

they were acquired. Although determining this involves a painstaking evaluation of sources, it is simply erroneous to assume that all memberships listed were held at the time of legislative service. While still useful for end-of-career assessments, these data are not reliable for evaluating legislative recruitment.

In the final analysis a directory is only as good as its basic conception. This volume was designed to provide information about the life experiences of legislators and, to a certain extent, about their political careers. In this regard it is largely successful although the editors could have taken a broader approach—one more in keeping with the aims of the legislative history project—that would also have advanced the study of legislative activities and structures. If they had included information on various leadership positions, committee service, and reasons for leaving the legislature, this good reference work would have been even better.

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*Karl Bodmer's America*. Introduction by William H. Goetzman; annotations by David C. Hunt and Marsha V. Gallagher; artist's biography by William J. Orr. ([Lincoln]: Joslyn Art Museum and University of Nebraska Press, 1984. Pp. viii, 376. Illustrations, maps, sources, notes. \$65.00.)

"About 1834, a gentleman, Prince Maximilian, visited the town. He had with him three or four scientific men. He traveled under the name of Baron Brownsburg. While here he had a room in the northwest corner of No. 2, on the second floor." So wrote Victor Colin Duclos of Maximilian's visit to New Harmony.<sup>1</sup> One of the scientific men was the artist Karl Bodmer, the subject of this volume.

An essay by William H. Goetzman on Maximilian's trip to America and up the Missouri in 1832-1834 opens the book. This is followed by David C. Hunt's and Marsha V. Gallagher's comments on the paintings produced by Bodmer during this trip and William J. Orr's sketch of Bodmer's life. Based primarily on Maximilian's writings, these essays unfortunately emphasize Maximilian's accomplishments over those of Bodmer. Such an

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Colin Duclos, "Diary and Recollections of Victor Colin Duclos," in Harlow Lindley, ed., *Indiana As Seen by Early Travelers: A Collection of Reprints from Books of Travel, Letters and Diaries Prior to 1830* (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. III; Indianapolis, 1916), 548.



VIEW OF NEW HARMONY



COURTHOUSE AT MOUNT VERNON

Courtesy The InterNorth Art Foundation, Joslyn Art Museum,  
Omaha, Nebraska.

emphasis does not matter because the essays are only appetizers. Bodmer's paintings are the main feast.

Born in Zurich in 1809, Bodmer received training in engraving, sketching, and painting. Finding little opportunity for an art career in Switzerland, he moved to Koblenz, Germany, where nineteenth century "tourists" eagerly bought paintings depicting the Rhine and Moselle valleys. Here Bodmer's paintings caught the attention of Prince Maximilian of Weid-Neuweid, who was searching for an artist to accompany him to America to paint a record of his trip and to execute ethnographic and scientific drawings.

Although the pictures in this book record the trip from the Netherlands up the Missouri to Fort Clark and the return to New York and Europe, it is probably in the series of exquisite paintings of southern Indiana and especially New Harmony and its environs that will most fascinate readers of the *Indiana Magazine of History*. Here European romanticism first encountered the American frontier and resulted in an elegant portrayal of life along the Ohio river in the 1830s.

In two delicate watercolors of the Ohio near Rome, Indiana, Bodmer employs river and sky to beckon the viewer westward between banks of luxuriant foliage hazy in the afternoon sun. At New Harmony, Bodmer painted several pictures. Both he and Maximilian were impressed by the town with its library and men of science. This respect is evinced in the paintings of New Harmony's neat buildings, picket fences, and dignified gentlemen—an eloquent testimony to the town's serenity and its serious mission. Other paintings labeled "Settler's Farm in Indiana" and "View of a Farm on the Illinois Prairie" contrast with the tranquility of New Harmony and stand as evidence of man's struggle against nature. Similarly, a bleak snowscape entitled "Courthouse at Mount Vernon," evoking the harshness and desolation of a frontier winter, is warmed by the soft orange glow of the late afternoon sun on the courthouse. There are also several paintings of the Wabash River framed by primeval undergrowth of tangled vines and grotesquely twisted trees. Yet here, as in most of the pictures, a grammar of blurred shapes and delicate colors suffused with light mute the severity of frontier existence.

Did Bodmer paint the world not as it was but as it was meant to be? Perhaps. In doing so, however, he provided paintings of an Ohio valley, an Indiana, and an America for ecstatic contemplation.

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