**The British Fur Trade**

The British wanted to make money from the fur trade, too. They created the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) in 1670. The HBC received control of Rupert’s Land. This was a vast area in the heart of the continent. Like the French, the HBC and other British fur traders gave goods to Indigenous people in exchange for beaver pelts.

Britain became the master of the fur trade in North America after it took control of New France in the 1760s. The most important fur trading companies were the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company (NWC). The NWC was founded in 1779. The HBC and the NWC were fierce rivals. Both companies expanded westward. Explorers Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser and David Thompson (all employees of the NWC) began the fur trade in British Columbia. In 1821, the North West Company merged with the stronger Hudson’s Bay Company.

George Simpson, the governor of the HBC’s trading territories from 1826 to 1860, made the company very rich. He founded new trading posts in the West, cut costs and defeated his rivals. By the mid-1800s, however, the HBC began to decline. Europeans were less interested in fur than they had been before. The federal government of Canada bought Rupert’s Land from the HBC in 1870. In the following decades, tens of thousands of settlers began to move to Western Canada.

(excerpt from [Fur Trade in Canada](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/fur-trade-in-canada-plain-language-summary), Canadian Encyclopedia)

The Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company were rivals. How were they similar? How were they different?

**HBC NWC**