London presented access problems for researchers who were, for the most part, in North America. The company acknowledged this problem by establishing the Hudson's Bay Record Society in 1938, thus launching a successful effort to publish the holdings of the archives. An agreement of joint publication was reached with the Champlain Society and that relationship remained in place until 1950 when the Hudson's Bay Record Society became solely responsible for its own publications. E.E. Rich, a fellow of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, was hired as the first editor and the staff of the Archives Department researched and wrote all the notes to accompany the published text. The records society publication programme, however, pointed to remaining unresolved problems relating to access to the company archives.

One of the remaining restrictions on access, the company's right to deny publication of information obtained from its records, continued to create problems for researchers in the late 1930s.

The company did not want to jeopardize whatever publicity and profit its own publications would bring to it by allowing researchers to prepare competing publications. The company's intention was to make its archival material available to students of history and others, but it wanted to maintain control over what was published. However, it was difficult to keep ahead of the North American enthusiasm for access to and publication of the historical record. Examples of that enthusiasm have become part of the archives mythology. In the 1920s, when Schooling was attempting to write a history of the company, he had been visited by Frederick Merk, a professor of history at Harvard University, who was researching the history of Oregon. Schooling had allowed him to view and make notes from letters and documents that related to Oregon, including George Simpson's Journal. Merk eventually published a book, using the notes and acknowledging Schooling and the Hudson's Bay Company.²⁰ The company was not impressed by the fact that it had not been informed of the possibility of publication. By that time it had made the commitment to publish material from the archives itself and had chosen Simpson's Journal as its first project. This misunderstanding caused Schooling to be chastized and led to a reinforcement of restrictions on access to the archival documents.

Again, in the 1930s, while the company was attempting to develop policy for the opening of its archives to researchers, an incident occurred which reopened the concerns of even restricted publication. Douglas MacKay, former editor of *The Beaver* for the company in Winnipeg, published a book entitled *The Honourable Company*. It was advertised as the first history to be written with full access to the company archives. The company was again caught by surprise by this publication and, a few months later, by a British edition of the same book. The board expressed "disappointment at the failure of the Canadian committee adequately to control the actions of their officers in this matter ... and [would] not assume any responsibility for the publication."²¹ The book was a success, and has since had several reprintings, but the episode prompted the company, once again, to tighten control of access to its records.

This type of response was repeated in 1938 when the first editor of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, E.E. Rich, became aware of the fact that the number of inquiries made of the company's Archives Department was increasing. He was concerned that the time required to answer these requests would take the archives' staff away from the classification work which was required to make the records available for publication purposes. As a result, he proposed rules to regulate the response to serious inquiries and to discourage casual inquiries by imposing charges for assistance and limiting the documents to which access would be allowed.²² Although it would seem that access to the company's archives was opening up with the establishment of an Archives Department in 1931, restrictions continued to be in force.

With the establishment of a solid publishing programme though, it soon became evident that researchers' interest in access to the archives and permission to publish information found therein was not a danger to the company's own plans. Indeed, the company's experience with outside researchers has been a positive one with only a

few exceptions, such as those mentioned here. Twelve volumes of documents were published jointly by the Hudson's Bay Record Society and the Champlain Society; twenty-three more were published between 1950 and 1983, solely by the Hudson's Bay Record Society. As well, hundreds of books and articles have been published by scholars and independent researchers from the historical material in the Archives.

World War II interrupted the progress of the Archives Department soon after it was established. Both the staff and the records were disrupted. A proposal to microfilm a large number of the most valuable records to save them from war damage was considered and rejected. Instead, the older and more valuable records not required for immediate purposes of classification or publication were moved to the governor's estate forty miles northeast of London. As soon as that move had been completed, the company Archivist, Richard Leveson Gower, was called up for war service and Alice Johnson, his assistant, carried on the work of the Archives Department for the next eight years. Research requests declined considerably during the war but the staff continued to answer inquiries and assist the Hudson's Bay Record Society publications, despite most of the records being dispersed to storage. The archives were returned to London in 1945 and Leveson Gower returned in 1947.

In the late 1940s the staff consisted of the Archivist and four assistants. Work continued on the classification and conservation of the records. The Hudson's Bay Record Society published annually and the number of researchers visiting Hudson's Bay House, and later Beaver House, grew each year. Leveson Gower retired and Alice Johnson became the company Archivist in 1950. That same year the company was approached by W. Kaye Lamb, Canada's new Dominion Archivist, who proposed microfilming its records from 1670 to 1870 as a conservation measure and as a means of making the contents more accessible to scholars in Canada.²³ He was already microfilming records related to Canadian history in the Public Record Office in London and was able to provide equipment and expertise. Although he had predicted that the microfilming of the pre-1870 records would take only four years, it was not completed until 1966 and continues today with the more modern records. Lamb's proposal would permit easier access, but he acknowledged the company's control over the use of the records: "I recognize fully the company's absolute proprietorship of the papers, and its right to prevent their use for any purpose that might be detrimental to its interests."²⁴ This reassurance no doubt helped win the company's support for the microfilming project, although the mere fact that the records would be more readily available in North America on microfilm indicates that the company was prepared to entertain and approve more requests for publication of information about its past. Conditions governing the use of the microfilm at the Public Archives of Canada reflected the rules of access in the Archives itself, with the added condition that a special committee be established in Winnipeg to screen all applications for access to the microfilm. That committee was in operation from 1951 to 1965. Access by academic historians to the pre-1870 archival records and the right to publish information from them were routinely granted. The company's positive experience with this arrangement soon overcame its remaining doubts about the wisdom of permitting researchers to publish information from its early records. By the 1950s, records were regularly received from the head office, northern posts, and retail stores

in Canada. The newer records, those from about 1970 on, reflect the reconfiguration of the company in response to pressures from competition in the North American economy and from the restructuring of what had become Canada.

This article is a study of one major company's experience with its archives. The great significance of this Archives to the study of Canadian history is obvious. Over the years the company gradually eased control of access to its records, made them more readily accessible on microfilm, and increasingly allowed researchers to publish information found in the records. The 1960s marked the beginnings of another major change for the company and for the Archives. With the centennials of the Dominion of Canada in 1967 and the Province of Manitoba in 1970, as well as the tercentenary of the Hudson's Bay Company looming, Canadian historians approached the company to transfer the Archives to a location in Canada. The extent of information relating to the early history of Canada was impressive and recommendations were made from Manitoba and Ontario. By the early 1970s, the company was willing to turn over physical custody of the Archives to the Government of Manitoba under the most generous terms of access and publication it had ever formally adopted. In 1994 the Hudson's Bay Company completed the process when it announced the donation of its corporate archives to the Provincial Archives of Manitoba with the assurance of future care, management, and interpretation through the establishment of the Hudson's Bay History Foundation, funded through tax savings resulting from the donations.

It is, in the end, an archival success story. Few Canadian companies or businesses have an archives. Most have not responded successfully to the problem of preservation of and access to their corporate archival records. Public archives no longer have the resources to accept large deposits of business archives. If Canadian business archives are to be preserved, more businesses will have to do so themselves. The Hudson's Bay Company offers them an example of how one company has managed to keep its records for over 325 years. The Canadian government provides tax benefits to encourage businesses to participate successfully in the economy of the country and the employment of its citizens. The entire tax benefit the Hudson's Bay Company received for its Archives and Museum Collection has been used to establish the Hudson's Bay History Foundation, which, in addition to ensuring the future care of the archives, supports Canada's National History Society (which publishes *The Beaver* magazine) and other historical associations, and has established an awards programme. With funding received in 1995, the Provincial Archives of Manitoba is upgrading its facilities for housing and preserving the archival material. Funding received in 1996 is being used to write a guide to the holdings of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives which will be available on the Internet.

Notes

- * This paper is an abridged excerpt of "'Custodians of a Great Inheritance': An Account of the Making of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives," which completed my Masters Degree in the Archival Studies Programme, Department of History, University of Manitoba in 1994.
- 1 Note that I am referring here to the administrative records of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, not the administrative records of the Hudson's Bay Company.
- 2 The earliest form of joint stock company in England was the chartered company and it was not until the nineteenth century that incorporation was possible without a charter. Other chartered companies include the East India Company and the Royal African Company, whose archives are deposited in the Public

Record Office in England. Most of the companies chartered for the purpose of trade on every continent were short-lived, but the Hudson's Bay Company has the privilege of being in business to this day and its archives contain the unbroken record of its activities.

- 3 Douglas MacKay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto, 1949), p. 283.
- 4 Hudson's Bay Company Archives/Provincial Archives of Manitoba (hereafter HBCA/PAM), RG 20/2/18, H.B.C. Archives, Reports and Recommendations, 22 September 1932.
- 5 John Armstrong and Stephanie Jones, *Business Documents: Their Origins, Sources and Uses in Historical Research* (London/New York, 1987), p. 1.
- 6 See Judith Hudson Beattie, "'My Best Friend': Evidence of the Fur Trade Libraries Located in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives," *Epilogue* 8, nos. 1 & 2 (1993), pp. 1-32.
- 7 Hilary Jenkinson, "The Classification and Survey of English Archives," in *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Gloucester, 1980), p. 197.
- 8 The original corporation, known as the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudsons Bay, included Prince Rupert (Governor or chairman of the board) and seventeen other investors, seven of whom made up the Committee (board of directors).
- 9 HBCA/PAM, Section A.1/1, fo. 3d, London Minute Books, 7 November 1671. The text reflects the spelling and punctuation in the original minute book.
- 10 Quoted in E.E. Rich, ed., "Copy-Book of Letters Outward &c, Begins 29th May, 1680 and Ends 5 July 1687," *Hudson's Bay Record Society* 11 (Toronto, 1948), p. 73.
- 11 HBCA/PAM, A.64/45.
- 12 *Report from the Committee Appointed to Inquire into the State and Condition of the Countries Adjoining to Hudson's Bay, and of the Trade Carried on There*, reported by Lord Strange, 24 April 1749.
- 13 Jenkinson, "Archive Developments in England 1925-1950," p. 274.
- 14 Historians who were lobbying at this time for access to the records of the Hudson's Bay Company included Arthur Doughty, George Wrong, W.S. Wallace, A.S. Morton, Chester Martin, and Frederick Merk. A.S. Morton was the first researcher to sign the Visitor's Book in 1933.
- 15 HBCA/PAM A.1/214, fo. 134, 28 October 1924.
- 16 HBCA/PAM RG20/1/14, Memorandum from Leveson Gower to A.K. Graham (Managing Director), 25 February 1931.
- 17 HBCA/PAM A.1/169, fo. 254, 12 May 1931. "In view of the decision to postpone the question of publication of the Company's Archives, it was decided that the Company's Archives prior to 1870 should be rendered available for inspection by students of history and others, at the discretion of Mr. Leveson Gower, the Company's Archivist."
- 18 The other consultant was Reginald Coupland, Professor of Colonial History at Oxford University.
- 19 R.H.G. Leveson Gower, "The Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company," *The Beaver* (December 1933, June 1934, December 1934, and September 1935).
- 20 See Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal* (Cambridge, 1931).
- 21 HBCA/PAM RG20/2/170, copy of extract from minutes of board meeting, 9 February 1937.
- 22 HBCA/PAM RG20/5/14, letter from Rich to Chadwick Brooks (Secretary), 1 June 1937.
- 23 HBCA/PAM RG9/615.3.1, letter from Lamb to R.A. Reynolds (Secretary), 28 July 1950.
- 24 *Ibid.*