

The Earl of Selkirk

- Thomas Douglas, the Fifth Earl of Selkirk, was a director of the HBC. He was troubled by the plight of poor farmers in Scotland, who were being displaced by their landlords for more profitable sheep pastures.
- **Lord Selkirk** wanted to establish a farming colony in the Red River Valley:
 1. He could help poor Scottish farmers by transporting & giving them land to farm.
 2. The HBC would use the farmers produce to supply their trading posts with less expense.
- 1811: the HBC gave Lord Selkirk 300,000 km² of land in the Red River Valley in southern Manitoba.
- 1812: Colonists led by **Miles Macdonell**, began to arrive in the fall, they had to spend the next two winters at a NWC post to prevent starvation.
- Jan. 1814: Macdonell issued the **Pemmican Proclamation**; this banned the sale & export of pemmican from the Red River. This angered the Métis in the area who relied on these sales.
- He then orders all NWC employees to vacate their posts in the Red River valley within 6 months. This angered the Métis & NWC in the area.
- Spring 1814: **Duncan Cameron** led the NWC & Métis in a series of retaliations against the colonists. Most of the colonists left the Red River area in early 1815.

Battle of Seven Oaks

- Summer 1815: HBC factor, **Colin Robertson** takes command of the colonists & returns to the Red River. He soon makes peace with the Métis & NWC.
- Fall 1815: **Robert Semple** arrives with 84 new colonists and takes command. Semple orders the burning of NWC Fort Gibraltar, the Métis are convinced the colonists intend to declare war.
- May 1816: **Cuthbert Grant** leads a group of Métis in raids against HBC boats.
- June 1816: Semple and 28 men ride out to confront the Grant & the Métis. After the “**Battle of Seven Oaks**,” Semple and 20 of his men were killed to only one Métis. Grant allows the rest of the colonists to leave unharmed.
- At the same time, Lord Selkirk & 100 Swiss mercenaries traveled west. They seized a NWC fort & took control of the Red River area. The colonists returned under the protection of the soldiers.
- Spring 1817: Selkirk made a treaty with local Anishinabé and Cree nations to lease land from them.
- Late 1817: Selkirk returns to London & is confronted with lawsuits over actions in the Red River. He battled the NWC in court over 3 years and dies in 1820.

Merger of the HBC & NWC

- 1820: Both companies were suffering financially, there wasn't enough furs for two companies.
- 1821: The HBC & NWC decided to merge companies in order to survive. The Hudson's Bay Company was formed with 100 shares; NWC partners controlled 55 shares, the HBC controlled 45 shares.
- The new HBC used York boats & shipped furs using the old route through Hudson Bay.
- After the merge the HBC reduced its workforce & relied more on FN & Métis peoples.
- **George Simpson** was hired to head operations in North America. He was dynamic and a hands on manager who inspected many posts personally.



Lord Selkirk