

**Estimate of the Fur and Peltry Trade  
in the District of Michilimackinac**

**1767**

**Mss.970.1.R63**

American Philosophical Society  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	American Philosophical Society
<b>Creator</b>	Rogers, Robert,1731-1795.
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<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Volume(s) 16 p.
<b>Extent</b>	1 vol., 16p.
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<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Container</b>	1
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>A New Hampshireman and one of the most famous military figures in colonial America, Robert Rogers saw brief service in the militia during King George's War, but found fame as a commander of rangers during the Seven Years War. An efficient leader and crack woodsman, Rogers gained a hard driving reputation in leading his rangers against the Abnaki Indians at St. Francis Quebec, and for service at Quebec, Montreal, Fort Pitt, and Detroit. After voyaging to England in 1765 to advance his career, he was appointed to the command of Fort Michilimackinac at the tip of the southern peninsula of Michigan, but was recalled less than two years later for impropriety and suspected treason. He later offered his services to George Washington before serving in the Loyalist Queen's Rangers.</p>

As Commander of Fort Michilimackinac from 1766-1768, Rogers sat at the critical nexus of the British fur trade, the point connecting the vast interior of the western Great Lakes and northern plains to the trading centers at Montreal and elsewhere in the east. His "Estimate of the Fur and Peltry Trade in the District of Michilimackinac, according to the bounds and limits, assign'd to it by the French, when under their government: together with an account of the situation and names of the several out-posts" is, as the title suggests, an overview of this most important area of economic activity. Rogers gave this manuscript to Jonathan Carver (the man he has sent on an expedition to find the Northwest Passage), who relayed it to Thomas Barton of Lancaster, Pa., who, in turn, sent it to the American Philosophical Society. It was received at the APS and referred to the Committee on Trade and Commerce on December 20, 1768.

**Preferred Citation**

Cite as: Robert Rogers, Estimate of the Fur and Peltry Trade in the District of Michilimackinac, American Philosophical Society.

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## Background note

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One of the most famous military figures of the Seven Years War in America, Robert Rogers was born in Dunbarton, New Hampshire, the son of the Irish immigrant James Rogers. Although he saw brief service in the militia during King George's War, his claim to fame came after he was commissioned to raise a regiment of rangers at the outset of the Seven Years War. An efficient leader and crack woodsman, Rogers' stock grew until by 1758 he was in command of nine companies. He gained a hard driving reputation for his daring raid behind enemy lines to devastate the Abnaki Indians at Saint Francis, Quebec, in 1759, and he subsequently served under Wolfe at Quebec and Amherst at Montreal. In *pays d'en haut*, Rogers' Rangers were present at the French surrender of Detroit in 1760, waged war against the Cherokees at Fort Pitt and further south, and returned to Detroit (and defeat at Bloody Run) in 1763 to counter Pontiac's offensive.

In the hopes of advancing his military career, Rogers traveled to England in 1765. A great self-promoter, Rogers published three works in 1765 based on his experiences in America, *A concise account of North America*, *The Journals of Major Robert Rogers*, and a regrettable play, *Ponteach, Or the Savages of America, a Tragedy*. Lionized as a hero, he was rewarded with command of Fort Michilimackinac, the post that controlled the critical fur trading routes between Lakes Superior and Michigan and the eastern Great Lakes.

Rogers and his wife Elizabeth Browne, whom he had married in 1761 arrived at Michilimackinac in August 1766 with high expectations, but his extravagant administration and rumored disloyalty led Thomas Gage, Commander in Chief of British forces in North America, to recall him in December 1767 and to arrest him the following spring. Although acquitted of treason, Rogers gave up his military career and returned to England, where he remained until the outbreak of the Revolution. His attempts to obtain a commission in the Continental army were viewed with suspicion by George Washington, who had Rogers arrested for a second time. Rogers escaped in 1776 and helped raise a Loyalist regiment, The Queen's Rangers, however after his unit was routed in Long Island, he was relieved of command. After his wife divorced him in 1778 and he was banished from New Hampshire, Rogers returned to England for a final time and lived out his final years in London.

## Scope & content

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As Commander of Fort Michilimackinac from 1766-1768, Robert Rogers sat at the critical nexus of the British fur trade, the point connecting the vast interior of the western Great Lakes and northern plains to the trading centers at Montreal and elsewhere in the east. His "Estimate of the Fur and Peltry Trade in the District of Michilimackinac, according to the bounds and limits, assign'd to it by the French, when under their government: together with an account of the situation and names of the several out-posts" is, as the title suggests, an overview of this most important area of economic activity. Rogers gave this manuscript to Jonathan Carver (the man he has sent on an expedition to find the Northwest Passage), who relayed it to Thomas Barton of Lancaster, Pa., who, in turn, sent it to the American Philosophical Society. It was received at the APS and referred to the Committee on Trade and Commerce on December 20, 1768. The manuscript may be the first separate manuscript collected by the American Philosophical Society.

## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

American Philosophical Society 2003

## **Provenance**

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### **Acquisition Information**

Gift of Robert Rogers through Jonathan Carver and Thomas Pennant, December 1768.

### **Processing Information**

Recatalogued by rsc, 2004.

## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Material**

The William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan has a collection of the papers of Robert Rogers.

## **Indexing Terms**

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### **Genre(s)**

- Manuscript Essays
- Official Government Documents and Records

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Fort Michilimackinac (Mackinaw City, Mich.)

## Personal Name(s)

- Barton, Thomas
- Carver, Jonathan, 1710-1780

## Subject(s)

- Colonial Politics
- Fur trade--Great Lakes
- Government Affairs
- International Trade.
- Native America
- Trade

## Other Descriptive Information

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This rich document provides insight into a facet of post-Seven Years War British imperial thought and planning as officials tried to consolidate their holdings. Robert Roger's manuscript essay includes a detailed plan for how the British Empire should handle its expansion, estimates the fiscal needs of western posts, and proposes a form of government for these new areas that would maintain peace for Indians, British troops, and settlers.

## Bibliography

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Clements, William L., "Rogers' Michilimackinac Journal," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 28 (1918): 224-273.