

# Lord Strathcona: A Biography of Donald Alexander Smith, the Canadian Railroad Tycoon Who Built the Canadian Pacific Railway

Donald Alexander Smith, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, GCVO, GCB, PC (March 6, 1820 – January 21, 1914), was a Scottish-Canadian businessman, philanthropist, and politician. He was one of the most influential figures in Canadian history, and his contributions to the development of the country were immense.



## Lord Strathcona: A Biography of Donald Alexander Smith by Mario T. Garcia

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 9047 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 617 pages



Smith was born in Forres, Moray, Scotland, in 1820. He emigrated to Canada in 1838 and quickly rose to prominence in the fur trade. In 1871, he was one of the founders of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and he served as its president from 1881 to 1888. Under Smith's leadership, the CPR was completed in 1885, and it played a pivotal role in the development of Western Canada.

In addition to his work with the CPR, Smith was also a major philanthropist. He donated generously to McGill University, the Royal Victoria Hospital, and many other institutions in Canada. He was also a patron of the arts, and he helped to establish the National Gallery of Canada.

Smith was knighted in 1897 and created Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal in 1900. He died in London in 1914 and is buried in Montreal.

This biography of Lord Strathcona provides a comprehensive and engaging account of the life and career of one of Canada's most influential figures. It is a must-read for anyone interested in Canadian history or the history of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

## **Early Life and Career**

Donald Alexander Smith was born in Forres, Moray, Scotland, on March 6, 1820. He was the son of Alexander Smith, a merchant, and Margaret Gordon. Smith received his education at the Forres Academy and the University of Aberdeen. In 1838, he emigrated to Canada and joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk.

Smith quickly rose through the ranks of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in 1847 he was appointed chief factor of the company's operations in the Northwest Territories. In this role, Smith was responsible for overseeing the company's fur trade and its relations with the First Nations. He was also involved in the exploration of the Northwest Territories, and he played a key role in the establishment of the Red River Colony.

In 1869, Smith left the Hudson's Bay Company and joined with other businessmen to form the North West Company. The North West Company

was a rival to the Hudson's Bay Company, and it quickly became a major force in the fur trade. Smith served as president of the North West Company until 1880.

## **The Canadian Pacific Railway**

In 1871, Smith was one of the founders of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The CPR was a transcontinental railway that was intended to connect the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada. Smith served as president of the CPR from 1881 to 1888, and he played a pivotal role in the construction of the railway. The CPR was completed in 1885, and it played a major role in the development of Western Canada.

Smith was a strong advocate for the CPR, and he believed that it would be a major force for economic growth in Canada. He was also a skilled negotiator, and he was able to secure the necessary financial and political support for the railway's construction.

## **Philanthropy**

In addition to his work with the CPR, Smith was also a major philanthropist. He donated generously to McGill University, the Royal Victoria Hospital, and many other institutions in Canada. He was also a patron of the arts, and he helped to establish the National Gallery of Canada.

Smith's philanthropy was motivated by a deep love for Canada. He believed that it was important to give back to the country that had given him so much. Smith's generosity had a major impact on Canada, and his legacy continues to benefit Canadians today.

## **Personal Life**

Smith married Isabella Sophia Hardisty in 1853. They had four children, two sons and two daughters. Smith was a devoted husband and father, and he took great pride in his family.

Smith was a devout Presbyterian, and he was a strong supporter of the church. He was also a Freemason, and he was a member of the Grand Lodge of Canada.

Smith was a complex and fascinating figure. He was a brilliant businessman, a skilled negotiator, and a generous philanthropist. He was also a devoted husband and father, and a strong supporter of his community. Smith's legacy continues to benefit Canadians today, and he is considered to be one of the most influential figures in Canadian history.

## **Legacy**

Lord Strathcona's legacy is immense. He was a driving force behind the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which opened up the West and helped to create a unified country. He was also a generous philanthropist, whose donations helped to establish many important institutions in Canada, including McGill University, the Royal Victoria Hospital, and the National Gallery of Canada.

Strathcona's legacy continues to inspire Canadians today. He is remembered as a visionary leader, a skilled negotiator, and a generous philanthropist. He is a true Canadian icon, and his contributions to the development of the country will never be forgotten.

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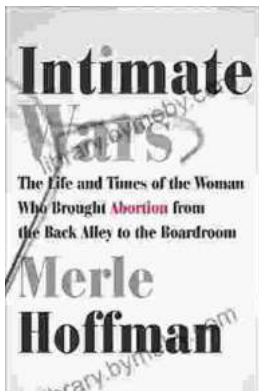


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