

Days of Long Ago in Manitoba

Written for The Western Home Monthly by J. D. A. Evans

This copy comprises facts gleaned from a former H. B. Factor, together with particulars the writer has recently obtained from London, England.

The hinterlands of the Canada West, embraced a huge territory the inhabitants of which were composed entirely of Indians nomadic in propensity. Yet, in the natural sequence of events in a 17th century, it was easy to surmise that conditions would undergo a change. We find that in the middle years of the period quoted, men, who had been sufficiently venturesome to penetrate the outskirts of this vast land area, returned homeward and dispelled startling information concerning its wealth and resources.

Within a short time, the first page of Manitoba's mercantile history would be written. We find that in 1650 a party of traders from the St. Lawrence river, penetrated to the westward of Lake Superior establishing several places wherein to barter with the native hunters for the pelts. In records yet preserved, it is learned a few of these posts were located in the forests adjacent to the Lake of the Woods. One of such forts was at Rat Portage, now Kenora. For four years operations were conducted, that is until 1654; at this date a number of the traders returned to their native country, France. Then was unfolded the story gleaned from Indians concerning an unknown sea in the northland upon the beaches of which rambled the polar bear. Again, during the summer of 1659, two individuals of French birth travelled into the areas westward of the Lake of the Woods. The feet of these men trod within the Manitoba of to-day. In the following year, 1660, much consternation was created in France by the claim that the great prairies and forests of the land toward the setting sun, contained prodigious quantity of animals the furs of which were of high financial value in the markets of Europe. The stories were not without a resultant issue a fact evidenced by the departure from France in 1661 of a determined band of explorers. The operations of this party did not extend westward of the Great Lakes, rather were they confined to traffic with Indians of Huron district, Ontario. A few years passed away, additional intelligence was forthcoming, the cry was—Onward to Hudson Bay. How was this desire to be accomplished? We shall see.

The primary action was to amalgamate a body of men. Attempt to do this in France proved futile. At this, information having reached Prince Rupert of England, an expedition under his auspices was dispatched to conduct inquiry into the conditions prevailing. In 1668, the first ship, another vessel acting in consort returned home, entered Hudson Straits. The imperative movement of this party was the erection of a trading place, hence a log fort made appearance; as a precautionary measure against treacherous attitude of the Indians, this building was protected by a stockade. In the spring of 1669, the expedition returned to England conveying enormous consignments of furs. Actuated by this success, application was made by Prince Rupert to King Charles the Second for a Charter of Royal Command. Thus the Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson Bay commenced its career. It was conceded by the few who had penetrated the regions that such would in perpetuity remain the abode of an aboriginal tenancy. Based upon this idea, extraordinary concessions were granted the Company. Naturally such were monopolistic in character, donated exclusive right to maintain control of the vast areas betwixt Hudson Bay and the Rocky Mountains. For in excess of two centuries this prerogative of the King's favor continued effective.

Let us review briefly the events in the Company's early career. Within a short period following the Adventurers' arrival at Hudson Bay, the pronounced success of the enterprise became apparent to the French, who in 1671 established a trading post on Rupert's River, a stream situated at the lower extremity of Hudson Bay. To these intruders, the golden opportunities of trade were speedily perceptible, sequent to which no delay was permitted to expand commerce by erecting a fort on the western shore. An accident to the

vessel in which the promoters sailed, temporarily frustrated the intrusion. The winter of 1682 arrived, the fort of the English Adventurers was captured by the French, who, purloining its valuable contents, conveyed the booty eastward. At a few months later date, the marauders encouraged by this success decided to force an attack upon the entire forts and outposts of the Company. The first combat occurred at Moose River; surrender was inevitable; an English vessel then in Rupert's River was likewise seized. A stubborn resistance was made, its success marked by retention of Fort Nelson, a post ultimately captured by the invaders with the assistance of Indians in 1694. The fiercest struggle of this belligerent era is stated to have occurred in 1697; a veritable naval battle on the waters of the Bay. As a result, Fort Nelson was donated a name delineating its alliance to a foreign proprietorship, Bourbon. At a later date of the same year, a treaty known as Ryswick was drawn up. Temporary cessation of hostilities followed; the spring of 1690, however, witnessed reincarnation of the warfare. Finally the French occupation in Hudson Bay transpired in 1713, its responsible factor being the Treaty of Utrecht.

Henceforth from the date of 1713, the Gentleman Adventurers of England have continued operations amid security, a feature observable in the mercantile life of Manitoba in 1915.

CHAPTER II

The red flag of the Gentlemen Adventurers of England, bears upon its surface a trio of letters, H.B.C. This emblem has been associated with historical record of Manitoba for two hundred and forty-five years. The Great Company established its first forts at the estuaries of great rivers emptying into the Bay; in succeeding years its operations were extended into various localities of Manitoba as we know the province to-day. At several of the once prairie posts, the

Company are yet conducting business in establishments to meet the spirit of a progressive age. The oldest incorporated mercantile concern in the world is the Great Company. Its flag flies from the inhospitable coast of Labrador to Vancouver Island; from the estuary of the St. Lawrence, to confines within the Arctic Circle. Its trading stations have always consisted of forts, posts, flying posts. In the distant northland were maintained two factories or depots in which a year's supplies were stored as precaution against accident to a ship conveying merchandise from England. The Company's territory was divided into north and south departments; of these, York factory formed the first, the latter located at Moose River. Stone was utilised as constructive material of factories; in erection of forts and posts, logs were requisitioned. Within the fort enclosure was the residence of the chief factor; the clerks also dwelt therein. The official dwelling of the Commissioner is situate at Lower Fort Garry on Red River. For a stated period annually, C. C. Chipman former incumbent of that position lived within the stone walls and bastions. Inside the fort boundaries were storehouses for furs; a shop wherein the Indians transacted barter; a stockade twelve feet in height, surrounded the entire buildings.

It may be remarked the out or flying posts were conducted in areas of heavy timber; the smaller outposts were stocked with nothing save absolute necessities for the Indian clientele in winter season only. Records of the Great Company show that many years ago a store was in operation on the shores of a lake laying between Ungava Bay and Labrador. This place was utilised for exclusive purchase of deer-skins, many thousands of which were annually shipped to London. Each summer witnessed arrival of two ships from England at Hudson Bay. The cargo of one vessel was destined for York Factory; that of the other, to Moose. It may safely be conjectured arrival of these craft formed the chief event of the lone land's calendar. Likewise it furnished the one and only mail service of the year, verily an epoch in the lives of an isolated people.

Impressive Stationery

We would like to quote you prices on Stationery which is at once both impressive and dainty. We make a specialty of Wedding Invitations and Society Stationery, and our plant enjoys every facility for turning out work of unexcelled quality.

Stovel Company, Ltd.
Printers and Lithographers
Winnipeg Man.



HAWK BICYCLES

An up-to-date High Grade Bicycle fitted with Roller Chain, New Departure Coaster Brake and Hubs, Detachable Tires, high grade equipment, including Mudguards, \$22.50 Pump, and Tools. Send FREE 1915 Catalogue, for 70 pages of Bicycles, Sundries, and Repair Material. You can buy your supplies from us at Wholesale Prices.

T. W. BOYD & SON,
27 Notre Dame St. West, Montreal.

RIDER AGENTS WANTED

everywhere to ride and exhibit a sample 1915 Hyslop Bicycle, with all latest improvements. We ship on approval to any address in Canada, without any deposit, and allow 10 DAYS TRIAL. It will not cost you one cent if not satisfied after using bicycle 30 days. DO NOT BUY a bicycle, pair of tires, lamp, or sundries at any price until you get our latest 1915 illustrated catalogue and learn all about our special proposition. The low prices will astonish you. ONE CENT write us a postal, and catalogue with full particulars will be sent to you Free, Postpaid, by return mail. Do not wait. Write it now. HYSLOP BROTHERS, Limited Dept. 21 TORONTO, Canada

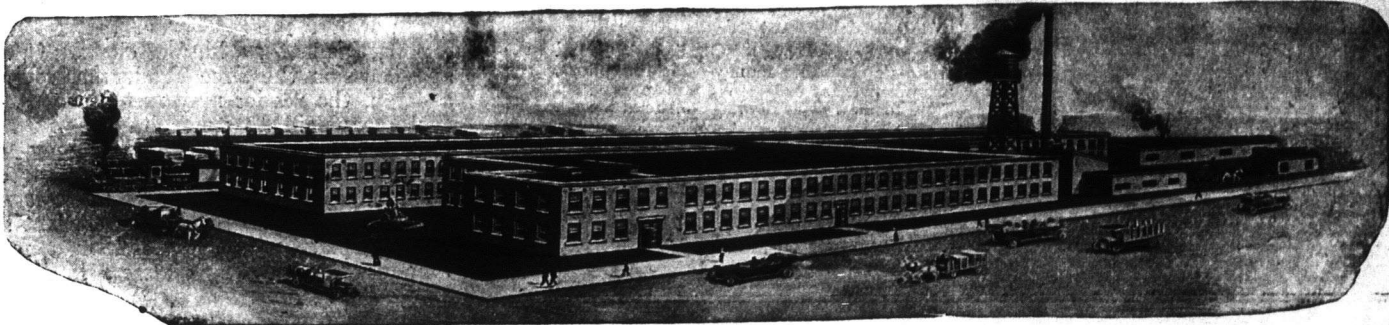
A Five Times Enlarged Plant Tells Its Own Story!

The history of this business is one of steady growth. The plant as shown below is modern, specially equipped, complete. It has been enlarged five times to cope with the demand—the latest addition being made during war-time when other industries were cutting down expenses. This growth is the direct result of honest business methods applied to an unswerving determination to make the

Sherlock-Manning ^{20th} Century Piano

"Canada's Biggest Piano Value"

In tone, case, finish, quality and durability, you will find the Sherlock-Manning the highest grade that money can buy. It goes to you with a sweeping ten-year guarantee for \$100 less.



Sherlock-Manning Piano Company, London (No Street Address Necessary) Canada

Write for the Proof Send a postcard to Dept. 14, for our beautiful Art Catalogue A, containing facts, figures and photos, in proof of our claim to give buyers "Canada's Biggest Piano Value."

The Winnipeg Piano Company, 333 Portage Avenue

carry a complete assortment of Sherlock-Manning Pianos and Organs. Catalogues and prices mailed free on application. Easy terms of payment arranged.