

**Collection #
SC1675**

**MAXIMILIAN PRINZ VON WIED
LETTER AND PORTRAIT, 1832, 1837**

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder
1 OVB graphic folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1832, 1837

PROVENANCE: R.E. Banta, February 1936

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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS: Wied, Maximilian, Prinz von, 1782-1867. *Travels in the
interior of North America*. London : Ackermann and Co.,
1843. General Collection Folio: E165 .W65 1843

ACCESSION
NUMBER: 1936.0203

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, German aristocrat, naturalist, ethnographer and explorer was born September 23, 1782. He studied at the University of Göttingen (1811-1812) and showed himself a solid student in the natural sciences. In subsequent years the future ethnographer served as an officer in the Prussian army during the Napoleonic Wars. His years of military service convinced him to trade the arms of the state for the academics of and experiences in Nature.

In due course, the young prince of Wied launched a trek to study the flora and fauna of Brazil in 1815 returning to Europe in 1817. His next expedition came years later when he hired Karl Bodmer (1809–1893), a Swiss painter whom he met in Germany in 1832. The two of them, along with David Dreidoppel, the prince's man "Friday," planned a research trip to study American Indians. So it was that the three left Europe on 17 May 1832 and arrived in Boston on July 4. Spending a few days in Boston and New York City before heading west they stopped in Pennsylvania, passed through Pittsburgh and on to Indiana, stopping first at Louisville.

The trio arrived at New Harmony, Indiana, on October 19, intending to stay only a few days, but the Prince fell ill, forcing the trio to remain in the Hoosier village until spring. While in New Harmony the prince enjoyed his time talking with various residents of the community. It was there that his portrait was drawn by local artist Virginia Poullard Dupalais. The team left New Harmony for St. Louis on 16 March 1833.

In St. Louis, the threesome planned their trip up and down the Missouri River and finally departed on 10 April 1833, for Fort McKenzie, Montana. Accordingly, they moved to Fort Clark, near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota where they wintered (1833–1834). Bodmer painted noteworthy scenes of Native Americans, the scenery, and personages, particularly among the Mandan tribe.

In May, 1834 they headed back to St. Louis after an absence of more than two years. From there they revisited briefly New Harmony, then returned through Ohio (via the Ohio Canal) connecting with Lake Erie, on to New York via the Great Lakes, Buffalo and Albany, and thence to, New York City. On 16 July 1834 they boarded a ship bound for France, where they birthed on August 8, concluding a remarkable two-year odyssey.

Amateur artist, Virginia Poullard Dupalais (1804–1864), was born in Philadelphia 20 March 1804. She studied with her uncle Charles A. Lesueur in Philadelphia and accompanied him to New Harmony, Indiana in 1826. There she married William Albert Twigg in 1828. She is known for her portraits in pen, pencil, and ink and as a scientific illustrator.

Sources:

Elliott, Helen, "Development of the New Harmony Community with Special Reference to Education (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1933).

Great Plains Quarterly, Winter, 1994

Wied, Maximilian, Prinz von, *Reise in das innere Nord-America in den Jahren 1832 bis 1834*. Koblenz, 1839; Vols. 1 & II.

Groce, George C. (George Cuthbert), 1899, *The New-York Historical Society's dictionary of artists in America, 1564-1860* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Reference Room Collection: N6536 .N4 1957

www.valdosta.edu/~mgnoll/Prince_Maximilian

www.solomon.eena.alexanderstreet.com/bios/A6625BIO.htm

www.tfaoi.com/aa/8aa65.htm

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is comprised of one 3 page letter written by Maximilian Prinz von Wied and his portrait sketch. The letter was translated by Miss Florence Venn, Indiana Historical Society librarian 1934–1939. The letter is fragile so a handwritten translation and a typed version are for patron use.

The letter from Wied to [Charles Lesueur of New Harmony, Indiana] is dated 1 February 1837. The letter, in French, discusses Wied's memories of visiting New Harmony during the winter of 1832–33, and the loss of many of the naturalistic specimens he collected while in the United States.

The profile portrait is a pencil sketch on paper of the Wied in profile. It is inscribed in the lower left corner with "Maximillian Prince of Neuweid" [sic]. A note on the verso attributes the portrait to Virginia Dupalais.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

ALS, Maximilian Princ de Wied, to [Charles Lesueur]
[New Harmony, Ind.] 1 Feb. 1837. [3 pages]
[use only photocopies and typed transcription]

Title: "Maximillian Prince of Neuwied" [sic]

Artist: "Probably by Virginia du Palais" on verso

Description: seated profile with chair, pencil rendering

Size: 8 ¼ x 6 ½ inches

CONTAINER

Folder 1

OVB Graphics:

Folder 1

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC1675).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.