

## Founders of the Hudson's Bay Company.

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**I**T hardly seems creditable to attribute the foundation of a thoroughly English corporation, such as the Hudson's Bay Company, to two Frenchmen directly or indirectly; nevertheless, this is the only conclusion that can be drawn by anyone, whose curiosity will arouse him enough to look into the question.

These two Frenchmen were traders, born at Three Rivers between 1630 and 1640. They were not only fur traders, but also explorers. The explanation of the oblivion obscuring the fame of these two men is very simple. Pierre Esprit Radisson and Médard Chuart Groseillers—for such were their names—defied, first, New France, then Old France, and lastly England. While on friendly terms with the Church, they did not make their explorations auxiliary to the propagation of the faith. In consequence, they were ignored by both Church and State.

The Jesuit relations, repeatedly refer to two young Frenchmen who went beyond the "Forked River," (the Mississippi) among Indian tribes who used coal for fire, because wood did not grow large enough on the prairies. The State papers of the Marine Department of Paris contain numerous references to Radisson and Groseillers. In the British Museum, in the Bodleian Library, and in Hudson's Bay House, London, there are authentic records of Radisson's voyages written by himself. In spite of these references, and many more which lack of space will not permit me to mention, we seldom meet with the names of these two men in the pages of our Canadian History.

These two young Frenchmen explored the prairies of the West, in 1661 they wished to extend their explorations to the North and at the same time establish trading posts, to barter with the Indians.

Radisson applied to the Governor of New France, M. D'Avongour, for a trader's license, and permission to go on an expedition of discovery. D'Avongour would grant the license, only on the condition that they divide half the profit of the trip with him, and take two of his servants as auditor of the returns.

One can imagine the indignation of the dauntless explorers at this answer, when their cargo of furs the preceding year had