



Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri: The Personal Narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872 (Bison Book S)

Charles Larpenteur, Milo Milton Quaipe

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The son of French immigrants who settled in Maryland, Charles Larpenteur was so eager to see the real American West that he talked himself into a job with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in 1833. When William Sublette and Robert Campbell sold out to the American Fur Company a year later they recommended the steady and sober young Larpenteur to Kenneth McKenzie, who hired him as a clerk. For forty years, as a company man and as an independent agent, the Frenchman would ply the fur trade on the upper Missouri River.

Based on Larpenteur's daily journals, this memoir is unparalleled in describing the business side and social milieu of the fur trade conducted from wintering houses and subposts in the Indian country. As Paul L. Hedren notes in his introduction, Larpenteur moved comfortably among Indians and all levels of the trade's hierarchy. But he lived during a time of transition and decline in the business, and his vivid recital of his personal affairs often seems to bear out his feeling that he was "born for misfortune." His lasting legacy is this book, which is reprinted from the one-volume Lakeside Classics edition of 1933.

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