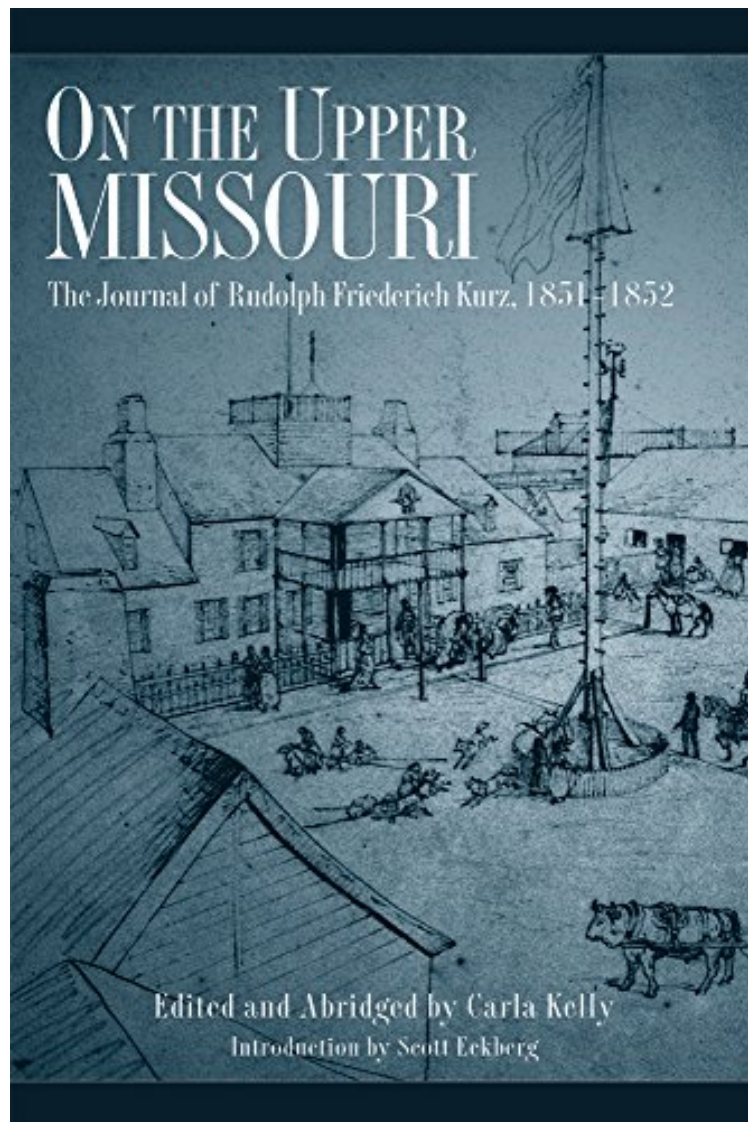


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On the Upper Missouri: The Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz, 18511852

Rudolph Friederich Kurz, Carla Kelly

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#647882 in Books University of Oklahoma Press 2005-03-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .70 x 6.00l, 1.04 #File Name: 0806136553352 pages | File size: 76.Mb

Rudolph Friederich Kurz, Carla Kelly : On the Upper Missouri: The Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz, 18511852 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On the Upper Missouri: The Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz, 18511852:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A classic well editedBy Anson Cassel MillsCarla Kelly has done a fine job of editing this classic diary (first published by the Smithsonian in 1937) by highlighting Kurz's commentary

on the Upper Missouri fur trade rather than his ruminations on art and thus making it feasible for a university press to issue an abridged version. Kurz came to the Upper Missouri as romantic, a believer in the superiority of wilderness and the noble savage over Euro-American cities and civilization. While Kurz never specifically repudiates this view, the notion fades from the journal during his comparatively brief stay in what today is western North Dakota. Certainly there is no romanticism in Kurz's description of the fur traders and their Indian clients. No modern author could publish with a university press such a meticulous portrait of native Americans as lazy, violent, thievish, superstitious, and abusers of their women and children. That's one advantage of Kurz: you can avoid political correctness and read the account of someone who was there. Kelly has also provided a useful index and 93 plates of Kurz's drawings. Kurz was a careful observer but not a great artist. In fact, if Kurz's Indian subjects--especially the women--were decked out in European clothing and hair styles, most of them would look right at home in his native Bern.³ of 4 people found the following review helpful. Another piece to the mosaic By Bruce Oksol This journal, last published some years ago, has now been republished with the editor, Carla Kelly, removing, apparently, the philosophy and ramblings of Kurz. What remains is that portion of his journal that sticks to the subject of the Native Americans and the interaction of the "white man" in the 1800's. It is just one more piece to be added to the mosaic of the American West in the Upper Missouri. As diaries go, it's quite bland; it's simply a day-by-day description of life that has become fairly familiar through other books covering the same time and place, particularly Denig's "Five Tribes of the Upper Missouri." If you have read Denig's, Kurz's journal does not add much. However, Kurz does provide the romantic, softer, more idealistic views to counter the rougher, businesslike realities Denig had to face. The editor, Carla Kelly, would do well to publish a sequel to this journal in the form of a book with chapters of the various subjects Kurz spoke to, such as Indian women, his challenges with painting in the "wild West," the use of tobacco, Indian culture, etc. The only problem is that most of this is now well documented and she would have to be a very good writer to attract enough interest to make the effort worthwhile.⁰ of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By J. Bullock very informative

In late 1846, Rudolph Friederich Kurz, a young and idealistic Swiss artist, came to the United States to study and paint American Indians. Because he also had to earn a living, he signed on with the Pierre Chouteau Jr. Company (commonly known as the American Fur Company) and traveled northward on the Missouri River to work as a clerk at Fort Berthold and Fort Union in present-day North Dakota. While living among fur traders and Indians of numerous tribes, Kurz filled a sketchbook and kept a detailed journal. On the Upper Missouri, an abridged and annotated version of his journal, is an invaluable source for information about Fort Union, the fur trade industry, and Indians of the northern plains. For this edition, editor Carla Kelly has preserved Kurz's style but included only those portions of greatest interest to readers today: his lively and detailed observations of people and activities at the fort. The volume also features 97 black-and-white drawings from Kurz's sketchbook.

About the Author Carla Kelly is a ranger in the National Park Service at Fort Union Trading Post and a contract research historian for the State Historical Society of North Dakota. Scott Eckberg is a manager for the Idaho Unit of the Nez Perce National Historical Park in the National Park Service.