

# The Natural Face of North America

## A Public Portal to the Maximilian-Bodmer Collection at Joslyn Art Museum

A team led by Creighton University faculty has received a \$350,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a digital portal to increase public access, exposure, and interpretation of Joslyn's Maximilian-Bodmer collection. The portal, *The Natural Face of North America*, is a collaboration with Joslyn Art Museum and the Nebraska Indian Community College.

Joslyn's Maximilian-Bodmer collection hosts the most complete archive of material from Prince Maximilian of Wied (German, 1782–1867) and Karl Bodmer's (Swiss, 1809–93) expedition across North America between 1832 and 1834. The pair meticulously documented the people, plants, animals, and landscapes they encountered during their 7,000-mile journey from New England to present-day Montana and back. Joslyn's collection includes more than 400 of Bodmer's watercolors and drawings and Maximilian's handwritten journals, which were recently translated and published in the three-volume *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied*.

The project brings the *Journals* to a digital platform, linking them for the first time to Bodmer's watercolor and graphite illustrations and a multi-layered digital map of their journey. Project staff will digitize, geocode, and markup Maximilian's journal entries and Bodmer's watercolors and drawings, which are housed at Joslyn, unifying these two resources. Users will be able to browse and search the collection or follow the expedition using a georeferenced historic map, creating a fully-integrated research experience that allows for multiple entry points into text and image.

In addition to enabling international access to this material for scholars and the public, the portal will include a set of interpretive essays by experts in history, geography, art history, and Native American cultures. Project leaders will develop a curriculum to provide preK-12 students a body of knowledge about nineteenth-century Native American life through exposure, and interpretation of the collection. Curriculum development will rely on consultation and discussion with members of Native American nations




### The Maximilian-Bodmer Expedition

[About the Collection](#)[Prince Maximilian](#)[Karl Bodmer](#)[Rights & Reproductions](#)[Purchase the Journals](#)


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## May 17, 1832


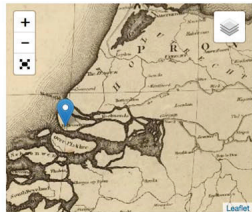
17 May: In the morning, wind and torrential rain. The canal in town is opened and discharges; a large number of gulls, especially *Larus ridibundus*, all of them with attractive plumage and black heads, flock together above the turbulent water at the mouth; some of them have black tips on their tail feathers, probably young birds; they also have several more spots on their wings. There were also several *Larus canus*. They look for refuse in the eddy of the canal. A crow picked something up and was pursued by them. In the vicinity of Helvoet are wet lowlands with many lapwings, common redshanks (*Tringus calidris*), ducks, and herons, as well as snipes and sandpipers.



Today, too, like every day in boring Helvoet, we take our regular stroll. The pier, on both sides of the canal before the town, (is constructed of) large piles driven into the ground, beams connected crosswise, ringed by a gallery. From spot 'a' on this pier we saw the vast expanse of water; before us the coast of Goeree Island; an hour or half hour to the right, the ocean. Ships sailed in and out, depending on the wind; at the outlet into the ocean, five gunboats lay at anchor. (See Mr. Bodmer's representation of such a gunboat.)



In the afternoon the brig *Janus* suddenly appeared in the canal. We went there and saw it moving down through the locks, then returned to Helvoet, took care of our affairs on land, and then boarded the ship at nine in the evening, shortly before the harbor area was closed. We slept very quietly on board that night.



**Metadata**

Journal Entry Date: May 17, 1832  
XML Encoded By: Rox Parr  
View XML File: [1832-05-17.xml](#)

[May 16, 1832](#)[up](#)[May 18, 1832](#)

ABOVE: Screenshots of the pilot website highlighting every Bodmer artwork geolocated on Maximilian's 1839 map. Users can click on pins to view thumbnails of Bodmer's watercolors and read Maximilian's related journal entries.

represented in the Maximilian-Bodmer corpus to ensure its representativeness and accuracy. *The Natural Face of North America* will be the most comprehensive public resource for the Maximilian-Bodmer expedition, facilitating new understandings of the peoples and landscapes of the nineteenth-century American West in a critical period of transition. The current phase of the project is slated for completion by 2024.

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