



ALEXANDER MACKENZIE Esq<sup>r</sup>

V O Y A G E S

FROM

MONTREAL

THROUGH THE

*Continent of North America, &c. &c*

V O Y A G E S  
FROM  
M O N T R E A L,  
ON THE RIVER ST. LAURENCE,  
THROUGH THE  
CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA.

TO THE  
FROZEN AND PACIFIC OCEANS;

*In the Years 1789 and 1793.*

WITH A PRELIMINARY ACCOUNT  
OF THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT STATE OF

T H E F U R T R A D E

OF THAT COUNTRY.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS.

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BY ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, ESQ.

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M.DCCCL.



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TO

HIS MOST SACRED MAJESTY

GEORGE THE THIRD

THIS VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED,

BY *HIS MAJESTY'S*

MOST FAITHFUL SUBJECT,

AND

DEVOTED SERVANT,

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.

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P R E F A C E.

ON presenting this Volume to my Country, it is not necessary to enter into a particular account of those voyages whose journals form the principal part of it, as they will be found, I trust, to explain themselves. It appears, however, to be a duty, which the Public have a right to expect from me, to state the reasons which have influenced me in delaying the publication of them.

It has been asserted, that a misunderstanding between a person high in office and myself, was the cause of this procrastination. It has also been propagated, that it was occasioned by that precaution which the policy of commerce will sometimes suggest; but they are both equally devoid of foundation. The one is an idle tale; and there could be no solid reason for concealing the circumstances of discoveries, whose arrangements and prosecution were so honourable to my associates and myself, at whose expence they were undertaken. The delay actually arose from the very active and busy mode of life in which I was engaged since the voyages have been completed; and when, at length, the opportunity arrived, the apprehension of presenting myself to the Public in the character of an Author, for which the course and occupations of



my life have by no means qualified me, made me hesitate in committing my papers to the Press; being much better calculated to perform the voyages, arduous as they might be, than to write an account of them. However, they are now offered to the Public with the submission that becomes me.

I was led, at an early period of life, by commercial views, to the country North-West of Lake Superior, in North America, and being endowed by Nature with an inquisitive mind and enterprising spirit; possessing also a constitution and frame of body equal to the most arduous undertakings, and being familiar with toilsome exertions in the prosecution of mercantile pursuits, I not only contemplated the practicability of penetrating across the continent of America, but was confident in the qualifications, as I was animated by the desire, to undertake the perilous enterprize.

The general utility of such a discovery, has been universally acknowledged; while the wishes of my particular friends and commercial associates, that I should proceed in the pursuit of it, contributed to quicken the execution of this favourite project of my own ambition: and as the completion of it extends the boundaries of geographic science, and adds new countries to the realms of British commerce, the danger I have encountered, and the toils I have suffered, have found their recompence; nor will the many tedious and weary days, or the gloomy and inclement nights which I have passed, have been passed in vain.

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The first voyage has settled the dubious point of a practicable North-West passage; and I trust, that it has set that long agitated question at rest, and extinguished the disputes respecting it for ever. An enlarged discussion of that subject will be found to occupy the concluding pages of this volume.

In this voyage, I was not only without the necessary books and instruments, but also felt myself deficient in the sciences of astronomy and navigation: I did not hesitate, therefore, to undertake a winter's voyage to this country, in order to procure the one and acquire the other. These objects being accomplished, I returned, to determine the practicability of a commercial communication through the continent of North America, between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, which is proved by my second journal. Nor do I hesitate to declare my decided opinion, ~~that very great~~ and essential advantages may be derived by extending our trade from one sea to the other.

Some account of the fur trade of Canada from that country, of the native inhabitants, and of the extensive districts connected with it, forms a preliminary discourse, which will, I trust, prove interesting to a nation whose general policy is blended with, and whose prosperity is supported by, the pursuits of commerce. It will also qualify the reader to pursue the succeeding voyages with superior intelligence and satisfaction.

These voyages will not, I fear, afford the variety that may be expected from them; and that which they offered to the eye, is not of a nature