

**Hudson Bay Company (HBC)**

- Founded in 1670 – the HBC received royal charter from King Charles II that gave it trading rights throughout **Rupert's Land**, an area roughly 1/3 the size of modern Canada that they would control for 200 years.
- The HBC built trading posts at the mouths of rivers emptying into Hudson Bay. Trappers & traders traveled to these posts to trade furs for trade goods.
- The HBC had a strict standard of trade that left little room for bargaining.
- HBC directors in London ran the company; local bosses (factors) & clerks were also British. Only the directors shared in the profits, all other employees were salaried.
- HBC used the York boat, to transports furs & other goods.
- Furs and supplies were shipped to and from England during the summer months.

**North West Company (NWC)**

- 1783 – The North West Company was founded. The NWC build trading posts farther inland making it easier for Native trappers to access.
- Fort William was established as a large trade depot for the NWC. Trade goods were shipped from England during spring and furs returned during late summer.
- The NWC shared profits with employees. This provided strong motivation for the employees to succeed.
- The NWC had more relaxed trading standards than the HBC meaning First Nation people preferred trading with them.
- NWC used canoes to transport furs & other goods.

**First Nations of the Northwest**

- Before European contact; the Cree, Ojibway, Stoney, Dene and Inuit peoples lived in the Northwest. The Inuit lived outside the fur trade.
- By 1800 the aboriginal people had a long history of involvement in the fur trade.
- As FN people became more involved in the fur trade, it began to disrupt their way of life. Trappers tried to keep up to the high demand for furs, forcing them to abandon their yearly cycle of fishing, hunting and preserving food.
- FN people were exposed to smallpox and measles which killed much of their population.
- FN women played an important role in the fur trade, they;
  - Assisted with the collecting, processing & transporting of furs.
  - Provided food, medicine, clothing and shelter
  - Worked as guides, interpreters & negotiators
- As European men began wintering in the Northwest, more and more began to marry FN women creating a new people, the **Metis**.