

4.4 **The Red River Valley (1820-1860)** p. 152 – 156

- After 1821 peace came to the Red River Valley. The settlement was isolated with little contact with the outside world and had to be self-sufficient.
- The settlement included the Métis, country-born, Scottish & Swiss colonists. In 1821 the population was evenly divided, but by 1860 more than 80% of the population was Métis.
- The economy of the community was built around the needs of the HBC:
 - Scottish settlers grew crops and sold their produce to the HBC.
 - The Métis provided pemmican to the HBC and buffalo robes and other goods to settlers.
 - The country-born worked as clerks, teachers, magistrates and store owners.

Race & Social Class in Red River

- 1829: George Simpson **turns off** his Métis wife & kids & goes to look for an English bride. He intends to “improve” society in Red River by introducing well-born European women.
- 1830: George Simpson returns to the Red River with his new wife Frances. She didn’t socialize with Métis and they were socially isolated from the community.
- The Simpsons didn’t find their efforts successful and left the Red River area in 1833.

Community Life

- There was little variation in diet; pemmican was the staple food during the winter and fruits & vegetables were rare. People worked very hard and did almost all work by hand.
- Women would:
 - Process all the wool in the community and make clothing.
 - Baked bannock & other food for their families.

End of the HBC trade monopoly

- It was a crime for anyone to trade furs or other goods because of the HBC monopoly.
- 1840s: The Métis began to fight for the right to trade freely, ignoring HBC rules.
- 1849: Pierre Guillaume Sayer is brought to trial for illegal trading. When the trial began the courthouse was packed and over 200 Métis surrounded the building.
- Adam Thom was the presiding judge, he was known to be hostile towards the Métis.
- The jury returned a guilty verdict but the foreman recommended mercy and Sayer was freed without penalty. The Métis rejoiced and free trade became a fact of life in Red River.

Red River Settlement (1860-1870)

- 1860s: The influence of the HBC was declining and more settlers were coming. Most Canadian settlers were Protestant and members of the **Orange Order**.
- The Orange Order was an anti-French, anti-Catholic movement. They were prejudiced against the Métis & their presence increased tensions in the Red River settlement.
- Dr. John Christian Schultz arrived & took over the only newspaper, the *Nor’Wester*, in the settlement. He championed Canadian interests and promoted hate against the Métis.
- Economic problems arose during the 1860s: crop failures were frequent, bison were disappearing & the HBC was losing interest in the area.

Canada Purchases Rupert’s Land

- The HBC wanted to relinquish control of Rupert’s Land. They found it difficult to maintain control over such a large area.
- 1867–68: The Canadian government & HBC negotiated the transfer of Rupert’s Land.
- Nov. 1869: An agreement was reached. The new territory was named the North-West Territories and Canada doubled in size.
- The Métis felt angry and ill at ease with the deal.
- 1868: Dominion of Canada surveyors arrived and began to lay out the land. They assumed the residents did not own their property.