



Hudson's Bay Company

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NEWS RELEASE

Hudson's Bay Company gives multi-million dollar corporate historical records and museum collection to Manitoba

WINNIPEG - The Hudson's Bay Company today announced the donation of its corporate Archives to the Provincial Archives of Manitoba and its Museum Collection to the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature. The Company also announced it will provide funding to support both collections.

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives comprise millions of documents dating back to the founding of the Company in the late 17th century and have been certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board as having an appraised value of approximately \$49 million. They include textual records such as handwritten journals, ships' logs, accounting ledgers and internal correspondence as well as maps, photographs, rare books and fine art. They constitute the largest and most reliable source of information available on early Western and Northern Canadian life.

The Hudson's Bay Company's Museum Collection comprises more than 6,000 artifacts relating, primarily, to Aboriginal and fur trade culture. The dollar value of the Collection has yet to be established.

The Company said it will ensure the future care, management and interpretation of its gifts through the establishment of the Hudson's Bay History Foundation. The new Foundation will be funded through tax savings, estimated at approximately \$23 million, which are expected to result from the donations.

In addition to annual operating funds, the Foundation will give the Museum \$2 million to house the Collection, and the Manitoba Archives will receive funding for capital upgrading to house and preserve the archival material. The Foundation will also support a popular history society, now being formed.

Presenting the gifts at a ceremony in Winnipeg, Donald S. McGiverin, Governor of Hudson's Bay Company, said the donations are a one-time opportunity for the Company to ensure the preservation and future use by all Canadians of the records of its historic role in Canada's development.

"These gifts follow our practice of transferring Company assets that are part of Canada's heritage to public ownership," Mr. McGiverin said. The Company's previous gifts include the Lower Fort Garry and York Factory National Historic Sites and the 1970 replica of the *Nonsuch*, the ship whose voyage from England to Hudson Bay in 1668 led to the creation of the Company in 1670.

"What makes this gift unique, however, is our decision to invest the entire tax savings from the transaction in foundations dedicated to support Canadian history and charity," he said.

Gary Filmon, Premier of Manitoba, in accepting the Company's archives on behalf of the Province said, "Manitobans are honoured to be the recipients of such a magnificent historical collection."

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"These gifts, along with the financial support to care for them, represent an unprecedented act of corporate social responsibility and generosity," Mr. Filmon said.

"It is probably the world's outstanding corporate archival collection and establishes Winnipeg as the pre-eminent centre for research into Canadian history."

Harold Gilleshammer, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship Minister said the change of ownership will not affect the location, operation or access to the Hudson's Bay Archives.

"The Company's Archives have been on loan to the Manitoba Archives since 1974 and have been used by journalists, genealogists, scientists and students, as well as historians," Mr. Gilleshammer said. "They are very important to the history of this country and we are pleased that they will officially become part of the Manitoba Archives. The funding that accompanies this gift means that we can provide improved service to the public and access to the most modern archival technology."

The Company's Museum Collection consists principally of Aboriginal artifacts. It includes archaeological objects, clothing and implements, trade goods and Inuit fine art, as well as maps and photographs that reflect the history of the Company and the First Nations, Inuit and Euro-Canadian peoples with whom the Company dealt.

The Collection has been on loan to Parks Canada at Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site since 1964. Recent studies, however, indicated that space and facilities for conservation, storage and display for the Collection were inadequate. In consultation with Aboriginal organizations and the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, it was decided to relocate the Collection to a new wing at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature adjacent to the *Nonsuch Gallery*. The museum addition is expected to be completed in 1997.

Gus Leach, President of the Museum, in accepting the Historical Collection, said "the gift will shape the future of the Museum. Together with the *Nonsuch* replica, the Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection will enable the Museum to document and interpret the history of the fur trade period more fully, and to serve as an international centre for Northwestern North American historical research."

He said the relocation of the collection provides new opportunities for joint research, study and education between the Archives, Lower Fort Garry and the Museum.

"The Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature is committed to a partnership with the Manitoba Archives to ensure cross-referencing between the collections and joint activities such as public presentations, exhibitions and training programs. We also look forward to working with Lower Fort Garry in its exhibition refurbishment program, and with the Aboriginal community in expanded training and program activities."

He said the Museum will mount a special preview exhibition of the collection in January 1995 to launch the Museum's 25th Anniversary.

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