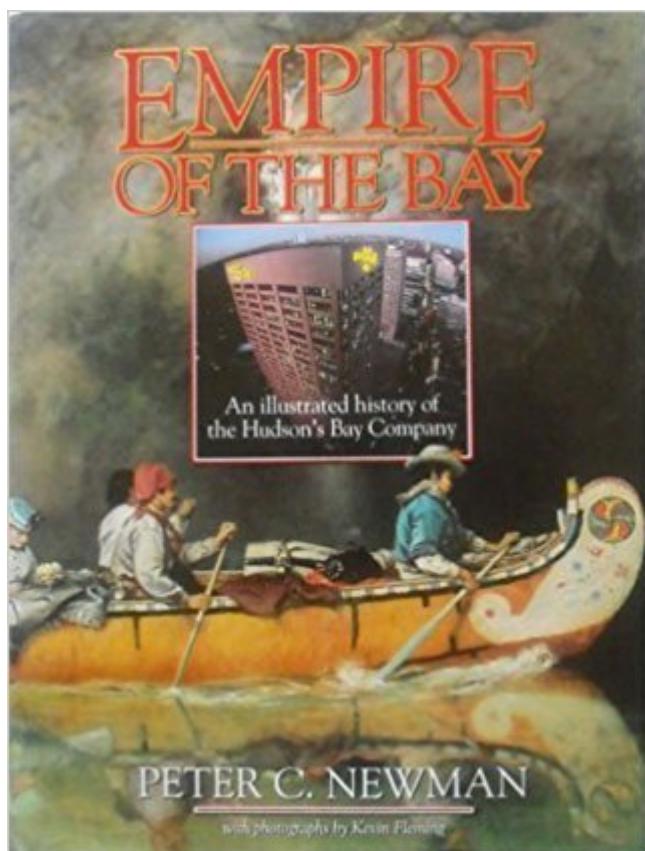


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Empire Of The Bay: An Illustrated History Of The Hudson's Bay Company



Synopsis

A history of the world's most famous trading company based on Peter Newman's history. In 1838 Sir George Simpson, the governor of the HBC, was toasted at a dinner as the "Head of the most extended dominion in the known world - the Emperor of Russia, the Queen of England and the President of the United States excepted". It was an astonishing but appropriate tribute to a commercial enterprise of unique scope and character, with trading houses that once stretched from the Arctic Ocean to Hawaii. Yet the history of the HBC is less the story of a company than of a people - its self-proclaimed gentlemen-adventurers mapped a continent and built a nation. The exciting story of the company and the people is told in this book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This fact-packed volume chronicles the colorful 319-year history of the Hudson's Bay Company whose mercantile empire at one time extended from the Arctic Sea to Hawaii. With verve and seeming omniscience, Newman (Company of Adventurers) tells outsize tales of the remarkable characters who manned the lonely outposts, Montreal mansions and London boardrooms of the HBC. He writes of the adventurers who explored the wilderness for the company; the internecine wars of fur traders; the establishment of forts and settlements; the parliamentary squabbles and backroom deals manipulated by HBC to retain its monopoly; and the present-day department-store chain, The Bay. Historical illustrations and National Geographic photographer Fleming's documentary shots decorate this sprawling, exciting, illuminating story. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Hudson's Bay Company is quite simply the most successful commercial enterprise ever known to capitalism. Imagine a company that controlled one twelfth of the earth's surface, whose domain was 10 times larger than the Holy Roman Empire, a company whose beginnings date from 1682, that developed its own Army, its own Navy and whose stock is still reputed to be owned by Britain's Royal Family. In the forward, the author claims this book is about the impact of Hudson's Bay Company on the development of Canada over the past three centuries. But it is really not. The author is being too modest. It is really about the impact of Hudson's Bay Company on the development of North America and how HBC actually was responsible for the formation of Canada and the United States as we know them today. Everything you read in this book is the result of the primary economic force of its time, fur. The fur business was the primary employer for the inhabitants of eighteenth century North America. As such, it was the primary driver for the continuing exploration of the North American continent. This then is not just a book about corporate wealth accumulation but of territorial exploration and definition, of competing, overlapping claims at a time in which there simply was no law. HBC was the fur business in Canada and in a very real sense it was HBC that defined the northern territorial limits of the United States. Read and enjoy this excellently written and well documented book. It is really a treasure. You will learn the amazing history of Canada and an incredible amount about the United States as well.

This book is very complete. Very informative.

This is a tremendous history. Its scope isn't limited to Canada, but spans 400 years of North American history and touches nearly every corner of the world. No other corporation • and certainly none of the great military conquerors • ever controlled more of the earth's land area than the Hudson Bay Company. Anyone half-awake these days must be aware of the rise of incredibly powerful, international corporations operating seemingly beyond law, yet for greed, ruthlessness, and singular pursuit of profit it's hard to imagine many businesses will ever outdo this grand-daddy of them all, the HBC. The HBC story is really appalling and enthralling, and Newman is an excellent writer in the style of Barbara Tuchman and Alan Moorehead. It's all an incredible adventure story, probably not much known outside of Canada, yet full of unbelievable characters and events. (Jules Verne's "Around the World in 80 Days" is based on the journey of an HBC executive, and other company men were the first to cross North America to reach the Pacific and Arctic oceans, beating Lewis and Clark by decades • and doing it pretty much alone since

the HBC was more interested in pinching pennies than exploring new worlds.) A really great book. I'd give it six stars if I could.

I have read all three of Newman's Hudson's Bay Trilogy, and enjoyed all three. This, the first volume, has the best illustrations but is more of a summary overview of the other two books. I do not know the history of how the three were written, but this first book seems like it was originally intended to be a coffee table book on the HBC. It has nowhere the depth that the other two have. If you want an overview of how the HBC began and how its actions and its competition with the Northwest Company shaped much of the essence of modern Canada, read this volume. If you want to read a truly extraordinary book, read the second volume entitled "Caesars of the Wilderness", which focuses on the fur trade period of the HBC's history. I gave this latter volume as a Christmas present to my mother's companion of 27 years who was dying of lung cancer. It kept him company in the weeks leading up to his death.

Great book. This is a wonderful history of the famous trading company leading to the opening of the North American continent. A fun read to be enjoyed by all. I received the book on time and in good condition. Thank you.

Beautiful book!

Was a good book.

If history is meant to elevate and entertain, then this book qualifies. Not only is the author's style engaging, but his commentary is itself illuminating. There's so much written these days about "colonial oppression" and the "politics of Empire", but it's refreshing to read a work that is conscientious of these issues without making them a guiding factor.

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