

NORMAN, Okla., Sept. 18 --(Special)-- Persistent determination on the part of two noted students of Western Americana has resulted in the release today of an autobiographical account of a colorful figure in the early American West, George Frederick Ruxton.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde H. Porter of Kansas City, who in 1947 collaborated with Bernard DeVoto in the publication of "Across the Wide Missouri," have assembled the autobiographical material included in "Ruxton of the Rockies," which was published today by the University of Oklahoma Press. The collectors investigated many sources of material in putting together the autobiographical account. In addition to libraries, historical societies, and military records, a visit to Ruxton's birthplace, Tonbridge, England, by Mrs. Porter produced information on his boyhood days.

As a boy Ruxton showed no promise of acquiring academic honors. In fact, he was expelled from the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, England, and while this action was not a mark of achievement it perhaps was largely responsible for his leaving England to become a young man of adventure and excitement.

At seventeen Ruxton was wearing the Cross of San Fernando with the title of knight; at nineteen he was a lieutenant in Ireland; at twenty he was serving the military, contacting Indians, and hunting the forest of Upper Canada. At twenty-three he was experiencing life in the desert of Morocco, at twenty-four exploring South Africa, at twenty-five adventuring in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains, and at twenty-six writing articles on ethnology and graphic accounts of his adventures. Then, just as he turned twenty-seven, while on the way to his beloved Rockies, he died in St. Louis.

In a period when literary persons were romanticizing life and creating fantastic stories of unreal characters, Ruxton ate and slept with his heroes and recorded them as human beings. He was the first among writers to portray the wild life of the Far West as it was. And it is the buckskin-clad hunters and fur men, and their fascinating way of life, which Ruxton describes in his own colorful jargon in the autobiographical account provided by Mr. and Mrs. Porter.

LeRoy R. Hafen, executive director of the State Historical Society of Colorado, assisted the collectors in editing the material included in "Ruxton of the Rockies."