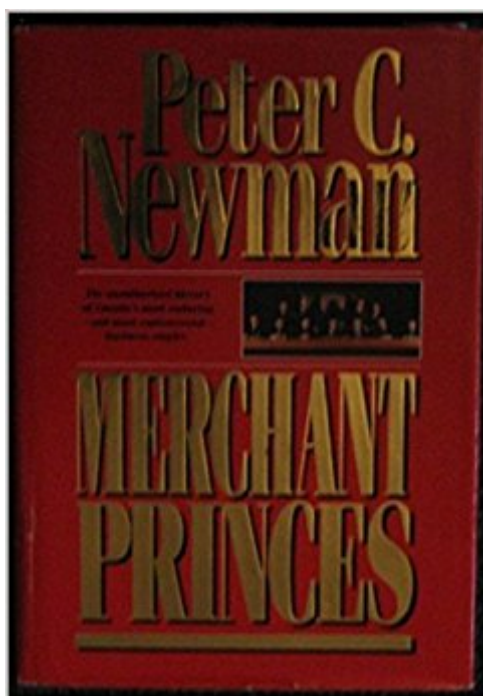


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# Merchant Princes (Company Of Adventurers)



## Synopsis

This book draws the author's "Hudson's Bay" saga to its conclusion. Here, the great fur-trading enterprise expands from its original western Canadian base to "conquer" the Arctic, leaving its influence on Inuit culture and lifestyle. How different would Canada's northern territories be now, had there been no Hudson's Bay Company to transform them from a hunting culture into a trapping and trading one? Peter Newman details the life and times of one of the Hudson's Bay Company's great governors, Donald Smith (he served for a record 44 years), who became one of his generation's leading business powers, concurrently heading the Bank of Montreal, and being the dominant financier behind the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. During World War I, the Hudson's Bay Company acquired the world's third-largest merchant ship fleet which enabled them to undertake secret missions for Winston Churchill and the Allies during World War II. The author reveals the extent of the boardroom backstabbing and conflicts of the 1970s when the Company was involved in a controversial takeover by Toronto billionaire Ken Thomson. The author's history of the Hudson's Bay Company began with "Company of Adventurers" and continued with "Caesars of the Wilderness".

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the third and concluding volume of his history of the Hudson's Bay Company, Canadian journalist Newman ( *Empire of the Bay* ) traces the growth of the 300-year-old firm from its Arctic colonizing

efforts to its 1980s status as a mercantile, transportation and urban real estate empire extending over one-twelfth of the globe. A splendid storyteller and indefatigable researcher, the author never allows the sweep of world and national events or the boardroom politics and internal struggles between London and Winnipeg to obscure the importance of individual adventurers and developers. Notable among the memorable portraits here is that of legendary Donald "Labrador" Smith (1820-1914), who not only served HBC for 75 years but was prominent in Canadian politics, economic and rail expansion and is credited with transforming his country from colony to nation. Smith would have rejoiced at HBC's Canadianization of the company completed in 1979 with its acquisition for \$641 million (cash) by a radically different leader, Canadian billionaire Ken Thomson. Photos. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The third century of Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was marked by an expansion into the Arctic followed by a slow transition from a fur trading company into Canada's leading retailer. Newman details these changes and the personalities behind them in his final volume on the history of the HBC, which brings the story up to 1991 and includes a discussion of the sale of the northern stores and fur trade divisions in 1987. As with the previous volumes ( LJ 12/85, 12/87), Newman presents a solid analysis based on extensive research and, in this case, interviews with some of the principals involved, and he delivers it with his usual straightforward, readable style. Merchant Princes forms a magnificent conclusion to the three-volume saga and will be of interest to business historians as well as readers interested in the fur trade and Canada. Taken together, the whole of the three volumes is greater than the sum of the parts--they should stand as the standard account of the HBC for decades to come. The set is essential for academic libraries and strongly recommended for public libraries.- Stephen H. Peters, Northern Michigan Univ. Lib., MarquetteCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is, without question, the best historical book that I have read in many years! It is part of a three-book trilogy on how the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) shaped Canada. This second book is the strongest of the three, and focuses on the period from the 1600's to the early 1800's when the HBC was primarily engaged in the fur trade in Canada and essentially providing the civil, social and political structure to Canada west of Ontario. The descriptions of the Northwest Company and the struggles between them and the HBC are fascinating. As an American with French-Canadian and Cree ancestors who paddled for both the Northwest Company and the HBC, it was as if I found where I have come from. I gave this book to my mother's companion of 27 years as a Christmas

present. He died in hospice in mid-March, but not before finishing this volume. He was a history buff, with no Canadian or British heritage, yet it fascinated him enough that he looked forward to reading it each day when he had enough strength. In his last days, I read to him out loud some of the passages that he particularly liked, such as the description of the goings-on at the Beaver Club in Montreal. A book that can give you something to look forward each day while you are dying of lung cancer has much to be said for it. Thank you, Peter, for this book!

Fine conclusion to the epic 3 volume set of the HBC story. Page after page a revelation to this average Canuck. The birth of the Canadian West- Red River settlements, Riel Rebellion, coming of the C.P.R. viewed as a complex, if hardball business deal between the rascally John A MacDonald and Canada's very own robber baron Donald Smith- detailed;warts and all. Commercial exploitation of the Canadian Native peoples and their lands to the present time here coherently depicted. The Bays final sad history in the coming of Canadian mass merchandising and corporate globalism, depicted in a portrait of its final owners, the charming Thompson boys, Roy Ken and David.

The story of the Northwest Trading Company is the story of early Canada, unique and unknown by most. For those who like to read about exploration, discovery, and adventure of the American continent, this book is a must read.

This was a gift that was received in very short order and great full to be able to have the book for Book Club. thanks Heidi

Complex non fic. history, long timeline, Peter Newman pulls it off. Incredible story, incredible people in the wild. Every paddler will enjoy. Lewis and Clark had it a lot better than the Voyageurs. As an outdoorsman survivalist history buff it hit my sweet spot.

I read both volumes. The second volume was as fascinating as the first one. But if you are interested in Canadian history it is very fascinating not just about the HB but also how England and Canada was dealing with surging US immigrants to the West. You must not be interested in history. I am a naturalized Canadian, both volumes kept my interest to the end.

Great book in good shape for a great price!

This book is a review of a very successful real estate company in Canada. My more then exciting introduction is about how I felt about the book. There were facts, lots of them but overall no real excitement or much to get the normal reader interested in the book. I got through about 175 pages before I gave up. The author tried to punch up the book, but the subject matter did not lend its self to it, there is just noting scandalous or exciting about a well-run company. This is more of a 400-page case study best left to a university class on management. Unless you work here or are related to some on that does I doubt you would find much value in this book.

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