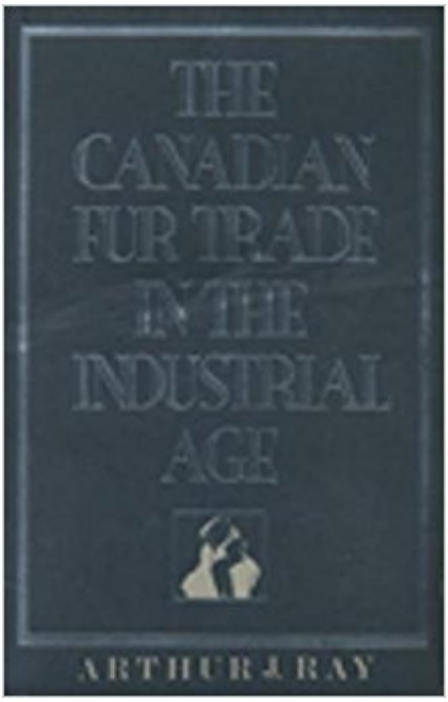
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The Canadian Fur Trade In The Industrial Age (Heritage)



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Synopsis

Throughout much of the nineteenth century the Hudson’s Bay Company had a virtual monopoly on the core area of the fur trade in Canada. Its products were the object of intense competition among merchants on two continents Ã¢â ¬â œÃ Â in Leipzig, New York, London, Winnipeg, St Louis, and Montreal. But in 1870 things began to change, and by the end of the Second World War the company’s share had dropped to about a quarter of the trade. Arthur Ray explores the decades of transition, the economic and technological changes that shaped them, and their impact on the Canadian north and its people.Among the developments that affected the fur trade during this period were innovations in transportation and communication; increased government involvement in business, conservation, and native economic welfare; and the effects of two severe depressions (1873-95 and 1929-38) and two world wars.The Hudson’s Bay Company, confronting the first of these changes as early as 1871, embarked on a diversification program that was intended to capitalize on new economic opportunities in land development, retailing, and resource ventures. Meanwhile it continued to participate in its traditional sphere of operations. But the company’s directors had difficulty keeping pace with the rapid changes that were taking place in the fur trade, and the company began to lose ground.Ray’s study is the first to make extensive use of the Hudson’s Bay Company archives dealing with the period between 1870 and 1945. These and other documents reveal a great deal about the decline of the company, and thus about a key element in the history of the modern Canadian fur trade.

Book Information

Series: Heritage

Paperback: 283 pages

Publisher: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division; 2nd Revised ed. edition (June 1, 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802067433

ISBN-13: 978-0802067432

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

’Ray has written a remarkably smooth, interesting narrative from a massive collection of discrete bits of information, a formidable accomplishment. In his focus on particular aspects of the trade, he has provided a coherent, useful analytical framework from which to view the transitions in the fur trade and indeed in the Canadian economy and polity.’ (Ann Harper Fender Journal of Economic History)’This is a grand example of business history ... [and] this important book will be the beginning point for all subsequent studies of the Canadian fur trade.’ (Barry Morton Gough Canadian Book Review Annual)’Ray offers a richly detailed narrative of political intrigue among officers, directors, and stockholders of the HBC, of government/Company relations, and of competition between HBC and other traders, as well as lucid tables, figures, and maps showing various economic patterns and changes.’ (Shepard Krech III American Ethnologist)

Arthur J. Ray is a professor in the Department of History at the University of British Columbia, and author of Indians in the Fur Trade and I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada’s Native People.

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