

The Military Career of the Ethnographer of the American Indians: An Unknown Manuscript

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Wied [- Neuwied], Maximilian Prinz zu.

Das Königlich Preußische dritte »Brandenburgische« Husaren-Regiment in dem Feldzuge von 1814. [Handwritten Manuscript in fine script, black ink on woven paper].- [no place, after 1828] Folio [360 x 255 mm] [2], 325 pp. with etched plans, charts within the text, II partly coloured plates. Brown Halfleather vol. with gilt edges, cover with gilt ornamental printing, inside clean and fresh. Provenance: from the library of king Ernst August von Hanover, with his stamp verso title.

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A fine manuscript by unknown hand (scribe or author ?) on the military actions in the wars of liberation seen through the eyes of the famous traveller & ethnographer Prince Max. of Wied [- Neuwied]. It seems not published up to this date. Maximilian zu Wied was a major in the Third Brandenburg Hussar regiment, from which he later transferred to the cavalry. During his active military service he participated in twelve battles: for distinction in the battles of La Chaussée and Chateau Thierry he was awarded the Order of the Iron Cross. On 31 March 1814 he entered Paris with the victorious allies. He resigned and became traveller, first to Brazil & then to explore the indians of North America. Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian zu Wied - Neuwied (1782 - 1867) was a German explorer, ethnologist and naturalist. Wied was born in Neuwied, the grandson of the ruling count (after 1784 prince) Johann Friedrich Alexander of Wied-Neuwied. Born at the end of the European Enlightenment, Maximilian became friends with two of its major figures: Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a major comparative anthropologist under whom he studied biological sciences, and Alexander von Humboldt, who served as Maximilian's mentor. He joined the Prussian army in 1800 during the Napoleonic Wars, rising to the rank of major. He was given a leave of absence from the army in 1815 (prior to Napoleon's escape from Elba). Wied led an expedition to southeast Brazil from 1815 to 1817. In 1816 he found the tribe of the Botocudos, about which he gave exact details for the first time. On account of the war among the different tribes of the country he was obliged to abandon his original route and remained for some time near some ruins that he had discovered. North of the Belmonte river he made his way through the woods, and after many difficulties arrived in the province of Minas Gerais. His delicate health forced him to abandon his expedition, and he was detained on unfounded suspicions for three days, and robbed of a large part of his collection of insects and plants. After this he resolved to leave the country, and embarked for Germany on 10 May 1817. On his return, he wrote *Reise nach Brasilien* (1820-21) and *Beiträge zur Naturgeschichte von Brasilien* (1825-33). In 1832 he travelled to the Great Plains region of North America, accompanied by the Swiss painter Karl Bodmer on a journey up the Missouri River, and wrote *Reise in das Innere Nord-Amerikas* (1840) on his return. During his travels, he studied the cultures of tribes such as the Mandan and the Hidatsa and collected many specimens of flora and fauna of the area.

