

Buffalo Bill Historical Center's

Karl Bodmer (1809 – 1893): Images of North America—a Preview

All images are from the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's collection given to the Center by Clara S. Peck.



Mato-Tope became friends with Bodmer and Maximilian and taught them about the daily life of the Mandan. For his portrait, he dressed as a warrior, with a yellow hand on his chest to indicate he had taken captives. The feathers in his headdress refer to his brave deeds and wounds in battle.

21.69.14



To create a print like Assiniboin Indians, an engraver reproduced the textures and tones of the original Bodmer painting on the surface of a copper aquatint plate. A printer then inked the plate and printed multiple, black and white copies on paper. Finally, an artist hand-colored the image, creating a finished print. 21.69.68



When Bodmer painted Wahn-tä-ge-li's portrait, the Sioux warrior patiently posed for an entire day in his ceremonial dress. After Bodmer finished his portrait, the warrior surprised Bodmer and Prince Max by presenting his outfit to them as a gesture of friendship. 21.69.8



Bodmer recorded Missouri, Oto, and Ponca Indians along the Lower Missouri River in present day Nebraska. The Chief of the Poncas wears a large silver medal from President James Madison around his neck. As Bodmer traveled the region, he observed how a smallpox epidemic had caused suffering among the Native people. 21.69.7