

Karl Friedrich, Grand Duke of Baden (Early 19th Century)

Abstract

Karl Friedrich of Baden (1728-1811) managed to elevate his once small margraviate of Baden-Durlach to an electorate (1803-1806) and finally to a grand duchy (1806). Although the enlargement of his territory was remarkable – in this, he was helped by major changes that followed the Coalition Wars against revolutionary France and his close association with Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine – Karl Friedrich is best remembered for an achievement of even greater significance: together with his ministers, he transformed Baden into a classic example of "enlightened absolutism." Among other things, he abolished torture and serfdom and oversaw the creation of model educational institutions and social insurance schemes. Despite his personal frugality and austerity, he promoted both the arts and sciences and fostered economic prosperity in Baden. His policies paved the way for the subsequent southwest German brand of liberalism that emerged from the era of Napoleonic domination in Germany.

Source



Source: Lithograph by an unknown artist, early 19th century.

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Recommended Citation: Karl Friedrich, Grand Duke of Baden (Early 19th Century), published in:
German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/the-holy-roman-empire-1648-1815/ghdi:image-2652>> [July 16,
2024].