

1994

Pictures on Stone: American Color Lithography

Daphne A. Deeds

Curator at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska- Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/sheldonpubs>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

Deeds, Daphne A., "Pictures on Stone: American Color Lithography" (1994). *Sheldon Museum of Art Catalogues and Publications*. 59.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/sheldonpubs/59>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Sheldon Museum of Art at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sheldon Museum of Art Catalogues and Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

PICTURES ON STONE:



William Sharp, VIEW OF THE OPENING FLOWER, 1854, chromolithograph, 15 x 21 in.

AMERICAN COLOR LITHOGRAPHY, 1836-1913

from the

SHELDON MEMORIAL ART GALLERY
AND SCULPTURE GARDEN
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

SEVENTH ANNUAL SHELDON STATEWIDE TOURING EXHIBITION

John James Audubon
1785-1851
WHOOPIING CRANE
n.d., hand-colored
lithograph
7 7/16 x 5 in.
UNL-Gift of
Harold W. Andersen
1991.U-4412



This hand-colored lithograph produced under Audubon's supervision by J.T. Bowen of Philadelphia was among the first American lithographs from the artist's extraordinary folio of life-sized watercolors entitled *The Birds of America*. Audubon began to collect and draw birds as a child in France. Sent to his father's plantation near Philadelphia at age 18 "to develop a sense of seriousness and responsibility," young Audubon instead found limitless opportunities to observe and explore the natural world that so enchanted him. The famous illustrations resulting from his travels document hundreds of species that abounded in North America. Notice the artist's admirable resourcefulness in deploying the long neck of the *Whooping Crane* through the picture space.

John Woodhouse Audubon
1812-1862
CALIFORNIAN HARE
n.d., four-color
lithograph
6 1/16 x 7 7/16 in.
UNL-F.M. Hall
Collection
1971.H-1693



This four-color lithograph printed by J.T. Bowen is after a painting by John Woodhouse Audubon, second son and lifelong collaborator of his more famous father, John James Audubon. Encouraged by his father, John W. Audubon learned drawing and coloring, as well as collecting, mounting and organizing specimens. Following methods and techniques used in drawing birds, Audubon made life-size drawings from live or dead animals. *Californian Hare*, now known as black-tailed jack rabbit, was first seen by J.W. Audubon while traveling in California where he observed, "I knew him at sight: he showed no white tail as he ran, and looked almost black amongst the yellow broom-sedge as he divided it in his swift course."

Karl Bodmer
1809-1893
MERKWURDIGE
HUGEL
(REMARKABLE HILLS
ON THE UPPER
MISSOURI)
c. 1839, hand-colored
lithograph
11 3/4 x 17 1/8 in.
NAA-Anonymous loan
1991.L-2-91



Published in London, this hand-colored lithograph provides a record of unusual natural formations painted by Karl Bodmer, Swiss painter-explorer, during an expedition to the American West. In 1832, Bodmer was engaged as an artist by Prussian Prince Maximilian, with whom he traveled nearly 2,000 miles on the Missouri River from St. Louis to Ft. McKenzie, at that time a lonely new outpost in Montana. Maximilian noted in his journal, "The most strange forms are seen, and you may imagine that you see colonnades...little towers, pulpits, organs with their pipes, old ruins, fortresses, castles, churches with pointed towers."

John James Audubon
1785-1851
AMERICAN ELK
1845, hand-colored
lithograph
17 1/2 x 24 in.
UNL-Gift of
Harold W. Andersen
1991.U-4410



American Elk is among seventy-six drawings produced in watercolor by John James Audubon for *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*, a publication completed during the later period of Audubon's twenty-five years in the United States and its territories. Determined to pursue this project, Audubon wrote, "My hairs are gray, and I am growing old, but what of this? My spirits are as enthusiastic as ever..." In drawing mammals Audubon was expert at rendering the appearance and texture of fur, using pencil, watercolor, ink and scratching. Reproduced from the artist's watercolor by lithographer J.T. Bowen of Philadelphia, these *American Elk* are depicted at 1/7 natural size, in sensitive relationship to their habitat.

Albert Bierstadt
1830-1902
THE ROCKY
MOUNTAINS,
LANDER'S PEAK
1869, chromolithograph
18 1/4 x 27 1/4 in.
UNL-Mercedes A.
Augustine
Acquisition Trust
1992.U-4418



Albert Bierstadt, more than any other artist, shaped our national image of the American West. This chromolithograph, after Bierstadt's first important western landscape painting, represents what could be called "chromo realism," combining romantic composition and factual rendering of forms so real that we see more than one might as an eyewitness. The type of painting produced by Bierstadt, and others trained in Germany's Düsseldorf Academy, lent itself to the technique of chromolithography. Forms were outlined and colors clearly localized, so that a chromolithographer could separate each distinct element within a single lithographic stone. Bierstadt's painting, *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* is now on permanent display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Karl Bodmer
1809-1893
WAHK-TA-GE-LI
n.d., hand-colored
lithograph
13 x 8 7/8 in.
Anonymous loan



Produced after Bodmer's watercolor, this hand-colored lithograph depicts a Yankton Sioux chief called Big Soldier by the Americans. An impressive man, nearly six and a half feet tall, this important warrior posed in all his finery for the artist for nearly a whole day in May of 1833. Wahktage's moccasins, leggings and shirt are embroidered with bands of brightly dyed porcupine quills. The fringe on his shirt sleeve is human hair said to have been taken from a Mandan foe. The feathers bound to his head represent enemies slain in battle. Around his neck hangs a large silver peace medal from the President of the United States. Bodmer's portrait captures the sense of pride and dignity of the Sioux at the height of his power.

PICTURES ON STONE: AMERICAN COLOR LITHOGRAPHY, 1836-1913

Art is often defined as the mirror of society. Chromolithography fulfills that definition because it was invented in response to the changing demographics of post-Civil War America. During the period 1860-1900 a variety of social changes transformed America from a small agrarian society to a giant industrial nation poised on the brink of joining the modern international world. Many aspects of American life were imbued with an egalitarian spirit. The new democracy was especially evident in the reformed educational system. For the first time in U.S. history, public schools were mandated for all U.S. children, and land-grant universities (including the University of Nebraska), were established. This broad dissemination of knowledge formerly reserved for the privileged class was now made available to the masses through the increased publication of newspapers, books and posters, and chromolithographs.

The chromolithograph is a printed-color lithograph in which the image is composed of at least three colors, and often more than a dozen, each applied to the print from a separate stone. Unlike tinted lithographs, with their second and third colors casting hues across the print, chromolithography is technically very complex, because it requires perfect registration and a sophisticated understanding of color. Though chromolithography was invented in Germany in 1796, the proliferation of this printed medium in the U.S. occurred during the last decades of the nineteenth century, when reproductions of paintings satisfied the public's new appetite for culture. Thus chromolithography represents a bridge between artists, intellectuals and the common people. It symbolized the American pursuit of democracy -- the democratization of culture as well as of government. With this rush for culture came the demand for art, and the color lithograph and chromolithograph were major elements in the movement to make the aesthetic available to everyone. Fine art reproductions could now hang in every home, to the dismay of elite social observers who were convinced that culture -- packaged and ready for purchase -- was destined to lead to mental and moral chaos, and the birth of a "smug society of ignoramuses." The escalating demand for original fine art and the resulting development of museums and art galleries can be traced in part to the wide availability of chromolithographs by the turn of the century. Though commercial lithography is today distinguished from fine art lithographs, in the mid-nineteenth-century printing world, the two could not be completely separated. By the turn of the century, the demand for art reproductions waned and the chromolithographic process was applied to commerce. The distinction between fine and commercial art became more explicit, relegating chromolithography to the level of greeting cards and bookmarks. Long before Andy Warhol and Pop Art, chromolithography fused advertising with art reproduction, creating a new hybrid that eventually became the advertising art so fundamental to the twentieth-century mindset.

The twenty pieces in this exhibition include two works from William Sharp's landmark chromolithograph series of 1854, *Victoria Regia: The Great Water Lily of America*, a rare complete portfolio, considered one of the most technically and visually beautiful examples of the artistry of chromolithography. Also included is *The Old Violin*, 1887, a chromolithograph by Frank Tuchfarber after the well-known painting by William Harnett. Several color lithographs by John James Audubon and his son, John Woodhouse Audubon, are seen here, as well as examples by well-known artists Albert Bierstadt, Karl Bodmer and George Catlin. The exhibition includes landscapes, nature studies, portraits, still lifes, and journalistic scenes of battles and buffalo hunts that served to inform, instruct and otherwise enrich the lives of the common American in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Sheldon Statewide succeeds in large part due to the continuing support of the Nebraska Art Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of the visual arts in Nebraska through educational and cultural enrichment opportunities. Of particular importance is Chancellor Graham Spanier's support of the Community Programs Coordinator position. Equally invaluable are the many local sponsors who support the exhibition in their respective communities. Their appreciation of both the immediate and long-range goals of Sheldon Statewide is especially meaningful. Their generosity has enabled tens of thousands of fellow citizens to encounter works of art of the highest quality.

Perhaps the most important component of this collaborative venture is the dauntless effort of the many volunteer docents at each venue. Their willingness to receive new and often complex information and disseminate it to the school children and adults of Nebraska is the vital link that binds together the Sheldon staff, the supporters, and viewers of each Sheldon Statewide exhibition.

Daphne Anderson Deeds
Curator/Assistant Director

Unknown American
19th century
THE NEW
DELMONICO HOTEL,
T. GIACOMINI & BRO.
PROPRIETORS
n.d., hand-colored
lithograph
8 x 12 in.
UNL-F.M. Hall
Collection
1972.H-1669



Printed for commercial purposes, this hand-colored lithograph advertises The New Delmonico Hotel in Leavenworth, Kansas. The hotel was founded in the late 1860s by Italian immigrants Thomas and Antonia Giacomini and was promoted as a hotel, boarding house, restaurant, saloon and reading room, centrally located across the street from "Market House" where City Hall was housed. Records indicate that several family members were active in the operation of the hotel as clerks and housekeepers as well as residents. Important as a trade center in the 1870s, Leavenworth "drew a constant stream of the famous and the infamous." In 1894 the Giacomini family sold the hotel, and the building is no longer standing.



Henry J. Warre
FALLS OF THE
KAMANIS-
TAQUOIH RIVER
n.d., color lithograph
9 7/8 x 14 3/4 in.
Anonymous loan

In 1845, the artist, Lt. Henry James Warre of the Royal Engineers, 14th Buckinghamshire Regiment, accompanied a survey party ordered by the British Government to determine the defensibility of the Oregon region. Warre's scenic watercolor sketches of that journey have been reproduced as lithographic "Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory." Describing the falls shown here the artist wrote, "...Kamanis-taquoih...is particularly beautiful, tumbling in awful grandeur over a ledge of rock 170 feet in depth into a narrow gorge, the silent forest alone re-echoing the roar of the cataract."

George Catlin
1796-1872
WINTER DANCE
n.d., color lithograph
12 x 17 3/4 in.
Anonymous loan



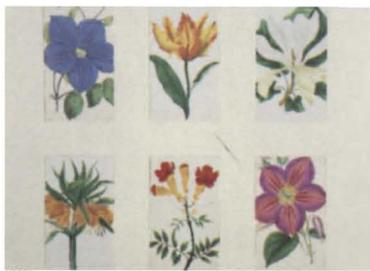
Educated as a lawyer, George Catlin abandoned his practice after several years to devote himself to portrait painting. After viewing a delegation of Indians passing through Philadelphia, Catlin resolved to "use my art and so much of the labor of my future life as might be required in rescuing from oblivion the looks and customs of the vanishing races of native man in America." Essentially a documentary painter, Catlin produced about 600 Indian portraits and sketches, recording in a primitive style the Native American civilization he encountered west of the Missouri in the 1830s. His scenes of village life, hunts and ceremonies such as *Winter Dance*, were sketched quickly, intending to convey action, spirit and feeling.



George Catlin
1796-1872
BUFFALO HUNT
ON SNOWSHOES
n.d., color lithograph
11 15/16 x 17 5/8 in.
NAA-Anonymous loan
1991.L-4-91

This hand-colored lithograph, after Catlin's painting, portrays the extraordinary drama of the buffalo hunt, a subject of special interest for the artist, a pioneer student of American wildlife. Catlin's written account of the hunt, and the scene depicted here, describe the upper Missouri River Indians' method of attack with bow and lance. Catlin, the scientist, noted every detail of the importance of the buffalo for food, shelter and other aspects of daily life for these people of the Plains. He described the activities of the hunt as "spirited and thrilling in the extreme."

D.M. Dewey
from THE NURSERY-
MAN'S POCKET
SPECIMEN BOOK
1875, color
lithograph
8 1/2 x 5 1/2 in. each
UNL-Gift of
Olga N. Sheldon
1961.U-342.38, .46, .47,
.51, .55, .69



These illustrations, "colored from nature" and lithographed by an unknown artist, were included in a leather-bound booklet distributed by D.M. Dewey, Horticultural Bookseller of Rochester, New York, in 1875. Nursery representatives promoted sales of ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers grown in the ideal climate of upstate New York with lithographs of this kind. A gift from Olga N. Sheldon, the booklet was once the property of her husband, Adams Bromley Sheldon of Lexington, Nebraska, who with his sister, Mary Frances Sheldon, bequeathed funds for construction of a University of Nebraska art museum, now named in their memory.



after Charles Bird King
1785-1862
WA-BAUN-SEE
(A POTTAWATOMIE
CHIEF)
1838, hand-colored
lithograph
13 x 9 in.
UNL-Gift of
Harold W. Andersen
1991.U-4414

Duplicated in "faithful and colorful lithograph" after an oil on panel painting of the "*Powerful Chief of the Potawatomies* [sic]," this portrait was among a group commissioned by the Superintendent of Indian Trade to record important tribal leaders brought to the nation's capital in the 1820s and 30s. Though the artist's father had been killed by Indians when he was a child, and he had never visited an Indian settlement, he portrayed his Indian subjects with a sense of wonder and profound sympathy. King's portrait of *Wa-baun-see* is a sensitive character study, capturing the white man's fascination with the red man's colorful regalia. The headdress is beautifully represented, and the chief is shown wearing a peace medal from President James Monroe.

after Charles Bird King
1785-1862
ONG-PA-TON-GA
(BIG ELK, CHIEF OF
THE OMAHAS)
1836, color
lithograph
14 x 9 1/2 in.
UNL-F.M. Hall
Collection
1979.H-2395



Charles Bird King's original portrait of *Ong-pa-ton-ga*, painted circa 1822, and titled *Big Elk, or Great Orator, Omawhaw Chief*, was reproduced in a hand-colored lithograph by Lehman & Duval in Philadelphia in 1836. King's portraits of nearly 143 Indian leaders were displayed in the Smithsonian Institution where this unique and irreplaceable record was almost entirely destroyed by fire in 1865. Fortunately, most of the artist's portraits had been preserved in lithographic reproductions such as this one. Wearing a buffalo robe and silver peace medal, Ong-pa-ton-ga's downcast gaze seems pensive and somber.



Thomas Moran
1837-1926
GRAND CANYON
OF ARIZONA FROM
HERMIT RIM ROAD
1913, chromolithograph
26 1/2 x 35 1/4 in.
NAA-Gift in memory of
Ava Lynne (Pinky)
Cherry
1991.N-702

A reproduction of Moran's romantic watercolor vision of the greatest geological evolution of the West, this large chromolithograph depicts a spectacular canyon view. The Grand Canyon was a source of inspiration for the artist for nearly forty years, and his work helped ensure the existence of the federal national park system that protects it today. Moran's painting technique was ideal for chromolithography, a result of his experience with a broad range of works ranging from designs for wood engravings to large, dramatic oil paintings and delicate etchings. He was also an accomplished lithographer who understood the peculiar problems of reproducing original paintings.

Louis Prang & Co.
SILK WORM
AND MOTHS
1885, chromolithograph
7 13/16 x 5 1/8 in.
University Collection
1991.U-4277



This richly-colored illustration by Louis Prang & Co. of Boston, was included in a three-volume set titled, *Animate Creation, Popular Edition of Our Living World, A Natural History* by the Rev. J.G. Wood, published in New York in 1885. Prang came to America from his native Germany, eventually becoming a lithographic printer and publisher employing artists who "worked to his orders." His business grew from one hand-operated press and a few lithographic stones to a "printory" built in 1867 containing fifty presses. As one of America's most famous and financially successful chromolithographers, Prang "devoted his life, in his work and writings, to the concept of art for all, as embodied by the chromolithograph."



William Sharp
c. 1800-1900
OPENING FLOWER
(FROM THE
AMERICAN WATER
LILY PORTFOLIO)
1854, chromolithograph
15 x 21 in.
NAA-Gift of
Carl Rohman in memory
of Lorraine Rohman
1989.N-689.6

Considered one of the outstanding achievements of botanical art depicted in the lithographic medium, Sharp's *Victoria Regia* illustrations were conceived to commemorate the successful cultivation of this water plant in America. First spotted by European explorers in South America, the giant water lily was considered a botanical wonder, with saucer-like leaves measuring six to eight feet spanning the surface of the water. The artist, English immigrant William Sharp, printed the first American chromolithograph in Boston in 1840, prior to the completion of the water lily series in 1854.

William Sharp
c. 1800-1900
VIEW OF THE
OPENING FLOWER
(FROM THE
AMERICAN WATER
LILY PORTFOLIO)
1854, chromolithograph
15 x 21 in.
NAA-Gift of
Carl Rohman in memory
of Lorraine Rohman
1989.N-689.4



Imagine the stunning sight of this night-blooming flower appearing on the water's surface around sunset. As the inner, creamy white leaves appear from within the prickly outer covering of the bud, a heavy scent reminiscent of butterscotch and pineapple fills the air. During the first nocturnal opening the flower begins to generate heat, a rare plant trait, and the odor becomes almost oppressive. Once started, *Victoria* blooms almost continuously, producing blossoms that may reach twelve to eighteen inches in diameter. Chromolithographer William Sharp's remarkable illustrations reveal a talent for combining factual representation with an aesthetically appealing design.



Frank Tuchfarber
active: 1870-1890
THE OLD VIOLIN
1887, chromolithograph
34 7/8 x 24 in.
NAA-Gift of Bess Walt
in memory of
Edward J. Walt, Jr.
1988.N-688

This rare Tuchfarber chromolithograph, printed on glass, is after William Harnett's popular oil painting purchased by Tuchfarber "as soon as it was unpacked," at the 13th Cincinnati Industrial Exposition in 1886. *The Old Violin* was important to Tuchfarber because the chromo to be made from it could be used both as a sign and as a profitable fine-art reproduction; and the subject matter was personally intriguing because Tuchfarber had worked to found the Cincinnati Grand Orchestral Company (later the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra). A gift of Nebraska Art Association board member Bess Walt in memory of her husband, this chromo hung for many years in Walt's Music Store in downtown Lincoln.

Unknown American
19th century
RESIDENCE OF
REV. C.H. HICKMANN
n.d., hand-colored
lithograph
12 3/8 x 15 1/16 in.
UNL-F.M. Hall
Collection
1972.H-1668.1



State Historical Society records indicate that German immigrant Rev. Conrad H. Heckman owned and lived on land purchased in southern Lancaster County, Nebraska, in 1866. This hand-colored lithograph depicts his residence close to the present town of Hickman. By mandate of the Federal Railroad Act of 1869, the Burlington and Missouri Railroad was constructed through some of Heckman's land. In 1872, Heckman and another landowner dedicated land to establish a town, named "by unanimous election of the people," in Heckman's honor, "although he entered a protest, and did not desire any such action..." Several blocks of land were given by Heckman to the railroad to establish a station. Railroad maps later showed the name of the town to be "Hickman," as it is now known.



Unknown American
19th century
DECORAH,
WINNESHIEK CO.
IOWA FROM BLUFF
OVER THE ICE CAVE
1875, hand-colored
lithograph
13 1/8 x 17 in.
UNL-F.M. Hall
Collection
1972.H-1667

This hand-colored lithograph is an unknown artist's depiction of the town of Decorah, Iowa, as viewed from a bluff over the ice cave (a geological phenomenon where ice deposits form in the summer and melt in the winter) overlooking the upper Iowa River in 1875. The scene portrays the well-ordered tranquility of a rural midwestern community, delineated and lithographed in response to the public's demand for images in color. Lithographs of this sort, printed by the millions, and depicting every subject imaginable, made their way into nearly every home in America in the latter half of the 19th century.

**PICTURES ON STONE:
AMERICAN COLOR LITHOGRAPHY, 1836-1913**

Sheldon Statewide Program Schedule

- York** • **September, 1993: The First National Bank of York**
Local Sponsor: The First National Bank of York
- North Platte** • **October, 1993: The Mall**
Local Sponsors: First National Bank, North Platte National Bank, United Nebraska Bank, North Platte Telegraph, Todd & Maggie Peterson
- McCook** • **November, 1993: Museum of the High Plains**
Local Sponsors: First National Bank, AmFirst Bank, Howard Kool Motors, Inc., Cornbelt Chemical Company, Marr Insurance-Ohio National Life Insurance Agency, Xi Beta Alpha
- Holdrege** • **December, 1993: The Phelps County Museum**
Local Sponsors: Dr. & Mrs. Stuart Embury, Dr. & Mrs. Wayne Quincy, Dr. & Mrs. Doak Doolittle, First National Bank of Holdrege, Holdrege School Foundation, National Art Honor Society, Holdrege Chapter
- Aurora** • **January, 1994: Alice M. Farr Library**
Local Sponsor: Hamilton County Foundation
- Grand Island** • **February, 1994: Grand Island City Library**
Local Sponsor: Arts in Education Committee
- Beatrice** • **March, 1994: Gage County Historical Museum**
Local Sponsor: Beatrice National Bank
- Columbus** • **April, 1994: Columbus Art Gallery**
Local Sponsor: Columbus Art Gallery
- Fremont** • **May, 1994: Fremont Area Art Association**
Local Sponsor: Fremont National Bank and Trust
- Cozad** • **June, 1994: Robert Henri Museum**
Local Sponsors: Cozad Arts Council, Monroe Auto Equipment Company
- Cambridge** • **July, 1994: Cambridge Museum**
Local Sponsor: Cambridge Museum Foundation, Inc.

S H E L D O N M E M O R I A L



ART GALLERY & SCULPTURE GARDEN

University of Nebraska - Lincoln • Lincoln, NE 68588-0300



Nebraska Arts Council

The Nebraska Arts Council, a state agency, has supported all the year's programs of the Nebraska Art Association through its matching grants program funded by the Nebraska Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.