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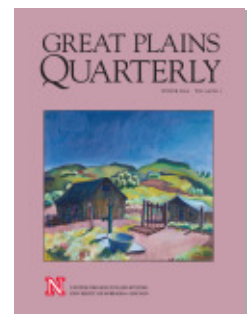
The End of a Journey and Beginning of a Legacy

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The End of a Journey and Beginning of a Legacy

The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied, Volume 3:

September 1833–August 1834.

Edited by Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher. Translated by Dieter Karch. Foreword by Jack F. Becker. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012. xxv + 512 pp. Illustrations, footnotes, maps, tables, bibliography, indexes, DVD. \$295.00 leather bound, \$85.00 cloth.

Few North American travel accounts of the nineteenth century are as significant as those published by Prince Maximilian of Wied (1782–1867), a German explorer and naturalist. A child of the Enlightenment, educated in anthropology and natural sciences, and befriended by Alexander von Humboldt, the prince was perfectly equipped for his studies of the physical and cultural landscapes of the United States. Moreover, to accompany him (along with taxidermist David Dreidoppel) the prince hired the Swiss painter Karl Bodmer, whose illustrations of Great Plains landscapes rival the mastery of the Hudson River School and whose ethnographic Indian artworks surpass the quality of George Catlin.

Since their publication in 1839–41, Maximilian's travel accounts, based on three field journals he kept, have served as a treasure chest of scientific and cultural information. They depict in detail the flora and fauna he encountered and provide a deep contemporary understanding of a young nation fed by a constant stream of European immigrants and expanding its settlement infrastructure with roads, canals, and railroads. They also describe Andrew Jackson's America, with a vigorous fur trade pushing farther west, European settlers following in its tracks, and the Native peoples trying to adjust and survive.

The prince's published travel accounts, however, represent an incomplete picture, for he modified or omitted portions of the field journals he considered irrelevant, redundant, or problematic. Thus in the 1980s the Durham Center for Western Studies at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, in whose collections Maximilian's original field journals reside, decided to translate them from the German in their entirety. This project took almost thirty years to complete and closes

an important gap in our understanding of Maximilian's America. The first volume of the translated field journals (May 1832–April 1833) was published in 2008 (and reviewed in *Great Plains Quarterly*, Spring 2010); the second volume (April–September 1833) followed in 2010 (reviewed in *GPQ*, Fall 2011); and now the final volume (September 1833–August 1834) is available and cause for celebration.

In this third volume, Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher finish their daring task of presenting the annotated translations of Maximilian's field notes. While not boasting as many illustrations as prior volumes, its narrative provides further insight into Maximilian's opus and, most importantly, concludes his observations on Native American peoples. Arriving with much anticipation, volume 3 will not disappoint readers as they embark on the final portion of Maximilian's journey through North America.

Here the prince visits Fort Union on the upper Missouri for a second time before returning to Fort Clark to spend the winter of 1833–34 with the Mandans and Hidatsas. And it is here that he continues his priceless ethnographic and linguistic studies of the northern Great Plains Indians, and is particularly taken by the Mandan chief Mató-Tópe. In March 1834, at the end of a harsh winter, Maximilian experiences a serious bout of scurvy, and his narrative almost comes to a halt. However, by mid-April his health recovers sufficiently to allow the travelers to pack their belongings again and begin their journey back to the East Coast.

After short stops at Cantonment Leavenworth, St. Louis, and the Cahokia Mounds, Maximilian heads to New Harmony, Indiana, where he is reunited with his fellow naturalists Thomas Say and Charles Alexandre Lesueur. After a few days he heads to Louisville, Ken-

tucky, to embark on a steamer for Portsmouth, Ohio. There the travelers turn north and, via the Ohio Canal and Lake Erie, make their way to Buffalo, New York. As the prince pays the nearby Tuscarora Indians a visit, he is deeply disappointed to see how acculturated they have become in comparison to the peoples of the northern Great Plains.

Since the Falls of Niagara are nearby, the travelers take the opportunity to visit this natural wonder, and Karl Bodmer creates one of his last drawings on the North American continent. Resuming their voyage, they travel on the Erie Canal and the Hudson River to New York City. Maximilian still finds time for a short visit in Philadelphia to meet with the naturalist Richard Harlan and to purchase more books for his research library. On July 16, 1834, time having finally run out, the companions set sail for Europe. Leaving New York Harbor on the ship *Havre*, the passengers carry with them an extensive collection of Native American artifacts, prepared specimens of natural flora and fauna, copious field notes painstakingly collected throughout their travels, invaluable illustrations by Karl Bodmer, and even live bears. While a long and arduous journey was coming to an end, the lasting legacy of a naturalist and his painter was just beginning.

As in preceding publications, it is regrettable that greater attention isn't paid to passages Maximilian later modified or omitted from his published travel accounts. His decisions were not simply driven by attempts to avoid redundancy; study of them gives insights into the author's inner world as he carefully crafted a narrative for his prospective audience. Still, it is hard not to marvel at this concluding publication of *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied*.

A remarkable project, spanning nearly three decades of tireless work, has come to an end. What makes this last installment particularly attractive is the editorial decision to include a DVD containing a searchable PDF file for all three volumes, including illustrations, footnotes, tables, and bibliographies. Considering that the annotated translations of Maximilian's journals total more than 1,500 pages, this

is a most welcome tool for those interested in finding specific entries in this acute observer's invaluable repository of nature and ethnography in the northern Great Plains in the early nineteenth century.

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