

COUNT ALBERT ALEXANDRE DE POURTALÈS

Count Albert Alexandre de Pourtalès, Tourist in Oklahoma

In the years before the autumn of 1832, the young count was busy being educated and causing trouble. He was born in 1812 (I couldn't find the exact date, but he was always referred to as a teenager) so he was either nineteen or twenty during the autumn of 1832. He was a Huguenot like his older friend Latrobe. He was a member of the nobility with French and German antecedents. Albert grew up Prussian. He was born in Neuchâtel which though in Switzerland was under both French and Prussian control during Pourtalès youth. His father Count Fritz Pourtalès married the lady in waiting of Napoleon's wife Josephine. Her name was Countess de Castellane Norante and she was very beautiful. She also had a great zest for living and a strong personality. Her son, as he was described by his Oklahoma travel mates, was much like her. He as a matter of fact was so full of life that he was sent on a trip which seemed to be a matter of getting him away from trouble and temptation. – Though by his own words temptation was everywhere there were pretty young ladies. – And his night alone in a solitary elm surrounded by wolves proved that he was capable of getting into trouble out on the vast prairie.

Mahongo at the Court of Charles X of France

Artist: Mike Wimmer

Sponsor: Sen. Charles Ford

Dedication: May 19, 2004

Size: 36" x 48"

Type: Oil on Canvas

Location: 4th floor, Senate Lobby

Albert (de Pourtalès) had seen, in Geneva, the six Osage Indians who had created such a sensation in Europe in the summer of 1827. They must have thrilled a boy of fifteen, decked out as they were in their native finery and wearing most of the lavish gifts they had received from European admirers. Albert longed to see them in their natural habitat. CP 6





Count Albert Alexandre de Pourtalès, Tourist in Oklahoma

The portrait shows the Pourtalès family at about the time the young Count came west. He is the one on your left. This Tourist came to the American West for adventure. He was a handful. Pourtalès letters were published in 1969. In them, he described himself.

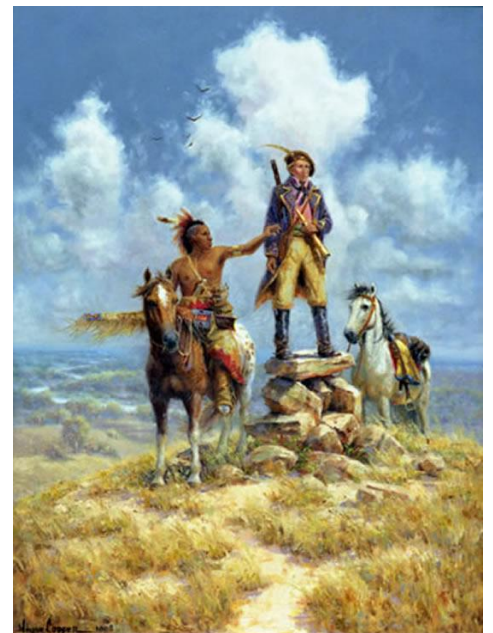
. . . the author of this interesting account presented a rather curiously colored outfit to the observer's eye. He wore leather trousers and a stylish hat tilted over one ear and carried a rifle on his shoulder. CP 24

Irving liked Pourtalès.

. . . full of talent and spirit, but galliard in the extreme, and prone to every kind of wild adventure. WI 12 . . . well mounted . . . a bold and graceful rider . . . caracoling his horse, and dashing about in the buoyancy of youthful spirits. His dress was a gay Indian hunting frock . . . dyed of a beautiful purple, and fancifully embroidered with silks of various colors . . . he wore leathern pantaloons and moccasins, a foraging cap, and a double-barreled gun slung by a bandoleer athwart his back. WI 39, 40

Commissioner Ellsworth didn't like Pourtalès quite so much. This description though tells as much about Ellsworth as it does Pourtalès.

M Pourteles, who is extremely car(e)less lost his boots . . . he . . . depended upon moccasins to wear through the journey . . . I rejoiced that he was not considered as M Ellsworth(s) party—His passions led him to great extreemes—His conduct at the Union mission was censureable in the highest degree . . . he attempted to seduce an amiable young indian girl at that school—the mother had been won by presents, and went to talk with Mrs. Vail, the wife of the superintendant about the matter, & see whether the girl might go—what presumption! Indignation and refusal, ought to have covered the Swiss gentleman (with?) shame—There were other instances of misconduct more gross, but I will not pollute my pages with a recital of them— . . . HLE 12 14



Alexandre was irrepressible. While still in St. Louis he is ecstatic and savoring every possibility on the Tour. In his own words, he will make you understand the way he approached life. Irresistible and oblivious would describe him. This letter was dated September 14, 1832.

I am overjoyed at the prospect of realizing all I have hoped for on this trip: visiting the Indians, seeing them in their meetings an assemblies, watching them dance, joining them in buffalo hunts, killing bears with a carbine. I am about to die of excitement. Today I bought a carbine and a complete leather outfit embroidered Indian fashion. CP 21 24

With all his flights of western folly, the Count cared about the Indians.

If ever I settle in America . . . I would become the advocate of the Osages before the government, which each year pushes them back a little more into the wilderness and the grave. CP 62 63

After finding a prodigious amount of honey in Tulsa, he called it campement de miel --- honey camp.

Perhaps Pourtalès' Great Granddaughter

C3. **Mechtilde Maria Gerda von Harrach**, Countess, * 1905, + 1991.

C4. **Barbara Maria Sophie Eleanore Renata von Harrach**, Countess, * 1907, + 1973.

C5. **Irene Maria Rosario Pauline von Harrach**, Countess, * 1910, + 1975, Md. 1934, **John Osmael Scott-Ellis**, 9th Baron Howard de Walden, 5th Baron Seaford, * 1912, + 1999.

Neuchâtel Switzerland



Englischer Garten, Munich where Countess Harrach lived – Pourtalès Great Granddaughter



Harrach's Pension was Biederstein