

KARL BODMER AND THE AMERICAN WEST*

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Abstract

The artist Karl Bodmer, who accompanied the German explorer, naturalist, and ethnologist Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied, on a trip up the Missouri River in 1832–34 created one of the most important aesthetic and ethnological records that we have of the Indians of the North American plains. Bodmer's superb watercolors were then reproduced in Maximilian's book, *Reise in das innere Nord-America in den Jahren 1832 bis 1834* (1839), two volumes plus atlas, which was translated and published in both French and English. Bodmer's images were then widely copied by other artists and published in such disparate sources as Graham's Magazine in the United States, Heinrich Rudolf Schinz of Zurich in his *Naturgeschichte und Abbildungen des Menschen der verschiedenen Rassen und Stamme nach den neuesten Entdeckungen und vorzuglichsten Originalien* (3rd ed., 1845), and the *Revistacientifica y literaria de Méjico* (Méjico: El Museo Mejicano, 1845), to mention only a few, ultimately having a great influence on the iconography of the North American Plains Indians.

The Library of the Royal Palace in Bucharest held copies of both Maximilian's impressive works, *Reise nach Brasilien in den Jahren 1815 bis 1817* and *Reise in das innere Nord-America in den Jahren 1832 bis 1834*. After the communists took the power in 1948, after King Mihai I was compelled to abdicate in December 30, 1847, most of the books from the royal library were spread among different cultural institutions. The two volumes of *Reise in das innere Nord-America*, still wearing the royal cypher in gold on the leather cover, are now preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy while the first volume of *Reise nach Brasilien* is in the library of the „G. Oprescu” Institute of Art History. (The whereabouts of the second volume is unknown.)

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Karl Bodmer happened upon the scene at precisely the right historical moment to help create the popular image of the Indian and the American West. When Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied brought artist Karl Bodmer to America in 1832, the West was still, for the most part, *terra incognita*, with little accurate information in circulation. The Indian was an established figure in American fiction by then, chiefly through the efforts of James Fenimore Cooper in novels such as *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), and the classic reports of Lewis and Clark (1804–1806) and Stephen H. Long (1820–1821), but, for most Americans the title of Cooper's book said it all – the Indians were a doomed race¹. No wonder that, after searching the bookstores of several Eastern cities the summer of 1832, Maximilian reported, “I could not find, in all the towns of this country, one good, that is, characteristic representation” of the American aborigines².

Maximilian was, of course, familiar with the earlier published images of Indians, included in works by Theodore De Bry; with the allegorical and metaphorical Indian that appeared on European porcelain and pottery throughout the eighteenth century; with the caricaturish Indian of American Revolutionary cartoons; and with the emerging, more realistic image of the Indian presented in works of European explorer artists

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¹ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 93; Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing Indian: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 21.

² Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846: A Series of Annotated Reprints of Some of the Best and Rarest Contemporary Volumes of Travel, Descriptive of the Aborigines and Social and Economic Conditions in the Middle and Far West, During the Period of Early American Settlement* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), XXII: 70.

such as John Webber, John Sykes, and Louis Choris³. But he was looking for the natives of the interior, where few explorers and fewer artists had traveled. With the exception of the portraits that Thomas McKenney was gathering for his Indian history, which Maximilian recognized as “an honourable exception” to his indictment, pictures of these Indians were limited to a few treaty scenes and crude portraits and a handful of prints in books and journals after Jonathan Carver, Samuel Seymour, Titian Ramsay Peale, and Peter Rindisbacher⁴. George Catlin, the first painter to go up the Missouri in 1832, had only begun his great work, and he, McKenney, Ephraim G. Squier, James Otto Lewis, and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft were yet to publish their groundbreaking books⁵.

Bodmer also arrived at a time when Americans were still striving for a distinctive cultural identity that would liberate them from European domination intellectually and creatively just as surely as the Revolution of 1776 had liberated them politically. In 1803, the editor of the *Monthly Anthology* had observed that America had succeeded in every way except that “polite literature and the fine arts have hitherto made a very dilatory progress”. This reflected a “Dependence” that the editor of the *Portico*, who published his magazine “to excite the emulation of genius in America”, saw in 1816 as “a state of degradation, fraught with disgrace; and to be dependent on a foreign mind, for what we can ourselves produce, is to add to the crime of indolence, the weakness of stupidity”. Even as late as 1846, Americans still sought such recognition, and, according to Henry Tuckerman, the country’s first art historian, the West held the key. Such recognition would come, he advised his readers, only

so far as the subjects are novel, or the execution superlatively great. Tales of frontier and Indian life . . . the adventures of the hunter and the emigrant – correct pictures of what is truly remarkable in our scenery, awaken instant attention in Europe. If our artists or authors, therefore, wish to earn trophies abroad, let them seize upon themes essentially American...⁶.

Part of the problem was the European perception of America. Despite Thomas Jefferson’s earnest defense of the New World in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), the theories of the famed French naturalist George Louis Leclerc, count de Buffon, expressed in his *Histoire naturelle* (1748–1808), flourished among European intellectuals well into the nineteenth century. Buffon did not set out to condemn all the creatures and plants of the New World, but his line of reasoning had the same effect. In his view, environment was a key factor in the development of living things. He believed that the New World was literally younger than the Old World, that it had relatively recently emerged from the Noachian waters, and that it was still possessed of humid and miasmatic airs, the result of the remaining swamps, lakes, and jungles. These conditions stunted all life, including the Indians, who, Buffon believed, were neither as strong nor sexually virile as Europeans⁷. This was but one of the many attempts to make sense out of the flood of

³ See Hugh Honour, *The European Vision of America* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975), sections on “New World of Words”, “Americainerie” and “Litertas Americana”. Webber traveled with Captain James Cook’s last expedition in 1776–80; Sykes with George Vancouver’s 1791–95 voyage, and Choris with Otto von Kotzebue’s 1815–18 voyage. See John Frazier Henry, *Early Maritime Artists of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 1741–1841* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984).

⁴ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 70; Jonathan Carver, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North-America, in the years 1766, 1767, 1767, and 1768* (London: Printed for the author, 1781). Seymour’s and Peale’s engravings are found in the atlas accompanying Edwin James, Comp., *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, Performed in the Years 1818 and ’20* (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & I. Lea, 1823). Rindisbacher’s images are found in the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, I (Oct. 1829) and the *Casket* (Oct. 1829). See also Ellwood Parry, *The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art, 1590–1900* (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1974).

⁵ Catlin’s *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians* (London: The Author, 1841); Catlin’s *North American Indian Portfolio: Hunting Scenes and Amusements of the Rocky Mountains and Prairies of America* (London, 1844). Squier and Edwin H. Davis, *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley: Comprising the Results of Extensive Original Surveys and Explorations*, (New York, Bartlett & Welford; Cincinnati, J. A. & U. P. James, 1848); McKenney and James Hall’s *History of the Indians Tribes of North America; with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs* (Philadelphia: Edward C. Biddle (parts 1–5), Frederick W. Greenough (parts 6–13), J. T. Bowen (part 14), Daniel Rice and James G. Clark (parts 15–20), [1833]–1844); Lewis’s *The Aboriginal Port-Folio; or, A Collection of Portraits of the Most Celebrated Chiefs of the North American Indians* (Philadelphia: J. O. Lewis, 1835–36); and Schoolcraft’s *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1851–57).

⁶ Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741–1850* (5 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), I: 183–184 (quotations); [Henry T. Tuckerman], “Our Artists. – no. V”, *Godey’s Magazine and Lady’s Book*, XXXIII (Dec. 1846): 250. This essay also appeared in Tuckerman, *Artist-Life: or Sketches of American Painters* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1847), 202–214; and with additional material in Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Son, 1867), 424–429.

⁷ Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820–1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 6; Ray Allen Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 1–25.

cultural, biological, and cartographic information that poured into European centers of learning during what historian William H. Goetzmann has called “the second great age of discovery”, an age in which the great French historian, Fernand Braudel, concluded that “the voyages around the world had no other goal than to obtain new information about geography, the natural world, and the mores of different peoples”. It culminated in the most challenging scientific question of the day: the origin, or origins, of the different races⁸.

Professor Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) of the University of Göttingen, one of the greatest German naturalists of his day and the founder of scientific anthropology, continued Buffon’s line of thought. Theorizing that all people sprang from a single creation and are biologically equal, he, too, reasoned that differences in cultures must be due to the natural environment – climate, habitat, means of subsistence, and diet – rather than inherent racial characteristics. If the environment were responsible for these differences, which Blumenbach and others perceived as degenerations from original people who lived near the Caspian Sea, it followed that it must be thoroughly documented and studied intensely through observations, collections, and drawings. In his *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* (third edition, 1795), Blumenbach, who evolved his thesis as evidence accumulated, described his examination of eighty-two skulls and numerous artists’ portraits of various peoples. From them he derived five basic races – Mongolian, American, Caucasian, Malayan, and Ethiopian – concluding that the Caucasian cranium was the most beautiful and symmetrical and, therefore, the original “from which, as from a mean and primeval type, the others diverge...”. But the variety of races discovered by the likes of British Captain James Cook, some of whose collections were now stored in the Göttingen museum, raised serious questions about this theory. Were the primitive peoples of Africa, the South Seas, and America from this same racial stock as Europeans?⁹ Did differences in the environment explain their diversity, or did they spring from several different creations?

Not everyone agreed that Blumenbach was even on the right track. Among the polygenists were Voltaire and Scottish philosopher Lord Henry Homes Kames, who suggested, in his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774), what many saw as an anti-Biblical idea that racial differences could only be accounted for by separate creations. Others doubted that environmentalism alone could explain the different races, claiming that such distinctions were innate – and that Africans and Indians were inferior to all others. Several Americans, the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, Albert Gallatin, and Samuel G. Morton among them, also researched the topic, but from different points of view: Smith felt that classifying the races was “a useless labor” because it was probably impossible. Gallatin, the former Secretary of the Treasury under President Jefferson, approached the problem from the perspective of Indian languages, and Dr. Morton, a Philadelphia Quaker, collected and studied their skulls and published the results in his widely read *Crania Americana*¹⁰. Smith and Gallatin felt that all men were of one species, while Morton posited, to the benefit of the relatively new practice of phrenology, that each race possessed a different but characteristic – and therefore identifiable – cranium, which, to him, suggested the possibility of separate creations. These questions were important because the answer held not only scientific but theological and political implications as well: would this new science uphold or deny the Christian belief in the descent of all people from Adam? Would it provide evidence that people of color were inherently inferior to the white race? Would it materially inform the relationship that colonial powers have with indigenous people?¹¹.

⁸ William H. Goetzmann, *New Lands, New Men: America and the Second Great Age of Discovery* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1995), Braudel quotation, 1; John C. Greene, *The Death of Adam: Evolution and Its Impact on Western Thought* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1959), 221–247; and Honour, *The European Vision of America*.

⁹ Greene, *Death of Adam*, 222, 224 (quote); Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian*, 61. Göttingen purchased a large collection of Cook materials from the London dealer George Humphrey, who acquired them directly from various members of the crew. See Adrienne L. Kaeppler, “Tracing the History of Hawaiian Cook Voyage Artefacts in the Museum of Mankind”, in *Captain Cook and the South Pacific* (London: British Museum, Yearbook 3, 1979), 169. Banks also loaned Blumenbach materials from Cook’s expeditions during their lengthy correspondence. See John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149–158; Arthur Keith, “Blumenbach’s Centenary”, *Man*, 40 (June 1940): 82–85; and Londa Schiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23 (Summer 1990): 387–405.

¹⁰ See Greene, *Death of Adam*, 222; Albert Gallatin, “A Synopsis of the Indian Tribes of North America”, *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society*, II (1836): 1–422; and Samuel G. Morton, *Crania Americana; or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America, to which is Prefixed an Essay on the Varieties of the Human Species* (Philadelphia: N.P., 1839).

¹¹ Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian*, has chapters on both Gallatin and Morton. See p. 16–103. See also John S. Michael, “A New Look at Morton’s Craniological Research”, *Current Anthropology*, 29 (Apr. 1988): 349–354; and Reginald Horseman, “Scientific Racism and the American Indian in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”, *American Quarterly*, 27 (May 1975): 152–168.

In his attempt to answer these questions, Blumenbach emphasized to his students the importance of obtaining documented observations and collections from distant lands. “Apodemics”, or the art of traveling, was one of the courses offered at Göttingen, the goal of which was “to make travel a method for the disciplined, systematic gathering of knowledge, which was achieved by organizing all aspects into categories”, and he dispatched his students around the world in search of evidence¹². By following his teachings, derived from Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, John Locke, and others – that knowledge could be gained from a disciplined observation of the physical world, careful description, and orderly classification – they eagerly added to the university’s collections and to the world of knowledge. Ideally, the Newtonian philosophy of the “world machine, running according to law”, would now be reconciled with the Lockian model of discovering natural law by gathering facts and organizing them in an orderly manner.¹³

Maximilian, Prince zu Wied-Neuwied (1782–1867) (Fig. 1), was one of those Blumenbach-inspired students who, who set out in May 1832 with artist Karl Bodmer to seek answers to these troubling questions. Born in 1782, the eighth of ten children, Maximilian had been a student of natural science from his youth and had pursued the field, interrupted only by military service (when he fought at Waterloo), throughout his life. He was the younger brother of Johann Karl August, 3rd Prince zu Wied (1779–1812), grandfather of Princess, later Queen Elizabeth of Romania, married in 1869 to Prince Carol I, ruling prince (1866–1881) and king (1881–1914) of Romania. Consequently, Maximilian was the queen’s paternal uncle. He adopted the Neoclassical ideal of rationalistic empiricism as the basis for the study of man but was also inspired by the protean Romantic figure of Alexander von Humboldt, another Blumenbach student, who had transformed the new field of geography with his 1799–1804 trip to Latin America and the resulting series of thirty publications over the next twenty-five years. Following Humboldt’s example, Maximilian became one of the first non-Portuguese admitted to explore the Brazilian jungles in 1815–1817, then presented his documented evidence to the world of science with a comprehensive two-volume report, *Travels in Brazil in the Years 1815, 1816, 1817* (1820–21), including prints made after his own drawings in an accompanying Atlas¹⁴.

By publishing his findings, Maximilian joined other naturalists who shared their research with the scientific world by means of beautifully illustrated, documentary accounts of their expeditions. The great illustrated book had been the preferred method of preserving and transmitting scientific information ever since the sixteenth century, and his book found its place among the great works by Theodore De Bry, *Brevis narratio eorum quae in Florida Americae provincia Gallis acciderunt, secunda in illam navigatione, duce Renato de Laudoniere...* (Frankfurt, 1591); Mark Catesby, *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands* (2 vols.; London, 1731–1754); James Cook and James King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean Undertaken by Command of His Majesty, for Making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere* (4 vols.; London, 1784); and Baron Alexander von Humboldt’s *Essai Politique sur le Royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne* (4 vols.; Paris, 1811) and *Researches, Concerning the Institutions and Monuments of the Ancient Inhabitants of America...* (London, 1814); among others¹⁵.

As his work on the Brazilian expedition gradually came to a close in 1830, Maximilian shared with a colleague his “thoughts of another journey..., and I am thinking strongly of northern America. Which region of this interesting land? I think the interior regions of the Missouri would be highly interesting because of its tribes”. He also thought about going to “the southern regions, particularly Louisiana or New Mexico”, or perhaps even Mexico. He probably chose the Missouri because “Little... has yet been done towards a clear and vivid description of the natural scenery of North America”; the “rude, primitive character of the natural face of North America, and its aboriginal population... those cheerless, desolate prairies, the western

Phrenology was a popular but controversial belief. See, for example, George Combe, “Combe on Phrenology, Number VII”, *Southern Literary Messenger*, 5 (Dec. 1839): 810–813; J. S. Allen, “Phrenology Examined”, *Southern Literary Messenger*, 12 (May 1846): 267–277; and Dr. Thomson, “Phrenology”, *Ladies’ Repository*, 1 (Dec. 1841): 361–367.

¹² Joseph C. Porter, “Marvelous Figures, Astonished Travelers: The Montana Expedition of Maximilian, Prince of Wied”, *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, 41 (Autumn 1991): 40. See also Pär Eliasson, *Platsens blick: Vetenskapsakademierna och den naturalhistoriska resan 1790–1840*, *Idéhistorisk skrifter* 29 (Umeå: Inst. för Historiska Studier, Umeå Univ., 1999), esp. chapter two (quotation from English summary on Internet at <http://www.cfvh.kva.se/abstr16.html>).

¹³ Brooke Hindle, *The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735–1789* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 12.

¹⁴ Goetzmann, *New Lands, New Men*, 55–56; Maximilian, Prinz zu Wied, *Reise nach Brasilien in den Jahren 1815–1817* (2 vols.; Frankfurt, a.M.: Broner, 1820–1821), translated into one volume in English cited above. Maximilian also published *Abbildungen zur Naturgeschichte Brasiliens* (Weimar: n.p., 1822).

¹⁵ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 27; Honour, *European Vision of America*, 1.

boundary of which is formed by the snow-covered chain of the Rocky Mountains... where many of the aborigines still enjoy a peaceful abode...". As he made his decision, the questions raised by his mentor, Blumenbach, were never far from his mind. His expedition would be, in the words of art historian Barbara Maria Stafford, "carried out for a purpose", chief of which was to address the most pertinent question confronting the natural history community of his day, the origin of the races¹⁶.



Fig. 1. Prince Maximilian zu Wien-Neuwied, lithograph by H. Meyer.

Having failed to create a satisfactory visual record of his Brazilian trip, Maximilian realized that he would have to employ a professional artist this time. The rudimentary sketches that he had made in Brazil, charming as they were, had to be redrawn for publication by his art-trained brother, Carl, and sister, Luise, yet were still found wanting by Humboldt, who, like Blumenbach, insisted on precise delineations of native peoples and their environment for his research. Blumenbach had acknowledged the importance of pictures to his work when he wrote to thank Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist on Captain Cook's first expedition, for "the unrestricted use of all the collections of treasures relating to the study of Anthropology, in which your library abounds; I mean the pictures, and the drawings and c. taken by the best artists from life itself". On another occasion, he thanked Banks for permitting him "the perusal of your inestimable portfolios of drawings of the South Sea curiosities & even the copying of many of them..."¹⁷.

Pictures were required for a number of reasons, but their use goes beyond what one might think of today to include the popular Enlightenment pseudo-science of physiognomy, which, as practiced by one of its most famous adherents, Johann Caspar Lavater of Zurich, held that a judicious physiognomist could

¹⁶ Maximilian to Karl Friedrich Philipp von Martius, Feb. 26, 1830, in Bayrische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, and Maximilian to Heinrich Rudolf Schinz, Mar. 1, 1832, in Zentralbibliothek Zürich, as quoted in William J. Orr, "Karl Bodmer: The Artist's Life", in *Karl Bodmer's America*, 352; Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 25–26; Stafford, *Voyage into Substance*, xix.

¹⁷ Goetzmann, "The Man Who Stopped to Paint America", in *Karl Bodmer's America* (Lincoln: Joslyn Art Museum & University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 6; Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, "Introductory Letter to Sir Joseph Banks", in *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, trans. and ed. by Thomas Bendyshe (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1865), 149 (quote); Blumenbach to Banks, Mar. 10, 1794, in the British Library, Additional MSS, quoted in Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, 153 (second quote).

divine a person's character from his or her facial features. "There are" I say, "in the exterior of man many things not susceptible to disguise", Lavater wrote in one of his best known works, *Essays on Physiognomy*, "and these very things are certain indications of an internal character". Where is the man, for example, who can at pleasure influence his body system? who can present his forehead in the form of an arch, when it is naturally flat, or render it uneven and angular when it is naturally regular". Lavater claimed that careful study of one profile "announces a higher degree of intelligence and activity", while another has in it "the power neither of education nor circumstances, to unite with that face... sagacity or exquisite sense; and it is absolutely incompatible with Philosophy and Poetry, with the talents of the Politician, or the heroism of the soldier". Lavater's concept of physiognomy became well known throughout Europe; perhaps so well known that even a young man such as Karl Bodmer would have known of it. But whether one accepts any element of physiognomy is not the point; the point is that the practice required the most accurate portraits that one could acquire¹⁸.

Ever since his trip, for example, Humboldt had called for an artist who could do justice to America. Now Maximilian had that opportunity, for which he sought a "landscape painter" who could "also... depict figures correctly and accurately, especially the Indians", but one "who would not be too much of a burden on my pocketbook...". This concession on Maximilian's part recognized the importance of the illustration to scientific endeavor – "the descriptive word wedded to accurate image", an undertaking, says Stafford, "whose very existence and popularity is based on an ardent yearning for facts rather than fictions". In this, Bacon's ideal that our trained senses can provide a replica of the real world "elevated [art] to the task of picturing reality"¹⁹.

The prince probably met Karl Bodmer (1809–1893) (Fig. 2) near the Wied ancestral estate on the Rhine. The twenty-three year old artist, trained by his maternal uncle, an itinerant Swiss landscape painter, had settled into a career painting views along the Rhine and Moselle rivers that his older brother engraved. It was probably there that Maximilian first saw his work and offered him the opportunity to travel to America for two years as a salaried artist. They signed a contract in April 1832 and, accompanied by the prince's servant and hunter, David Driedoppel, who had also accompanied the Prince to Brazil, departed for America aboard the packet *Janus* from Helvoetsluys, near Rotterdam, on May 17²⁰.

Bodmer realized the intensity of Maximilian's effort in their first encounter with Indians in St. Louis in March 1833. Chief Keokuk had led a band of Sauks and Foxes into the city to appeal to Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark for the life of their friend, Black Hawk, who had been imprisoned at nearby Jefferson Barracks for his role in what was known as Black Hawk's War. Surprised at their appearance, Maximilian immediately noted "their great affinity to the Brazilians" and concluded, "I cannot hesitate to consider them as belonging to the same race". Then, while Bodmer sketched their portraits, he made several pages of notes as to their appearance: "stout, well formed men, many of them above the middle size, broad shouldered, muscular and brawny". He also carefully described their facial features: cheek, jaw, eyes ("animated and fiery, and especially in youth"), forehead, teeth, nose, lips, hair, skin. He also recorded differences²¹.

Bodmer later wrote that his "lack of expertise" in such situations had forced him "to copy with unusual eagerness and attention every aspect realistically... in an almost ridiculously fussy manner but also with as much authenticity and truth". Maximilian, too, was pleased with both the character and the ability of his artist assistant²². And the vivid, exotic, and stunningly detailed watercolor portraits and resulting engraving of Massika and Wakusásse (Fig. 3), two of those who visited St. Louis, illustrate the success of his efforts. For the three Europeans, this was just the beginning of thirteen months of close observation, extensive note-taking, collecting, and documentation among the Native Americans of the Great Plains.

¹⁸ Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy, Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind*. Trans. by Henry Hunter (3 vols.; London: John Murray, H. Hunter and T. Holloway, 1789–98), II: quotations on p. 12, 27, and 35. See also Joan K. Stemmler, "The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater", *Art Bulletin*, LXXV (Mar. 1993): 151, 152 (Stafford quote).

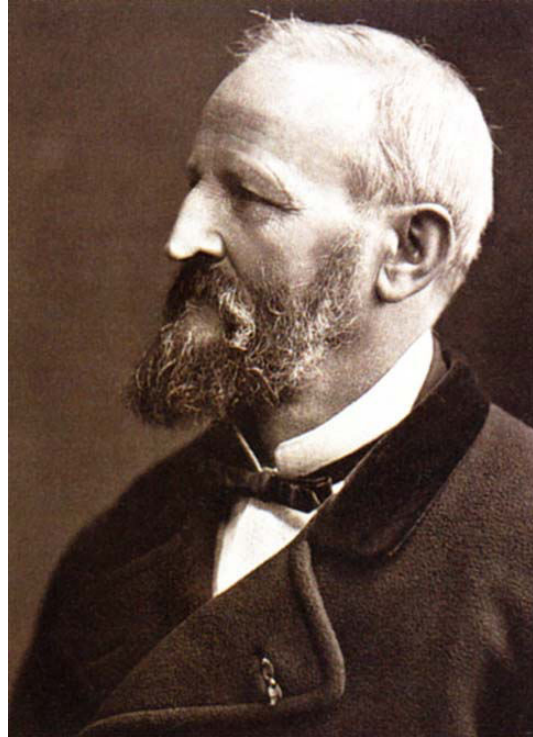
¹⁹ Humboldt apparently felt that German artist Johan Moritz Rugendas (1802–1858), who painted in both South America and Mexico, provided the kinds of pictures that he called for. See Renate Löschner and Xavier Moyssen, *El México luminoso de Rugendas* (México: Edición Privada de Cartón y Papel de México, S.A. de C.V., 1985), 13–14, 24–28, 96–102; and Maximilian to Martius, Feb. 26, 1830, quoted in Orr, "Bodmer", in *Karl Bodmer's America*, 352 (quote); and Stafford, *Voyage into Substance*, xx, 445 (quote).

²⁰ Orr, "Bodmer", 351, 353.

²¹ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 217–220, 218 (quote).

²² Bodmer to Maximilian, July 18, 1840, Maximilian-Bodmer Collection, Joslyn Art Museum, Durham Center for Western Studies. Unless otherwise noted, all the manuscripts cited in this essay come from this collection. See also Orr, "Bodmer", 354.

Fig. 2. Karl Bodmer in his later years, 1877, Wikimedia Commons.



Maximilian and Bodmer departed St. Louis on the American Fur Company steamboat *Yellow Stone* on April 10. They steamed up the Missouri, the longest river in the United States, past Cantonment Leavenworth (just above present-day Kansas City), Bellevue (near present-day Omaha), Sioux Agency near the mouth of the White River, Fort Pierre (in the present state of South Dakota), Fort Clark, and Fort Union (both in the present state of North Dakota), the farthest up the river that the steamboats could go. There they switched to a keelboat for the month-long trip to Fort McKenzie, which cost Maximilian a number of his hard-won specimens. Because he had collected too many items, he did not have room for everything in his cabin and had to leave many articles on deck. The “rude” crew probably resented having to push those specimens up the river along with everything else on the keelboat and threw many of them in the river during the night. Arriving on August 9, Maximilian and Bodmer had traveled more than 3,000 miles by the river²³.

Remaining at Fort MacKenzie for more than a month, Bodmer sketched the portraits of the leading men of three different Blackfeet bands camped around the post, while Maximilian interviewed the sitters, took notes, and traded for and purchased artifacts to take back to Germany as a part of his collection. The dapper Bodmer, who often carried a parasol with him as protection against the harsh western sun, gradually improved his techniques for convincing the Indians to pose for him, sometimes for a full day or more²⁴. The aesthetically inclined were often fascinated with his pictures, which were so different from their own art. Others were transfixed by his small music box, thinking that there was a “little spirit” inside, or the different European toys that he had brought along for that purpose²⁵.

Aware of increasing hostilities among the Indians around the fort, they were, nonetheless, surprised to be awakened by gunshots on the morning of August 28. They rushed to the palisade to see that a party of perhaps 600 Assiniboin and Crees had attacked the Blackfeet camped around the fort (Fig. 4). When the whites joined in the battle, the attackers retreated to a nearby hill to ponder their next move. Maximilian was fascinated:

From the place where the range of hills turns to the Missouri, more and more Blackfeet continued to arrive. They came galloping in groups, from three to twenty together, their horses covered with foam, and they themselves in their finest apparel, with all kinds of ornaments and arms, bows and quivers on their backs, guns in their hands, furnished with

²³ For an account of the trip, see Goetzmann, “The Man Who Stopped to Paint America”, 8–11; Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 58.

²⁴ See Bodmer’s self portrait with parasol in a drawing in the Newberry Library, Chicago, collection.

²⁵ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 160, and XXIV: 15.

their medicines, with feathers on their heads; some had splendid crowns of black and white eagles' feathers, and a large hood of feathers hanging down behind, sitting on fine panther skins lined with red; the upper part of their bodies partly naked, with a long strip of wolf's skin thrown across the shoulder, and carrying shields adorned with feathers and pieces of colored cloth. A truly original sight!²⁶ (Fig. 5).

The Assiniboins and Crees further retreated to a nearby valley when David Mitchell, post commander, ordered his men to fire the fort's cannons, which they had not been able to use during the fight because of the proximity of friend and foe.

As the conflict drew to a close, Maximilian spotted a dead Indian with a distinctive head, which he hoped to collect for study. But by the time the Blackfeet had vented their rage on the corpses, the head was gone. The next day, an old Indian man told Maximilian that "no ball had touched him; doubtless, because Mr. Bodmer had taken his portrait a few days before", and Bodmer took advantage of the idea, convincing others to pose for him by pointing out that "none of the men whose portraits he had drawn, had been lately killed or wounded". The following day, Maximilian, surprised to see that the entire Blackfoot village had moved to the fort, directed Bodmer to sketch the more than 400 teepees around the post (Fig. 5). Under these circumstances, he soon realized that it was much too dangerous to continue his trek to the Rocky Mountains, so he had to content himself with a distant view of the first chain that he had glimpsed early in the visit²⁷.

One cannot help but ponder the documentary opportunity that Bodmer missed. He was one of the only pre-Civil War artists in the West who saw an Indian battle first-hand, yet there are no sketches of it among his paintings and drawings that survive. The only image that appears in the Atlas that accompanied Maximilian's book is a later studio composition, which Bodmer depicted as if he were among the combatants rather than inside the fort. It is a dramatic image, clearly showing the bravery as well as the atrocities of battle – women and children are among the dead as the Assiniboins and Crees fire into the Blackfeet teepees at point-blank range. Yet, there are so few non-Indian eye-witness pictures of an Indian battle that Bodmer's first-hand documentation of this skirmish would have been a welcome addition to the record²⁸.

On September 14, Maximilian's party, along with their notes, journal, paintings, artifacts, and natural history specimens, including two bears in cages, loaded all aboard a mackinaw boat for the trip from Fort McKenzie downriver to Fort Clark, where they would spend the winter. They could have stayed in the more spacious quarters at Fort Union, but Maximilian, like Catlin before him, wanted to spend time with the mysterious Mandan Indians near Fort Clark more than he wanted the comfortable quarters. These were Indians who, Catlin speculated in a popular but later discredited story, had descended from early Welshmen who, under Prince Madoc, supposedly visited America in 1170. Unlike other Indians, many of the Mandans had hazel, gray, or blue eyes; were light-complexioned; and told stories about their ancestors escaping the Flood in the "big canoe". In fact, they were related to the Sioux and had migrated from the Southeast to the Missouri River Valley about A.D. 1200. Between Catlin and Maximilian, they quickly became perhaps the best-documented tribe on the Plains²⁹.

Post commander James Kipp hurriedly built a two-room shack for his distinguished guests, but because there was no time to properly chink the logs, the chinking froze and fell out when the temperature went below zero in one of the coldest winters on record. Although suffering, probably from scurvy, Maximilian made the most of his time among these fascinating people, and he and Bodmer produced an unparalleled record of their culture, language, and customs. Only Catlin, who visited during the summer of 1832, saw more in the form of the O-Kee-Pa ceremony³⁰. Maximilian and his party finally began their return trip on April 14, 1834, after the ice had melted on the Missouri.

²⁶ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 150.

²⁷ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 138, 152 (quote), 156, and 160 (quote).

²⁸ One of the few might be Hermann Stieffel, "Attack on General Marcy's Train, escorted by Comp: K 5th U.S. Infantry, Br. Major Brotherton commanding, near Pawnee – Fort Kansas, September 23rd 1867, in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Reproduced in Jonathan L. Fairbanks (ed.), *Frontier America: The Far West* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1975), 86.

²⁹ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 168–221; Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 1: 93, 156–157, 206–207; P. Richard Metcalf, "Mandan Indians", in Howard R. Lamar (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 674–675.

³⁰ For a record of Catlin's observations, see his *Letters and Notes; O-Kee-pa: A Religious Ceremony; and other Customs of the Mandans* (London: Trübner and Co., 1867); and *Folium Reservatum* (published by Catlin in 1867, reprinted by Osiris of Montreal in 1974).



Fig. 3. Massika, Sauk Indian and Wakusasse, Musquaque Indian, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 5. Blackfoot Indian on Horse-Back, Wikimedia Commons.

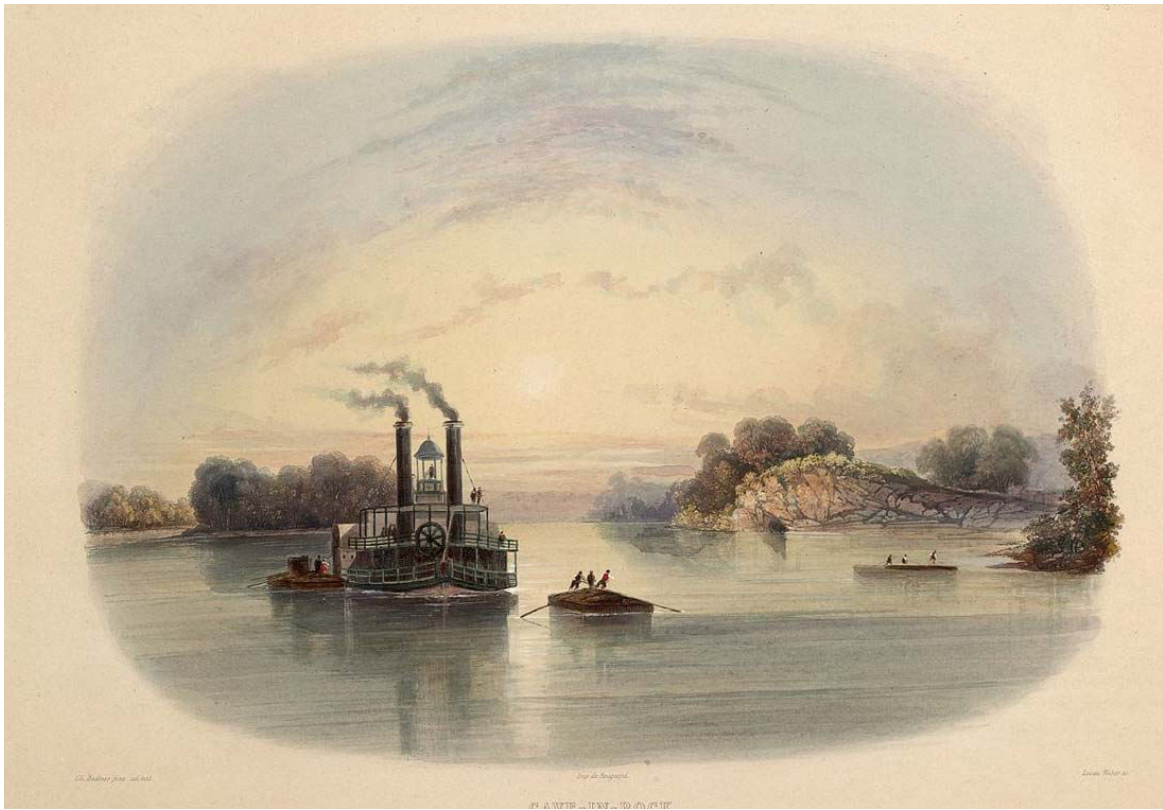


Fig. 6. Cave-in-Rock, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 7. Fort Clark on the Missouri, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 4. Assiniboin and Cree Warriors attack on Blackfoot at Fort MacKenzie, Wikimedia Commons.

Although Maximilian was clearly an Enlightenment figure, the adventuresomeness and curiosity of the Romantic is apparent at the very core of his endeavor as he and Bodmer faced dangers in pursuit of the unknown. Maximilian did not underplay the anticipated hardships when he recruited the elegant Bodmer to accompany him, but he probably did not emphasize the potential life-threatening dangers either: the certainty of being cut off from the city centers, much less Europe, for months at a time; the possibility of sickness far from even the most primitive medical care. Indeed, Maximilian faced serious illnesses on two different occasions: during the winter of 1832–33 at New Harmony, Indiana, when he came down with a “serious indisposition, nearly resembling cholera”, and during the winter of 1833–34 at Fort Clark when “a violent fever succeeded, with great weakness, and, having neither medical advice nor suitable remedies, my situation became daily more helpless and distressing, as there was nobody who had any knowledge of this disorder”³¹.

Maximilian’s choice of steamboat travel up the Missouri rather than accompany Captain William Drummond Stewart, a Scottish adventurer, overland to the Rocky Mountains, might have made the travel more comfortable, but no less dangerous. Boats caught fire, snagged, exploded, or were swamped in the Missouri’s swift eddies. Maximilian narrowly escaped injury when a large branch of a partially submerged tree crashed into his cabin, where it “carried away part of the door case, and then broke off, and was left on the floor...”. “One might have been crushed in bed”, he pondered³².

And, of course, the Indians themselves sometimes proved to be a danger. As the party proceeded up the river on the keelboat *Flora* to Fort McKenzie, they encountered a huge camp of Gros Ventres. Some Indians swam to the boat, while others waited on the shore. The keelboat was so slow that it could not escape them, so the captain invited the chiefs on board to smoke. “We were now entirely in the power of these people”, Maximilian realized, “and had every reason to fear the vengeance” of one of the chiefs who had been thrown out of Fort McKenzie several years before. Later, after witnessing a group of Assiniboins and Crees attacking a camp of Blackfeet that had settled around Fort McKenzie, Maximilian concluded that they could go no farther and stopped short of his goal – the Rocky Mountains. He and Bodmer might easily have

³¹ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 185–186; XXIV: 75.

³² Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 231, 255; Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River: Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barage* (2 vols.; New York: Francis P. Harper, 1903), I: 122–23, 124–25, 164; II: 285, 385, 394, 421; and Donald Jackson, *Voyages of the Steamboat Yellow Stone* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1985), 112.

found themselves in similar circumstances to those of the later German artist and writer Balduin Möllhausen, who, during a trip with Duke Paul of Württemberg to Fort Laramie in the winter of 1851, was harassed and robbed by Pawnees and left sick, alone and daily threatened by wolves. After more than two weeks, he was finally rescued by a group of friendly Ottos³³.

The starkness of the *Mauvaises Terres* (the badlands) apparently depressed Maximilian so much that he had a difficult time working on the book when he returned home. “The mountains continued to increase in height; they were more and more naked and sterile; their colour was whitish-grey, grey-brown, often spotted with white, the upper part disposed in horizontal strata, or in narrow stripes...”, he noted. Further up the river there were more “rude, naked mountains...” then, “two white mountain castles... [that] when seen from a distance, so perfectly resembled buildings raised by art, that we were deceived by them, till we were assured of our error”. As Maximilian and Bodmer prepared to spend the winter of 1833–34 at Fort Clark, so they could observe and study the Mandan Indians, they found the region around the post “desolate and deserted”. Fresh scaffoldings denoted recent deaths among the Indians, while the living were reduced to dragging dead dogs by a strap through the woods, apparently as bait to catch wolves or foxes. Maximilian and Bodmer suffered intensely from the cold because the structure that the post factor had built for them had been hastily chinked with clay, which froze and cracked when the temperature dropped, permitting the “bleak wind” to penetrate on all sides³⁴.

Bodmer’s images, too, partake of romanticism, even when, as in most cases, they are clearly scientific specimens, precisely and carefully painted against a white background – just as Audubon painted his birds. In addition to being meticulous, however, these portraits also captured the individualism, the humanity of the Indians – and, one might argue, the character of the animals, too, as Lavater explained – in such a way that they could be easily recognized. The critic for the *Journal des Debats* said that he recognized Indians who visited the French court from Bodmer’s portraits, and Smithsonian anthropologist and historian John C. Ewers told a compelling story about an incident that occurred early in his career, during the 1940s, when an aged Blood Indian named Weasel Tail, recognized Bodmer’s portrait of Stomick-Sosack (Bull’s Back Fat) because he had known Stomick-Sosack’s son³⁵.

Bodmer’s lush landscapes suggest the aggressive westward movement of the Americans in scenes such as the *Forest Scene on the Tobihanna, Alleghany Mountains*, with the road and cabins penetrating the dense forest; *View of Mauch-Chunk (Pennsylvania)*, which, Maximilian pointed out, had “sprung up since the discovery of the very rich coal mines in the vicinity”, becoming the classic illustration of the “machine in the garden”; and *Cave-in-Rock, View on the Ohio* (Fig. 6), with the steamboat puffing down the virgin river³⁶. Like other Romantic artists, he saw classical structures in nature, and depicted them in engravings such as *The White Castles on the Upper Missouri*. And in pictures such as *Fort Clark on the Missouri (February 1834)* (Fig. 7) and *Fort Union on the Missouri* he showed the white man’s encroachment into what appears to be pristine nature.

His landscapes also record his (and Maximilian’s) encounter with the sublime American wilderness at its height – from the *Forest Scene on the Lehigh (Pennsylvania)*, which even Maximilian described as “wild and picturesque”, to the *Mouth of Fox River (Indiana)* near New Harmony, to the *View of the Rocky Mountains* with a band of Indians in the foreground and a village in the left middle ground. Maximilian had seen the beginnings of the Rockies, but had to turn back because of the threat of hostilities³⁷.

Maximilian had begun work on the results of his Brazilian trip immediately upon his return, but distilling his American expedition took more time. Whether he had not fully recovered from his near-fatal bout with scurvy at Fort Clark, or the rigors of the lengthy trip upon his fifty-one year old body, or had

³³ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 72; Preston Albert Barba, *Balduin Möllhausen, the German Cooper* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Americana Germanica, vol. 17, 1914), 40–41.

³⁴ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 52–54, XXIV: 12, 14, 15.

³⁵ Bodmer wrote Maximilian, July 7, 1838, that he needed a picture of the grizzly bear that would show its “character”. Lavater also believed that physiognomy would also reveal the character of animals. See Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, which includes engravings of animals as well as humans to illustrate his discussion. Donné, “Les Sauvages du Missouri”; John C. Ewers, “An Appreciation of Karl Bodmer’s Pictures of Indians”, in John C. Ewers, et al., *Views of a Vanishing Frontier* (Omaha: Center for Western Studies, Joslyn Art Museum, 1984), 92.

³⁶ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 119 (Maximilian quotation). The classic statement is Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

³⁷ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 118 (Maximilian quotation), XXIII: 138.

momentarily succumbed to depression – he found Americans rude and uncultured, and the climate harsh, all of which might have dampened his enthusiasm. “I could not help making comparisons with my journeys on the Brazilian rivers”, he wrote.

There, where nature is so infinitely rich and grand, I heard, from the lofty, thick, primeval forests on the banks of the rivers, the varied voices of the parrots, the macaws, and many other birds, as well as of the monkeys, and other creatures; while here, the silence of the bare, dead, lonely wilderness is but seldom interrupted by the howling of the wolves, the bellowing of the buffaloes, or the screaming of the crows... These plains, which are dry in summer, and frozen in winter, have certainly much resemblance, in many of their features, with the African deserts³⁸.

He was further discouraged when he learned that in 1834 most of his massive natural history and ethnographic collections had been lost when the steamer *Assiniboine* had exploded and sank on a trip down the Missouri. Nor could he have been much encouraged when he lent Bodmer’s paintings for the Salon of 1836 exhibition at the Royal Academy in Paris, only to have the reviewer for *L’Artiste* damn them with faint praise: “the *Indian characters* of M. Bodmer have excited our curiosity thanks to the bizarreness of their garb, and we must at least thank the designer for the kind of artlessness with which he has collected the details of this savage attire³⁹”. Obviously the most beautiful and meticulous watercolors ever done of the Plains Indians were not considered high art in a society used to the stunning and Romantic paintings of Delacroix and Ingres, and Bodmer’s later addition of elements of the picturesque and the Romantic to the finished Atlas might have been an attempt to address some of these concerns. For example, several of the engraved landscapes are more studied and precise than the original drawings or watercolors, as in *Fort Pierre on the Missouri* (Fig. 8), *Fort Union on the Missouri*; and *Junction of the Yellow Stone River with the Missouri*, where the addition of the engraved lines seems to add welcome detail compared to the finished watercolor.



Fig. 8. Fort Pierre and the Adjacent Prairie, Wikimedia Commons.

³⁸ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXIII: 42.

³⁹ “Salon de 1836”, *L’Artiste*, 9 (1836): 170.

Perhaps the best examples, however, are the entirely new compositions that Bodmer created in his Paris studio: *Bison-Dance of the Mandan Indians in Front of Their Medicine Lodge in Mih-Tutta-Hankush* (Fig. 9), *Fort MacKenzie August 28, 1833*, and *The Travellers Meeting with Minatarre Indians. Near Fort Clark* (Fig. 10). In *The Travellers*, Bodmer confronts the trio of Europeans with “the character of the Indians truly and without exaggeration”, from the “noble savage” to the curious and the almost comic (the plumed high-hat)⁴⁰. *Bison-Dance* and *Fort MacKenzie* are true departures in which Bodmer casts his lot with Romantics who wanted to know how the dance or the battle felt, rather than the Neoclassicists who preferred the information conveyed in the almost cartographic approach of artists such as Louis-François Lejeune, who laid out the battle before the viewer as if they were creating a map of the terrain. In both cases, Bodmer places the viewer in the midst of action, confronting them with the barbaric and colorful, with danger in the case of *Fort MacKenzie* and fearsome savagery in the other. These are the only prints in the Atlas in which Bodmer approaches the fury and emotion that the French writer George Sand felt as she witnessed the scalp dance as performed by Catlin’s visiting troupe of Indians:

A kind of delirious rage seemed to transport them; raucous cries, barks, roars, shrill whistles and the war-cry which the Indian makes by putting his fingers on his lips and which uttered far off in the deserts freezes the strayed traveler with fear, interrupted the song creating an infernal concert. A cold sweat came over me; I believed I was witnessing the real scalping of some vanquished enemy or some still more horrible torture. Of all that was in front of me I saw nothing but the redoubtable actors and my imagination placed them in their true setting, under ancient trees by the light of a fire burning the flesh of the victims, far from all human help: for these were not men that I saw but demons of the desert, more dangerous and implacable than wolves or bears among whom I would gladly have sought refuge⁴¹.

Maximilian finally realized that in his careful observations and the more than four hundred of Bodmer’s vivid and exotic watercolors and sketches he possessed a priceless cache of ethnographic and historical information that would add much to the scientific literature about North America, and he set about producing one of the last of the great illustrated books of the Enlightenment as well as a thoroughly Romantic document of his North American expedition. His publishers would have preferred a light travel journal, illustrated with a few lithographs, but Maximilian (with Bodmer’s encouragement) remained true to his purpose and planned a multi-volume work accompanied by a deluxe Atlas containing the finest engravings that Paris craftsmen could produce. As a result, he had to do it at his own expense and without any government assistance, unlike most such books published at this time⁴². He first organized his field notes and wrote a three-volume journal of the expedition as the basis for his shorter, two-volume *Reise in das innere Nord-America in den Jahren 1832 bis 1834*, which Jakob Hölscher of Koblenz began issuing serially beginning in 1839 (Fig. 11). Hölscher, who had published several of Bodmer’s landscape albums, printed the German edition and handled the subscriptions, and Maximilian contracted with Bodmer to oversee production of the engravings in Paris and to arrange for translation, publication, and sales in France and England. The artist received a monthly stipend plus travel expenses and, if the work showed a profit, he would receive two-thirds of it⁴³.

Bodmer might have chosen the less expensive method of lithography for the reproductions, but he wanted the finest quality that could be achieved, despite the cost, something similar to what London engraver Robert Havell, Jr., was accomplishing for the ornithologist and naturalist John James Audubon in the magnificent *Birds of America*⁴⁴. Probably because he had been trained as an engraver, Bodmer chose the same copperplate aquatint engraving technique that Havell had used and immediately signed up some twenty of the best engravers and printers to produce the plates for the Atlas.

⁴⁰ Bodmer to Maximilian, July 18, 1840. There are sketches of the village in Bodmer’s work, but nothing that could be considered a prototype for the print.

⁴¹ See Susan Locke Siegfried, “Naked History: The Rhetoric of Military Painting in Postrevolutionary France”, *Art Bulletin*, LXXV (June 1993): 235–239, for a comparison of these methods of painting battles. See also Honour, *European Vision of America*, text to accompany catalogue entry 298 (quote).

⁴² See Ron Tyler, “Illustrated Government Publications Related to the American West, 1843–1863”, in Edward C. Carter II (ed.), *Surveying the Record: North American Scientific Exploration to 1830* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1999), 147–172.

⁴³ Contract, Nov. 7, 1836.

⁴⁴ Audubon’s work, which Havell completed in 1839, was even larger: 435 double elephant (39 ½ by 26 ½ in.) size plates. See Waldemar H. Fries, *The Double Elephant Folio: The Story of Audubon’s Birds of America* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1973).



Fig. 9. Bison-Dance of the Mandan Indians in Front of Their Medicine Lodge, in Mih-Tutta-Hankush, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 10. The Travellers Meeting with Minatarre Indians, Near Fort Clark, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 12. Péhriska-Rúhpa, A Minatree or Big Bellied Indian, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 13. Mato-Tope, A Mandan Chief, Wikimedia Commons.

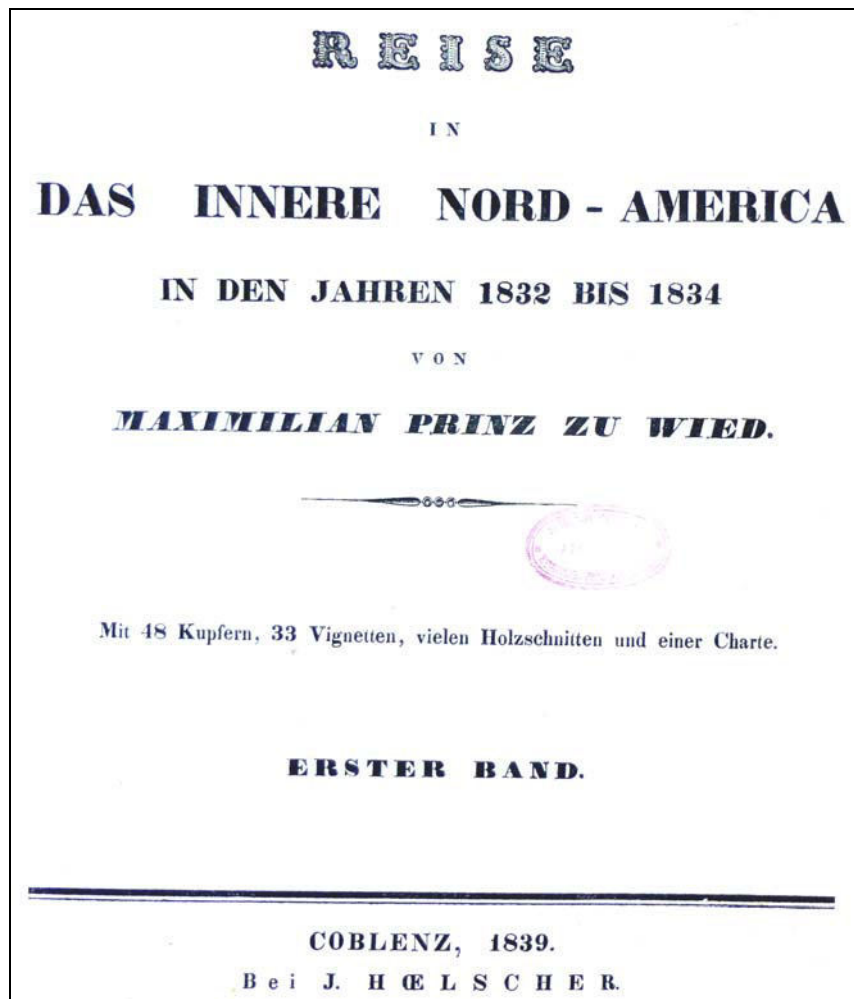


Fig. 11. Title page of *Reise in das innere Nord-America in den Jahren 1832 bis 1834*, Library of the Romanian Academy.

Maximilian had been a demanding patron while on the trip and did not relax his control during the transition from watercolor to print. Bodmer sent him proofs of each state of the prints and discussed tentative changes with him in detail. The whole process was complicated, time-consuming, and, therefore, expensive, requiring preliminary drawings followed by trial proofs followed by additional etchings and more proofs. On one occasion, Maximilian required Bodmer to re-engage the striking portrait of “Pehriska-Ruhpa with the war bonnet”. On another, the engraver lost Bodmer’s sketch of an Indian he called Watapinat, about whom Maximilian had written in the prospectus and the text. Bodmer’s suggestion that no one would know if he substituted the portrait of another Indian without changing the name, which would save further time and expense, was a fundamental misunderstanding of Maximilian’s desire for utmost accuracy throughout the book, and the portrait of Wakusásse, with the correct caption, was used instead⁴⁵.

Maximilian sometimes challenged Bodmer on the content, intent, and quality of his work. When Maximilian apparently questioned the inclusion of antelope in *The White Castles on the Upper Missouri*, for example, Bodmer “vividly recall[ed] the nearly uninterrupted line of antelopes, we saw several times in spring in those areas... I believed I had to use and include such an authentic motif in a picture of these otherwise so sad parts of the country”. To the prince’s criticism of his sketch for *Dance of the Mandan Women*, Bodmer answered, “Regarding the ugliness of the Indians I can only reply that I stick strictly to the sketches made from real life, as well as of the people’s physiognomy, which still is vividly in my mind”⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ Bodmer to Maximilian, Feb. 22, 1840; Bodmer to Maximilian, Nov. 6, 1840 (re. Periskah-Rupah).

⁴⁶ Bodmer to Maximilian, Jan. 22, 1839.

Maximilian also continued to add pictures to the work, and Bodmer agreed to the additional work, commenting that his “memory and... existing sketches” were adequate sources for the new images. For *Fort McKenzie August 28th 1833*, *Bison-Dance of the Mandan Indians in Front of Their Medicine Lodge, in Mih-Tutta-Hankush*, and *The Travellers Meeting with Minitarre Indians, Near Fort Clark*, there are no watercolor prototypes. Bodmer probably composed them from his sketches and other sources, perhaps models or classical compositions that he found in Paris. As art historian Hugh Honour has pointed out, artists like Bodmer would have had no problem coming up with a pose to copy, for classical sculpture would have been drilled into them early in whatever training they had. In regard to *Fort McKenzie August 28th 1833*, Bodmer explained, “I have designed and composed the print with the highest historical accuracy and completely coinciding with Your Grace’s wishes, and it is, for its variety and completeness, very important for the work and certainly appealing to the audience... As the buffalo dance and the bear and buffalo hunt etc., this action is drawn and conceived from nature and contains less conventional aspects than most such objects in other travel accounts”. Bodmer’s neoclassical background is also apparent in his handsome portrait *Pehriska-Ruhpa: A Minitarre or Big-Bellied Indian* (Fig. 12) which may be modeled after the Dresden Zeus, a Roman copy of a Greek sculpture dating from 440–430 B.C. Other historians have suggested that Jacques-Louis David’s *Leonidas at Thermopylae* may be the source for *Bison-Dance of the Mandan Indians in Front of Their Medicine Lodge, in Mih-Tutta-Hankush*⁴⁷.

Bodmer permitted himself a comment on nature as well. His picture of two grizzly bears, an animal symbolic of the wildness and ferocity of the wilderness to most Americans, tearing apart and devouring the carcass of a bison is a powerful study of the natural cycle. Even as the bears feast on their prey, they are about to fall victim to a greater enemy, man. The buzzards circling overhead complete the cycle, as one species feeds off another in the struggle for survival⁴⁸.

Bodmer was careful to explain various other details to Maximilian. In December 1838, he reported that, “Mato tope with the war bonnet has turned out magnificently” (Fig. 13). In “the view of Mih-Tutta-Hang-Kush...[tableau 16], one does not see anything of Fort Clark because the picture is drawn from downstream”; the village and the fort are shown in tableau 15. He copied the Oregon snow finch from Audubon’s plate 398 in *The Birds of America*; other birds he got from Richard Harlan’s *Fauna Americana* (Philadelphia, 1825) while Harlan was visiting in Paris. He thought that Catlin’s imminent appearance in Paris would not compete with their book, but would, in fact, “rouse interest in it”⁴⁹.

Printing and coloring the images took several years. Some prints are virtual copies of the original watercolors, but others are combinations of or altered from the watercolors, presumably to make a more attractive or pleasing scene: for example, *View of the Missouri, with Blackbird’s Grave in the Distance* (watercolor) and *Washinga Sahba’s Grave on Blackbird’s Hills*.

In November 1839, after production of the Atlas was well underway, Bodmer accepted an invitation to speak to a new ethnological society, the Société Ethnologique, about the North American Indians. He apparently showed the group some of the prints, for he wrote Maximilian that “The Société... has... given me the utmost praise for them by saying that this was the most beautiful and by far the best work which has been published anywhere”⁵⁰.

While Bodmer was overseeing work on the Atlas, Hölscher, the publisher of the German edition, began the sales effort by printing and mailing 3,000 copies of the prospectus all over Europe and the eastern United States, thinking that some of the recent German immigrants might want to order. He announced that there would be five different editions of the Atlas based on the quality of the paper and the amount of coloring. Meanwhile, Bodmer contracted with Arthus Bertrand in Paris for the French edition and with Rudolph Ackermann in London for the English edition; Ackermann would undertake the translation and publication of

⁴⁷ Bodmer to Maximilian, Apr. 9, 1838, and Feb. 5, 22, 1840; Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1987), 116; and George P. Tomko, “The Western Prints of Karl Bodmer”, in Ron Tyler (ed.), *Prints of the American West: Papers Presented at the Ninth Annual North American Print Conference* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1983), 47–55.

⁴⁸ Dawn Glanz, *How the West was Drawn: American Art and the Settling of the Frontier* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, Studies in the Fine Arts: Iconography, no. 6, 1982), 87.

⁴⁹ Bodmer to Maximilian, Dec. 28, 1838, Mar. 4, 1839; Feb. 22, Apr. 9, 1840. Catlin arrived in London with his Indian Gallery early in 1840, and, no doubt, talked of going to Paris, but he did not arrive there until April 1845. See William H. Truettner, *The Natural Man Observed: A Study of Catlin’s Indian Gallery* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 46.

⁵⁰ Bodmer to Maximilian, Paris, Nov. 1, 1839.

the text as well as the coloring of the prints. Prices varied based on the number of prints that were colored and the quality of the paper; the English edition was advertised for sale in New York for \$ 120⁵¹.

Although the price was modest compared with the approximately \$ 1,000 that Audubon asked for *The Birds of America*, it was still a substantial amount and probably was the greatest deterrent to sales. It also kept Hölscher and the other publishers from sending out review copies, because, as he informed Maximilian, “The reviewers demand free copies, which I cannot give them?”. The work, of course, was published at Maximilian's expense, and the question mark at the end of Hölscher's comment probably was intended to provide the prince the opportunity to offer to cover the cost of review copies. Hölscher also hesitated to risk copies by consigning them to booksellers, especially in the United States, because “I have had some losses in New York and Philadelphia”⁵².

But there were other problems as well. The tasks of organizing the engraving and printing of the plates, the translation and publication of the French and English texts with two different publishers, and the sales of the English and French editions stressed Bodmer's administrative skills to the breaking point. “It is bad that especially the best artists are the worst business people”, Hölscher commented at one point. The burden of sales of the English and French editions, in particular, seemed a hardship that Bodmer undertook only because he needed the money. He could have taken a lesson from Audubon, who sold most of his own books, but Bodmer was apparently unable to ingratiate himself into the confidence of either prospective buyers or publishers⁵³.

Maximilian worried, of course, that his book would be a financial disaster and repeatedly urged Bodmer to bring it to a conclusion. His concern, no doubt, developed in part because of the artist's inability to predict when the Atlas would be finished. On October 22, 1839, Bodmer assured him that the “whole opus” would be finished by the coming Easter, and it is painful to read the correspondence and watch the date slip, month by month, as Bodmer makes excuse after excuse, until, in February 1842, he offered “to lay the whole matter into more qualified hands... and to retire completely from the whole affair”. Maximilian, of course, did not remove him, no doubt because, as each new fascicule appeared, he realized anew that Bodmer's true genius was in the images. He even invited the artist to accompany him on a trip to the Caucasus and Russian Asia, but Bodmer declined, citing poor health, family tragedy, and the need to get his new career underway⁵⁴.

There were other problems that Bodmer could not control. His father died in 1839, followed by his brother's insanity and death in 1841. Bodmer's various illnesses, moves, and attempted businesses delayed the work, and on at least one occasion the engravers stopped work on Bodmer's prints to fill a large order from one of their regular customers. If that were not enough, in August 1841, a, by now, sympathetic Hölscher reported that “the best colorist and best copper engraver in Paris recently shot himself, so that there will be another delay!”. And, as the project neared conclusion, he acknowledged that “the printing would go faster had I known in advance that the language sample had so many brackets, á & other accentuated letters; I would have especially cast these signs and unusual letters which do not appear in other printings”⁵⁵.

In London, meanwhile, Ackermann feared that another publisher had smuggled a copy of the manuscript. As soon as Bodmer had calmed him, he learned that Catlin was readying his *Letters and Notes* for publication and hurriedly informed Maximilian that the English edition of his work “absolutely must appear before Catlin's”. But Catlin's work was published first, and Ackermann blamed Bodmer for not delivering the prints in a timely manner. Bodmer responded by beginning to re-engrave some of the earlier plates, claiming that “Catlin's competition now can only be met by a product of more quality, and this is what I aim at”. Hölscher announced to Maximilian the completion of the last copperplate on November 8, 1842, but Bodmer remained in Paris overseeing the last bit of coloring, re-engraving several of the copperplates, and beginning work on an abbreviated version of the Atlas that he had discussed with Maximilian⁵⁶.

⁵¹ Bodmer to Maximilian, June 11, 1838. Maximilian lists the subscribers in *Reise in das innere Nord-America*, I: front.

⁵² Hölscher to Maximilian, Jan. 29, 1840, Maximilian-Bodmer Collection, Joslyn Art Museum, Durham Center for Western Studies.

⁵³ Hölscher to Maximilian, May 23, 1838; Sept. 19, 24, 1838; Jan. 29, 1840; Agreement between Maximilian and Bodmer, Nov. 7, 1836, Acta I, no. 7, paragraph 2, Maximilian-Bodmer Collection. See also Orr, “Karl Bodmer”, 360–361. See Bodmer to Maximilian, Dec. 14, 1838, for his difficulties in sizing the map so that it would fit properly in the Atlas.

⁵⁴ Bodmer to Maximilian, Oct. 22, Dec. 30, 1839; Feb. 22, Nov. 6, 1840; Feb. 13, Nov. 24, 1841; Feb. 3, 1842; and Mar. 25, 1845.

⁵⁵ Hölscher to Maximilian, Feb. 10, 1841; Bodmer to Maximilian, Mar. 25 (quote), Apr. 17, 1841; Hölscher to Maximilian, Aug. 23, 1841; Orr, “Bodmer”, 361.

⁵⁶ Thorn to Maximilian, Nov. 19, 1841, Maximilian-Bodmer Collection; Bodmer to Maximilian, Feb. 3, Dec. 26, 1842; Jan. 29, 1842; and May 20, 1845; Hölscher to Maximilian, Nov. 8, 1842. Hölscher shipped the last copperplates to the Prince on Dec. 30, 1842. See letter of that date to Maximilian.

Finally, in September 1843 came the long awaited endorsement from the great Alexander von Humboldt. “There is no other travel-book written in our language, which might be compared with this publication that is so perfect in all its details”, he wrote. Maximilian must have relished the words as he continued:

We may find in all this book the portrayal of a rather important section of mankind in its condition, language and customs and this human race is about to get extinct soon; so you have produced a most important and attractive book for the history of mankind... I have read every line with great interest. Your way of writing is quite adequate to the subject: noble, simple and clear; there is no presumption in any personality, nowhere we may see the Prince, but the noble, well-meaning broad minded man, the well-informed natural scientist.

Insofar as Bodmer was concerned – “the large atlas and the excellent copper engravings” – Humboldt concluded that, “I can’t find anything like that in other literary achievements, with regard to beauty and reality... How poor are the recent books of the French about travels around the world, which had been published at the expense of the government, compared to this”. Bodmer, he wrote, “is a great artist, who is able to perceive nature as something alive”⁵⁷.

Humboldt’s praise was better than any review that Maximilian had received. To have the most famous naturalist in the world commend his book in precisely the terms that Maximilian intended – an objective study of the origin of mankind and the environment – surely was gratifying. That one of the later reviewers also noticed the objectivity that Humboldt referred to, but found it troubling – “Prince Maximilien [sic!] remains impartial and it is somewhat bothersome to not know what his feelings are” – the Prince would also have taken as a compliment because of his Neoclassical instincts vs. the Romantic interpretations that were then in fashion. Critic Frédéric Mercey also called attention to the Prince’s scientific approach, describing the book a “luxurious and conscientious work” that “gives us an unaltered portrait of the particular customs and civilizations of the peoples there”. He complimented Bodmer on the “magnificent engraved plates”⁵⁸.

Humboldt’s letter stimulated Bodmer into a new sales effort, because his only chance of earning additional money from the project was that the book show a profit. In October 1843, he wrote Maximilian that he had contacted M. Al. Donné, who would do an article on the book for the *Journal des Débats*. In November, he visited Neuwied to reconfirm his relationship with the Prince and allay the concerns of Maximilian’s staff, who had come to suspect his motives for prolonging himself on the Prince’s payroll. The result of the visit was a new contract, dated November 6, whereby he would increase his efforts to promote the book, but would now receive all the proceeds from its sale. He would also go ahead with the smaller, less expensive volume made up from the left-over illustrations in an effort to offset some of his financial loss⁵⁹.

Bodmer also saw George Catlin’s spring 1845 visit to Paris as an opportunity. Despite the considerable publicity that the American and his Indian troupe attracted, Bodmer sold no additional books. But the aborted effort was a measure of Bodmer’s desperation, inasmuch as both he and Maximilian disliked Catlin’s work (Maximilian had contemplated a pseudonymous French review of it, but Bodmer dissuaded him), and Bodmer even referred to the American as a “charlatan”⁶⁰. Catlin’s visit, no doubt, caused King Louis Philippe to recall Bodmer’s visit and the quality of his engravings, and he sent Bodmer a warm letter and a monogrammed diamond ring to commemorate the occasion⁶¹.

M. Donné’s article finally appeared in April 23, 1845, apparently timed to coincide with Catlin’s arrival. Probably reacting to the rather flat, narrative voice that Maximilian assumed, Donné criticized him for not properly introducing his story – for leaving the reader wondering about the purpose of his trip – and for not adequately interpreting the myriad facts that he presented. On the other hand, he found the specificity of his observations, along with the “wonderfully presented... details of the elegant costumes” and

⁵⁷ Humboldt to Maximilian, Sept. 18, 1843, Maximilian-Bodmer Collection. Humboldt concluded the letter with a request that Maximilian recommend a young friend of his for post of physician that the ruling prince of Wied had announced.

⁵⁸ Al. Donné, “Les Sauvages du Missouri”, *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 23, 1845; Frédéric Mercey, “Le Missouri”, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 8 (Oct. 1844), 467–468. *The Living Age* (Feb. 1, 1845), 284, noted the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

⁵⁹ Bodmer to Maximilian, Oct. 6, 1843; Bodmer to von Bibra, Nov. 13, 1843; Herman, Ruling Prince of Weid, to unidentified correspondent, Nov. 28, 1843. *Nord-America in Bildern, oder eine Auswahl von Ansichten der interessantesten Gegenden, hauptsächlich am Missouri, Abbildungen der dort lebenden Völkerstämme, ihrer Häuptlinge, Spiele, Waffen, &c. Nebst...* (Neuwied, 1846) contained thirty-four illustrations from the Atlas along with short, descriptive captions. The main title translates as *North America in Pictures*.

⁶⁰ Bodmer to Maximilian, Dec. 28, 1843, May 20, 1845 (“charlatan”); and Truettner, *Natural Man Observed*, 44.

⁶¹ Bodmer to Maximilian, May 28, 1844, May 20, 1845. Maximilian was disappointed in the French translation of his text, claiming that it contained numerous errors, and requested that the publisher issue an errata sheet. Bodmer to Maximilian, May 17, 1843.

“wonderful sketches representing the detailed interior of an Indian cabin with its kitchen tools and weapons” in the Atlas, much to his liking. Referring, no doubt, to the delegation of Iowas that Catlin had introduced to King Louis Philippe, Donn  said that Bodmer’s “portraits were so realistic that we could recognize the savages easily. When we saw the real people it was almost as if we were transported to the heart of the Mandan tribe. We expected to start out dancing the scalp dance or another strange or wild ceremony that Prince Maximilian described so well”⁶². While it was not the rave review that Bodmer had hoped for, it provided a momentary lift. But the lack of sales soon brought him back to reality: “... In our days such a large travel Atlas can never again be profitable. Tastes have changed greatly especially since the mass of dime and penny works, the mercantile spirit of the present public is frightened of the costs of such a scientific work”, “Even when the Iowa and Chippewa Indians were present here, I did not sell a single copy and neither has Catlin disposed of any specimens of his lithographed atlas in folio...”⁶³.

Despite the lack of sales, Maximilian’s book was, in many ways, a masterpiece of Neoclassicism. It was the result of close, intense observation, straightforward description, and Bodmer’s careful copying of nature in both his portraits and landscapes. “Indians have always interested me so vividly”, Bodmer wrote the Prince, “that I could not neglect exactly to watch and capture their characteristic traits and peculiarities during our stay with the different tribes”. If art did not meld with word, they at least combined in this instance to provide a fuller understanding of the subjects. In recalling the history of the Mandans, historian Francis Parkman observed, nearly half a century after they had been almost exterminated by smallpox, that the “faithful brush of the painter Catlin” and “the pencil of the excellent artist who accompanied Prince Maximilian of Wied to their village... preserved them to posterity essentially unchanged since the journey of the brothers La V rendrye”⁶⁴.

George Catlin had preceded Bodmer up the Missouri by a year, and he had exhibited his work in several Eastern cities and published accounts of his exploits in newspapers before departing for England in 1839. His writings were enormously popular, and his reputation spread, but excellent reproductions of Bodmer’s images were placed before the subscribers to the German edition of Maximilian’s book beginning as early as 1838 or 1839 and were far superior to the modest outline engravings that Catlin published in his two-volume *Letters and Notes...* in 1841. Catlin did not publish anything comparable to Bodmer’s prints until *Catlin’s North American Indian Portfolio* in 1844⁶⁵.

Complete copies of the English translation of Maximilian’s book apparently first reached the United States in late 1843. A notice of arrival appeared in the *New York Commercial Advertiser* in November, with a follow-up article on Nov. 22⁶⁶. While admitting that he had only scanned a copy of this “Magnificent Work” at Wiley & Putnam, local agents for the publisher, the editor continued:

But the accompanying folio volume of illustrations is more easily examinable, and it is really a great treat. The engravings are very carefully executed from drawings made with much taste and skill, and the whole are colored in a style of great beauty and elegance. Indeed these plates are finished altogether in a manner which is unusually beautiful for works of this description, and what is more, they are faithful and life-like copies from nature. The view of Niagara is perhaps the only one to find fault with. The Indian portraits are elaborately done, and have every evidence of being faithfully correct, and the views of scenery on the Ohio, the Missouri, and in the Western forests are all most carefully and exquisitely represented.

⁶² Al. Donn , “Les Sauvages du Missouri”, *Journal des Debats*, Apr. 23, 1845. Bodmer had expected the article to appear forthwith. See also William H. Truettner, *The Natural Man Observed: A Study of Catlin’s Indian Gallery* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 46, 48.

⁶³ Bodmer to Maximilian, Dec. 28, 1843; Bodmer to Maximilian, Mar. 25 (quote), and May 20, Dec. 14, 1845.

⁶⁴ Stafford, *Voyage into Substance*, 445–446; Bodmer to Maximilian, July 18, 1840; Francis Parkman, “The Discovery of the Rocky Mountains”, *Atlantic Monthly*, 61 (June 1888): 785.

⁶⁵ Brian W. Dippie, *Catlin and His Contemporaries: The Politics of Patronage* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 27, 29, 57 Acta I, 156–158, contains the dates of Bodmer’s delivery of the prints. Also see *Catlin’s North American Indian Portfolio. Hunting Scenes and Amusements of the Rocky Mountains and Prairies of America* (London: George Catlin, 1844), which contains twenty-five hand colored plates on 18 by 25 inch paper.

⁶⁶ *New York Commercial Advertiser*, Nov. 9, 17, 18, 22, 1843. The *New York Commercial Advertiser* article was noted in “Literary Reviews”, in the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, Dec. 2, 1843. *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, XI (Oct. 1842), 444, noticed the book sooner but did not review it and made no mention of having seen a copy.

The only objection to this work is the cost – but it certainly should have a place in all our public libraries – and why not in private libraries too? Many of our millionaires might spend their money for much worse things than a luxurious and elegant book like this. We advise them to look at it.

The article concluded with the note that the copy at Wiley & Putnam's was only a specimen and that "no copies will be sent to this country unless previously engaged". Philadelphia's *Saturday Courier* suggested the reason for such caution, the price: the English edition of Maximilian's book cost \$ 120 per copy for two volumes of text plus the Atlas⁶⁷. No doubt, the price did limit the number of people who purchased the book; an equivalent price in 2014 would have been \$ 2,660⁶⁸. Not without reason did the *Commercial Advertiser* call it "the most elaborate and costly work on the geography and scenery of North America ever published"⁶⁹.

There is no record of the number of copies that initially came to the United States, although it could not have been many. While the Prince wrote in the Preface that the book was "designed for foreign, rather than for American readers, to whom, probably, but few of the details would be new", he later expressed the hope, along with Ackermann, that the bulk of the English edition might be sold in America. Perhaps the economic depression that struck in the U.S. in 1837, added to the book's expensive price, kept that hope from being realized. Hölscher reported that, "The sale of copies has not increased despite announcements made as the price is too high for private purchasers after all", and he soon asked Maximilian for permission to sell the individual plates from the Atlas. At the same time, Bodmer reported that the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* had said that the book was "too expensive", when in fact the reviewer called it "luxurious". The reason that Bodmer gave for declining Maximilian's invitation to accompany him on a subsequent trip was that, "in our days the publication of such a large travel Atlas can never again be profitable. Tastes have changed greatly especially since the mass of dime and penny works, the mercantile spirit of the present public is frightened of the costs of such a scientific work". Art historian Barbara Maria Stafford might have agreed with him. She concluded her study of illustrated travel books in 1840, citing the advent of photography as the agent of change. The fact that Audubon, at the same time, sold more than 1,200 subscriptions to his \$ 100 royal octavo edition of *The Birds of America* may be attributed to his charismatic personality as well as his technique of enlisting the help of influential persons in each city that he visited⁷⁰. Prince Maximilian, of course, would never have consented to sell his own book, depending entirely upon Hölscher, Bodmer, and subscription agents.

Beginning as early as 1842, Bodmer's images also reached the public through other publications, and this is where Bodmer's compelling images joined with Americans efforts to define themselves, to take the advice that Tuckerman would later offer artists about developing themes about "Tales of frontier and Indian life". One of the first to copy a Bodmer print was Thomas McKenney in his magnificent *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*. Perhaps McKenney got the image directly from Maximilian in July 1834, when the Prince and Bodmer paused in Philadelphia on their return, for, somehow Maximilian had become aware of McKenney's project and commended it, calling McKenney an "honourable exception" to the general disdain in which the "foreign

⁶⁷ *New York Commercial Advertiser*, Nov. 22, 1843; Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, Dec. 2, 1843, col. 6. The publication was also noticed in *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review* in October 1842.

⁶⁸ John J. McCusker, "How Much is That in Real Money? A Historical Price Index for Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the Economy of the United States", *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society: A Journal of American History and Culture Through 1876*, 101 (1991), Pt. 2, 327; and McCusker, "How Much is That in Real Money? A Historical Price Index for Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the Economy of the United States: Addenda et Corrigenda", *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 106 (1996), Pt. 2, 333. The price of the book in London was 25 guineas, which is approximately \$ 2,790 in 2013 dollars (This calculation is based on information on EH.Net, the web page of Economic History Services, sponsored by The Business History Conference, The Cliometric Society, The Economic History Association, The Economic History Society, and The History of Economics Society). It would follow that the book would be a bit more expensive in the United States because of the costs of shipping. A complete set of the Atlas today brings hundreds of thousands of dollars.

⁶⁹ *New York Commercial Advertiser*, Nov. 22, 1843. Of course, Audubon's double elephant folio *Birds of America* cost much more (approximately \$ 1,000 in 1839), and the seven-volume octavo edition at \$ 100 cost almost as much as Bodmer's Atlas, so the author of the review apparently did not consider Audubon's double elephant folio a work of "geography and scenery".

⁷⁰ Thorn to Maximilian, Nov. 19, 1841; Hölscher to Maximilian, Sept. 9 and 19, 1844. The book sold for 25 guineas in London. Ad in Frederic Shoberl (ed.), *Forget Me Not; A Christmas, New Year's, and Birthday Present* (London: Ackermann and Co., 1843 and 1844), 355 and 3. See also Bodmer to Maximilian, Mar. 25, 1845; Frédéric Mercey, "Le Missouri", *Revue des deux mondes*, 8 (Oct. 1844): 468; Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760–1840* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984), XIX, 440–441; and Tyler, *Audubon's Great National Work*, 101.

usurpers” held the Native Americans⁷¹. It is also possible that McKenney got one of the first copies of the Atlas to arrive in the United States, because the *Encampment of the Piekann Indians, near Fort McKenzie on the Muscleshell River* (after Bodmer’s Tableau 43) (Fig. 14) , did not appear in McKenney’s *History* until plate ninety-seven, probably about 1842. But it is more likely that Maximilian permitted McKenney to use the image, lending it to him along with two others. The hand-colored lithograph, produced by John T. Bowen in Philadelphia, is virtually the same size as Bodmer’s engraving⁷².



Fig. 14. Encampment of the Piekann Indians, near Fort McKenzie on the Muscleshell River, Wikimedia Commons.

With that first appearance in McKenney’s *History*, Bodmer, who by now was trying to bring Maximilian’s book to a conclusion and figure out how he would spend the rest of his life, was well on his way to becoming known as creator of some of the most popular images of the Plains Indians that the American public would know prior to the American Civil War. The person most responsible for his emergence as *the* artist of the West was George R. Graham, who decided to begin running handsome and professionally made steel engravings after Bodmer’s images in his magazine.

An aspiring young publicist, Graham had purchased Samuel C. Atkinson’s *Casket*, a small journal that consisted mostly of borrowed articles and engravings, in May 1839. In November 1840, he acquired William E. Burton’s *Gentleman’s Magazine* and combined the two as *Graham’s Magazine* in January 1841. *Graham’s* rapidly gained a reputation for good writing (paying his authors better than most of the competition) and excellent illustrations. The journal is known today because author Edgar Allan Poe was its literary editor for a brief time (1841–1842) and it contains a number of his writings, but Graham’s was known then for its handsome illustrations, which, Graham said, was a part of his plan from the beginning. Engraver John Sartain of Philadelphia, who did much work for Graham, confirmed that, calling him a publishing pioneer because “it [was]... an unusual thing for the monthlies to have new plates engraved

⁷¹ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 63, 70–71; XXIV, 191. See also Herman J. Viola, *Thomas L. McKenney, Architect of America’s Early Indian Policy: 1816-1830* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1974), for McKenney’s activities, esp. ch. 14.

⁷² Bodmer delivered Tableau 43 in September and November of 1839, so it would have been relatively easy for McKenney to obtain a copy in time to reproduce it in his portfolio by 1842 (Acta I, Nos. 156–158, p. 5). But the fact that McKenney reproduced two Rindisbacher watercolors in his *History*, *War Dance of the Sauks and Foxes* (1834) and *Indians Hunting the Bison* (1837), from Maximilian’s collection suggests that he borrowed them all from Maximilian, who had acquired the Rindisbachers from the artist himself in St. Louis in March 1833. See also McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, plates 1, 49, and 97.

expressly for them”⁷³. Sartain credited the superb illustrations with the magazine’s success, and William Evans Burton, editor of *Gentleman’s Magazine*, would have agreed. Shortly before Graham began running the high-quality engravings, Burton wrote:

A good engraving of a good picture is, in its effect upon the mind, incomparably superior to a painting of ordinary merit... The prolific family of annuals... the invention of lithography, and the great advance in woodcutting... have enlivened with glimpses of art the walls of many a humble dwelling.

Beginning with the combined lists of the magazine’s predecessors – about 5,500 subscribers – *Graham’s* was printing 40,000 copies per issue within two years.⁷⁴

It was about that time – 1844 – that *Graham’s* published the first engraving after a Bodmer print, *Cave in Rock, View on the Ohio* (after vignette VII). Although *Graham’s* does acknowledge Bodmer as the creator of the images, there is no known record of any agreement with Maximilian to license it, so one suspects that Graham, following the practice of the day, simply had his engravers copy the plate from the Atlas. There were no international copyright agreements at that time, and Maximilian would have had to publish an American edition of his book if he were to have kept it from being copied in the United States. Such copying was “merely business”, as the historian of American magazines Frank Luther Mott wrote. That is one reason why John James Audubon rushed to publish an octavo edition of his *Birds* upon his return to America in 1839⁷⁵.

Cave in Rock, View on the Ohio was an idyllic scene south of New Harmony, Indiana, where Maximilian had spent the winter of 1832. It was a spot well known to tourists then and now, for it is the site of a popular state park. The *Graham’s* writer – who might have been Robert Montgomery Bird, a Philadelphia medical doctor, author of the novel, *Nick of the Woods* (1837), and editor of *American Monthly Magazine*, for he wrote many of the articles accompanying the engravings after Bodmer’s Indians – recalled that at the turn of the nineteenth century the cave had been the lair of a notorious gang of robbers who had preyed on Ohio River traffic. A few years later it had become a “remarkable natural curiosity”, with “bold bluffs running out into the current, diversified here and there with green valleys opening between”. “The beautiful scenery of the West and South has been shamefully neglected by sketchers and tourists”, the *Graham’s* author explained, “while every nook and rural beauty to be found in the East has been taken, and sent forth belauded in gilt-edged quartos. We purpose in ‘Graham’ to distribute our favors, and by engraving remarkable places in every part of the country, to give a *National* rather than a sectional interest to the Magazine”⁷⁶.

In November, *Graham’s* published its first trans-Mississippi image, *The Elk Horn Pyramid – on the Upper Missouri*, a particularly exotic scene of perhaps 1,200 to 1,500 elk horns piled in a sixteen to eighteen feet high by twelve to fifteen feet wide pyramid. Dr. Bird borrowed from Maximilian’s text to explain that the mound served as a good luck charm for the Indians and resulted from the habit of each hunting party that passed by tossing horns into the pile to insure success on the hunt. Such illustrations confirmed the magazine’s identity as “*American*”, wrote Bird: “These prairie and Indian scenes are peculiarly appropriate..., and we find they are more popular than any other style of illustration”. James Smillie and Robert Hinshelwood engraved the plate, and Bird predicted that the readers “will look with interest for the succeeding sketches, of which we have quite a number”⁷⁷.

Graham’s published nine engravings after some of Bodmer’s most intriguing pictures in 1845: three Indian portraits, three genre scenes, and three landscapes, two western and one eastern. Smillie and Hinshelwood produced the landscapes, while Rawdon, Wright & Hatch engraved the portraits and genre scenes. The full-length portrait of the graceful and proud Mató-Tópe ran in the January 1845 issue. The accompanying caption focused, not on his bravery or heroism, but upon his vanity – “It is remarkable that the men, among the Indian tribes, are far more vain than the women.... A warrior, in adorning, takes more time for his toilet than the most elegant Parisian belle” – while neglecting to mention that he and most of the

⁷³ Mott, *History of American Magazines*, I: 546–548; John Sartain, *The Reminiscences of a Very Old Man, 1808–1897* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, Publishers, 1899), 197.

⁷⁴ Sartain, *Reminiscences of a Very Old Man*, 198; Williams Evans Burton, editor, in *Gentleman’s Magazine*, VII (July 1840), 55–58.

⁷⁵ Audubon feared that someone would ruin his American market by copying *The Birds of America* in a smaller format before he could get it done. See Tyler, *Audubon’s Great National Work*, 33–34, 47, and 49; Mott, *History of American Magazines*, 2: 385 (quote).

⁷⁶ “Western Views. no. 1. – Cave in the Rock, on the Ohio”, *Graham’s Magazine*, 26 (July 1844), 41; and “American Indians”, *Graham’s*, 30 (Mar. 1847): 201. Also, see an online exhibit on Robert Montgomery Bird at <http://www.library.upenn.edu/special/gallery/bird/>.

⁷⁷ “Our Prairie Sketches – No. II. Elk Horn Pyramid – On the Upper Missouri”, *Graham’s Magazine*, 26 (Nov. 1844), 216. See also George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society’s Dictionary of Artists in America, 1564–1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 319, 585.



Fig. 15. Péhriska-Rúhpa, Minatarae Warrior in Dog-Dance Costume, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 16. Horse Racing of Sioux Indians, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 20. Funeral Scaffold of a Sioux Chief near Fort Pierre, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 30. Monument of Prince Maximilian zu Wied and his skillful artist, Karl Bodmer, Coblenz, Germany.

Mandans died in a smallpox epidemic in 1837. The *Mandan in Dog-Dance Costume* (Péhriska-Rúhpa, tableau 23) is one of Bodmer's greatest images (Fig. 15). The black-ink engraving does not show the red of Péhriska-Rúhpa's plume that accents the wild turkey tail at his back, but the white tips (down feathers) stand out exotically against the glossy black raven feathers of his headdress. Péhriska-Rúhpa's stance simulates the steps of the Dog Dance, during which the entire headdress would have been in constant motion, an exotic blur. *Dacota Woman and Assiniboin Girl* (after tableau 9), in the March issue, depicted the "principal wife of a Dacota of the branch of Yanktons" in "a very elegant leather dress, with stripes and borders of azure and white beads, and polished metal buttons, and trimmed as usual at the bottom with fringes, round the ends of which lead is twisted, so that they tinkle at every motion"⁷⁸.

With *Blackfeet Indians on Horseback* (after vignette XIX) in the February, 1845, issue, the editors began a series on Indian tribes. A two-part article on the Blackfeet, at least partly taken from Maximilian, discussed the history and culture of the tribe. *Horse Racing of Sioux Indians* (after vignette XXX) (Fig. 16) followed in the March issue, accompanied by a brief article and a promise of more in a future issue, and *Indians Hunting the Bison* (after tableau 31) was published in November (Fig. 17). Every artist who had gone into the West had treated the hunt. Titian Ramsay Peale, a naturalist on the Long Expedition of 1820–1821, was, perhaps, the first to publish such a scene in the *Cabinet of Natural History and American Rural Sports* in 1832, and McKenney included St. Louis artist Peter Rindisbacher's *Hunting the Buffalo* as plate number forty-nine in his *History*. Of course, Catlin had published numerous buffalo hunt scenes in his popular *Letters and Notes...* in 1841, and *Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio*, issued in London in 1844 and apparently copied by James Ackerman in New York in 1845, went into some detail pictorially, with a series of buffalo hunt pictures that he hoped would appeal to the sporting audience in Britain. Bodmer's classic statement is, as usual, better drawn than Catlin's, but adds little to Catlin's thorough description of the hunt. The Indians of North America have long been of interest in Europe, Bird observes, noting that the magazine was publishing these "excellent engravings... for the purpose of rescuing a part of their history from oblivion here"⁷⁹.

The landscapes, *View on the Delaware, near Bordentown* (after vignette II), *Cutoff-River, Branch of the Wabash* (after vignette VIII), and *Tower-Rock. On the Mississippi* followed in March, May, and September. "Our plan of publishing Southern and Western Views... has won us the concurrent plaudits of the newspapers and inhabitants of both those sections of the country", the author concluded⁸⁰.

Graham's published an engraving of the *Punka Indians Encamped on the Banks of the Missouri* (after vignette XI) in 1846, then returned to the topic the following year with five engravings: *Herds of Bisons and Elks* (after Tableau 40), *Sauke and Fox Indians* (after vignette X), *Mandan Women* (after vignette XXVIII), *Fort Mackenzie* (after tableau 42), and *A Skin Lodge of an Assiniboin Chief* (Vignette XVI) (Fig. 18). They concluded the series in 1850 with *Dance of the Mandan Indians*. As the series drew to a close, the editors patted themselves on the back:

We have thought proper, in conducting a magazine of higher reputation and aim than the usual run of the light periodicals of the day, to devote a part of the pictorial department to pictures of American Scenery and Indian Portraiture, as better fitted to give the work a permanent value in libraries and on center-tables, than the ordinary catch-penny pictures which disgrace a number of the magazines. Our illustrations of Southern and Western Scenery have commanded the respect and support of a very large class of readers; and the constantly growing celebrity and profit of Graham's Magazine, indicate that we have judged wisely and well⁸¹.

⁷⁸ "Mandan Chief (With a Full Length Portrait)," *Graham's*, 27 (Jan. 1845): 45; "Dacota Woman and Assiniboin Girl," *Graham's*, 27 (Mar. 1845): 122; and "Mandan in Dog-Dance Costume (with an Accompanying Engraving)," *Graham's*, 27 (Oct. 1845): 170. Ralph and Freeman Rawdon, Nezhiah Wright, and George W. Hatch operated a banknote engraving company in New York, with branches in Albany and Boston. At times they had other partners, such as Tracy R. Edson and James Smillie. See Groce and Wallace (eds.), *Dictionary of Artists in America*, 525–526.

⁷⁹ "North American Indians. — no. I. The Blackfeet," *Graham's*, 27 (Feb. 1845): 92–93, and (Mar. 1845): 136–137; "Indians Hunting the Bison," 28 (Nov. 1845), 236 (quote); *Cabinet of Natural History and American Rural Sports*, 2: plate 15, opposite p. 169; Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Artist was a Young Man: The Life Story of Peter Rindisbacher* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1970), 74–75; *Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio*, plates 4–7, and 9; William H. Truettner, "For European Audiences: George Catlin's *North American Indian Portfolio*," in Ron Tyler (ed.), *Prints of the American West: Papers Presented at the Ninth Annual North American Print Conference* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1983), 25–45; and Brian W. Dippie, "Flying Buffaloes": Artists and the Buffalo Hunt," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, 51 (Summer 2001): 2–19.

⁸⁰ "Grand Tower Rock. (On the Mississippi)," *Graham's*, 28 (Sept. 1845): 124; "Mandan in Dog-Dance Costume (With an Accompanying Engraving)," (Oct. 1845): 170; "Indians Hunting the Bison," (Nov. 1845): 236.

⁸¹ "The Punka Indians. With an Illustration," *Graham's*, 29 (Aug. 1846): 72; "American Indians. With an Engraving," "American Indians. With an Engraving," 30 (Mar. 1847): 201; "Fort MacKenzie," 31 (Nov. 1847): 271; "An Assiniboin Lodge" (Dec. 1847): 328; and "Mandan Indians. With an Engraving" (Sept. 1850): 195.



Fig. 17. Indians Hunting the Bison, Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 18. A Skin Lodge of an Assiniboin Chief, Wikimedia Commons.

At the same time, Maximilian's friend Professor Heinrich Rudolf Schinz of Zurich used some copies of Bodmer's work in his *Naturgeschichte und Abbildungen des Menschen der verschiedenen Rassen und Stamme nach den neuesten Entdeckungen und vorzuglichsten Originalien*. Three pictures copied after Bodmer appear in the third edition, which was published in 1845: *Mönnitarri-Krieger im Anzuge des Hundetanzes./Guerrier Mœnnitarri costume pour la Danse du Chien* (after tableau 23), *Scalptanz der Monnitarrri/Danse du Scalp des Meunitarris* (after tableau 27) (Fig. 19), and *Chef Der Blutindianer, Chef des Indiens Sangs./Crih Indianerinn. Indienne Crih* (a double portrait after tableaux 33 and 46). The images were beautifully lithographed by Honegger in Zurich and some of them might have been hand-colored. At least in this instance, Maximilian was a willing participant in the arrangement, having sent Schinz copies of several of Bodmer's engravings as soon as they were available⁸².

⁸² Heinrich Rudolf Schinz, *Naturgeschichte und Abbildungen des Menschen der verschiedenen Rassen und Stamme nach den neuesten Entdeckungen und vorzuglichsten Originalien* (3rd. ed.; Zurich: Honegger, [1845]); draft of letter from Maximilian to Hölscher, on back of Hölscher to Maximilian, Oct. 25, 1838; and Hölscher to Maximilian, Apr. 11, 1839. The copy of *Chef der Blutindianer... Crih-Indianerinn* in the Joslyn Museum collection has been hand-colored, although it could have been done much later.



Fig. 19. Scalp Dance of the Minatarees, Wikimedia Commons.

Maximilian probably was also pleased to see Bodmer's images used in Johann Georg Heck's *Bilder-Atlas zum Conversations-Lexicon* (1849–51) and Josiah C. Nott and George R. Glidden, *Types of Mankind or Ethnological Researches Based upon the Ancient Monuments...* three years later, because both publications attempted to resolve for a popular audience the same kinds of questions that Maximilian had addressed concerning the origin of man. Heck edited the great *Bilder-Atlas*, published by Friedrich Arnold Brockhaus in Leipzig, which included some 500 engravings in a separate, two-volume atlas. Under Heck's direction, the engravers incorporated into three different composite views of Plains Indian ceremonial and camp life at least six different Bodmer plates. Tableau 11 (*Funeral Scaffold of a Sioux Chief near Fort Pierre*) and vignette XXVIII (*Dance of the Mandan Women*) were combined to make the first scene; Tableau 18 (*Bison-Dance of the Mandan Indians in Front of Their Medecine [sic] Lodge*) and Vignette XXV (*Dance of the Mandan Indians*) to make the second one; and vignettes X (*Saukie and Fox Indians*) and XXX (*Horse Racing of Sioux Indians near Fort Pierre*) to make the third one. On the whole, the reproductions bear a direct relationship to the images from which they were taken, although combining them into what appear to be village scenes do give them more of a community feeling than Bodmer's specimen-like images. They were praised upon publication by journals such as the *Southern Literary Messenger*:

The Iconographic Encyclopedia has fully maintained to the last, the excellence of its letter press and the exceeding beauty of its steel engravings... One derives but a feeble impression from reading a paper, however clear and well elaborated, upon any scientific subject, compared with that which is made upon him by studying accurate diagrams and plates relating to it, and it is precisely upon this principle that the Iconographic Encyclopedia bases its title to general approval. *It writes by images*. In every possible branch of human investigation which is capable of being illustrated, it gives us spirited pictures of the *rationale*. ... All are set before our eyes in the most exquisite and life-like engravings⁸³.

Sometimes, however, the illustrations suffered from being copied by engravers who did not understand the pictures. Such is the case in Plate 29, Figure 2, a portion of which is a copy of the *Funeral Scaffold of a Sioux Chief near Fort Pierre*. In the drawing, Bodmer clearly indicated that the body of the dead person was wrapped in a blanket or robe (Fig. 20). The engraving after the drawing (Tableau 11) is a faithful copy, even to the basketlike framework over the body. But the engraving by Henry Winkles in the *Iconographic Encyclopedia* is something of a departure, appearing to show an unwrapped body partially

⁸³ "Notices of New Works", *Southern Literary Messenger*, 18 (Mar. 1852): 192.

covered with an disorderly pile of brush, rather than the regular framework in Bodmer's image. Nor does the text mention that the body should have been wrapped⁸⁴.

A few years later, Nott, a Southern doctor and disciple of Morton's, and Glidden, an Englishman who had lived in Egypt and the Middle East for a number of years and now toured the United States giving popular lectures on Egyptology, pushed the multiple-creations argument even further, attempting to use it as proof of white superiority over colored races. When Nott met Louis Agassiz, while Agassiz was in Mobile on a lecture tour in 1853, he convinced the famous Harvard naturalist to allow one of his papers to be published in what became *Types of Mankind*. "I maintain distinctly", Agassiz wrote, "that the differences observed among the races of men are of the same kind and even greater than those upon which the anthropoid monkeys are considered a distinct species". Agassiz used Massika's portrait (tableau 3) to represent the American in an illustrated table purporting to show the different species and gave credit to Maximilian's book as the source of the image. *Types of Mankind* was a best-selling book despite its cost of \$5 per copy and had gone through ten editions by 1871⁸⁵.

It was during these same years that Bodmer began to exhibit his North American pictures again in Paris. Perhaps it was the finish of Maximilian's book, which freed him from the restriction that he not publish anything from his sketches or give any information to anyone about them that stimulated him⁸⁶. Perhaps it was the need to get on with his career. In 1845, he entered a watercolor of *Forêt vierge de l'Amérique septentrionale (Virgin Forest of North America)* in the Salon. The critic Donné might have seen Bodmer's works at the Salon before writing, in his review⁸⁷. The following year, Bodmer showed two watercolors, *Vue prise sur le Missouri (View taken on the Missouri)* and *Forêt près du Wabash (Indiana) (Forest Close to the Wabash)*; and in 1847 he exhibited three of his American pictures: a watercolor of *Forêt des monts Allegheny (Amérique septentrionale) (Forest of the Allegheny Mountains (North America))* and two aquatint engravings, *Cerf et biche de Virginie (Virginia Deer)* and *Vue prise dans les monts Alleghany (View near the Allegheny Mountains)*⁸⁸. Given the interests of the Salon, as well as Bodmer's own interest, he probably thought that the landscapes would be of more interest than his watercolors had been in 1836.

That Bodmer maintained an interest in the West may be seen in the fact that the abbreviated version of the Atlas that he had discussed with Maximilian, *Nord-America in Bildern (North America in Pictures)*, was finally issued in 1846 and reissued in 1851, although it brought him no financial relief. Bodmer clearly was no salesman. In that same year, he accepted a commission from an American publisher for scenes of early pioneer life. Busy at the time, he got his friend Jean-François Millet to help, ironically, by composing the figures, while Bodmer provided the landscapes. In the meantime, he also published a beautiful lithograph of *Tombeaux des Indiens Sioux (Tomb of the Sioux Indians)* in *L'Artiste* in 1850. It was about that same time that Bodmer saw some of the steel engravings after his work that had been published in America. "Our atlas was imitated and reproduced in steel engraving and in all different ways", he lamented to Maximilian. "It is horrible thus to have exerted so much labor and sacrifice solely for the use and profit of others"⁸⁹.

⁸⁴ *Bilder-Atlas zum Conversations-Lexicon; ikonographische Encyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste. Entworfen und nach den vorzüglichsten Quellen bearbeitet von J. G. Heck* (10 vols.; Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1849–51) was translated and edited and published in New York as *Iconographic Encyclopaedia of Science, Literature, and Art*, Trans. and Ed. by Spencer F. Baird (4 vols. plus atlas 2 vols.; New York: R. Garrigue, 1851–52), 3: 431 and atlas, vol. 1, plate 29, figure 2. (The *Iconographic Encyclopaedia* bears two sets of page numbers: consecutive numbers and numbers within each section; I have used the consecutive page number in this reference). See also William Healey Dall, *Spencer Fullerton Baird, a Biography* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1915), 184–185.

⁸⁵ Louis Agassiz, "Sketch of the Natural Provinces of the Animal World and Their Relation to the Different Types of Man", in J. C. Nott and George R. Glidden, *Types of Mankind or Ethnological Researches Based upon the Ancient Monuments, Sculptures, Paintings, and Crania...* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1854), LXXIII, LXXV (quote), and LXXVII. The Rev. John Bachman of Charleston, coauthor with Audubon of *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (New York: J. J. Audubon, 1846–46), was one of the few American scientists who argued against multiple creations. See Lester D. Stephens, *Science, Race, and Religion in the American South: John Bachman and the Charleston Circle of Naturalists, 1815–1895* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 165–217. *Types of Mankind* continued to sell even after the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which destroyed its arguments. See Reginald Horseman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), esp. ch. 8 and 249.

⁸⁶ See Agreement between Maximilian and Bodmer, Nov. 7, 1836, Acta 1, no. 7, clause 6.

⁸⁷ Donné, "Les Sauvages du Missouri", *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 23, 1845.

⁸⁸ *Paris Salon de 1845* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 212; *Paris Salon de 1846* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 210; and *Paris Salon de 1847* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 260.

⁸⁹ Orr, "Karl Bodmer", 364, 370; *L'Artiste*, Oct. 15, 1850, p. 160 and lithograph by Eugène Le Roux; Bodmer to Maximilian, July 5, 1851.

With the completion of the Atlas, the publication and reissue of *Nord-America in Bildern*, and the popularization of Bodmer's work through the *Graham's* illustrations, copies of his pictures began to find their way into other volumes. New York publisher Leavitt and Allen and Philadelphia publisher Willis P. Hazard were among the first to reuse the plates from *Graham's* in their own publications. In 1854, Leavitt and Allen used five of the plates in T. Addison Richards, *American Scenery Illustrated*. That same year, Hazard used four of the plates in D. W. Belisle's *The American Family Robinson; or, The Adventures of a Family Lost in the Great Desert of the West*. Three years later, he used nine of the *Graham's* plates and several new woodcuts made after Bodmer's aquatints in his edition of Catlin's *Letters and Notes...* Then he apparently sold the book and plates to another Philadelphia publisher, J. W. Bradley, who reissued it in 1859 and 1860 with an almost identical collection of engravings and woodcuts⁹⁰.

Meanwhile, other publications began to copy the *Graham's* engravings. One of the first to do so was the *Revista científica y literaria de Méjico* in Mexico City, which published *Escenas en el desierto* after Bodmer's Vignette XXX (*Horse Racing of Sioux Indians near Fort Pierre*) in 1845 (Fig. 21). The lithograph, drawn on the stone by Plácido Blanco and Joaquín Heredia and printed by Hipólito Salazar, was accompanied by an article on the life and customs of the Indians, written by author and intellectual Manuel Payno. Following closely was J. J. Reithard with his *Schweizerisches Familienbuch* (1845–47). It contains two lithographs, *Assiniboin Baumgraber* (*Assiniboin Tree Grave*) and *Bisonheerden u Elk Hirsche am obern Missouri* (*Herds of Bison and Elk on the Upper Missouri*), one in color. A few years later, Bodmer's print of Mähchsi-Karéhde (Tableau 20) was badly copied in William V. Moore, *Indian Wars of the United States, from the Discovery to the Present Time* and hand colored⁹¹.



Fig. 21. *Escenas en el desierto*, *Revista científica y literaria de Méjico*, Ron Tyler Collection.

⁹⁰ T. Addison Richards, *American Scenery. Illustrated* (New York: Leavitt and Allen, 1854), includes *Cutoff-River, Branch of the Wabash; The Eklhorn Pyramid on the Upper Missouri; Tower Rock, View on the Mississippi; Herds of Bisons and Elks on the Upper Missouri; and Cave-in-Rock, View on the Ohio*. D. W. Belisle, *The American Family Robinson; or, The Adventures of a Family Lost in the Great Desert of the West* (Philadelphia: W. P. Hazard, 1854): *Dacota Woman and Assiniboin Girl* (Tableau 9) as *Cree Woman and Child, Mænnitarri Warrior (Pehriska-Ruhpa, Moenitarri Warrior in the Costume of the Dog Dance* (Tableau 23) untitled, *Saudie and Fox Indians* (Vignette X) as *Kansas Osage Indians*, and *Horse Racing of the Sioux Indians* (vignette XXX) untitled. The *Graham's* plates in Hazard, and later Bradley, included: *Péhriska-Rúhpa in the Costume of the Dog Dancer; A Skin Lodge of an Assiniboin Chief; Dacota Woman and Assiniboin Girl; Mandan Women; Mandan Chief; Dance of the Mandan Indians; Saukie and Fox Indians; Horse Racing of Sioux Indians near Fort Pierre; and Fort McKenzie*.

⁹¹ *Revista científica y literaria de Méjico* (Méjico: El Museo Mejicano, 1845), p. 55 and 55–57; W. Michael Mathes, *Mexico on Stone: Lithography in Mexico, 1826–1900* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1984), 23; J. J. Reithard, *Schweizerisches Familienbuch* (Zurich: Meyer und Zeller, 1845–47); and William V. Moore, *Indian Wars of the United States, from the Discovery to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: Leary & Getz, 1856), p. 71.

Horse Racing of Sioux Indians near Fort Pierre might well have been the most copied of Bodmer's images. The first copy appeared in *Graham's* in January 1845, followed quickly by the *Revista científica y literaria de Méjico* in Mexico City and the *Fliegende Blätter*, a Cincinnati German-language newspaper. Hazard picked it up for his edition of Catlin's *Letters and Notes* in 1854, and it was also used in subsequent editions of the book in 1857 and 1860. Bodmer himself reproduced it in *Le Magasin pittoresque* in 1865⁹². The second most popular images, based on the number of copies found, probably are the portraits of Mató-Tópe (Tableau 13) (Fig. 22, 23) and Péhriska-Rúhpa (tableau 23) (Fig. 24), two of the finest pictures in the Atlas.⁹³ In 1852, Herrmann Julius Meyer began copying Bodmer's aquatints for the American edition of *Meyer's Universum*, a popular, semi-monthly series begun in Germany in 1832 that contained fine engravings of scenes and cities all over the world⁹⁴. The *Universum* was published in several different European languages and had reached a circulation of more than 30,000. Meyer thought the formula would work in the United States, and when the revolutions of 1848 caused the family to think that they may have to immigrate, Joseph Meyer of the Bibliographischen Institut in Hildburghausen, Germany, sent his only son, Herrmann, to New York to establish a business. Herrmann apparently issued a New York edition, and, for a while, even a Philadelphia edition, of the German title. The editor of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* complemented him on his "splendid pictorial work", but called his decision to issue the volume in German "an injudicious arrangement" that would "limit the circulation of the work, in a great degree, to Germans, and to those familiar with the German language"⁹⁵. But Meyer did not stop there; he also selected Charles A. Dana, then the popular managing editor of the *New York Tribune*, as editor of an American edition of the serial. In the Prospectus, he promised that the publication would provide Americans "a living and intimate acquaintance with the natural scenery, historical monuments and social peculiarities of every people" through the "above one hundred views of North American scenery alone" that engravers were already working on. The work was to be issued serially, on the first and fifteenth of each month, with each number to contain four engravings of approximately four by six inches. The subscription price was \$ 25 per number, or \$ 3 per volume. Meyer noted the *Universum's* success in Europe, despite the "restrictions and opposition of the existing monarchical governments", and, in an appeal directed toward the American psyche, he concluded that he hoped that a land that loved "public liberty, and law-guarded order" would welcome his new publication⁹⁶.

In fact, it is uncertain whether Meyer actually employed any artists specifically for the *Universum* or his later publications. He could have purchased pictures from artists already on site; he could have copied photographs, as he clearly did in the case of Jefferson City, Missouri; and he could have copied the published work of other artists, as was the practice of the day, and as he did in one of his later numbers of the German language edition with an adaptation of Bodmer's picture of *New Harmony on the Wabash* (tableau 2) (Fig. 25) entitled *Mouth of the St. Croix River Minnesota*. But Meyer's use of this image was different from the others who had copied Bodmer, for he changed both its name and location, which, of course, dashed any notion of "accurate views" that he advertised. Perhaps that was what the editors of *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art* referred to when they concluded that "a few [of the engravings] are neither faithful as views nor well executed".⁹⁷

⁹² *Graham's*, XXVI (Jan. 1845); *Revista científica y literaria de Méjico*, 1 (1845); *Fliegende Blätter* (Cincinnati), Oct. 10, 1846, p. 133; Belisle, *American Family Robinson*; Catlin, *Letters and Notes* (Hazard, 1854; Hazard, 1857; and Bradley, 1860); and *Le Magasin pittoresque*, 33 (1865).

⁹³ Copies of Mató-Tópe's portrait appeared in *Graham's*, XXVI (Feb. 1845); Catlin, *Letters and Notes* (Hazard, 1857; Bradley, 1860); and *Le Magasin pittoresque*, 31 (1863). Copies of Péhriska-Rúhpa's portrait appeared in *Graham's*, XXVII (Oct. 1845); Belisle, *American Family Robinson*; Catlin, *Letters and Notes* (Hazard, 1857; Bradley, 1860); Schinz, *Naturgeschichte und Abbildungen des Menschen der verschiedenen Rassen und Stämme*; and *Le Magasin pittoresque*, 31 (1863).

⁹⁴ Meyer's *Universum, Oder Abbildung und Beschreibung des Sehenswerthesten und Merkwürdigsten der Natur und Kunst auf der ganzen Erde* (21 vols.; Hildburghausen: Druck und Verlag vom Bibliographischen Institut, 1835–1860).

⁹⁵ "Literary Notices", *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 1 (Sept. 1850): 574. OCLC notes that the imprint for Meyer's *Universum, oder, Abbildung und Beschreibung des sehenswerthesten und merkwürdigsten der Natur und Kunst auf der ganzen Erde* (21 vols.; Hildburghausen; New York: Druck und Verlag vom Bibliographischen Institut, 1835–1860) varies and also includes Amsterdam and Philadelphia. See OCLC accession No. 11092501.

⁹⁶ For information on Meyer, see David Boutros, "The West Illustrated: Meyer's Views of Missouri River Towns", *Imprint: Journal of the American Historical Print Collectors Society*, 9 (Autumn 1984): 2–3. See also "Prospectus", in Charles A. Dana (ed.), *Meyer's Universum or Views of the Most Remarkable Places and Objects of All Countries...* (2 vols.; New York: Herrmann J. Meyer, 1852), Vol. 1.

⁹⁷ Boutros, "The West Illustrated", 6. For the engraving of the *Mouth of the St. Croix*, see Meyer's *Universum, oder Abbildung und Beschreibung des Sehenswerthesten und Merkwürdigsten der Natur und Kunst auf der ganzen Erde* (New York: Herrmann J. Meyer, 1852), which apparently was published in both Hildburghausen and New York. See vol. XV of the German edition in the New York Public Library. See also "Editorial Notes – American Literature", *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art*, 3 (June 1854): 675.



Fig. 22. Mato-Tope, chef mandan, Dessin de Charles Bodmer, d'après nature, *Magasin Pittoresque*, no. 28/1863.



Fig. 23. Fac-simile d'une peinture de Mato-Tope, chef Mandan, Dessin de Charles Bodmer, *Magasin Pittoresque*, no. 28/1863.



Fig. 24. Guerrier meunitarri costume pour la danse du chien, Dessin de Charles Bodmer, d'après nature, *Magasin Pittoresque*, no. 15/1863.



Fig. 25. New Harmony on the Wabash, Wikimedia Commons.

Dana's other editorial colleagues welcomed the new project. The *New Englander and Yale Review* complimented the first two numbers as "very good" and predicted that the series would be "deserving of extensive patronage". The editor of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* agreed, noting the forthcoming work of "eminent artists" who were then "engaged in exploring the most romantic regions of the country". And the editor of *Scientific American* concluded that the publication was "decidedly tasteful, as well as instructive, and elegant; few if any in our country equal it in beauty and design"⁹⁸.

Despite the seemingly favorable prospects, only two volumes of the American edition of the *Universum* were published and it soon failed, perhaps because Joseph Meyer insisted that it be printed in Germany, which resulted in late deliveries and cancelled subscriptions. Calling upon Dana's name and talent once again, Herrmann quickly undertook a similar publication, *The United States Illustrated*, in 1853. It, too, seemed destined for success: "The announcement of no literary enterprise has interested us more of late than that of THE UNITED STATES ILLUSTRATED", wrote the editor of the *Ladies' Repository*. "The work is got up on a magnificent scale, and is to give views of city and country, with descriptive and historical articles... We trust the enterprising publisher will meet with abundant encouragement and a liberal patronage". The "new serial... bids fair to meet with popular success", suggested the editor of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. The editor of the *Scientific American* called it "one of those choice, elegant publications which deserves, and will doubtless receive, an extensive patronage", and a reviewer for *The United States and Democratic Review* deemed it "worthy of its title, and deserving of National patronage". Meyer also issued the publication serially, with each number costing \$ 50 and each volume \$ 5. There would be two volumes, one on the East and the other on the West, which were published simultaneously⁹⁹.

The United States Illustrated contains several images after Bodmer, beginning with the decorative title page for volume two, which is a montage of the artist's scenes based on Tableau 2, *New Harmony on the Wabash*. The *Minatarre Chief Abdih-Hiddisch* (from tableau 24) is shown standing in a forest glade with the busy Mississippi River in the background. At the left one can discern a figure from *A Blackfoot Indian on Horse-Back* (vignette XIX), with a village at Abdih-Hiddisch's back, on the opposite bank, and a wolf (from Tableau 30) cautiously glancing over his shoulder. The book also contains engravings of New Harmony (derivative of Tableau 2), the St. Croix (adapted from tableau 2), the Stone Walls (after tableau 41), the Prairie near the Arkansas River (using the figures from vignette XIX), and the Mandan Village (after tableau 16), as well as other plates (such as *Mississippi Scenery* and *The Eagle Rocks*) that contain Bodmeresque touches such as riverboats and an Indian canoe (from vignettes VII and IX). The set might have sold as many as 10,000 copies, which Meyer probably would have considered insufficient for such an expensive publication¹⁰⁰.

In the meantime, Joseph Meyer became ill, and in August 1854 Hermann liquidated his business and returned to Germany. It was about that time that the German edition of the *Universum* began reusing the engraving plates that had been created for the American *Universum* and for *The United States Illustrated*. The first one after Bodmer was *Mouth of the St. Croix River (Minnesota)*, which appeared probably about 1852.¹⁰¹ Also, upon completion of *The United States Illustrated*, Meyer published an abridged version of the book in 1855 under the title of *The Scenery of the United States Illustrated in a Series of Forty Engravings*, with D. Appleton and Company as the publisher. It also reused the plates that had appeared both in the *Universum* and in *The United States Illustrated*¹⁰². And the plates that had not yet appeared in the German edition of the *Universum* were published there in 1857 and 1860¹⁰³.

⁹⁸ "Books Received", *New Englander and Yale Review*, 10 (Aug. 1852): 492; "Literary Notices", *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 5 (Sept. 1852): 565; and "Literary Notices", *Scientific American*, 8 (July 9, 1853): 344.

⁹⁹ "New Books", *The Ladies' Repository: A Monthly Periodical, Devoted to Literature, Arts, and Religion*, 13 (Oct. 1853): 476; "Literary Notices", *Scientific American*, 8 (July 9, 1853), 344; "Literary Notices", *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 7 (Aug. 1853), 426; "Book Notices", *The United States Democratic Review*, 7 (Sept. 1853): 287; and Boutros, "The West Illustrated", 3.

¹⁰⁰ Charles A. Dana (ed.), *The United States Illustrated; In Views of City and Country* (2 vols.; New York: H. J. Meyer, 1853), vol. 2: fol. p. 47, 78, 82, 86, and 88; and the German edition of *Meyer's Universum*, XV (no date on title page). See also Boutros, "The West Illustrated", 4–5. Dana paid the authors as much as \$ 300 for their essays.

¹⁰¹ There is no date on the title page of the volume, but it appeared between volume XIV, published in 1850, and volume XVI, published in 1854.

¹⁰² Charles A. Dana (ed.), *The United States Illustrated; In Views of City and Country* (2 vols.; New York: H. J. Meyer, 1853), vol. 2: fol. p. 47, 78, 82, 86, and 88; Dana (ed.), *The Scenery of the United States Illustrated in a Series of Forty Engravings* for (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855). The other plates are: *Forest-Scene on the Lehigh*, *Mauch-Chunk*, *Boston Lighthouse*, *New Harmony*, and *Mouth of the St. Croix River (Minnesota)*.

¹⁰³ The images are: *The Stone Walls (Upper Missouri)*, vol. XVI (1854); *Grand Tower and Devil's Bakeoven (Mississippi River)* and *Die Elkhorn – Pyramide*, vol. XVII (1856); *Urwald-Landschaft am Lehigh (Pensylvania)*, *Prairie am Arkansas*, *Boston Lighthouse*, and *Am Obern Missouri Ein dorf der Mandan Indianer*, vol. XIX (1857); and *Mauch-Chunk* and *New Harmony*, vol. XXI (1860).

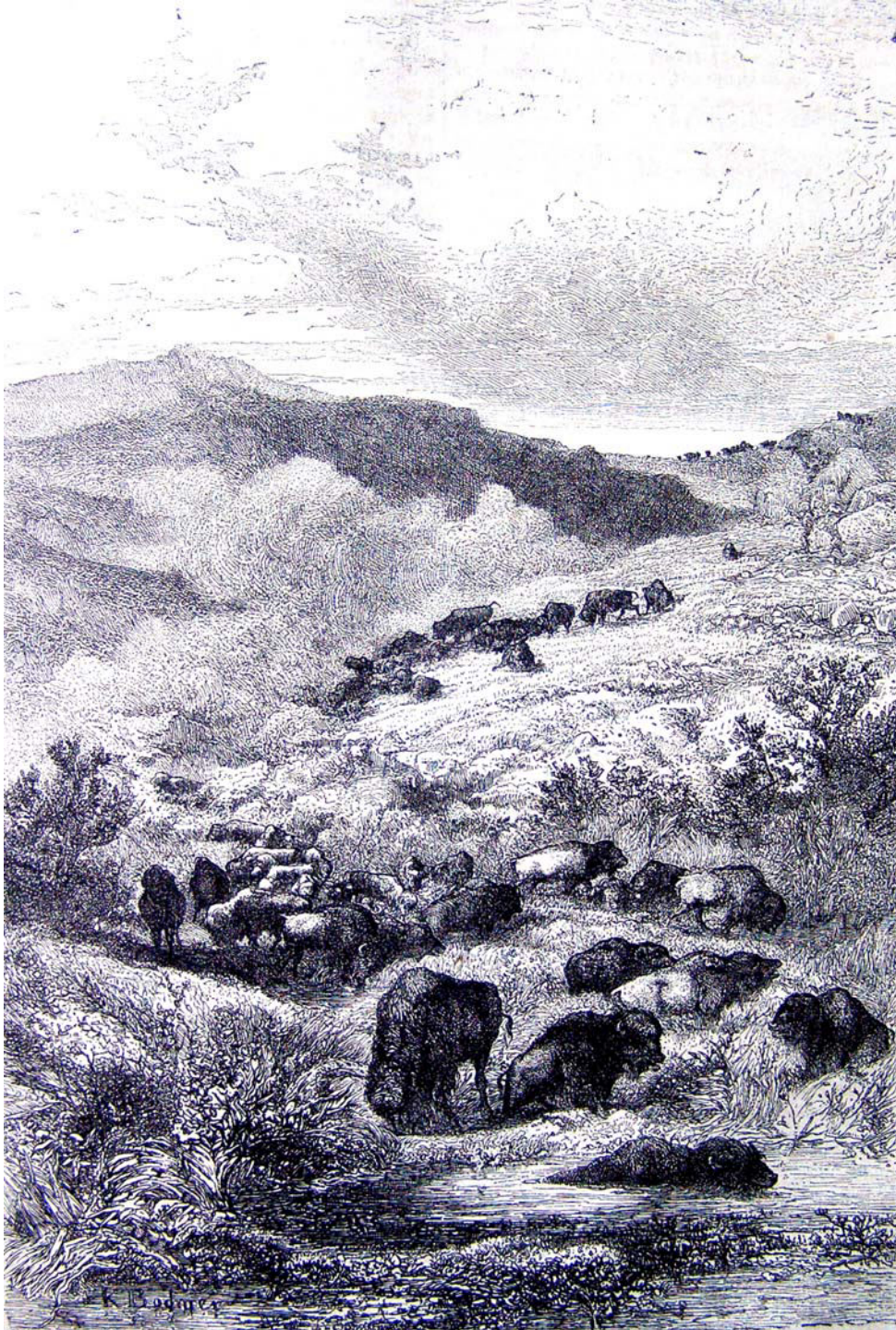


Fig. 26. Troupeaux de bisons près du Missouri, *Magasin Pittoresque*, no. 41/1863.

Bodmer had been so forgotten by the Meyers that Edmund Flagg, author of the New Harmony essay in *The United States Illustrated*, credited Prince Maximilian as the artist. Maximilian, Flagg recalled, had spent several weeks at New Harmony, “during which the Prince exercised his graceful pencil in delineating several of the romantic scenes in the neighborhood. One of these in the Fox Island Cut-off [*Cut-off River, Branch of the Wabash*, vignette VIII], is exceedingly picturesque, as is also that of the village itself”.¹⁰⁴

Bodmer did little else with his American work. Years later he “swapped Indian tales” in a Paris bistro with Francis Mayer, a protégé of Baltimore artist Alfred Jacob Miller, who had accompanied Sir William Drummond

¹⁰⁴ Edmund Flagg, “New Harmony”, in Dana (ed.), *United States Illustrated*, 2: 57.

Stewart to the Rocky Mountains in 1837. He was said to have exclaimed on one occasion that, “In Europe I have acquaintances, but over there I had friends”, and, on another, that he had concocted a “crazy, extravagant plan” of remaining in America after the Prince left, roaming the forests with his horse and rifle like a latter-day Daniel Boone. One reason might have been the fact that Maximilian kept all but a handful of the original watercolors, and Bodmer returned the title to the copperplates in 1847. He would have had to obtain the Prince’s permission to do anything more with them. But he did not forget the experience. When Rudolph Friederich Kurz, a young colleague, was preparing to go abroad – perhaps to Mexico – Bodmer urged him to complete his training before doing so. “He wisely urged me not to be in too great haste”, wrote Kurz, “but first to become so practiced in the drawing of natural objects and in the true representation of animals and of mankind that the matter of technique would no longer offer the least difficulty”. Perhaps also because of Bodmer’s influence, Kurz chose to go to the American West instead of Mexico¹⁰⁵.

Although Bodmer did continue to publish an occasional North American picture in *Le Magasin pittoresque*, a monthly French pictorial (Fig. 26) and illustrated a final work for Maximilian in 1865 – a catalogue of North American reptiles and amphibians – most of his work now centered on the French landscapes that earned him increasing respect at the Paris salon and appeared in such journals as *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, *L’Illustration* (Fig. 27, 28), *Le Monde illustré* and *L’Art*. His exaggerated claims of identifying with the Indians and the West could have been part of a desperate attempt to sell some paintings or promote his reissued *Nord-America in Bildern*. But friend and critic, Théophile Gautier, was justified in his conclusion that he “thus commands the forest of Europe just like the forest of America...”, and the French government recognized his artistic merit in 1876 with the prestigious Legion of Honor award¹⁰⁶.

With the publication of copies after Bodmer’s work in *Graham’s Magazine* in 1844, these elegant, precise, and careful images began their transition from Maximilian’s eighteenth century world of the Enlightenment to a much greater audience in the mainstream world of nineteenth-century American romanticism. Romantics appreciated the preciseness and definitive nature of the images just as much as the Neoclassicists – “romanticism is a perception of reality”, as William H. Goetzmann is fond of saying – but they wanted more: they wanted to be able to imagine, to feel, to understand emotionally the subject of their research. *Graham’s* engravers changed little about the images – in some cases, such as *Cut-Off River, Branch of the Wabash* (vignette VIII) and *Tower-Rock on the Mississippi* (vignette IX) they are exact if reduced size copies – but the words that interpreted the images to the readers put them in a different context from the one that Maximilian intended. For example, Maximilian had provided few words to accompany Bodmer’s image of the Cut-off River, which forms the eastern branch of the Wabash at New Harmony: “the forests ... are very extensive”, he wrote, “and the soil extremely fertile: vegetation is much more luxuriant than to the east of the Alleghanys...”¹⁰⁷. Perhaps it was this reticence and language that a more Romantically inclined reviewer for the *Journal des Debats* deplored. While admitting that Maximilian was “quite thorough and exact in his classifications”, Al Donné complained that

we would have preferred an analysis of his daily observations rather than a simple description of the minute details.... When I read a book I expect to get to know the author’s thought and judgment. I insist on the fact that the author must not only concentrate simply on facts. The facts are just the base and only the explanation can bring them to life.

After describing Maximilian’s account of the Mandan ceremonies and religious rites, Donné continues:

The impressions given through the Prince’s study leave us with feelings of pity, sadness and disgust. These feelings result from the facts presented by this author. Not from his personal

¹⁰⁵ The small collection of Bodmer paintings and drawings at the Newberry Library in Chicago came from Bodmer’s personal collection. See also Orr, “Karl Bodmer”, 362–363, 366. In 1856, Bodmer deposited the copperplates in the Prussian embassy, where they were finally reclaimed by Maximilian’s heirs in 1873. See also J. N. B. Hewitt (ed.), *Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz: An Account of His Experiences Among Fur Traders and American Indians on the Mississippi and the Upper Missouri Rivers During the Years 1846 to 1852*, Trans. by Myrtis Jarrell (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 115, 1937), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Orr, “Karl Bodmer”, 364–366 (quotes), 367; Dippie, *Catlin and His Contemporaries*, 367–368; and *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, 31 (1863): 113, 153, 217, 220, 221, 249, 269, and 325; 32 (1864): *Les Forêts, Au Bas Bréau*, no page number given; 33 (1865): 365; 34 (1866): 81; 35 (1867): 373 (?); 37 (1869): 61, 137, 145, and 241; and 39 (1871): 177. See also Théophile Gautier, “Les Eaux-fortes de Karl Bodmer”, *L’Illustration*, 47 (1866): 422 (quote); and Maximilian, Prinz zu Wied, *Verzeichniss der Reptilien welche auf einer Reise im nördlichen America beobachtet wurden* (Dresden: E. Blochmann, 1865).

¹⁰⁷ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 165. There are no more extensive references to the river in his unpublished journal. See the manuscript of Paul Schach’s translation at the Joslyn Art Museum, vol. 1, Chapter 5, p. 141 and 148. See also William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986), 13.

insight, for it remains impersonal and objective. Indeed, Prince Maximilien [sic!] remains impartial and it is somewhat bothersome to not know what his feelings are.¹⁰⁸ (Fig. 29).

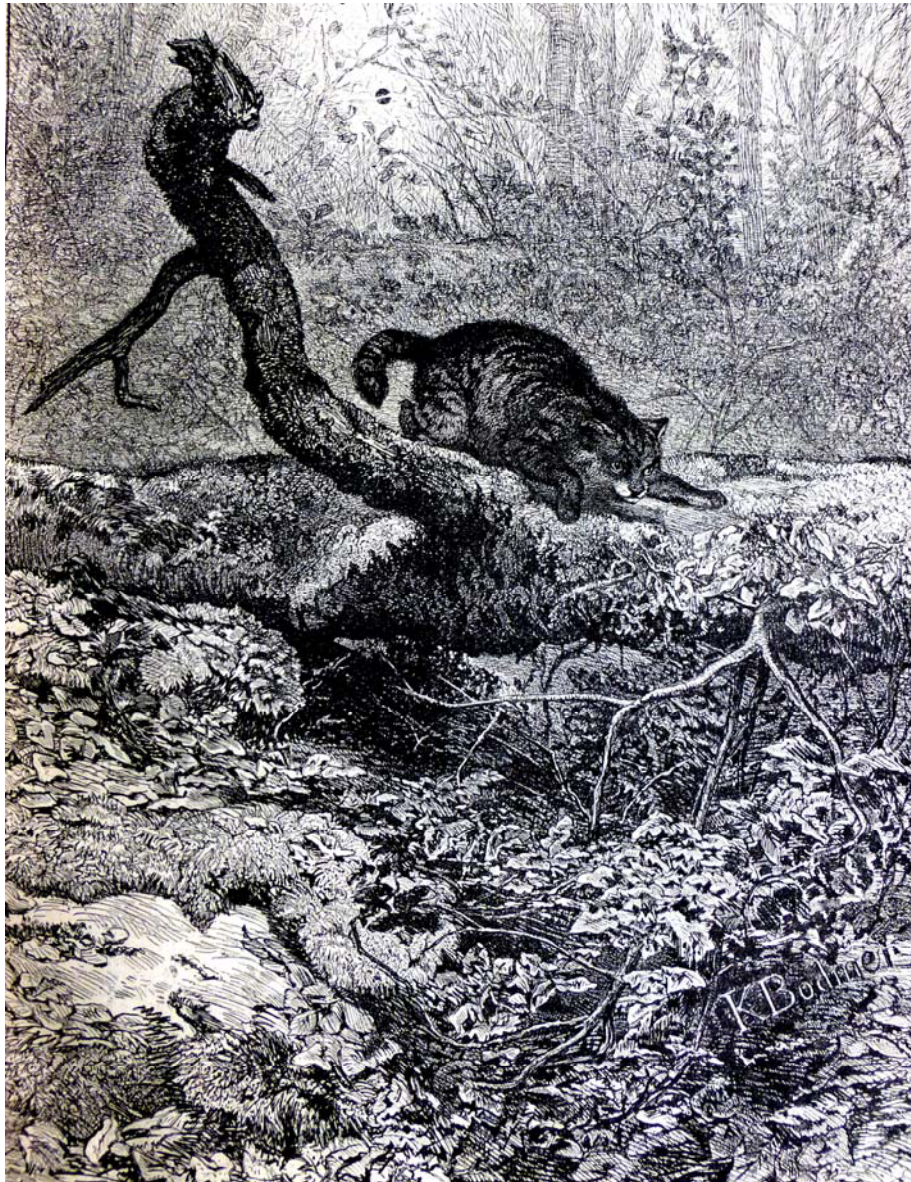


Fig. 27. Le chat sauvage a l'affut, *L'Illustration*, no. 1249/2 Fevrier 1867.

The *Graham's* writers, whether Dr. Bird or someone else, were not so reluctant. Insofar as the Cut-Off River was concerned, the *Graham's* author claimed,

Few streams, either in the West or elsewhere, are more picturesque. It is a bold and rocky river, diversified with numerous wooded islands, and shaded by primeval trees of enormous magnitude. Though the country in the vicinity is rapidly becoming cultivated; though the old monarchs of the forest are one by one departing; and though the ploughman's whistle is now heard where once the silence was only broken by the scream of the eagle, Cut-Off River still retains much of the wildness of its aboriginal appearance... its wild grandeur.¹⁰⁹

In another case, Maximilian described Tower Rock, which stands on the Missouri side of the Mississippi River, between St. Louis and the mouth of the Ohio, as an "isolated, cylindrical rock, from sixty

¹⁰⁸ Al. Donné, "Les Sauvages du Missouri", *Journal des Débats*, Apr. 23, 1845.

¹⁰⁹ Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels*, XXII: 208–209; "The Cut-Off River (With an Accompanying Engraving)", *Graham's*, 26 (May 1845): 204.

to eighty feet in height... its summit crowned with red cedars”, But the *Graham’s* writer saw “A column of roc ..., rising fifty feet in height above the ordinary surface of the water”, surrounded by other landmarks with names like “the Devil’s Bake-Oven”, “Devil’s Pulpit”, and “Cornice Rocks”, and backed by the “stupendous cliffs” of the Illinois side of the river. In addition, the area was one of the most dangerous on the river, with a “remarkably swift” current that years ago forced the rivermen to pull their boats through by rope, because ordinary polling against the current was impossible. *Graham’s* also endorsed a suggestion to place a statue of the inventor of the steamboat, Robert Fulton, perhaps executed by American sculptor Hiram Powers, atop the tower to honor “the mighty genius who taught how to stem the tide of the great Father of Waters”, “the art of sculpture”, and “the great West”¹¹⁰.

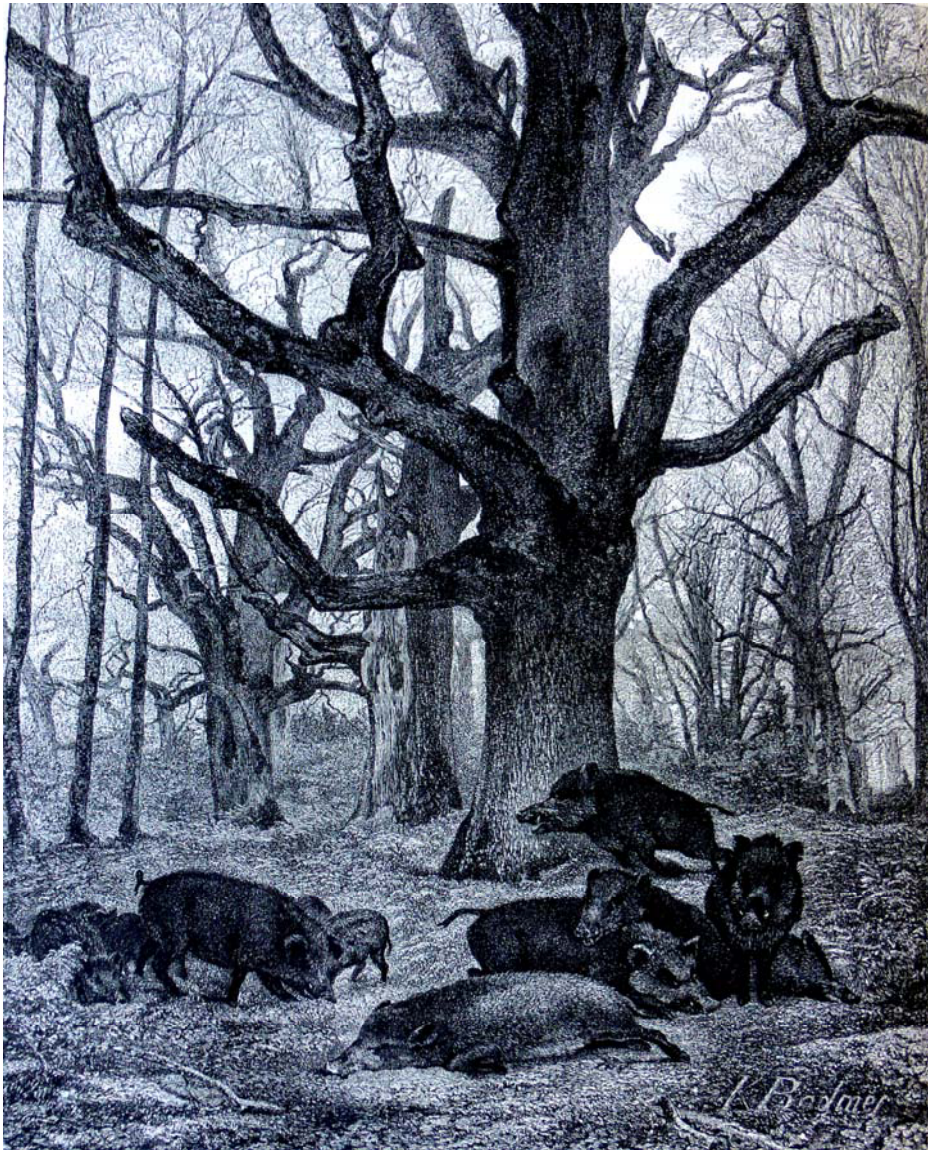


Fig. 28. Bande de sangliers sous la haute futaie, Exposition Universelle, Section Suisse, *L’Illustration*, no. 1284/5 Octobre 1867.

One of the Greatest of the *Graham’s* illustrations is a copy of Bodmer’s portrait of Péhriska-Rúhpa, one of the three main members of “the band of the dogs”. Shown while doing the Dog-Dance, Péhriska-Rúhpa, according to Bird, wore... a large cap of colored cloth, to which a great number of ravens’, magpies’ and owls’ feathers were fastened, adorned with dyed horse-hair and strips of ermine. He also carried a large war-pipe

¹¹⁰ “Grand Tower Rock (On the Mississippi)”, *Graham’s*, 26 (Sept. 1845): 124.

made of the wing bone of a swan. Three of the band were honorably distinguished from the rest by strips of red cloth hanging down the back; and it was the duty of these men, if any one threw a piece of meat on the ground, during the progress of the dange, and said, “there, dog, eat”, to fall on it and devour it raw, like dogs or beasts of prey¹¹¹.



Fig. 29. A Mandann Village, Wikimedia Commons.

But even the *Graham's* prose proved reserved in comparison to later copyists and interpreters of Bodmer's scenes. Edmund Flagg of St. Louis, author of the essay on Tower Rock in *The United States Illustrated* and well known western writer, lawyer, journalist, and diplomat, noted that this “huge perpendicular mass of lime-rock” stood firm while the “turbid torrent boils and rages in a dangerous eddy below”. Beyond the tower, “the river pours with fearful force and rapidity through this narrow channel; and before the introduction of steamboats, it was one of the most dangerous points between St. Louis and New Orleans”¹¹². To popular author Robert Sears, this same prospect presented a

wild scene... The banks are high, steep, and very remarkable for their picturesque character, being steep, and thickly grown with gigantic oaks and other trees of large size, while the surface is broken by rocks and ledges. The stream in some parts is beautifully variegated with small islands...; while the high, rude, and frowning banks, crowded with thick, natural forests, give an air of wildness and sublimity, strongly contrasting with the smooth surface of the stream....¹¹³.

¹¹¹ “Mandan in Dog-Dance Costume. (with an Accompanying Engraving)”, *Graham's*, 27 (Oct. 1845): 170.

¹¹² Charles A. Dana (ed.), *The United States illustrated; in views of city and country. With descriptive and historical articles* (2 vols.; New York: Herrmann J. Meyer, 1853), 2: 84. The book for which Flagg is best known is *The Far West: or, A Tour Beyond the Mountains. Embracing Outlines of Western Life and Scenery; Sketches of the Prairies, Rivers, Ancient Mounds, Early Settlements of the French, etc.* (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1838).

¹¹³ Robert Sears, *A Pictorial Description of the United States, Embracing the History, Geographical Position, Agricultural and Mineral Resources...* (Boston: J. A. Lee & Co., 1876), 543. This book was first published as Robert Sears (ed.), *A New and Popular Pictorial Description of the United States: Containing an Account of the Topography, Settlement, History, Revolutionary*

Focusing on elements of *Prairie near the Arkansas River*, in which the engraver has taken the figures from Bodmer's *A Blackfoot Indian on Horse-Back* (vignette XIX) from their Upper Missouri River home and placed them on the southern Great Plains near the Arkansas River, R. Clark, the author of the accompanying essay in *The United States Illustrated*, imagined a first-time traveler "standing upon the edge of one of our large western prairies... with a deep feeling of astonishment": a level prairie before him, "without a single tree or shrub, or other object" between him and the horizon. "... A sense of utter solitude oppresses the lonely traveller", continued Clark, employing the vivid and emotional language of the Romantic. "Proceeding mile after mile, and hour after hour, he finds the same solemn monotony... It is only in its wild uncultivated state, that the prairie is seen in all its beauty and lonely grandeur". Clark then imagined the "terrific grandeur" of a prairie fire with "flames [that] wildly career over the prairie". "The fire rushes on with new violence" until the few settlers finally start enough back fires to extinguish it, leaving "a gloomy and desolate scene..., the soil bare and the surface perfectly black... The wind sighs mournfully over the black plain... there is nothing to be seen but the cold and dead earth". The text accompanying the reuse of the engraving in the German edition of *Meyer's Universum* was even more florid in its Romantic prose¹¹⁴.

Such emotion would, no doubt, have distressed Maximilian, who strove mightily to present the facts precisely as he saw them in unemotional and clear language. His book is one of the great scientific achievements in relation to the Indian and the early nineteenth-century American West, but it also came to represent the Romantic image of the *terra incognita* and the Indian to an entire generation of these new men, the Americans (Fig. 30).

and Other Interesting Events, Statistics, Progress in Agriculture, Manufactures, and Population, &c., of Each State in the Union... (New York: R. Sears, 1848).

¹¹⁴*Prairie near the Arkansas River*, in Charles A. Dana (ed.), *Scenery of the United States Illustrated in a Series of Forty Engravings* (2 vols.; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855) 2: 26–28; "Die Prairie", *Meyer's Universum*, XIX (1857): 105–111.