Bauke Ritsert Rinsma

Eyewitness to Utopia

Scientific Conquest and Communal Settlement in C.-A. Lesueur's Sketches of the Frontier

Foreword by:
Edouard Philippe, Prime Minister of France
Donald E. Pitzer, Professor Emeritus of History, Center for Communal Studies
Ralph G. Schwarz, Founding President of Historic New Harmony, Inc.

Drawings: Charles-Alexandre Lesueur
Translation: Leslie Jean Roberts

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Main subjects:
Sketches of the United States of America and early American utopias (1816-1837); Charles-Alexandre Lesueur (1778-1846), explorer, geologist, zoologist and natural history painter; William Maclure (1763-1840), father of American geology and utopian philosopher; Robert Owen (1771-1858), British social reformer and utopian philosopher; early history of New Harmony, Indiana (1814-1837); early history of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (1812-1825); early history of the United States Geological Survey (1839-1879); Pestalozzian schools of Joseph Neef (1770-1854) and Marie Duclos Fretageot (1783-1833); Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827).

Also in this book:
History of lithography in the USA (1807-1822); creation of the Smithsonian Institution (1836-1856); Lewis and Clark expedition (1803-1806); Stephen. H. Long expedition (1819-1820); American Revolution (1775-1783); Louisiana Purchase (1803); War of 1812; United States Boundary Commission (1819); Harmonists in America (1803-1832); Moravians in America (1741-1825); English settlements on Prairie Albion, Illinois (1825-1826); slave emancipation in Nashoba, Tennessee (1825-1830); Valley Forge retreat of George Washington (1732-1799); Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826); boyhood of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

With contemporaneous illustrations, photographs, maps, bibliography, index and notes.
Website: www.charles-alexandre-lesueur.info
e-mail: contact@heiligon.com

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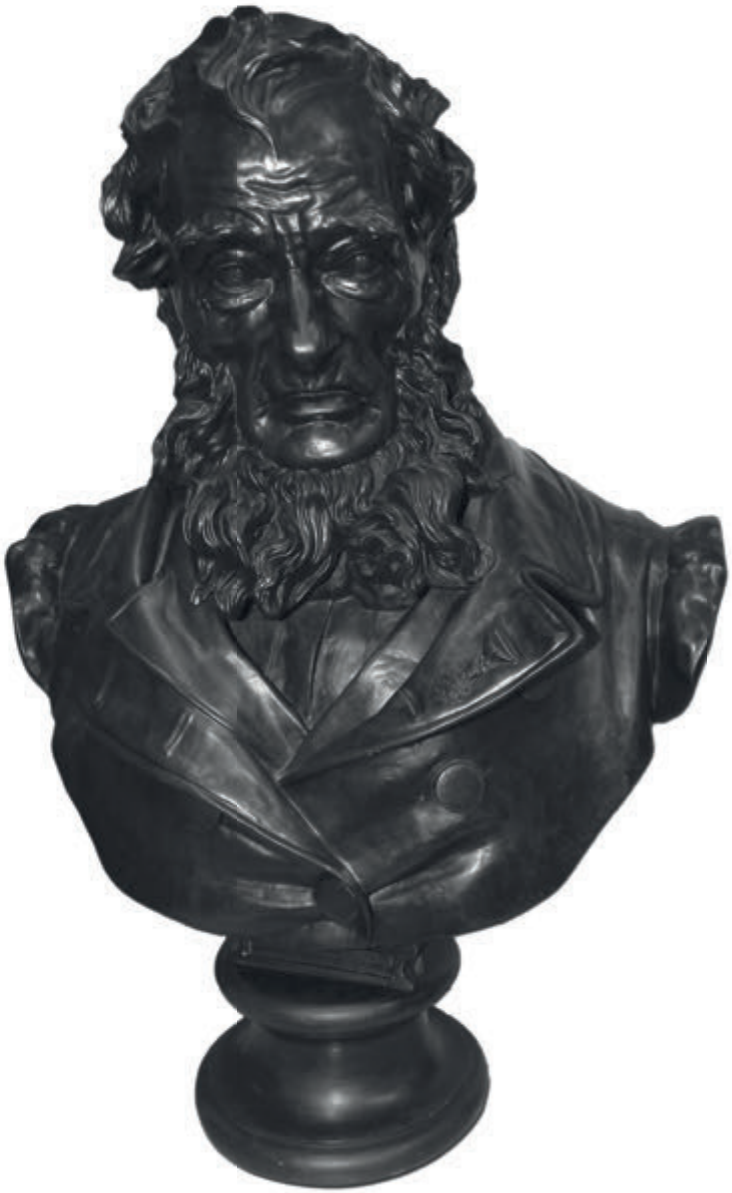


Bust of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur – sculpted by Joseph E. A. Mezzara in 1844 and cast in bronze in 1879

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

Foreword by Donald E. Pitzer

Charles-Alexandre Lesueur's sketchbooks are the enduring work of an exceptional "eyewitness to utopia." Lesueur experienced the utopian quest that was inherent in the early American Republic—the pursuit of happiness through the rights of liberty and justice, the progress in knowledge through discoveries in science, and the promise of perfection through experiments in communal living. In his sketchbooks, Lesueur left his legacy, thousands of meticulously detailed drawings—an unparalleled record of one man's embrace of the spirit, environment, and life forms he found on extensive travels as a natural scientist and teacher in the United States from 1816 to 1837. However, Lesueur left scant accounts in writing, either in his native French or his limited English. Therefore, Dutch historian Bauke Ritsert Rinsma chose the daunting task of searching out, analyzing, and compiling the story of Lesueur's adventures and accomplishments as expressed through his masterful artwork.

The author's research took him to archival collections of primary importance in Europe and America, especially the Working Men's Institute in New Harmony, Indiana, and the Lesueur Collection at the Natural History Museum in Le Havre, France, and to venues sketched by Lesueur across the eastern United States. Many of the drawings he has chosen for this book have never been published before as images digitally restored to their original colorful realism. Informative captions and engaging narrative bring them to life. Ritsert Rinsma also inserts recent photographs taken from Lesueur's historical vantage points to give readers a comparative view. Much of the historical content is presented in refreshingly new perspectives, analyses, and interpretations, ultimately focusing on Robert Owen's utopian New Harmony in Indiana. There Lesueur lavished his energies and talents as one of the 782 official communal members—including scientists and educators from Philadelphia and families from the frontier—whose names and other information are helpfully brought together for the first time in an annotated list by Ritsert Rinsma. In all, this work provides American readers their first opportunity to view early nineteenth-century utopias through the eyes of an artistic eyewitness: Charles-Alexandre Lesueur.

Lesueur is one of the last major naturalists from Thomas Jefferson's age of exploration whose story has not been sufficiently told. His recognition has taken far too long, which does not mean that Lesueur's work was not noted and recognized in his native France before and after his arrival in America. He participated in Captain Nicolas Baudin's expedition to Australia, sponsored by Napoleon from 1800 to 1804, and rose into the earliest elite circle of natural scientists—which included such giants as his mentor Georges Cuvier, the great French zoologist and paleontologist. In 1815 William Maclure (already considered the Father of American Geology) would also become Lesueur's mentor and benefactor, offering him a contract to accompany Maclure on his next geological exploration of the United States. Lesueur's subsequent travels, discoveries and artwork with his patron resulted in an updated edition of Maclure's 1809 groundbreaking work *Observations on the Geology of the United States*.

Since Maclure and Lesueur made their home base in the culturally and scientifically rich Philadelphia, Lesueur soon became a rising star among the most noted naturalists and teachers in America. He was made curator of the Academy

of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. He was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society and came to know its earlier president Thomas Jefferson. As Ritsert Rinsma reveals, he so revered Jefferson's utopian assertion of human rights in the Declaration of Independence that he drew a scene through the window of the house where Jefferson wrote the first draft. Moreover, Lesueur's scientific knowledge and artistic ability made him a prized educator in Maclure's Pestalozzian-type school as well as in several boarding schools for children of the city's wealthiest citizens. His proficiency as a printer brought Lesueur to introduce innovations in engraving and lithography in Philadelphia, technologies he continued to improve in Maclure's School of Industry in New Harmony. His skill as a surveyor won him an appointment by the United States government to establish the earliest boundary between this country and Canada. In 1825 Lesueur's urban life and scientific venue changed dramatically as he, along with others of Philadelphia's finest scientists and educators, was lured to the utopian adventure of making new discoveries in the wilderness around New Harmony, and of teaching in Maclure's and Owen's progressive schools. Now, finally, *Eyewitness to Utopia* validates Lesueur's rightful place of prominence among artists, scientists, and communitarians.

As a gifted artist, Lesueur became one of the most important "photographers" of his day, documenting the towns and landscapes, flora, fauna, and fossils he found from the Atlantic coast to the Great Lakes and to the Ohio, Wabash and Mississippi Rivers. In 1816, when Lesueur accompanied William Maclure on an exploration of the route Governor DeWitt Clinton was considering for his projected Erie Canal, Lesueur's drawings became a priceless record of a landscape soon to be changed forever. When, in 1825-1826, Lesueur came down the Ohio River on the famous "boatload of knowledge," he scanned the countryside and preserved for posterity the towns and landscapes along its banks. During this voyage, sponsored by Maclure, Lesueur captured graphic scenes from the keelboat bound for utopian New Harmony, which had been purchased from the Harmony Society by industrialist and social reformer Robert Owen. He also recorded memorable images of the scientists, educators, and their students aboard as they endured the hardship of being trapped in the ice for an entire month and discussed how they would help bring Owen's and Maclure's utopian dreams to reality. New Harmony and its environs became a decade-long object of study preserved forever through the lens of Lesueur's artistic talent.

As a prolific natural scientist, Lesueur made innumerable explorations to find new specimens in his fields of interest from A to Z: archeology, conchology, entomology, herpetology, geology, ichthyology, mineralogy, ornithology, paleontology and zoology. His research contributed fundamental evidence in every field of science he studied. While in New Harmony, he enthusiastically searched out and sketched never-before-recorded animals, plants and fossils, as well as Native American artifacts, in the ancient yet living laboratory of the surrounding frontier. Lesueur played a crucial role in making New Harmony an early national center for geological research, exploration and training. Ritsert Rinsma makes clear that it was Charles-Alexandre Lesueur's knowledge and enthusiasm that lured Owen's sons David Dale Owen and Richard Owen into this promising new field. Without Lesueur's instruction, the Owen brothers might never have become Indiana's first two state geologists. Their renowned New Harmony-based geological explorations, laboratories and classes might never have come to be or the mineral resources discovered which helped lead to the industrialization of the Midwest.

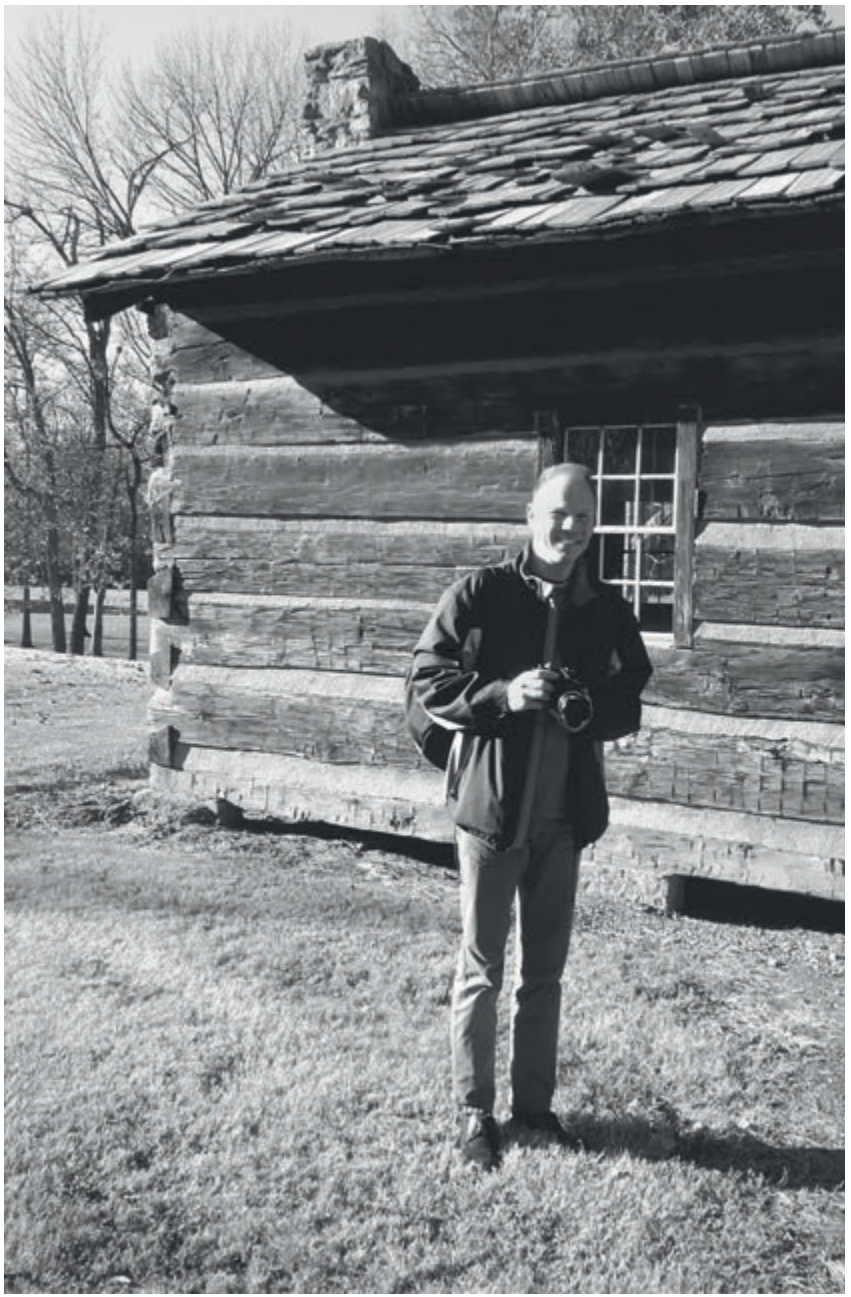
As a committed communitarian in New Harmony, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur embraced the opportunity of becoming a member of America's first secular, socialistic communal utopian experiment. The potent ideas and financial underwriting of its two founding philanthropists would surely assure its success. William Maclure's utopian faith in practical Pestalozzian education to improve the economic and political standing of the working classes would merge with Robert Owen's utopian belief that enlightened

education from infancy could reform human character and combine with advances in science and commodious communal living to create a New Moral World of peace and plenty. Besides, Lesueur and Maclure themselves were partially prepared for life as communitarians. Their fascination with the scientific, educational and economic innovations of two of the most famous religious movements that chose to live communally in America had led them to visit towns of the Moravians at Bethlehem and Nazareth, and the Harmony Society at Harmony and Economy in Pennsylvania. There they observed and recorded the benefits and demands of communal living historians now see as an age-old method of organization which has offered security, solidarity and survival to religious and secular groups the world over. Lesueur made painstakingly accurate sketches documenting not only these successful Moravian and Harmonist communal sites but later also those of Owenite New Harmony, the English community called Wanborough at Albion, Illinois, and the anti-slavery advocate Frances Wright's attempt to use communal living to free slaves at Nashoba, Tennessee. Drawing these sketches of multiple American communal settlements, brought together for the first time in Ritsert Rinsma's vivid reproductions, became one of Lesueur's unique eyewitness contributions to America's utopian history. No other artist attempted this before or since.

The author also reveals Lesueur as a gentleman with the common touch. In New Harmony, the French naturalist relished equally wading into the Wabash up to his neck with a student to find shells with their toes or discussing natural science and art with his colleagues. Importantly, Ritsert Rinsma's account brings Lesueur out from the shadows of well recognized New Harmony leaders like Owen, Maclure, and Maclure's protégé Madame Marie Duclos Fretageot, who managed the education programs. Lesueur emerges as a major contributor to both utopian New Harmony and the vigorous continuation of its scientific, cultural and educational initiatives until his departure in 1837. He even participated in a little-known venture to identify a potential geology-related income source for the fledgling communal utopia. Traveling with a team to the banks of the Mississippi near Cairo, Illinois, Lesueur found an abundance of the special white clay needed for the production of fine porcelain that could have become part of the community's economic underpinnings. In Maclure's School of Industry, he taught boys who prepared the plates for Maclure's periodical *The Disseminator of Useful Knowledge* and his book *Opinions on Various Subjects*, as well as the first 9 plates and 26 pages of Lesueur's unfinished *American Ichthyology*.

In the most poignantly descriptive manner to date, Ritsert Rinsma's commentary combined with Lesueur's sketches convey the intricate pattern of circumstances and animosities that regretfully destroyed long-standing personal relationships and, after a brief two-and-a-half years in 1827, New Harmony's utopian experiment itself. Beyond the well-known disagreements of Owen and Maclure, the author ferrets out lesser-known but equally dramatic and divisive conflicts that festered on. Marie Fretageot's role as a capable and assertive woman in an unusual position of authority in early nineteenth-century America has only been completely credited in recent decades. However, she clashed irreparably with community members in carrying out Maclure's instructions every time he left New Harmony. Ritsert Rinsma skillfully exposes the underlying tensions and interprets the emotional and religious overtones of Lesueur's most enigmatic drawings.

Ultimately, Owen, Maclure and Lesueur could not consider their New Harmony experiment a failure. And the author of *Eyewitness to Utopia* is careful not to fall into this all-too-common interpretive trap. In the context of the greater goals for social reform conceived by Owen and Maclure, New Harmony and the 31 other short-lived communal efforts it helped inspire in Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland and the United States can be seen as stepping stones. In a process now known as developmental communalism, Owen's followers from New Harmony and elsewhere went on to



employ other means of organization and activism to further their utopian agenda—lectures, publications, labor unions, producer-consumer cooperatives, and holding public office. As a result, the ongoing Owenite movement to which Lesueur was an eyewitness into the 1830s exercised a profound influence on shaping modern America with emancipation, laborers' and women's rights, and free tax-supported public schools, libraries and museums, including the Smithsonian Institution.

By happy coincidence, Lesueur's fellow Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville took his own investigative tour of the United States in 1831-1832 while Lesueur was still in New Harmony. Tocqueville articulated his astute observations of the country's social and political institutions and practices in his incisive *Democracy in America* published in 1835. Lesueur made a similar contribution with his incomparable sketches, documenting America's natural and built environment, its ancient and living wildlife, and the utopian vision of its people. Two centuries later, Ritsert Rinsma's *Eyewitness to Utopia* presents Lesueur's artistic gift to the New World in its most complete rendition and elevates this artist, scientist and communitarian to his own proper status among the most notable figures in the early Republic.

Dr. Donald Elden Pitzer

Professor Emeritus of History, Director Emeritus, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville

Author and photographer Ritsert Rinsma in front of New Harmony's double log cabin, October 2006

Photograph by Manon Rinsma

Foreword by Ralph G. Schwarz

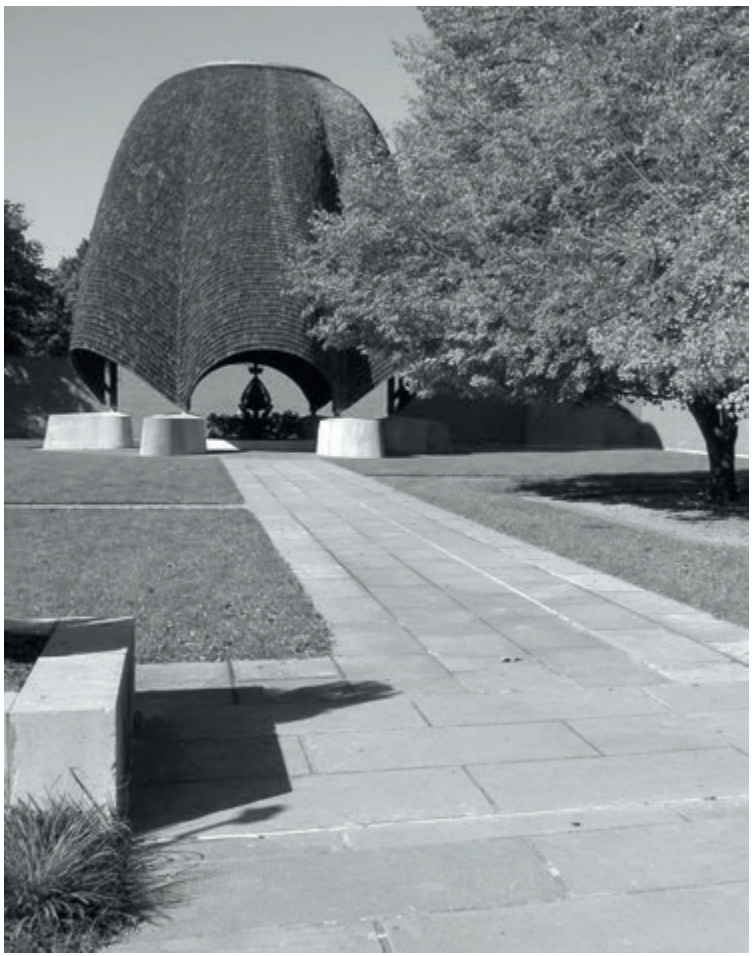
With the foresight and support of Indiana Lieutenant Governor Robert Orr and Indiana University Provost and Lilly Endowment Trustee Dr. Herman Wells and others, during the period between 1972 and 1982, a concerted effort was launched to revive interest in New Harmony, Indiana, the remarkable location of two early nineteenth-century utopian experiments. Historic New Harmony, Inc. was created to help recapture the significance of the early period and, at the same time, attempt to restore and bring renewed vitality to the town, still with a population of only 1,000 residents (its original size). I was elected to serve as president of Historic New Harmony, Inc. during this entire decade, which consummated with the building of the Atheneum (a place of learning), an award-winning icon, designed by Richard Meier. It was set apart on its own podium above the flood plain, challenging and inspiring twenty-first-century scholars. Its simple but architecturally complex interior was also designed to circulate the visitor or student from the reception level up to the observation platform, with its ramp system descending directly into the beautiful historic town. Later Richard Meier was selected to design the world renowned Getty Fine Arts Center in Los Angeles, California, and he invited me to serve as a partner with him during the conceptual and design development phases of the Center.

In 1972 I had been introduced to New Harmony by Helen Duprey Bullock, early archivist of Colonial Williamsburg and pillar of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and her friend Jane Blaffer Owen, wife of New Harmony descendant Kenneth Owen. Jane Owen—personally inspired during extended periods of residency in the community—had been motivated to add in the northern quarter of the town the celebrated Roofless Church, designed by Philip Johnson. Jane Owen became a close friend of mine. We shared strong beliefs and optimism, together and independently, as we addressed the future of New Harmony.

One of the great satisfactions during the renaissance in New Harmony has been the attraction of many scholars who have been enlightened by the early period of Indiana's and our nation's history. Author Ritsert Rinsma is one of them. As a young graduate student, he became a friend of Jane Owen and her beloved associate Dr. Josephine Elliott, a New Harmony resident, archivist, and author of important related biographical literature pertaining to Charles-Alexandre Lesueur and William Maclure. They offered Ritsert encouragement and support over many years as he researched the art and career of Charles-Alexander Lesueur on both sides of the Atlantic. I, too, have been a long-time friend and colleague of Ritsert during his research and authorship of this important monograph. In addition to New Harmony, our paths crossed in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where I have been an active preservationist, researcher, and resident periodically since 1949. Ritsert has visited many archives in Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Philadelphia, exploring the fascinating historical links between Indiana and Pennsylvania.

During the early nineteenth century in America, when naturalists accelerated their efforts to describe and publish new findings on the American continent, the scientific world remained, in fact, a network of international scholars. They were eager to communicate. It was essential, as they shared, identified, and named their findings (to avoid duplication). New Harmony's "community of scholars" was

actively involved. Drawings of species by Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, Thomas Say and others were engraved under the supervision of Cornelius Tiebout, the first engraver born in America, and hand colored, under their inspection, by trained local students of New Harmony's School of Industry. Multiple copies were sent to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, where they were inserted as illustrations and bound into volumes published for distribution to scientists in Europe and America.



The legacy of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, researched and published by Ritsert Rinsma, reinforced by his friend and collaborator, Jacqueline Bonnemains of the Muséum d'Historie Naturelle du Havre in France, and the input of other dedicated scholars, is now fully documented. Madame Bonnemains was also a friend of mine and New Harmony. She worked tirelessly to preserve the memory of Lesueur and shared her knowledge, gained through the extensive Lesueur collections in her museum, with New Harmony. Charles-Alexandre Lesueur's contribution in natural sciences led him to collect specimens in a wide range of fields—prehistoric artifacts, freshwater mollusks, Native American vegetation and wildlife. Naturalists of Europe and America have united in giving Lesueur the highest praise for his work as painter-naturalist. Quatrefages said his watercolors were "the foremost natural history of ancient or modern times." Lesueur was the first to study fishes of the Great Lakes of North America. His name will always be associated with the earliest American work on marine invertebrates and invertebrate paleontology. His ability to document faithfully what he observed has provided a remarkable collection of over 1,200 sketches of the American frontier, in many instances the earliest surviving documentation.

In this groundbreaking book, Ritsert Rinsma, with his comprehensive knowledge and acute perceptions, has succeeded masterfully in capturing the significance of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, illuminating the context of his meaningful American sketchbooks.

Dr. Ralph Grayson Schwarz

Founding President of
Historic New Harmony, Inc.

Altar and park inside New Harmony's Roofless Church

Photographs by Ritsert Rinsma

Author's Preface

In 1974 Walter B. Hendrickson, author of an important book on geologist David Dale Owen, reviewed an outstanding biography on New Harmony teacher Joseph Neef in the *Indiana Magazine of History*, volume 70, issue 2. It was written by Charles W. Hackensmith and published under the title *Biography of Joseph Neef, Educator in the Ohio Valley, 1809-1854* (New York: Carlton Press, 1973). For the first time since Will Monroe's *History of the Pestallozian Movement in the United States* (Syracuse, NY: C. W. Bardeen, 1907), a historian presented Neef and his schools after uniting all available published and unpublished materials. He turned these sources into an innovative and comprehensive work that deals with both the historical context and this complex educational figure. Nonetheless, criticism was harsh, for the reviewer wrote:

> […] Neef is a secondary character in the New Harmony saga and even in the history of American education, a full length book is perhaps not called for. […] [Charles Hackensmith] treats in considerable detail all of the characters in New Harmony […].
>
> In fact there is so much ancillary material that Neef is lost in the maze. A good many years ago, Richard W. Leopold, himself the author of one of the best books about New Harmony personalities, *Robert Dale Owen*, […] said that a biographer should never let his typewriter stray from his subject.

Several lessons can be learned from this comment. First of all, never let any reviewer spoil the fun of discovering a lesser-known historical figure. I enjoyed reading Hackensmith's work and believe secondary figures only remain secondary until someone bears witness to their importance. Neef has become the object of many complementary studies since 1974, confirming his status of *premier* avant-garde teacher. Furthermore, when an author needs to widen the scope of his book, he should take care to anticipate criticism by clearly defining a set of goals. If the subject is novel and the scholarship sound, based on contemporary diaries, journals and other first-hand accounts which may reveal new or little-known insights that call for innovative interpretation, then the temptation is strong to provide exhaustive evidence to back up new conclusions. Yet the narrative must remain clear as the author demonstrates his fundamental understanding of the subject without making unnecessary detours. *Eyewitness to Utopia* is no exception, but it was never intended to be just Charles-Alexandre Lesueur's biography. The problem with Lesueur is that he wrote very little about himself. To tell *his* story I needed to contextualize his art and travel to the many places the French explorer once sketched, consulting numerous archives to retrieve essential primary sources.

My original goal was to identify Lesueur's drawings; to try to grasp what the artist saw and why he sketched things, to understand the man through his oeuvre. However, the focus rapidly shifted to science when new elements revealed Lesueur's vital role in Philadelphia and New Harmony. His generous patron was responsible for this rich career, and so William Maclure's part needed to be included in the narrative as well. He influenced Lesueur's philosophy and choices, and he provides the historical context which clarifies the meaning of many of Lesueur's letters and drawings, concurrently adding to our knowledge of the savant but telling another story: the one Lesueur recorded himself in his American sketchbooks from 1816 to 1837. He was an *eyewitness* to the world he lived in. *What he saw* is the main topic of this book, with an emphasis on *Utopia*.

List of Consulted Archives and Abbreviations

ADSM	Archives Départementales de la Seine-Maritime (Rouen, France)
AMH	Archives Municipales du Havre (France)
ANSP	Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (PA), [affiliated with Drexel University since 2011]
APS	American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, PA)
BIF	Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France (Paris, France)
BMH	Bibliothèque Municipale du Havre (France)
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris, France)
CADN	Centre des Archives Diplomatiques (Nantes, France)
CHAN	Centre Historique des Archives Nationales (Paris, France)
CL	Charles-Alexandre Lesueur Collection
FHL	Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College (PA)
HCLH	Harvard College Libraries, Houghton Library (Cambridge, MA)
HMLW	Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington (DE)
HNH	Historic New Harmony Archives (IN)
HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA)
IHLC	Illinois Historical Survey and Lincoln Room, University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign, IL)
IHS	Indiana Historical Society, William Henry Smith Library (Indianapolis, IN)
ISMHS	Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, State Historic Sites Collections (New Harmony, IN)
IULL	Indiana University Lilly Library (Bloomington, IN)
JAM	Joslyn Art Museum (Omaha, NE)
KDO	Kenneth Dale Owen Collection (New Harmony, IN)
LMDC	Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation & Archives, Cornell University (Ithaca, NY)
LOC	Library of Congress (Washington, DC)
MCA	Moravian Church Archives (Bethlehem, PA)
MCZ	Museum of Comparative Zoology Archives, Harvard University (Cambridge, MA)
MHNH	Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle du Havre (France)
MNHN	Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris, France)
NCA	National Co-operative Archive, Co-operative College, Holyoake House (Manchester, England)
NHS	Newport Historical Society Library (RI)
NLT	New Lanark Trust (Scotland)
NNM	Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum (Leiden, The Netherlands)
NYPL	New York Public Library (NY)
OEVA	Old Economy Village Archives (Ambridge, PA)
OHC	Ohio History Connection (Columbus, OH)
PCW	People's Collection Wales (United Kingdom)
PWL	Purdue West Lafayette University Libraries (IN)
QHCL	Quaker Collections Haverford College Libraries (PA)
ROM	Robert Owen Museum, Newtown (Wales, UK)
SIA	Smithsonian Institution Archives (Washington, DC)
SHM	Service Historique de la Marine (Cherbourg-Octeville, France)
USI	University of Southern Indiana, David L. Rice Library (Evansville, IN)
UVL	University of Virginia Library (Charlottesville, VA)
WMI	Working Men's Institute (New Harmony, IN)
WYCK	Wyck Historic House Museum, Germantown (Philadelphia, PA)
YUL	Yale University Library (New Haven, CT)
ZB	Zentralbibliothek (Zürich, Switzerland)

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thank Dr. Leslie Jean Roberts for the quality of her work.

Recognition for C.-A. Lesueur's scientific contributions—be it in France, Australia, Tasmania, Africa or North-America—is growing steadily, mainly thanks to the hard work of the former curator of the Lesueur Collection of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre, Madame Jacqueline Bonnemains, who spent her entire career organizing, cataloguing and transcribing the immense archive of papers, letters and drawings the naturalist left behind. The catalogues and articles she published from 1978 to 2005 allow researchers to dig deep into the life of this energetic, artistic Frenchman as new light is being shed on his many accomplishments. In September 2009, the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle du Havre published a major compilation of Madame Bonnemains's lifelong efforts in a highly illustrated 400-page album *Charles-Alexandre Lesueur Lesueur: Peintre Voyageur, un Trésor Oublié* (Paris: Editions de Conti, 2009), translated into English under the title *Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, Painter and Naturalist: A Forgotten Treasure* (Paris: MFK Editions, 2016). The publication contains many drawings and watercolors from different periods of Lesueur's existence, accompanied by the precise transcriptions and scientific identifications found in Jacqueline Bonnemains's catalogues. Curiously, Madame Bonnemains is not mentioned as a co-author, and no foot- or endnote hints to her preparatory work, even though it makes up 70% of the book. Moreover, this otherwise valuable compilation of Lesueur's art includes introductory sections (for each period) which undermine Jacqueline Bonnemains's lifelong work with factual and historical errors. To mention just a few: the French edition attributes Lesueur's portrait to V. Gribayedoff instead of Charles Willson Peale; the portrait of Lesueur's grandmother is mistaken for that of his mother; Lesueur's bust is wrongly attributed to "Madame Mezzara" and not to her son Joseph Ernest Amédée Mezzara (1820-1901); two drawings by painter Louis Lesueur (1746-1803) are reproduced (CL 46 260, 46 263, MHNH) and presented as artwork by C.-A. Lesueur; technical terms like "steamboat," "flatboat" and "keelboat" are mixed up, and many dates and place names are approximate or erroneous. Few other sources than Jacqueline Bonnemains's catalogues and publications seem to have been consulted, yet the former curator's name is missing, except in the preface by the mayor of Le Havre (removed from the international edition) and in the book's bibliography, which refers to five minor contributions. None of these issues have been addressed in the album's English translation, apart from Lesueur's portrait, which is now *almost* correctly attributed to "Charles Wilson [*sic*] Peale."

The present work on Lesueur's American sketchbooks took about sixteen years to write, a full chapter of my life and a task I could not have accomplished without the precious aid of the dedicated Jacqueline Bonnemains (and the many persons listed above), not to mention my loving wife Elisabeth, my children Liza, Rohan and Sander, and my little sister Manon, who patiently shared me with Lesueur. Moreover, I shall always be grateful to the late Jane Blaffer Owen, who first introduced me to her husband Kenneth Dale Owen in the summer of 2001, and who passed away nine years after the beginning of our friendship on June 21, 2010. I am thankful for the volcano Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland, which prolonged my stay in Houston and New Harmony that year, for it allowed me, one last time, to fully appreciate her enthusiasm, devotion and warmth. Mrs. Owen's grandson, Erik Arneberg, finally succeeded in teaching me how to pronounce the name of that ill-famed, but helpful, volcano. Dear Erik, Ingrid, Jamie and Abigail, it is to your grandmother that I dedicate this book and also to her much beloved friend, the indefatigable Josephine Mirabella Elliott, archivist emerita, who died in New Harmony the same day as your grandfather. Mrs. Elliott's work and method were an inspiration to us all. She showed me the way in the labyrinth of American archives. When Josephine received me at her home, day after day during that first summer of 2001 in New Harmony, I found the resolve and methodological means to bring this mission to a successful end.

Ritsert Rinsma

Introduction

Marching field where General Harrison gathered his troops in 1811 for the Battle of Tippecanoe – by C.-A. Lesueur, June 1834 (CL 41 182). From left to right: the new courthouse with its steeple (1830-1874); Vincennes University with its cupola (1811-1886); three houses belonging to Leonard Ackley; the fenced university grounds; the Presbyterian church on Buntin Street; the Main Street area and St. Francis Xavier Cathedral with its high belfry; Buntin and Fourth Streets with the old courthouse and Knox County jail logcabin (between the two intersections); Buntin and Third Streets with the Methodist church on the left corner; David Bonner's steam mill (chimney) and the cotton factory on Barnet Street between Third and Second Streets. Identification by Richard Day.

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

For many Europeans, the name Indiana still evokes a certain exoticism. This American state—about two hundred and forty miles long and one hundred and fifty miles wide—is bounded by Michigan and its lake to the north, Kentucky and the Ohio River to the south, the state of Ohio to the east, and Illinois and the Wabash River to the west. In 1800, however, Indiana was not yet a state but part of the Indiana Territory, which included the region north of the Ohio River up to the Canadian frontier; the present states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana. To the west, the Mississippi marked the border between American and French possessions. Here one entered that immense region—stretching from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico—which, in 1682, had been named Louisiana by French explorer Robert-René Cavelier de La Salle, in honor of Louis XIV.[1] In 1803 Napoleon Bonaparte sold this vast colonial province to Thomas Jefferson's America. Before long, the area became the states of Louisiana (1812), Missouri (1821) and Arkansas (1836), as well as the territories of Minnesota (1849), Kansas (1854), Nebraska (1861), Dakota (1863) and Montana (1864). The newly organized Louisiana Territory bordered the Indiana Territory from 1805 to 1812, before giving its name to the rather small southern state at the mouth of the Mississippi. In 1816 the state of Indiana joined the Union, followed by its neighbor Illinois in 1818. The remainder of the former Indiana Territory had become the Michigan Territory in 1805. In 1830, however, the states of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Louisiana were still part of the American frontier.[2]

Until the end of the eighteenth century, the region that stretches from the Ohio to the northern Great Lakes was inhabited mainly by tribes of Algonquian Indians, the most significant being the Shawnee, Illinois and Miami. French explorers Jacques Marquette (1637-1675), Louis Jolliet (1645-1700) and René-Robert Cavelier de la Salle (1643-1687) were among the first Europeans to come into contact with these tribes in their home territory. After many voyages of discovery between 1673 and 1687, a growing number of trappers followed in their footsteps, enriching Quebec trading markets with furs and pelts of all kinds.[3] As a result, toward 1731 François-Marie Bissot (better known as François Margane, lord of Vincennes, 1700-1736) commissioned a military fort to be built on the east bank of the Wabash. A few years later, this fort became the center of the first village of non-native Americans in Indiana. Under the directive of governor William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), future president of the United States, Vincennes became the official capital of the Indiana Territory from 1800 to 1813. Harrison put an end to the territorial aspirations of the native population by sending in troops to destroy their villages. He supervised the infamous Battle of Tippecanoe in November 1811 and two years later was responsible for the death of the last great Shawnee chief, Tecumseh (c. 1768-1813).[4] It was during this time of war against Native Americans of the Indiana Territory that German spiritual leader George Rapp decided to build New Harmony. The Harmonists created their new community, starting in 1814, on the east bank of the Wabash River, fifty miles south of Vincennes and fifteen miles north of the confluence of the Wabash and Ohio Rivers. In 1825 Father Rapp sold the entire town to a utopian philosopher: the philanthropist and social reformer Robert Owen.

Charles-Alexandre Lesueur arrived at New Harmony for the first time in January 1826. Approaching from the southern hills and seeing a lush valley in the midst of thick forest with the silver arms of the Wabash River cutting through it, set against the backdrop of the wide prairies of Illinois, he must have felt like Moses at the gates of the Promised Land.[5] In winter, of course, the site would not have looked as magical, but in the spring's first strong suns, with nature awakening and the fireflies lighting the earth like stars in the sky, the traveler was transported to a new realm. The forest and its animals—deer, beaver, bear, wolves, hares, wild cats, squirrels and snakes—suddenly came alive. In the

air and on the ground one could hear the calls of so many birds: wild turkeys, parakeets, woodpeckers, nuthatches, crested cardinals and chickadees. Abundant trees and vines produced flowers and buds that decorated branch and soil: gum trees, plane trees, cypress, apple trees, maples and thick vines. Countless big trees, many taller than sixty-five feet and wider than a yard, provided shade in all seasons: oak, beech, ash and a great variety of nut trees.[6] The richness of flora and fauna filled Lesueur's heart with joy. Here was a paradisiacal garden, an Eden in Indiana.

Indiana's principal river became a major source of inspiration and investigation for the naturalist Lesueur. The Wabash receives the flowing waters of the White River and Tippecanoe, and it is about five hundred miles long. Unfortunately, intense agriculture and excessive deforestation of its banks have given today's Wabash a muddy, brownish color. It is a far cry from the river the Miami once called Wah-bah-shik-ki or Wah-pah-shik-ki, meaning "pure white," "natural" or "bright." In the days of Lesueur, the water was so transparent that its bed of limestone schist and small white pebbles, clearly visible, made it look like a shining pearl of incomparable perfection.[7] In contemporary accounts, many travelers describe the Wabash as a "very beautiful river,"[8] full of life. The first French explorers, who had come down from Canada, spelled the Algonquian name "Oua-bache," while also using "Belle Rivière" (a name which later came to refer to the lower course of the Ohio because it was then supposed that the Ohio flowed into the Wabash).[9]

The history of the region, its links with French culture, the purity of the Wabash valley, and the richness of its flora and fauna made this part of America infinitely attractive to Lesueur. His future duties and obligations to the utopian community were not by any means his only reason for staying there. Robert Owen had bought a tiny, isolated island of civilization—the equivalent of a futurist lunar base—in the midst of a wilderness, completely unexplored by science. Moreover, Lesueur's patron William Maclure would bring in all the necessary tools to identify and publish data about objects of natural history. To make new discoveries, Lesueur only had to walk a few steps. What more could he ask for? Do not all scientists dream of working in such a perfect environment?

Surprisingly, few historians seem to appreciate the full import of Lesueur's stay in New Harmony. The following acerbic remark by his biographer Ernest Hamy—first published in 1904 in his book *The Travels of the Naturalist Charles A. Lesueur in North America*—perfectly sums up the negative point of view that has been generally adopted on this subject:[10]

> Lesueur had no word of sympathy for the fall of the communistic enterprise of which he was an apathetic witness. He lived in the midst of the new society without participating in and without particularly following its practices. […] [Lesueur] never showed the least interest in the dreams of New Harmony. […] He submitted to some of the rules of the society in whose service Maclure urged him to enter. He surveyed, drew and collected for it [...]. But there his effective participation ended.[11]

Hamy based his strong opinions on what he had gleaned from George Ord's "Memoir of Charles Alexander [*sic*] Lesueur," read to the members of the American Philosophical Society on April 6, 1849. Yet it is important to note that the words of this friend of Lesueur cannot be considered trustworthy, for Ord had a very low opinion of Owen's doctrines and disapproved of the utopian experiment in which Lesueur had taken part. In October 1845 Ord wrote to Lesueur:

> There is a reunion of savants in New York, by and by. It is a matter of a cure for all evils, a universal reform. When I tell you that the fanatic Robert Owen is at the head of this assembly of asses, you will be disposed to believe that there are no longer houses for the insane among us.[12]

Ord's point of view is biased, but this book will establish the precise reasons which induced the French naturalist and artist to depart for New Harmony.

2

Lesueur and Maclure's Travels in the Northeast

Road to Albany at sunset
– by C.-A. Lesueur,
[April] 1819 (CL 39 179)

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

CL 40 100, MHNH

Between 1815 and 1831, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur's projects were an integral part of the educational framework defined by William Maclure:

> All ideas are only images in the Mind, and it is a difficult task to form these images by a discription [*sic*] of words, however perfect. […]. I therefore think teachers […] cannot have too many prints […]. Such as all the antiquities in the United States—ornaments of architecture and handsome buildings; the greatest part of Natural History such as animals, plants &&; […] landscapes, pleasant and usefull [*sic*] representations […].[1]

Studying social experiments and collecting views of antiquities and important historical places in America were as much a part of their educational mission as the observation of nature. Every animal drawn by Lesueur became a cognitive tool for Maclure. Inspecting communal villages, such as those of the Shakers and the Moravians, allowed the travelers to meet inspiring people who often proposed alternatives to traditional teaching. This did not stop Maclure from being skeptical about some of the congregations from which these initiatives originated. The negative publicity surrounding Joseph Neef's school, the hostility toward similar projects in France and Spain, "the obstinacy of schoolmasters, the ignorance of parents and the intolerant bigotry of priestcraft"[2] frustrated Maclure and eventually led him to rally to Owen's cause.

Maclure and Lesueur: Precursors of Uniformitarianism

William Maclure was not a religious man but an activist for workers' rights, an inheritor of the Jeffersonian ideal, and a promoter of useful knowledge. Maclure considered himself to be a son of the Enlightenment just like Lesueur, who participated in his effort, learned from him, and made his own contributions in a time steeped in the ideas of Thomas Jefferson and his quest for utilitarian data. In addition, Maclure and Lesueur undertook their "grand tour" through the northeastern United States as part of the new wave of scientific exploration also initiated by Jefferson. They did not, however, travel west of the Eightieth Meridian (which crosses the towns of Pittsburgh and Erie) and did not go further south than the Thirty-Ninth Parallel (near Baltimore).

During their expeditions, Lesueur's work consisted of collecting geological data by making sketches of stratifications and gathering rock samples. Paleontological studies were part of the focus[3] because the presence of marine fossils on high ground allowed them to determine the sedimentary origin of certain strata, and to distinguish between Primitive, Transitional and Secondary. These scientific terms are no longer in use but they correspond to Abraham Gottlob Werner's (1749-1817) classification that Maclure chose to employ. Like his German colleague, Maclure differentiated five geological layers during his fieldtrips with Lesueur, making a distinction between "Primitive Rock" (which corresponds to the Precambrian and other crystalline rocks of the Adirondack Mountains, New England and the Piedmont Province), "Transitional Rock" (the folded Paleozoic of the Appalachians), "Secondary Rock" (the flat-lying Paleozoic further west), the "*Floetz*" or "Old Red Sandstone" (the Triassic Newark group), and "Alluvial Rocks" (the Cretaceous and Tertiary deposits of the Coast Plain).[4] Maclure was a pragmatist who based his conclusions on observation rather than theory.[5] His personal journals suggest he was a precursor of uniformitarianism like Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), who theorized that the earth must be much older than it was thought to be in his era.[6] In 1811 Maclure was already writing in his journal:

> [I] have allways [*sic*] thought that the Changes on our Globe depend more on the coincidence of a great many partial causes and Changes [rather] than on any great

> sweeping Agent which should have wrought up the whole in 7 days as Moses made the creation. But Moses has many imitators: all the theories of the Earth yet published begin by a creation which is effectuated all at once by some great Agent [such] as a comet, the sun, fire, water &&c. No part of the Globe has been supposed [to be] eternal. The earth itself must after Moses be made by some materials brought from other planets without inquiring how or when those planets were made. There appears to me no absurdity in supposing that the Earth is as eternal as the other planets and stars; the Origin of which we shall most probably find it difficult to explain.[7]

Maclure was very much ahead of his time, and it comes as no surprise that he and Lesueur, both forerunners of modern geology and paleontology, were perfectly aware that by correlating their knowledge of biology with the geological record, they could analyze the earth's crust with more precision. Fossils, which were by then largely recognized as organic remains, became the key for interpreting the geological register, particularly after Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) and his assistant Alexandre Brongniart (1770-1847) explored the Paris Basin at the beginning of the 1800s. Cuvier, who became the international expert in comparative anatomy, demonstrated the structural differences between fossils and existing animals, which led to an awareness of the great age of the strata.[8] In the Primitive there were no traces of fossils; the Transitional could have some, but only sightless animals and the first forms of vegetation such as ferns. The Secondary, on the other hand, sometimes contained fossils of seeing animals and woody plants.[9]

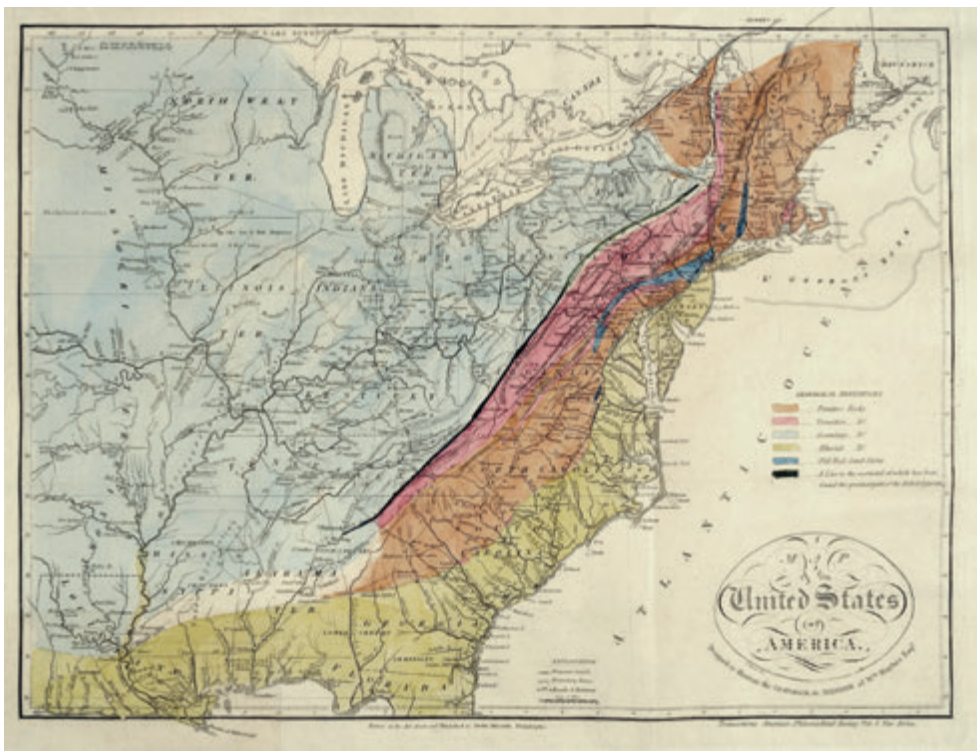
This biostratigraphic distinction does not clearly appear in the publications of Maclure, who seems to prefer a lithostratigraphic division. Lesueur's comments, however, indicate that in fact he and Maclure were following the same paleontological principles as Cuvier and Brongniart. Charles-Alexandre Lesueur's extensive knowledge of plants and animals living on the earth's surface and in the deep oceans enabled him to identify fossil remains with great precision—something very few mineralogists were capable of doing. Lesueur was a great zoologist, ornithologist, entomologist, conchologist, ichthyologist, and even botanist. His contributions to Maclure's geological investigations and American paleontology should not be underestimated. This is illustrated by Lesueur's encounter, in 1819, with the American geologist Amos Eaton in Albany, New York.[10] About this chapter of Lesueur's life, historian John M. Clarke wrote in 1921:

> Lesueur was a student of Cuvier, and I think New York Paleontology may now confess the measure of its debt to him. Early in 1820 [*sic*] Lesueur visited Albany at the request of the State Boundary Commission and here he was quickly found by Eaton, then lecturing at the Troy Lyceum. Forthwith he was whisked off, as opportunity presented, into the Helderbergs whose teeming fossils were lying nameless. There [Lesueur's] Cuvierian eyes and his Cuvierian training helped Eaton, the Yankee geologist, to [give] Cuvierian names, the first these fossils ever had.[11]

In addition to being an excellent geologist and paleontologist, Lesueur was an experienced land surveyor. Trained as a cartographer at the Le Havre School of Mathematics and Hydrography, he drew the first map of Sydney, Australia, in 1802.[12] After his return from the Baudin expedition in 1804, Lesueur became Cuvier's student in Paris. Cuvier established that the most reliable way to differentiate strata was to identify key fossils. He was the first to demonstrate that extinct animals could be reconstructed from fragmentary remains according to consistent anatomical principles. This allowed him to recreate long-gone hippopotamuses, rhinoceroses, cave bears, mas-todons, crocodiles and tigers.[13] An interesting example of Lesueur's exceptional Cuvierian abilities can be found in Amos Eaton's 1824 book *A Geological and Agricultural Survey of the District Adjoining the Erie Canal*, where we read about the pyritiferous rock at the head of Cayuga Lake:

> I have seen in this rock encrinites, entrochites, anthocephalites, chamites, gryphites, terebratulites, orthocerites, volutites, turbinites, common madreporites, retiporites, horn-form madreporites, favosites, isidites, alcyonites; all of which were labeled at my request by Le Sueur.[14]

In 1819 Lesueur's technical skills brought him back to the frontier between Canada and the United States, having been commissioned by the American government to establish the dividing line between the two countries. This allowed him to meet geologist Amos Eaton, the protégé of Stephen Van Rensselaer. As a result, not only did Lesueur help to define the territory of the United States, but he also made major contributions to institutions like the Albany Academy and the Rensselaer School in Troy, which in 1861 became the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.[15]



Map of the United States of America—with boundary lines, roads, distances and proposed canals—designed to illustrate the geological memoir of William Maclure. Published by John Melish, Philadelphia.

Courtesy of the Working Men's Institute in New Harmony

First Evidence of an Interest in Utopian Societies

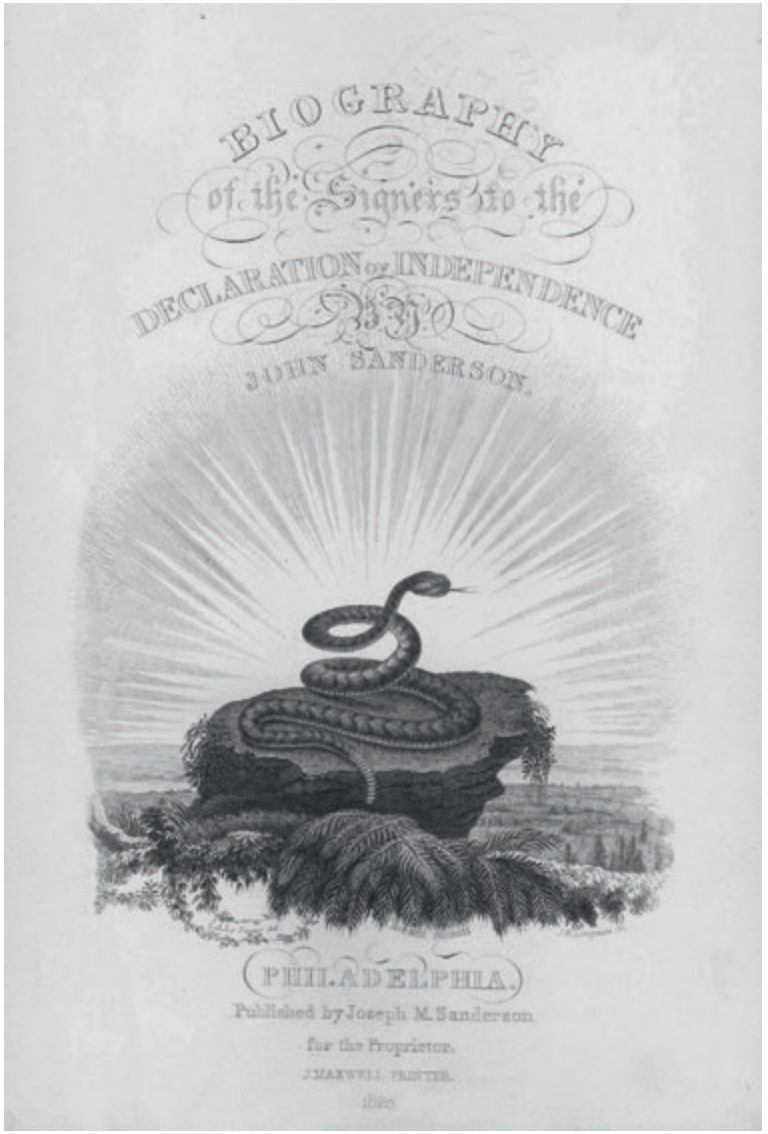
Whether from the first part of his trip through the northeastern United States or the rest of the grand tour, Lesueur's manuscripts and drawings describe in a realistic manner the landscapes, villages and cities he passed through in company of Maclure. It is important to note, however, that Maclure's journal, on at least two occasions, provides evidence of an ideology behind their itinerary. At the end of June 1816, after visiting the Pittsburgh coal mines, the explorers went down the upper Ohio in a keelboat, apparently as far as Rochester in Beaver County.[16] From there, they continued by land for about fifteen miles in a northeastern direction and then halted to make their first utopian visit.[17] William Maclure wrote on a separate page of his geological diary:

> This place was settled about 11 years ago by a number of Germans brought from some part of Germany by a priest of the name of Rap[p]. He had sufficient influence with them to make them all put their property into a joint purse and give him the management of it. They bought 9,000 acres of land and made great improvements, woolen manufacturing mills, distilleries &&& and a town with upward 15 or 20 good brick houses, a church, Granary && and several out villages.[18]

Maclure and Lesueur had arrived in Harmony, Butler County, located about thirty miles north of Pittsburgh. As

French naturalist and artist. Lesueur was asked to copy two heads with antlers Jefferson had found in Kentucky. These drawings were used to illustrate Caspar Wistar's article "An Account of Two Heads Found in the Morass, Called the Big Bone Lick, and Presented to the Society by Mr. Jefferson."[10] Lesueur knew Jefferson well, and showed a particular interest in the former president's career. An example of this is the detailed watercolor of an opened window overlooking Market (or High) Street, showing the intersection with Sixth Street. Lesueur himself lived on Eighth Street, southwest of Market Street in 1825. After some research, it appeared that the drawing was made from Jacob Graff's house, located on Seventh Street between Market and Chestnut Streets, the very place where Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in June 1776. The picture also includes a chair and (hardly visible) portable desk on a low table, still present in the room. When Lesueur was asked, in 1820, to illustrate the title page of John Sanderson's *Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence* (9 vols.), he chose to represent a rattlesnake, for he considered this animal to be one of the most amazing things he had seen in the United States.[11] Under the engraving he added the following inscription in Latin: "Caveant moniti," which means "Visionaries beware." With this word of caution he reminded the American leaders that the English threat was still very real and that they were to remain as vigilant as a snake to safeguard the future of their young republic.

In July 1801 William Maclure sent Thomas Jefferson a long letter summarizing the political and economic situation in France and reporting on his trips in countries of Northern and Western Europe. Maclure took this opportunity to give Jefferson a copy of the *Napoleonic Code*, while expressing his confidence in the new president who would bring "happiness and prosperity" to the United States, as well as "progress of civilization and Knowledge in every part of the Globe."[12] Jefferson had met the young Maclure around 1783 in Richmond, Virginia, where Maclure worked for Patrick Hart.[13] In 1799 the future president of the United States



C.-A. Lesueur's title page for the first four volumes of John Sanderson's *Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence*, published in Philadelphia between 1820 and 1827.

Courtesy of the Providence Public Library on Rhode Island

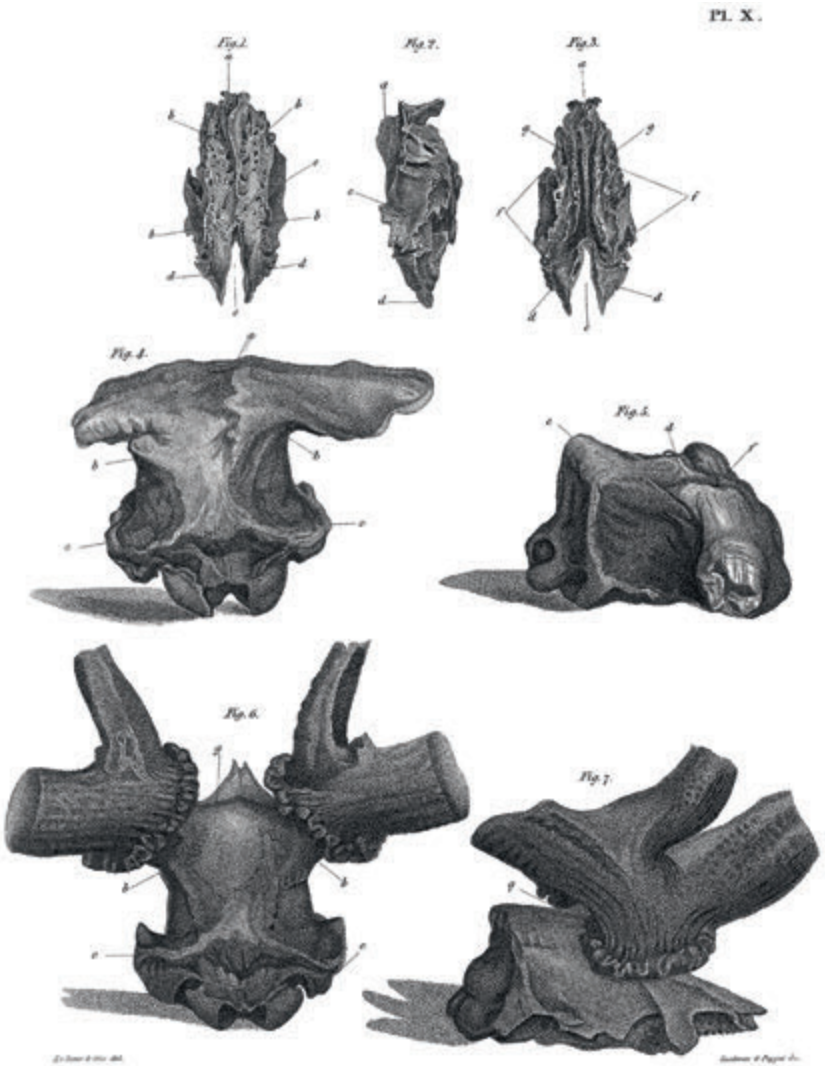
apparently proposed Maclure's nomination as a member of the American Philosophical Society, three years after the Scottish merchant had become a naturalized U.S. citizen in Detroit. Maclure's mandate as a government representative ended in December 1804,[14] but for many years afterwards he considered it a point of honor to inform Thomas Jefferson about anything that might be of interest to him. Jefferson, on the other hand, valued Maclure's friendship and counsel, which we can appreciate thanks to a note he mailed him in November 1817:

> I thank you, dear Sir, for the copy of your *Geology of the US*, which you have been so kind as to send me. [...]
>
> I recall to mind with fondness the pleasure I received from your society in Philadelphia, with Volney, Niemsewicz [*sic*], Latrobe & others. [...] I am not without a hope that a literary establishment we are making near Charlottesville may become considerable enough to attract your summer peregrinations towards it sometimes. […] Should this or any other circumstance invite you again to our neighborhood I shall fondly hope you will make Monticello your head quarters, and that in the mean time you will be assured of my sincere attachment & respect.[15]

Jefferson kept up a worldwide correspondence, obtaining first-hand information about the advancement of the sciences and arts, as well as on national and international issues.[16] In 1792, seventeen years before Maclure published his first geological map,[17] Jefferson asked the American Philosophical Society to find competent men to travel up the Missouri to its source, to cross the Rocky Mountains, and to go as far as the Pacific Ocean, in order to study the geographical and geological characteristics of the North American continent. Captain Meriwether Lewis, stationed in Charlottesville at that time, volunteered for the task, ready to take along the famous French botanist André Michaux (1746-1802). Surprisingly, according to a report by Jefferson, the Minister Plenipotentiary from France, then at Philadelphia, sent a special envoy to remind Michaux of his obligations to his fatherland. As a consequence, the expedition had to be called off although its members were already in Kentucky. In 1803 the American president decided to revive the mission after the acquisition of colonial French Louisiana. Lewis, who had now been Jefferson's private secretary for almost two years, set off to Philadelphia to enrich his knowledge of the natural sciences. Benjamin Barton, Caspar Wistar and Benjamin Rush instructed him in botany, zoology, ethnology and Native American linguistics; Robert Patterson and Andrew Ellicott taught him how to make astronomical observations. Lewis expended five hundred dollars to organize the trip, and Lieutenant Clark was recruited as his second in command.[18]

Lesueur's oeuvre has many connections to the Lewis and Clark expedition. It is therefore important to give this voyage of discovery a closer look. Not only was it organized less than two months after the Louisiana Purchase, in which William Maclure played a diplomatic role, but it provided a large number of natural history objects to the American scientists who were collaborating with Lesueur. Throughout his stay in Philadelphia, the French naturalist worked with the fruits of the expedition. Moreover, from December 1825 to May 1826, he would retrace some of the path of Lewis and Clark, going to several regions they had crossed. Lesueur traveled no further than St. Louis, the first step of their journey, but he nonetheless immortalized the very landscapes the famous explorers saw from July to December 1803. Lesueur quite probably met William Clark in Philadelphia before 1825, and he may have visited his museum of Native American artifacts in St. Louis between 1826 and 1830.[19] Lesueur showed much interest in the recent history of American Indians, and in 1819 he tried to join Major Stephen Harriman Long's scientific mission, which was organized along the same principles as the voyage of Lewis and Clark.

At the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition, American flora and fauna west of the Mississippi were virtually unknown, and the opportunities to learn about them still rare. It is, however, regrettable that the party did not include any methodical zoologist; scientists like François Péron and



Skulls and horns of deer found by Thomas Jefferson and drawn by Charles-Alexandre Lesueur and Bass Otis. This plate was published in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., 1 (1818): 380 *bis*.

Courtesy of the Brown University Library on Rhode Island

Lesueur, who had collected, organized and named most of the new species discovered during their Voyage to the Southern Lands.[20] Because of this, the final report of the American expedition contained only the descriptions of animals that had caught their attention. Nonetheless, the specimens brought back to Philadelphia and exhibited in the museum of Charles Willson Peale attracted much interest. Peale stuffed them and Lewis entrusted part of their study to the Scottish ornithologist Alexander Wilson, who was then writing his book on the birds of North America. The zoological samples that were preserved in Peale's museum in Philadelphia contributed to the publishing of major American scientific works.[21] The first to come out was Alexander Wilson's famous *American Ornithology*, followed in 1825 by Richard Harlan's *Fauna Americana*.

In the next few years, John Godman published his three tomes of *American Natural History*, for which Lesueur provided most illustrations.[22] His collaboration with Godman was fruitful, and in 1824 Lesueur also contributed to medical works such as *Anatomical Investigations* and *Morbid Anatomy*.[23] In one of the sections of this last publication, Godman declared: "I had a drawing made […] by Mr. C. A. LESUEUR, whose name is synonymous with TRUTH in all that pertains to graphic delineation […]."[24] In his 1895 biography on Lesueur, published in *Popular Science Monthly*, Dr. David Starr Jordan, president of the Leland Stanford Junior University and cofounder of the Indiana Academy of Sciences, repeated Godman's assessment of Lesueur's graphic talents:

> His scientific work was done chiefly in America, and it ranked with the best of its kind at the time. […] His descriptions are clear, exact and honest. His drawings are not accurate only, but spirited. They are works of art rather than mechanical representations. […] Lesueur had, what Rafinesque had not, sound sense and faithfulness in the study of details. In America he was perhaps the first of that school of systematic zoology which regards

new materials and initiate the greatest number of students to a sensorial apprenticeship, i.e. learning through the senses by experiencing concrete objects.[51] About the involvement of the members of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, Lesueur wrote to Maclure:

> R. Haines has just set up a school in Germantown where Dr. Wistar is teaching Mineralogy. He would like to have or to borrow your telescope and an electric machine. […] Dr. Troost is going to give a course on Mineralogy, and I am sure it will be a good stimulus for the members of the Society and will inspire them to further study. As for me, all my time is taken up at present. I teach at the following boarding houses: of Mesdames Grelaud, Grimshaw, Cygogne [*sic*], I. Juggs [sic: Hughes]; and at the homes of Mead, Meridith [*sic*], Heyre [*sic*], Isard [*sic*] & I spend Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, after dinner, on the minerals.[52]

To his friend Anselme Desmarest, Lesueur wrote:

> In the mean time I carry on with my students, who keep me busy from morning 'til evening, for I enjoy a good reputation in town. I have the best and most respectable homes of Philadelphia, and very pretty pupils.[53]

Lesueur's most famous pupils, to whom he taught natural history and drawing, were Joseph Bonaparte's daughters, Princesses Zénaïde and Charlotte, who lived at Point Breeze near Bordentown (New Jersey), twenty-five miles northeast of Philadelphia. Point Breeze was a cultural and artistic meeting point, and Lesueur's relationship with the Bonaparte family seems to have been quite congenial.[54] Other well-known pupils of Lesueur were the Du Pont de Nemours children, who later ran the firm E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. At the beginning of the twentieth century, DuPont would evolve into the second-largest chemical enterprise in the world (behind the German firm BASF),

Garden and manor of Joseph Bonaparte at Point Breeze – by C.-A. Lesueur, [c. 1821] (CL 40 105)

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

Column with capital and Henry du Pont's rocking horse

Courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington

developing revolutionary synthetic products like neoprene, nylon, Teflon and Kevlar. A short humorous note, written in 1822, bears witness to the playful interaction between Lesueur and his pupils north of Wilmington, Delaware:

> Be it known to all whom it may concern that the Ladies of Brandywine have detained M[r] Le Sueur by main force this day the Second of September in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and twenty-two. In witness whereof they here unto affix their names.
>
> Eleutherian Mills – Kentmere – Louviers: V[ictorine] E[lizabeth] Bauduy, Sarah L[ydia] Gilpin, S[arah] E[mlen] Hare, E[lizabeth] Gilpin, Julia S[ophie] du Pont, Eleuthera du Pont[55]

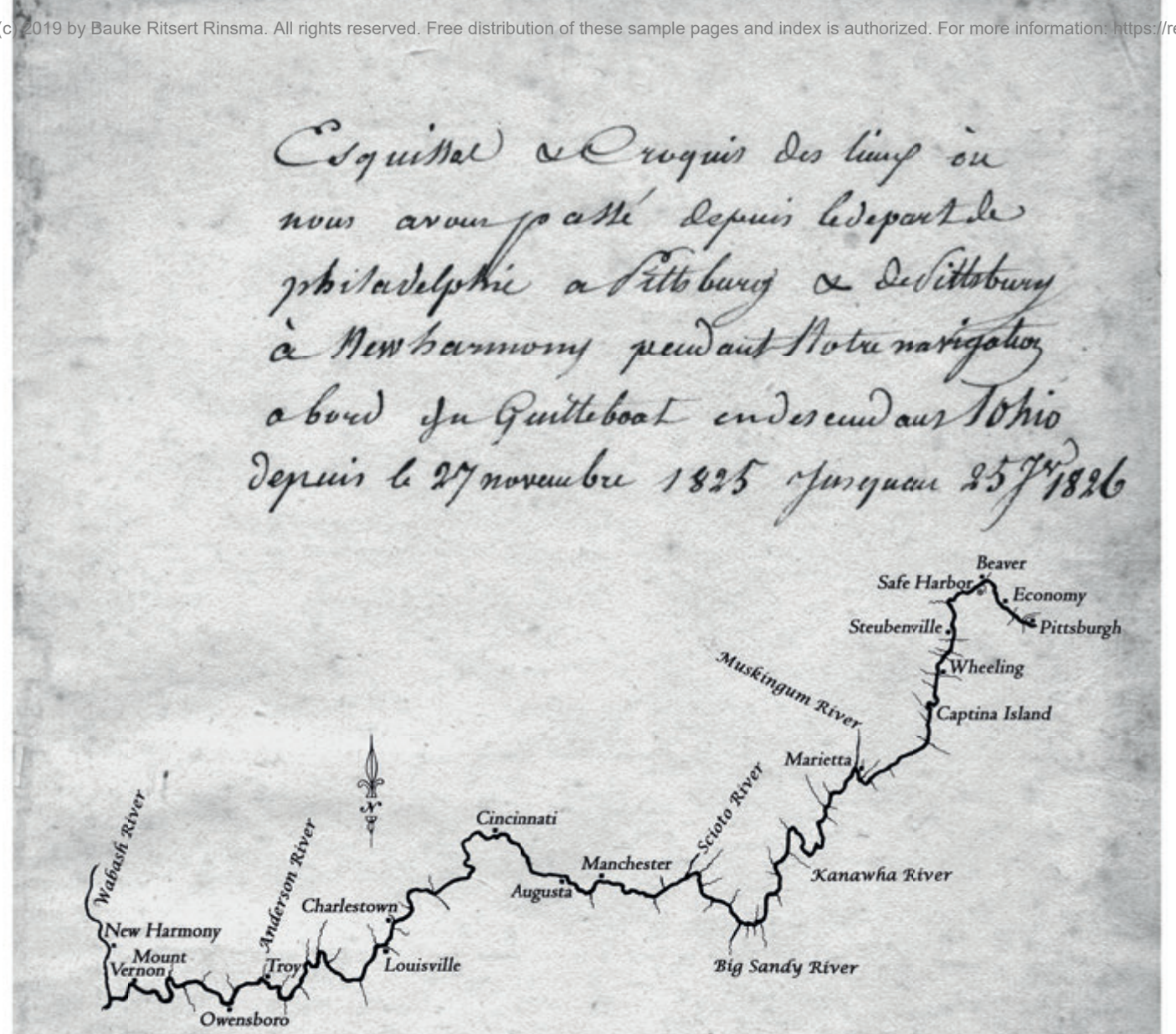
Lesueur instructed his pupils in natural history and drawing, using the methods of a professionally trained teacher. This is obvious when we study the private collection of the late Kenneth Dale Owen in New Harmony. It contains sketches and watercolors by Robert Owen's sons and several other students of the French naturalist. About his lessons with Lesueur, Richard Owen wrote in a letter dated December 14, 1886:

> He was a magnificent artist, good alike in drawing and coloring. I have some of his sketches yet, in which, when I was taking drawing lessons from him, he showed me how to outline, for instance, the skeleton of the human figure, then to add the muscular system, then the clothing, drapery, etc. We usually took views from Nature. Although so minute in details of fine paintings, he was equally good in large scenery. For many years we had here the scenes he painted for a Thespian Society of this place, where, amid the forest trees, he had squirrels, birds, etc.[56]

Lesueur had his pupils analyze color, shadow, depth and perspective, teaching them how to draw skulls, skeletons, architectural ornaments, buildings and landscapes. This enables us to understand the manner in which he organized

View on the Brandywine Valley from the piazza of Eleuthère Irénée du Pont – by C.-A. Lesueur, [September 2, 1822] (CL 39 166)

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre



"Sketches and drawings of the places we passed through since the departure from Philadelphia to Pittsburg[h] & from Pittsburg[h] to New Harmony during our navigation on board the keelboat going down the Ohio, from November 27, 1825, till J[anuar]y 25, 1826." Translated from page 1 of C.-A. Lesueur's sketchbook (CL 41 000).

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

The last days in Philadelphia were spent packing an immense quantity of material, particularly the private collections and books of Lesueur, Say and Maclure, stored on the ground floor of the Academy of Natural Sciences. The boxes were sent to New Orleans with the rest of the baggage to be taken by steamboat to Shawneetown near New Harmony.[1] On Sunday morning, November 27, 1825, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur left Philadelphia in a convoy of wagons and carriages en route to Pittsburgh.[2] William Maclure, Marie Fretageot, Guillaume Phiquepal, Thomas Say, William Price and many others made the trip with him. Madame Fretageot traveled with her assistants, Lucy Sistare and Virginia Dupalais. Virginia was accompanied by her brothers André and Victor, and Lucy by her sisters Frances and Sarah. There were quite a few other children in the group, such as doctor Price's three daughters, carpenter John Beal's daughter, and Phiquepal's pupils from Paris and Philadelphia: Alexis Alphonse, Amédie Dufour, Charles Falque, Achille Fretageot, Pierre Duclos, Victor Duclos, Edmund Morris and Thomas Riley.[3]

C.-A. Lesueur: Father of a Small Family

The presence of one particular passenger, three-year-old Cecilia Noël, has given rise to speculation. In 1938 historian Robert Vail also mentioned her in his Lesueur biography, stating the little girl was under the Frenchman's care:[4]

> Another member of the family was Cecilia Noël whose feverstricken parents in Santo-Domingo had entrusted her to the kind-hearted Lesueur who brought her to New Harmony where she afterwards married Achille Emery Fretageot, son of Madame Fretageot.[5]

Where Robert Vail obtained this information is a mystery. No other historical document mentions this supposed good deed of Lesueur. It is true he was seen in the company of a child during the trip down the Ohio, since Captain Donald Macdonald, listing the passengers, writes: "Mr. Le Seur [*sic*] & one child."[6] But this could be Victor Dupalais, age seven, of whom Lesueur took special care, as he did of the older siblings, André and Virginia,[7] who are mentioned separately by Macdonald as "Mr. Dupalais & his sister."[8] But who were they?

Their father, Captain Pierre Alexandre Poulard de Guémar Dupalais, officer in the French army under Rochambeau (1725-1807), helped George Washington to fight the British and later moved to Philadelphia. After the death of Dupalais and his wife, Lesueur became the guardian of their young children who followed him to New Harmony. Virginia Dupalais played an important role in the communal schools, assisting her "uncle" (as she called Lesueur)[9] with his drawing classes. Born in Philadelphia in 1804, she was an accomplished painter thanks to her talent and Lesueur's tutelage.[10] Robert Dale Owen's journal also alludes to Lesueur's friendship with Virginia and her family, but it never mentions Cecilia Noël.[11]

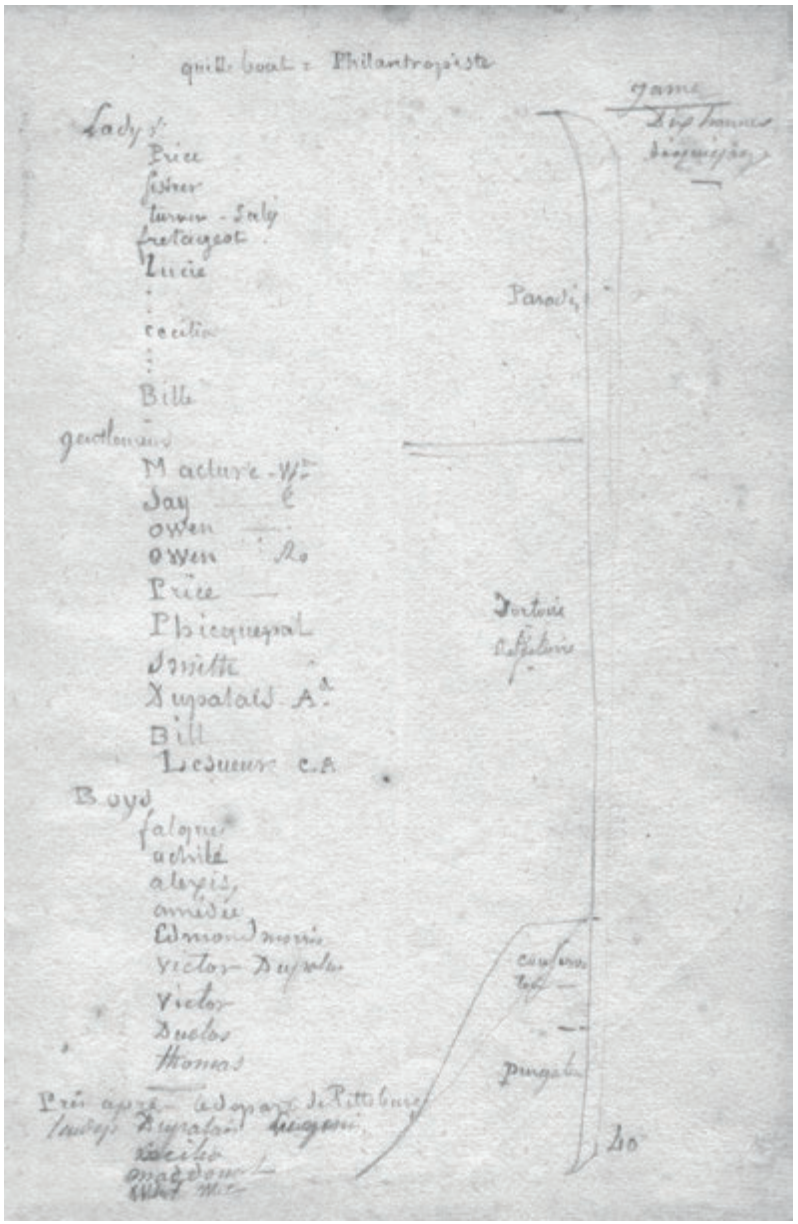
Lesueur himself included Cecilia twice on his list of passengers, indicating, however, that she did not board the *Philanthropist* until January. He created three categories: "Ladys" [*sic*], Gentlemans" [*sic*] and "Boys." He noted the names of six women, i.e. Hannah Fisher Price, Helen Gregoroffsky Fisher, Sarah Turner—whom he calls both Sal[l]y and Miss Sale [*sic*]—Marie Fretageot, Lucy Sistare and Rose Ann Clark Beal; ten men, i.e. William Maclure, Thomas Say, Robert Owen, Robert Dale Owen, William Price, Guillaume Phiquepal, Charles Schmidt (spelled "Smith" [*sic*]), André Dupalais, John Beal (spelled "Bill" [*sic*]) and himself; and nine boys, i.e. Charles Falque, Achille Fretageot, Alexis Alphonse, Amédie Dufour, Edmund Morris, Victor Dupalais, Victor Duclos, Pierre Duclos and Thomas Riley. On the bottom of the page he added "Boarded after the departure from Pittsburg[h]," and appended six more names: "Ladys [*sic*] Dupalais, Eugeni[e], Cecilia" as well as

"Macdonal[d], Whitwel[l], James."[12] However, Lesueur's list is incomplete, which he indicated by leaving empty spaces and dashes. He omitted the names of doctor Price's three children (Emelia, Sarah and Caroline), the daughter of John Beal (Caroline), Lucy Sistare's two sisters (Frances and Sarah), Charles Schmidt's father, the ten members of the crew (only William McCarter's name is known), and a seventeen-year-old student called Balthazar Obernesser.[13]

As for Robert Vail's remark on Lesueur's guardianship, Richard Owen made the following statement in a letter:

> When [Lesueur] came to New Harmony during the social experiment he was directly from the West Indies, and brought a young lad and a child, both of whom subsequently married […].[14]

But when would Lesueur have gone to Santo Domingo to take on Cecilia as a ward? He did not stop at this island when he went to the Antilles in early 1816, and he never left the American continent after that. Is this another legend about our French naturalist? When and where did Robert Vail hear it, and why would someone invent such a story? For this study, only contemporaneous sources that can be substantiated have been used. As for the departure of the utopians for New Harmony, the journals of Donald Macdonald and Robert Dale Owen have proven to be verifiable, thanks to Lesueur's drawings and annotations. Moreover, the back of drawing n° 41 123, in the archives of the Museum of Le Havre, contains this valuable note: "[…] stayed on board: Whitwell – Say – Lesueur – Dupalais – Lucie [*sic*] – Eugénie – the two little Sister [*sic*] & Cecilia."[15] This is another direct reference to Cecilia Noël, who was among the utopians who completed the trip to New Harmony in January 1826. An intense search turned up yet another document. Typed and signed by Virginia Dupalais Twigg (the granddaughter of Virginia Dupalais and William Augustus Twigg), this three-page biographical note sheds light on the mystery of Cecilia:



Passenger list of the *Philanthropist* – by C.-A. Lesueur, [January 10, 1826] (CL 41 037)

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

> When the "Boat-Load" landed at New Harmony, in January 1826, Lucy [Sistare] had her two sisters, and Virginia her two brothers and young Cécile Noël, daughter of their older sister Sophie; and all the children were registered for the community school. No other of the girls' relatives came out to join them, as originally expected, but the girls remained. Thomas Say married Lucy, Madam Fretageot's son Achilles [*sic*] married Cécile and William [Twigg] wed Virginia.[16]

So Cecilia (or Cécile) is actually the daughter of Virginia's sister, Sophie Dupalais Noël.[17] This is a valuable piece of information, but it does not reveal the fate of Cecilia's parents. In the early twentieth century, historian Robert Vail may have heard oral reports about their demise on Santo Domingo by Achille Fretageot's descendants in New Harmony. If this is the case, the account probably has its roots in the 1820s when Lesueur became Cecilia's guardian. Still, he never visited Santo Domingo, and we may in fact be dealing with a cover-up story.

Here is another piece of the puzzle. In April 1832 Lesueur wrote a letter to his friend Isaac Hays in Philadelphia, requesting the payment of a bill to... S*ophie Noël*. Cecilia's mother was definitely alive in 1832, and Lesueur was sending her money.[18] He did not do so directly but proceeded as follows: while in New Harmony, he continued to work for the Academy of Natural Sciences, which paid for his services. Lesueur used Sophie Noël as his agent and sent her the bills she could then present to men like Isaac Hays. Consequently, she would receive the money in lieu of Lesueur. Although nothing proves she kept it, it is possible that Lesueur channeled part of his income to Sophie. Only one letter indicating such business dealings subsists, but it raises questions about Lesueur's connection to her. Had little Cecilia simply been brought to Indiana to receive a good education, as Virginia Dupalais Twigg wrote in her summary? Or was there more to it? Cecilia would not return to her mother after the community school closed in 1831, and she married in New Harmony in 1839. Lesueur watched over her, and she lived in his house. Of course, so did Virginia and her brothers, even after Virginia's marriage to William Twigg in March 1828. But the question remains: aside from their French origins and Lesueur's guardianship, was there another link between the naturalist and his protégés? Virginia did refer to him as her "uncle," but Lesueur's genealogical tree makes it clear that this was a term of endearment, nothing more.[19] Unless this hides another truth. Could Lesueur have been Cecilia's father? Was he simply helping her mother? Or both?[20] Whatever the answers to these questions, they are not to be found in Lesueur's correspondence, and we know little of his love-life. Between 1812 and 1815, he did have a liaison with the Countess of Chastenay, Mademoiselle Louise-Marie-Victoire (or Victorine) de Lanty (1771-1855), who continued to enquire about Lesueur's well-being after his departure with Maclure. But her lover never returned to France, and almost none of Lesueur's letters on this matter survive,[21] which closes the subject, at least for the moment.

Lesueur was a naturalist and an artist, not a poet. He could only tell his story by writing small technical notes and by rapidly drawing scenes and landscapes as he passed by them. During the trip from Philadelphia to New Harmony, he filled several sketchbooks. The opening picture of that journey shows the Capitol grounds in Harrisburg, where he and his companions spent the first night. Thanks to Robert Dale Owen, we know they met up with Robert Owen and other travelers who had left the same morning by stagecoach.[22] On Lesueur's watercolor, apart from "Mr. Wilson – Harrisburg," there are no other indications or remarks.[23] The following days they stopped at Chambersburg, Bedford and Greensburg, and on December 1, the travelers arrived in Pittsburgh at three o'clock in the afternoon. The group initially intended to go to New Harmony by steamboat, but because the water level was very low and the situation had not improved four days later, they decided to find a keelboat.[24]

Robert Owen Announces his Millennium of Peace

From December 1 through 5, Lesueur was free, and he decided to spend the time visiting Pittsburgh and its fish market. During this period, the city limits were the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. They were still frozen to the north because of the intense cold. Two covered bridges, with their walls and wooden roofs, became the subjects of drawings.[25] On the south side of the Monongahela was a steep hill, rich in natural materials: chalk, sandstone and coal, all of commercial value. Its exploitation had a direct impact on the city center and surrounding areas, which, because of industrialization, were dirty and unhealthy. Many chimneys spewed black smoke into the polluted atmosphere. Wagons filled with coal rolled along one after the other on the filthy roads. Many houses were badly kept up and unsound, and the people in them seemed to have hard, unhealthy lives.[26] What a contrast with the earthly paradise promised by Robert Owen, who took advantage of every occasion to preach his gospel.

On December 2, 1825, Lesueur visited Fort Duquesne (renamed Fort Pitt) at the spot where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers join to form the Ohio River. He sketched the old powder house, which reminded him that France had once owned this land.[27] On the back of the watercolor, he wrote:

> The only thing left is the fort that used to defend the Allegheny. The ditch is still in good condition. The powder house, which is in the east wing, was dug out of the earth that was covering it. The door is topped by a capitol, above which is a square rock with four holes in it that form a star. The Americans do not want to remember the time when France ruled these territories, and they put on their maps neither the location nor the names of these forts.[28]

From the vantage point of the French remains, Lesueur also drew the bridge on the Monongahela, as well as many barges and steamboats anchored along the river.[29] The low water level prevented large vessels from going through, but on December 5, the utopians were informed that the crew of a keelboat was willing to take them to New Harmony.[30] During the three days it took them to prepare for departure, Owen continued his proselytizing.

The British philanthropist spent most of his time meeting with people who were favorably disposed to his communal project, in particular the members of the Cooperating Society of Allegheny County, founded in July 1825 on Owenite principles.[31] Having failed to establish a true cooperative community in Pittsburgh, they still greeted their spiritual guide with enthusiasm.[32] This was the third time they were visited by Owen; he had already graced them with his presence in December 1824 and June 1825. John Speakman had introduced him to the Unitarian Benjamin Bakewell, a glass manufacturer who was an important promoter of the cause.[33] On December 8, 1825, Bakewell recounted the events in Pittsburgh in a letter to Thomas Pears, his nephew by marriage, who had moved to New Harmony:[34]

> [Mr. Owen] and his party, consisting of forty, have arrived, and will at 12 o'clock be ready to embark in a light keel fitted up for the occasion. Unhappily for them it has set in cold, and both rivers are closed just above the town. […] Especially shall we be glad to hear that the Master Spirit is well received [in New Harmony], and that he may be able to unite all hearts.
>
> Have you had sufficient accession of strength in the well-disposed to commence a community with the prospect of success? […] Mr. Owen delivered a lecture last night to a very crowded and respectable audience in the Methodist Church. Mr. Page, though somewhat roused by the representations, or rather misrepresentations, of Mr. Prentice, was delighted with it beyond measure, and is, I believe, quite restored to the true faith.[35]

View from Mr. Wilson's Hotel, Harrisburg – by C.-A. Lesueur, November [27 or 28], 1825 (CL 41 001). Lesueur was standing on the intersection of Third and Walnut Streets looking north. The sign indicates Matthew Wilson's tavern on 97 Walnut Street (which in 1836 was moved to the site of the Lochiel Hotel on the southeast corner of Third and Market Streets). Lesueur's watercolor shows the Capitol grounds with, on the left, the 1821 Pennsylvania State Capitol (designed in 1819 by Stephen Hills and destroyed by fire in 1897), and on the right, the buildings of the 1817 State Arsenal on High Street.

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

Powder magazine of Fort Duquesne (Fort Pitt) at the Point of Pittsburgh – by C.-A. Lesueur, [December] 2, 1825 (CL 46 056)

Courtesy of Natural History Museum in Le Havre

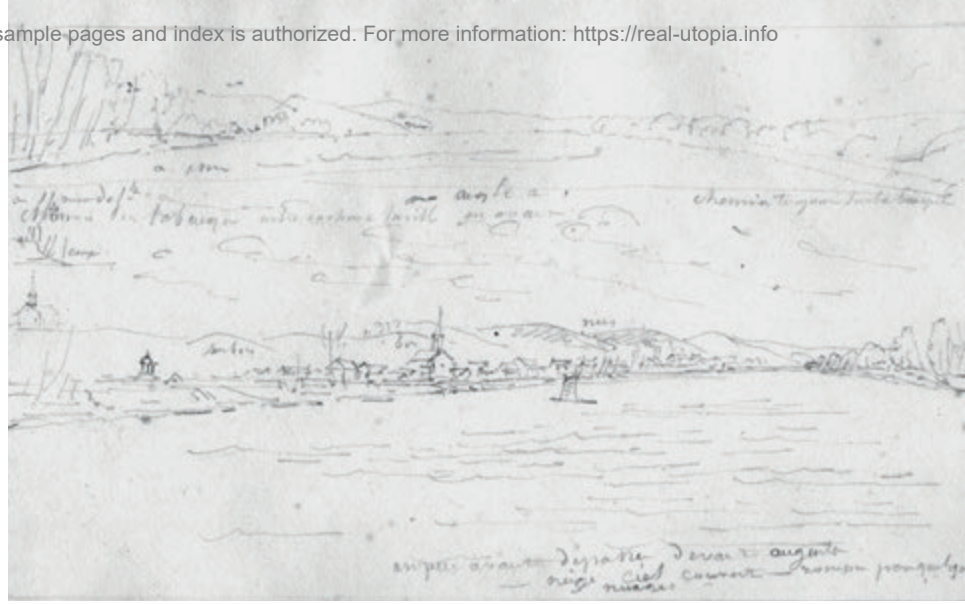
to pass through.[49] It was the most frightening moment of the trip down the Ohio. Lesueur noted the details of the adventure on the back of a quick and hardly recognizable sketch of the rapids:

> Beautiful sky – cold – frozen – Louisville low ground: well-built city of brick buildings – we visited it around seven o'clock in the evening – wide streets at right angles – 5 or 6 steamboats were anchored along the bank and in Grass Dear Creek [sic: Beargrass Creek] many keelboats, flatboats, etc. – we went over the little bridge that crosses this little river, our boat was anchored upstream from this bridge – many logs and blocks of ice floated by near us – about 11 p.m. we moved our boat a few hundred yards upstream so that it would catch the current and go through the rapids in the morning. On the morning of [January 20], we picked up the captain who would get us through and we entered the Fall of the Indians in which our boat rocked like in a troubled sea compared to the quiet state of things before the falls where the surface of the river is calm – to go through it we closed all the places where water could come in, no one got off, children, women stayed on board and beheld the spectacle of these foaming rapids in the middle of which, for a short while, we were thrown from side to side – some boats are wrecked here.[50]

Lesueur did not take the time to make a detailed drawing of the rapids, which is regrettable because he did have a moment to do so downstream, when the keelboat stopped at Shippingport to drop off the pilot.[51] After December 1830, fewer and fewer boats would go through the wild waters of the Indian Falls, using instead the new Louisville and Portland Canal, the construction of which began in 1825.

Debacle at Mount Vernon

The last three days of the journey on the *Philanthropist* were not uneventful. On Monday, January 23, the travelers



Augusta, Kentucky, January 15 (CL 41 078), and New Richmond, Ohio, January 16, 1826 (CL 41 084) – by C.-A. Lesueur. He noted frame houses were grey with green shutters or simply painted white, red or black.

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

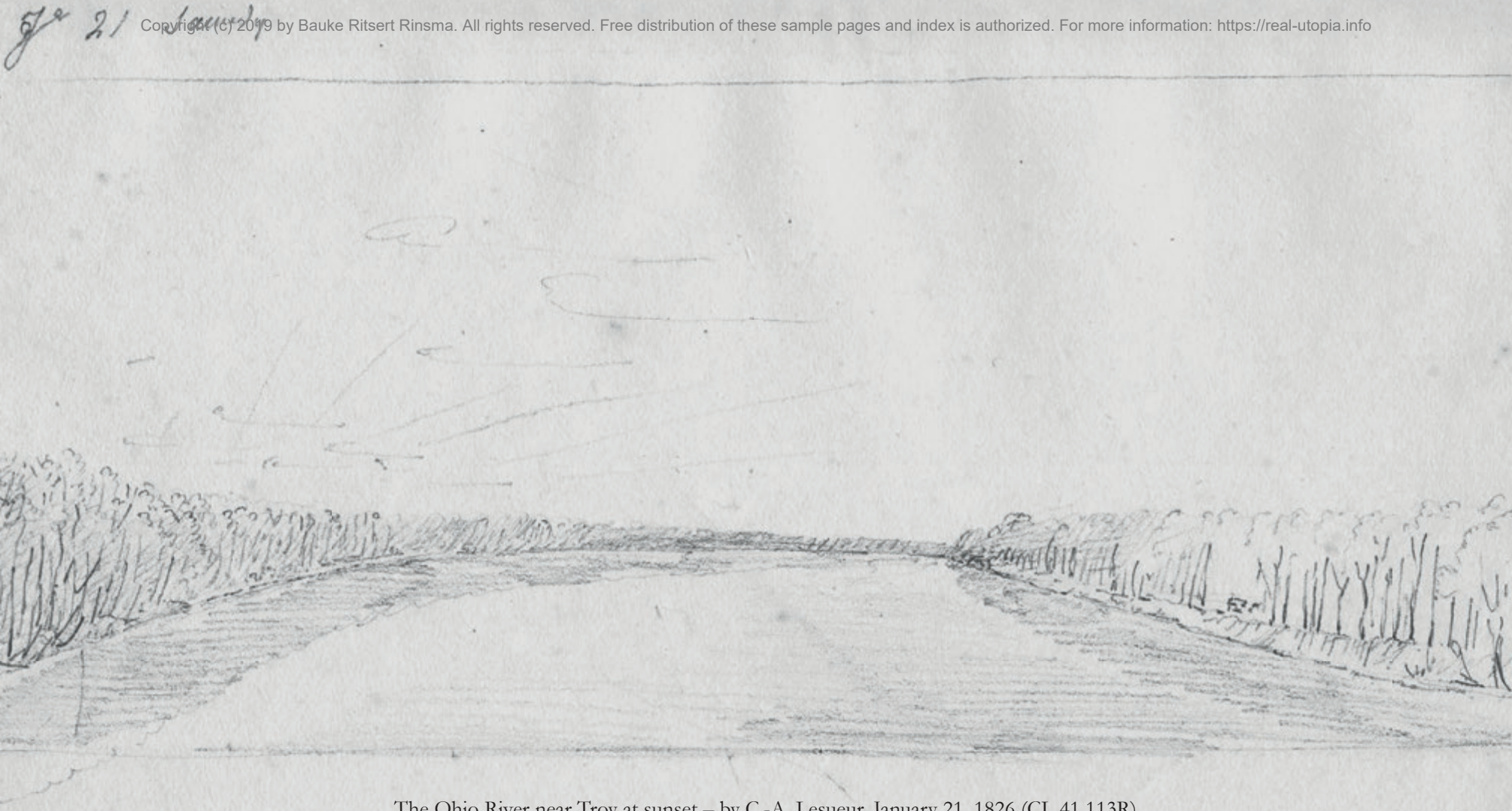
The Ohio, five miles upstream from Cincinnati, January 16 (CL 41 085), and the ridge of Charlestown, Indiana, January 19, 1826 (CL 41 099) – by C.-A. Lesueur. A fox and a powder horn are hanging in the door of the *Philanthropist*, seen from the inside. One of the boat's oars is also visible.

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

arrived in Mount Vernon, Indiana.[52] Charles Schmidt,[53] Robert Owen's servant, was waiting for them with four carriages. He had gotten there earlier by taking a steamboat shortly after Shippingport to allow the other passengers to get to New Harmony more quickly. However, almost all of them chose to spend another night on the keelboat because of the bad weather. If the snow and cold continued, they were even thinking of going by boat up the Wabash River as planned originally. As a consequence, on January 23, the only person to go to New Harmony was Robert Dale Owen, who borrowed one of the horses Charles Schmidt had brought.[54]

The story of the other passengers—who spent the last days on the *Philanthropist*—seems problematic to many historians. Josephine Mirabella Elliott stated that most of the travelers disembarked on January 23, 1826, and that Say, Lesueur, and a few women and children continued "those final seventy-odd miles up the Wabash to New Harmony."[55] According to Patricia Tyson Stroud, author of a biography on Thomas Say, his party arrived in New Harmony on the night of January 25.[56] Ernest Théodore Hamy wrote that Maclure and the others left Mount Vernon on January 26, and he added: "The naturalists remained on board; they would arrive later after making the longer trip upstream by way of the Wabash."[57] Lesueur's detailed notes clarify this point. On the back of the drawing of the Mount Vernon wharf, we read:

> Arrival Mount Vernon about 2 o'clock. Mad. Fretageot, Price & her three children & Miss Sale [*sic*], Mrs. Bill [*sic*] & child, Mr. W. Maclure, Price, Macdonald, Phiquepal, Robert [Dale] Owen, &c. got off the boat & left the next day, the 24th, for Harmony with 4 wagons loaded with goods. Those who stayed on board: Whitwell – Say – Lesueur – Dupalais – Lucie [*sic*] – Eugénie – the two little Sister [*sic*] & Cecilia.
>
> Very cold on the 25th-26th. Very thick ice floes, some more than a mile in length, collided with the boat, making a crashing noise like thunder, and pushed it.[58]



The Ohio River near Troy at sunset – by C.-A. Lesueur, January 21, 1826 (CL 41 113R)

That Saturday evening, after sketching the view above, C.-A. Lesueur wrote a small note on the geological and natural characteristics of the river bank while his keelboat gently floated past some log cabins at the mouth of the Anderson River. Suddenly, the calm and peaceful quiet were brutally interrupted. According to Dennis Friend Hanks (1799-1892), who saw the event unfold, seventeen-year-old Abraham Lincoln, son of the local ferryman, also watched the scene. The future president of the United States got "nigh crazy" when he recognized the boat the newspapers had been writing about. Many years later, in an interview with author and journalist Eleanor Atkinson (1863-1942), Mr. Hanks recounted with a Hoosier accent what happened that evening: "An' one day arly in the winter, a big keel-boat come down from Pittsburg[h] over the Ohio. They called it 'the boatload o' knowledge,' it had sich a passel o' books an' machines an' men o' l'arnin' on it. Then little rowboats an' rafts crossed over from Kaintucky an' ox teams an' pack hosses went through Gentryville and struck across kentry to—to—plague on it! Abe'd tell you in a minute—". Abraham Lincoln wanted to approach the *Philanthropist* too, but not to tease the passengers like some other people. "Denny," he said, "thar's a school an' thousands o' books thar, an' fellers that know everything in creation' [...]. The schoolin' cost only about a hundred dollars a year [...]." Dennis Hanks recalled Abe's father would not even consider sending his son to New Harmony: "Abe'd a broke his back to go, an' it night about broke his heart when he couldn't." *The Boyhood of Lincoln* (New York: The McClure Company, 1908), 29-31.

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

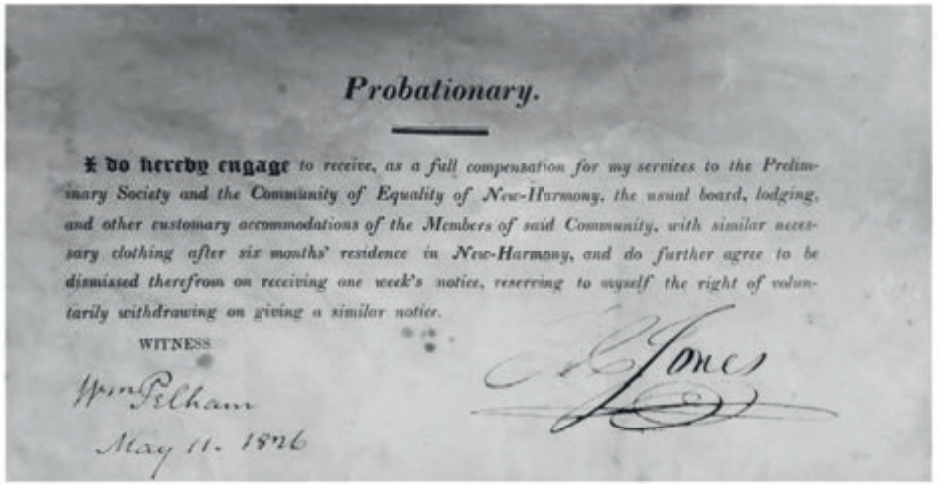
disciples created their burial ground there because, per an agreement with Father Rapp, they were not allowed to use the Harmonist graveyard.[15]

The Ropewalk, a narrow path of a few yards wide and some three hundred yards long, separated an old Indian cemetery and the burial place of the Harmonists, as well as large orchards, from the town center. The path was used to make long ropes for which they cultivated hemp (*Cannabis sativa*). The narrow lane ended inside the rope maker's workshop on Steam Mill Street, south of Tavern Street, not far from community house Number One. Steam Mill Street also led to a cotton and wool factory run by a sixty-horsepower steam engine. Following this street, one would pass by the blacksmith's and the wheelwright's, before arriving at the hospital near the intersection with Main Street.[16]

Disease among the population affected productivity, which added to the long list of problems the community had to cope with. Some historians have argued that Owen's colony included many rascals and idlers who had joined the Society for the sole purpose of benefitting from the British philanthropist's generosity.[17] Yet contemporary accounts state that most of Owen's followers were committed to the experiment. Only a very small number of people may actually have tried to take advantage of the system.[18] From February to May 1826, the main difficulties were caused by bad weather, illness and the important fact that the demographic composition of New Harmony had considerably changed after the departure of the Germans.[19] A welcoming committee may, at some point, have attempted to make a selection among the potential members who arrived at New Harmony. But in their effort to pick out the most competent workers, how could they refuse admission to the families of these enthusiasts who had traveled hundreds of miles to be part of the experiment? William Owen and his committee were therefore confronted with a moral dilemma. As a consequence, immediately after Robert Owen's first publicity campaigns, the town was filled with spouses and nonproductive children, while the positions for qualified operators in the factories and workshops remained vacant.[20] Utopian Thomas S. Bosson declared on this subject:

> Our manufacturing and mechanical branches may be considered in a state of infancy. Notwithstanding the purchase included most things necessary for prosecuting them on a pretty extensive scale […]. The transatlantic concerns of our founder left him but little time for completing his arrangements here, and a population of eight hundred persons was, in the short space of six weeks, drawn together, necessarily without much deliberation, or any reference to their professional skill or immediate usefulness.[21]

The result was dramatic, despite the fact that there were workmen in many branches—an experienced foreman cotton spinner, several qualified weavers, a few woolen spinners and a reed maker, an expert superintendant in tanning, four tanners and curriers, at least two distillers, seventeen shoemakers, seven tailors, twelve seamstresses, a good maltster and brewer, four blacksmiths, four wheelwrights, four coopers, one tinsmith, two turners, one machine maker, one cabinet maker, two watch makers, three printers, two paper makers, three sawyers, nine carpenters, two stonecutters, four bricklayers and plasterers, several millwrights, two butchers, two bakers, two gardeners, the newly arrived mechanics, and thirty-six farmers and field laborers. Still, most factories and workshops only produced a fraction of the output of the year before. The flour mill, capable of producing sixty barrels a day, was not fully operational, and the big dye-house with its large copper kettles lay idle for a lack of qualified personnel. On the other hand, the town did manufacture several items in respectable quantities which were sold in the store: soap, candles, glue, rope, boots, shoes and hats.[22] However, the most important goods were not produced in sufficient numbers,[23] and so the monetary system based on accounts with debit and credit entries did not function well.[24] Historian Arthur E. Bestor observed, while quoting some of the contemporary sources:



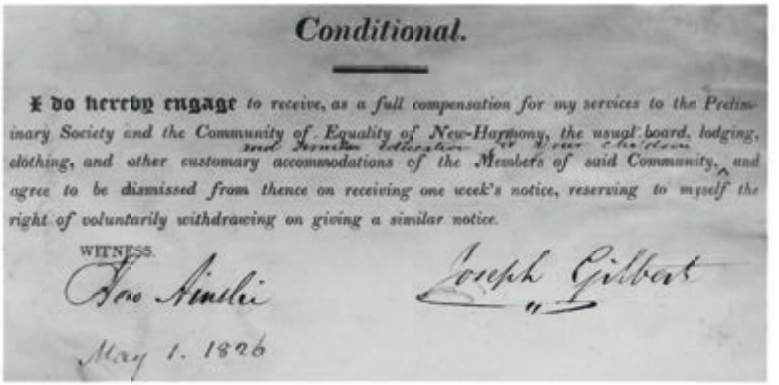
Probationary.

I do hereby engage to receive, as a full compensation for my services to the Preliminary Society and the Community of Equality of New-Harmony, the usual board, lodging, and other customary accommodations of the Members of said Community, with similar necessary clothing after six months' residence in New-Harmony, and do further agree to be dismissed therefrom on receiving one week's notice, reserving to myself the right of voluntarily withdrawing on giving a similar notice.

WITNESS

Wm Pelham

May 11. 1826



Conditional.

I do hereby engage to receive, as a full compensation for my services to the Preliminary Society and the Community of Equality of New-Harmony, the usual board, lodging, clothing, and other customary accommodations of the Members of said Community, and agree to be dismissed from thence on receiving one week's notice, reserving to myself the right of voluntarily withdrawing on giving a similar notice.

WITNESS

Joseph Gilbert

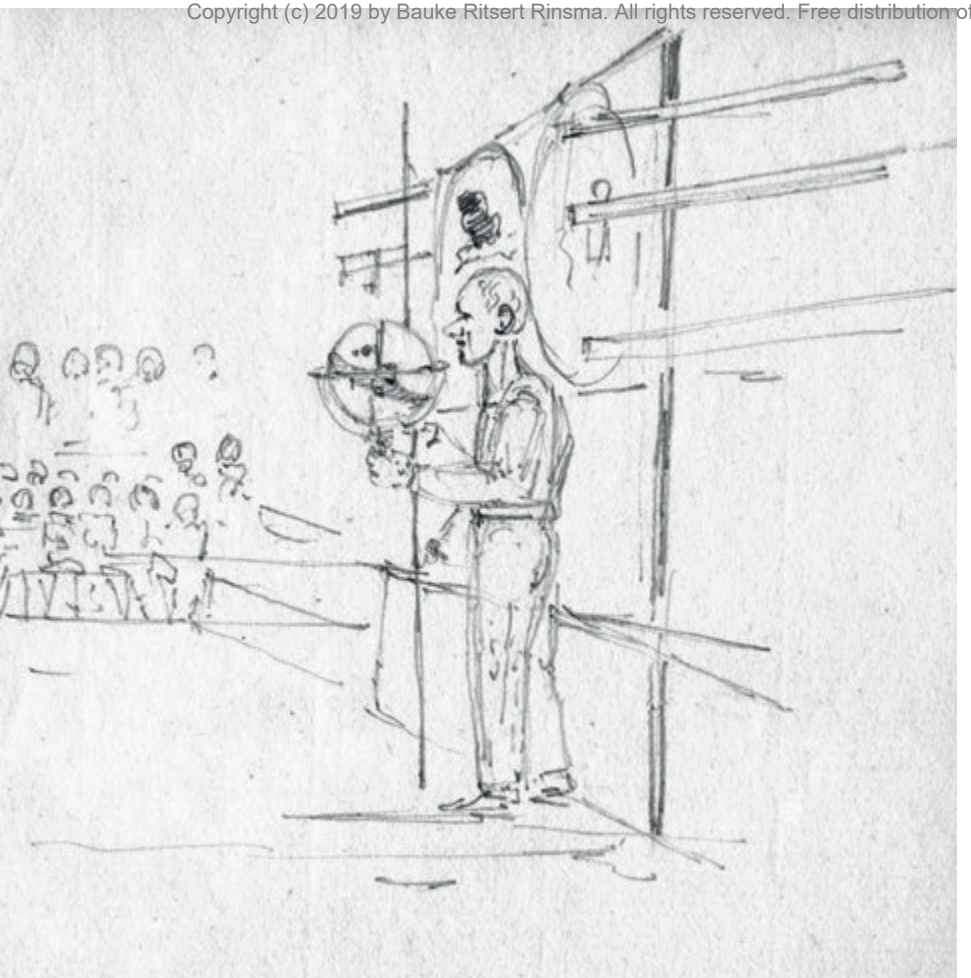
May 1. 1826

Private Collection

On May 1, 1826, in order to organize the New Harmony Community of Equality, Robert Owen created four classes of utopian citizens. He selected twenty-five persons who immediately became full members because of their qualities or qualifications. They could add new members to the Society by admitting "conditional members," i.e. people who had already proven themselves in the community over a period of six months as "probationary members." A fourth class, or "persons upon trial," was composed of newcomers. When, on May 28, the recruiting system changed, the Agricultural, Commercial and Education Societies had to define their own membership rules.

tory museum for the instruction of the members of the Society and their children.[6] Lesueur had also been planning to explore the area around the town and begin his archeological excavations. The weather was improving, and he had noticed the presence of several funeral mounds in and around New Harmony. He believed these Native American tombs to be much older than generally assumed.[7] According to French archaeologist Jean-Pierre Watté, Lesueur's method of uncovering, while as destructive as most of the excavation works in the nineteenth century, was nonetheless much ahead of its time. Unlike the closet archaeologists, Lesueur went out in the field to study the remains of the Indian village at New Harmony and the cemetery of Bonebank near Mount Vernon. He tried to read the ground, made stratigraphic observations and wrote that a ceramic statuette and a dagger came "from the same stratum and are [presently] in the cabinet of Dr. Troost."[8] Lesueur established comparisons between the cemeteries of New Harmony and Bonebank, and he did not simply uncover human bones but also noted the orientation of the bodies.[9] As Dr. Watté stated:

> He took notes, made plans and sketched what he found. [...] The gathered objects were fully sketched: they comprise potsherds which would have been rejected as "rough" or "common" by a considerable number of archaeologists at the end of the 19th century and also the beginning of the 20th century [...]. Present-day chronologies, however, are based precisely on the analysis of this type of material.
>
> He studied the composition of these objects. [...] He determined the nature of the manufactured materials and objects [...]: grinder of "diabase," axes of "syenite, diabase" [...], pipes of "red jasper" or "gray clayish stone"



Robert Owen's geography class in the Hall or the shoe factory – by C.-A. Lesueur, [August-September 1826] (CL 46 241)

Courtesy of the Natural History Museum in Le Havre

In August 1826 Robert Owen made his first attempt to establish an alternative school for the residents of New Harmony, separate from the Education Society, because he disagreed with Neef's method and had no control over his teachers. Owen proposed free classes for children, inviting their parents and other adults to accompany them. He convinced the farmers and mechanics of his community to send some two hundred pupils to be instructed by himself and several inexperienced men. These children had been recently withdrawn from the Education Society.[42]

Globe and bust of Robert Owen in the Working Men's Institute

Photograph by Ritsert Rinsma

Eyewitness Paul Brown noted about Robert Owen: "He brought some large maps into the Hall, on which the children were to be exercised; and, usually bringing in globes in the evening, the education went on according to appointment. The children were made to point out the names and situations of places on these maps and globes, and to answer a few questions concerning the motions, shape, and size of the world, &c, the effect of all which was said to infuse real general knowledge […]. Owen and his young teachers exercised them in a similar way at the shoe factory, and once a day took them in procession to the Hall, besides three nights in a week, and once every Sunday. This teaching went on for six weeks."[43] Robert Owen wanted to be in full control of all the affairs of his utopian society, but the alternative school was suspended in October 1826 when William Maclure returned to New Harmony. By this time, Owen was living in Number Five with his son Robert Dale and Marie Fretageot. It was then decided that most of the children would be placed under Madame's jurisdiction, whereas twenty-two others returned to Neef's institution. Owen's school had to close.[44]

"Inferior and commonplace artists are attached to the establishment of the French Museum, while the Raffaelle of zoological painters was suffered to emigrate, and pursued his professional career as a private teacher in Philadelphia."

William John Swainson, 1840

List of Illustrations

This list of illustrations is organized in two parts. Part 1 presents C.-A Lesueur's art reproduced in this book. It contains twelve sections: Animals, Archeology, England, Lesser Antilles, Eastern Travels, Philadelphia, Journey to New Harmony, New Harmony, Western Travels, Engravings, Manuscripts and Miscellaneous. Each picture is followed by its current catalogue number and archive. Old reference numbers are also provided when they exist. Items followed by an asterisk (*) were never catalogued by Robert W. G. Vail. The years indicated under recently identified drawings refer to the first date of publication and not to the actual moment of identification. Part 2 contains the list of photographs and other illustrations. It is organized in two sections. Its first section presents the photographs made by the author. Place names are alphabetically arranged. Its second section lists the remaining photographs and illustrations provided by institutions and several persons who helped the author complete the pictures. Reproductions of C.-A. Lesueur's art and documents from the collections of Le Havre, Paris, Germantown, Indianapolis, New Harmony and West Lafayette were digitized or photographed by Ritsert Rinsma. Some archives were given digital copies.

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27	black leopards from Java (1824) *Panthera pardus melas*	Coll. 136B#4, ANSP
359	painted turtle and smooth soft-shell turtle *Chrysemys picta* (1833) *Tryonix muticus* (1826)	 CL 78 016, MHNH CL 78 047, MHNH

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300	potsherds from Bonebank (March 1828)	CL 41 199, MHNH Vail #867 Leland #219
301	ceramic figurine from Bonebank (March 1828)	CL 41 210, MHNH Vail #867 Leland #219 Hamy p. 76 fig. 11
302	map of the NativeAmerican tombs in New Harmony (c. 1830)	CL 41 297, MHNH * Hamy p. 65 fig. 8

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30	view of London from Greenwich Park (September 1815)	CL 37 006, MHNH [*see photo* p. 31]
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LESSER ANTILLES (1816)

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19	removal of half of a church in New Bedford (September 1816)	CL 39 123, MHNH Vail #780 Leland #36 Guiffrey #12
45	road to Albany at Sunset (April 1819) [*previously unidentified*]	CL 39 179, MHNH *
56a	Niagara Falls (July 1816)	CL 46 003, MHNH *
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113	garden and manor of Joseph Bonaparte at Point Breeze (c. 1821) [*identified by B. R. Rinsma, 2007*]	CL 40 105, MHNH Vail #87 [incorrectly identified]
115	view on the Brandywine valley from the piazza of E. I. du Pont (September 2, 1822) [*identified by B. R. Rinsma, 2007*]	CL 39 166, MHNH *
116	residence of Victor Marie du Pont at Louviers (September 1, 1822) [*identified by B. R. Rinsma, 2012*]	CL 40 004, MHNH Vail #7 [unidentified] [*see photo* p. 117]
119	Henry Clay Cotton Mill (September 1, 1822) [*identified by B. R. Rinsma, 2012*]	CL 40 006, MHNH Vail #8 [unidentified] [*see photo* p. 118]
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236	New Year's Eve at Safe Harbor (December 31, 1825)	CL 46 051, MHNH *
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328	Robert Owen's geography class (August-September 1826) [*previously unidentified*]	CL 46 241, MHNH *
329	on the doorstep of Number Five (c. 1827) [*previously unidentified*]	CL 46 247, MHNH *
331	girl writing to her boyfriend (August 31, 1826) [*this may be Camilla Wright*]	CL 46 244, MHNH *
333	Le Malade Imaginaire (c. 1827) [*previously unidentified*]	CL 46 246, MHNH *
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341	Thomas Say on the doorstep of Number Five (c. 1834) [*identified by J. M. Elliott, 1994*]	K:2-130, HSP
345	backside of Church Street, seen from West Street (c. 1828) [*identified by J. M. Elliott, 1993*]	CL 46 103, MHNH *
346	stone granary, Lesueur's house, wine press house and Number Five (c. 1828) [*identified by J. M. Elliott, 1993*]	CL 46 113, MHNH * [*see photo* p. 347]
356	New Harmony buildings related to the United States Geological Survey (November 15, 1831)	CL 41 161, MHNH Vail #750

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10	marching field of Vincennes (June 1834) [*most buildings previously unidentified*]	CL 41 182, MHNH Vail #734
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16	houses of John Badollet and William Henry Harrison in Vincennes (November 2, 1833)	CL 41 177, MHNH Vail #713 [*see photo* p. 17]
143	William Hall's tavern in Wanborough (May 21, 1826) [*identified by B. I. Madden, 1974*]	CL 41 142, MHNH Vail #233
144	Cauliflower Lodge in Wanborough, home of Morris Birkbeck (May 19, 1826) [*identified by N. J. B. Plomley, 1971*]	CL 41 137, MHNH Vail #228 [*see photo* p. 147]
145	Park House in Albion, home of Richard Flower (May 25, 1826) [*identified by B. I. Madden, 1974*]	CL 41 146, MHNH Vail #237
146	breakfast at William Hall's tavern in Wanborough (May 21, 1826) [*identified by B. I. Madden, 1974*]	CL 41 141, MHNH Vail #232 Guiffrey #48
281	sugar camp on the road to Mount Vernon (February 25, 1826)	CL 42 001-2, MHNH Vail #791 Leland #132 Guiffrey #17-1 Hamy p. 64 *bis* fig. 1

87	Genus *Actinia* (1817)	*ANSP Journal*, 1, no. 1 (1817): 186 bis
122a	Freshwater Bass Lesueur's *Cichla aenea* [*Centrarchus aeneus*]	*ANSP Journal* 2, no. 2 (1822): 439
122b	Freshwater Drum Lesueur's *Sciaena oscula* [*Aplodinotus grunniens Rafinesque*]	*ANSP Journal* 2, no. 2 (1822): 441
290	*Archimedes* of Lesueur [Genus *Bryozoans*] (c. 1827)	CL 42 201-3, MHNH
338	title page of Lesueur's *Fishes of North America*	C. -A. Lesueur, *American Ichthyology Or Natural History of the Fishes of North America* (1827), 1
339	first three pages of Lesueur's *Fishes of North America*	C. -A. Lesueur, *American Ichthyology Or Natural History of the Fishes of North America* (1827), 3-5
352	plan and profile of Wilkinson's Cave at Mine Lamotte (c. 1827)	CL 42 041-1, MHNH Vail #865 Leland #162
360	eight printed pages of Lesueur's *Walnut Hills Fossil Shells* (1829)	CL 45 141, 45 148, 45 149, 45 151, 45 142, 45 152, 45 155, 45 156, MHNH
361	frontispiece of Lesueur's *Walnut Hills Fossil Shells* (1829)	CL 45 120, MHNH Vail #490 Hamy p. 69 fig. 9
366 *see* p. 20	map of New Harmony, Indiana (1834)	E.-T. Hamy, *Les Voyages du Naturaliste Ch. Alex. Lesueur en Amérique du Nord (1815-1837)*, 54 fig. 6 Vail #814
411	Lesueur's view and cross-section of Cap de la Hève near Le Havre	*Comptes-rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences* 18 (1844): 227

PART 2: INDEX OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER REPRODUCTIONS

PHOTOS BY RITSERT RINSMA (2004-2015)

PHOTOS BY OTHER AUTHORS

OTHER ARCHIVAL REPRODUCTIONS

The New Harmony labyrinth, drawn from memory by David Schnee, aged 85, who was taken there by his father as a child in 1826. The hedges were cut down about 1840.

General Index of Persons, Places, Institutions and Works Mentioned

Names of buildings, constructions and streets documented in this book can be found under the main- or subentries "buildings and constructions" and "street names" for each town. Exceptions are the "Neef-Lesueur House," "New Harmony churches," "New Harmony granary," "Number One" to "Number Five," and "Owen's Number One," which are main entries. Sketches by C.-A. Lesueur are under the main- or subentries "drawn by Lesueur" after a place or person's name.

A

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Chronological and Thematic Index

The index of persons, places, institutions and works mentioned does not contain all the references relating to Charles-Alexandre Lesueur and William Maclure, which have been organized thematically and in chronologic order to provide the reader with a clear and comprehensive overview of the information treated in this book.

EARLY YEARS

EARLY CAREER

PESTALOZZIAN SCHOOLS

MACLURE'S TRAVELS WITH LESUEUR

RESIDENCE IN PHILADELPHIA

MACLURE'S DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE

CORRESPONDENCE

LESUEUR'S RELATION WITH FRANCE

LESUEUR'S FAMILY LIFE

MACLURE'S RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

REASONS FOR DEPARTURE FROM PHILADELPHIA

DEPARTURE FOR NEW HARMONY

RESIDENCE IN NEW HARMONY

FINAL YEARS

LESUEUR'S SCIENTIFIC WORK

"I was naturally drawn to the Cape [of Le Havre], and it was a pleasure to find myself in the midst of its rubble, excavating and extracting fossils. In 1814 I got the idea to reveal their forms. I had already collected and drawn some samples of fossils and sketched the cliffs several times, including a few cross-sections, when this work was interrupted by my departure for the United States. After my return to the spot I had abandoned in 1815, I joyfully began exploring it again. The successive rockslides that had taken place during my twenty-two-year absence, and also after my return, the most recent being in 1841, causing the removal of the semaphores, had changed the shape in many ways. [...] The table [I have made] shows two sides or cross-sections of the glauconite soil of the cliffs at Cap de la Hève. It gives an idea of the positions of the strata and the successive layers of the Upper Jurassic, the green sand, the lines of the sources, the brown and gray-white glauconite-holding limestone, and the Upper Diluvian layer on top of these high cliffs."

Charles-Alexandre Lesueur,
Views and Cross-Sections of the Cap de la Hève, 1843

Eyewitness to Utopia

Scientific Conquest and Communal Settlement in C.-A. Lesueur's Sketches of the Frontier

Utopia is no myth. It was there, at the frontier, the missing link between George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Apollo 17. Three progressive minds made it happen. Two had a vision of the future. One told their story in his sketchbooks: the true story of the scientific conquest of America.

After courageously defending the city of Paris in 1814 and 1815, first to protect Napoleon, next to get rid of him, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur was in need of a better world. A philanthropic businessman provided the opportunity. Enthused by his scientific knowledge, William Maclure brought the French explorer to the United States. There he met the Founding Fathers and all the great minds of his time. Every knowledgeable American agreed to this: no one knew more than Lesueur. He was a living encyclopedia, the most talented student of Georges Cuvier. His contributions to American science were revolutionary. Then, suddenly, history forgot about him when together with a group of intellectuals he created an experimental scientific utopia. Abandoned by most of his friends on the American frontier, he initiated its geological exploration and systematic discovery.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND HIS RESEARCH

Born in the Netherlands in 1969, Bauke Ritsert Rinsma moved to France in 1990 and obtained two bachelor's degrees, in Law and Business Administration, as well as two master's degrees, in History and Anglo-American Literature, from the Universities of Le Havre and Rouen, before starting his career as a dedicated teacher and researcher, working part-time in the universities of Caen and Le Havre, and several other institutions. His innovative research on Charles-Alexandre Lesueur began with the preparations for a Ph.D. Fluent in French, English, Dutch and German, he investigated archives and libraries across Europe and the U.S.A. to uncover C.-A. Lesueur's impact on American science. The savant turned out to be a modern Leonardo da Vinci, the irreplaceable collaborator of William Maclure, and the devoted disseminator of Georges Cuvier's knowledge.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Leslie Jean Roberts is a specialist in first translations of literary and cultural books in French. She translated *Exile in Richmond: The Confederate Diaries of Henri Garidel* (University Press of Virginia, 2001), Etienne Cabet's *Travels in Icaria* (Syracuse University Press, 2003), portions of the 1690 *Gravier Dictionary* for the Miami Tribes of Oklahoma and Indiana, and has published articles in various scholarly journals. She has a Ph.D. and M.A. in French Language and Civilization from Columbia University (New York), a B.A. from Tufts University (Massachusetts), and a diploma in French Civilization from the Sorbonne University (Paris). She taught at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (New York), Emerson College (Boston), and the University of Southern Indiana (Evansville). As a professor *emeritus*, she volunteered her time to translate Ritsert Rinsma's research because it brings to light a pioneer of science in Jefferson's America who later became a central figure in the New Harmony experiment.

" Ritsert Rinsma's Eyewitness to Utopia presents Lesueur's artistic gift to the New World in its most complete rendition and elevates this artist, scientist and communitarian to his own proper status among the most notable figures in the early Republic."

Dr. Donald E. Pitzer, Director Emeritus, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana

" In this groundbreaking book, Ritsert Rinsma, with his comprehensive knowledge and acute perceptions, has succeeded masterfully in capturing the significance of Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, illuminating the context of his meaningful American sketchbooks."

Dr. Ralph Grayson Schwarz, Founding President of Historic New Harmony, Inc.

" I am delighted that the present memoir reveals the immensity of this historical figure from Le Havre."

The Hon. Edouard Philippe, MP, Prime Minister of France

Author and historian
Ritsert Rinsma

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