Robert Stuart Encyclopedia Article

Robert Stuart

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1785-1843

Scottish trader and explorer who made way for permanent settlement by opening commercial fishing in the Great Lakes. Born in Scotland, Stuart immigrated to Canada in 1807 and became a fur trader. He eventually became a partner with John Jacob Astor in the American Fur Company. This was important because the American Fur Company became one of the first great American trust companies. The history of the frontier was strongly influenced by Stuart's economic development of Michigan. He was the director of trade for the area called Mackinac, and he was responsible for fostering trade in lead. Steamboat transportation in the region was also under his influence.