



"THE BEGGERS"

C. M. RUSSELL

The Storytelling Value of Art

When we first discussed this new publication we outlined our aims, our hopes and scope of coverage; we found common ground until we attempted to agree on a name, but here we could find no agreement. We made a list of possible names, but no one idea seemed just right. We knew what we wanted, a name which would sum up neatly all our thinking on American history and the importance of art as a medium of conveying a definite idea or impression—and still more, of art as having historical significance. The first issue of the new quarterly, for instance, was to be—and is—devoted to one aspect of this concept, specifically, "The Story-Telling Value of Art". But how could we find a word or a group of words which would reflect this and all the other equally important subjects we would be dealing with in "exploring" the wealth of Americana available to us in the Gilcrease Museum? A series of conferences stretching over more than a month finally resulted in the name used in this issue, THE AMERICAN SCENE. We realize that this is a broad concept, but we feel that the material we will "discover" will warrant the presumption.

In the course of our word searching, we thought of many ideas for which we could find no adequate term. Someone mentioned "picture-maker", which has been used many times, but which has great significance in looking back into the history of Man as an artist and chronicler. Man—apes and parrots notwithstanding—has the distinction of being the only picture-making animal on our planet; perhaps, this is more of a key to his rise up the ladder of human progress than we have given

(Continued)

thought. We know that for some 30,000 years man has been a picture-maker; the caves of southern France and northern Spain reveal examples of Aurignacian art which are both descriptive and beautiful. Certainly, the archeologist owes much to the primitive artist; the drawings, the figurines, the picture languages have contributed greatly to his knowledge of the centuries of peoples who lived before a written language had evolved. Picture-maker! Fortunately the world has never lost her picture-makers,

once they began to work. Much of our knowledge of recent times as well as of the past has been preserved for us by the artist's brush. Often the artist has served as historian, where no other worked. Social historians recently have turned to the arts for documentation concerning other eras and other times. A painting, a piece of sculpture, is treated as any other document, being put to certain tests to judge its relative worth as a document. Treating art works as documents relating to social history,

or other aspects of the story of Man, may cause some to cry out, "But what about art as an aesthetic joy?" Well, what is beautiful will remain so regardless of our interest in it for its story-telling value, will it not? In fact, art museums have always known that visitors generally respond best to paintings which depict a familiar theme or present a known subject. In other words a painting can be beautiful, but can also have documentary value—one value need not detract from the other.

To follow from the general to the specific . . .

Let's look at some of the artists represented in the Gilcrease Museum who have made a contribution in light of what has been said in the introductory remarks. The Gilcrease collections concern themselves generally with America, and develop considerable emphasis on the history of trans-Mississippi West. The story of the American Indian is an important chapter in this history as is that of the Indian fighter, the mountain man, the homesteader, the miner, the cowboy, the builder of towns and cities. The historian was not an active seeker after knowledge on the rugged fringe of the American empire—stretching ever westward—but the artist was. Just seventeen years after the great Louisiana Purchase was made an English artist, Samuel Seymour, had sketched his way to the foot of the Rocky Mountains; twelve years later, in 1832, George Catlin, a native of Pennsylvania, went into the Missouri Valley—working over hundreds of miles both up and down stream—to paint the Indian and the landscape. Catlin was determined to, as he put it, "rescue from oblivion the looks and customs of the vanishing races of native men in America." He devoted most of his life to this resolve; only in recent years has the world begun to realize the importance of his work.

Many other artists came into the great frontier area, including: Charles Bodmer, Peter Rindisbacher, and Alfred Jacob Miller. Miller is the first artist, whose work survives, to paint the Rocky Mountain region and the upper Missouri. Miller traveled west under the sponsorship of Captain William Drummond Stewart with a fur company caravan in 1837; he sketched all along the 800-mile trip and produced invaluable records of the trappers, the old forts, the Indians in their native state, and of a landscape

soon to be altered by the advance of white settlers. Miller tended to romanticize about his subjects on occasions, but his details are good and his eye was true; under the pink frosting one can see the rugged, virgin land awaiting conquest . . . the unsuspecting Indian about to lose his homeland to the white man whom he had at first made welcome.

Four years before Miller went into the Rockies, a Swiss artist of considerable talent, Charles Bodmer, traveled up the Missouri River and to the mouth of the Marias, stopping for a time at Fort McKenzie. Bodmer accompanied the naturalist, Maxamilian of Wied-Neuwied, who was later to write of his experiences and publish a folio containing many of Bodmer's paintings. Bodmer saw the Blackfoot, the Sioux, the Crow, the Assiniboin, the Snake, the Mandan and the Gros Ventres; many of his paintings are so faithful that they can be used by ethnologists in their study of the Plains Indians. Certainly Bodmer's works carry a touch of the dramatic without losing their value as documents.

Much of the art produced on the American frontier was done by artists who were engaged in government surveys. John Mix Stanley joined General Philip Kearny in 1846, traveling from Santa Fe to San Diego; again in 1853 he became a part of the Isaac Stevens survey party, producing hundreds of sketches of the new West. Seth Eastman, a West Point graduate, in 1850 was instructed to prepare illustrations for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' publication, written by Henry R. Schoolcraft. Beginning in 1855 the U. S. Senate published a series of reports of the explorations and surveys made to determine the most practicable route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. Here again the

artist played an important role, since these reports were filled with every type of information about the land and its inhabitants from the geography to the number of buffalo in the various herds. Several artists contributed to this survey, including Stanley, R. H. Kern, H. B. Mollhausen, A. H. Campbell, J. C. Tidball, J. J. Young, W. P. Blake, Charles Koppel, J. H. Richard and many others. This survey resulted in producing one of the first documents to give a factual account of the area west of the Mississippi River; unfortunately, the average Easterner or seeker after western land did not see this series of heavy volumes. However, the trails into the West had been made and the artist's conception of the land of opportunity had much to do with the steady movement which followed.

The artist, the picture-maker, has recorded a segment of our American story with such graphic realism that no history text is now compiled without the use of these primary source materials.

James T. Forrest

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"MOUNTAIN MAN"

The work of Frederic Remington epitomizes the story telling aspect of art perhaps more than that of any other western artist; his contemporaries were quick to recognize this. No doubt his realistic and dramatic interpretation of frontier life is the key to his continued popularity. Charles Belmont Davis in 1905 appraised Remington's art with a deftness not recently approached. "The years which intervened between 1880 and 1885 saw the passing of the West—that is, the West which Remington has made real to every American, although the American may never have been west of Trenton. During those five years the buffaloes that remained were ignominiously shipped to Eastern zoological gardens; the Indian exchanged his war-bonnet for a high silk hat; the little frontier posts were consolidated into large garrisons, and the men who had been fighting their red brothers devoted themselves to drills and a general preparation for later controversies with the Spaniard and Filipino. With a keen observation and an unusual foresight, Remington watched his throbbing, full-blooded life of the prairie fade away into history. From his point of vantage he saw the Indian bury his hatchet and take up the plow; he saw the scout and the bad man and the trapper of the plains move into more refined occupation—in a word, he was a patient witness while all that was most pict-

FREDERIC REMINGTON---

Storyteller on Canvas and in Bronze

uresque and dramatic of our American life of the last century was being carefully swept up by the broom and dumped away by the dust-pan of civilization."

In the same year James Barnes said of Remington's sculpture: "Frederic Remington's virile drawing, his mastery of type and character, long ago made him famous in the rendering of Western life. The frontier, from the days of Kit Carson to those of Custer, was his playground. The overland trail and the men who followed it, the drama of life and death in the fight at the foothills, we know, for he has shown them to us. The bearded old trapper, the trim cavalryman with deep-set eyes and tawny mustachios, the half-breed scout, the Indian brave in war-bonnet, the cowboy with loose neckerchief, six-shooter, and goatskin chaparejos—the horses they rode, the rawboned cayuse, the bronco, half-broken, never tamed, the tireless cavalry horse, the cow-pony—all these are known of Frederic Remington. He has made us feel the rush of the stampede, the glaring, heated stretches of blue-shadowed alkali deserts, the chaparral and sagebrush, lava-bed and bad land—all this was his dominion and source of inspiration! In the school that he founded Frederic Remington has had many imitators, but to his types we invariably return. . . .

"One (bronze) with which the public is familiar, 'The Bronco Buster', was that selected by the Rough Riders for presentation to their colonel at the end of the Spanish war. It had been chosen by men familiar with the subject represented, men who had themselves braved the dangers of the bronco buster's calling. These men were not critics, but they knew the living thing the bronze had caught from the knowledge of the master-hand.

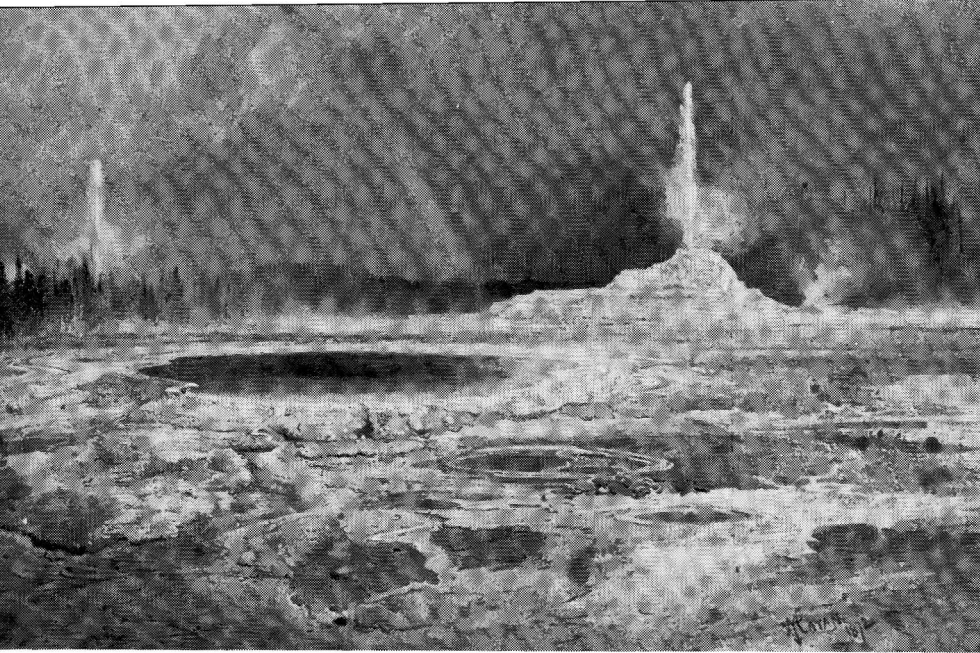
"Here are four cowboys, wild, harum-scarum devils, shooting up a town from the mere joy of a healthy existence, plus the exhilaration produced by frontier rum! They are dashing down the street, the ponies at top speed, spurning the ground beneath their feet—and that is the marvelous part of it—only five of those pattering hoofs touch the earth, and there are eight pairs of them! (This refers to the bronze, 'Coming Through the Rye'.)"

"But in his simpler figures there also lurks all that this larger group contains. Take 'The Mountain Man'—note the unconsciousness of effort here again—the habit of surefootedness of the beast, the poise of that extended forefoot to catch the projecting rock, the keen attention to business, and that not too strained."

Frederic Remington, storyteller on canvas and in bronze, once said: "...if the recording of a day which is past infringes on the increasing interest of the present, be assured there are those who will set this down in turn and everything will be right in the end."



"THE TROOPER"



"THE CASTLE GEYSER"

THOMAS MORAN

During the administration of Ulysses S. Grant the American political scene was one of unparalleled cynicism and corruption. The vested interests practically controlled the passage of laws. Graft and bribery, involving cabinet members and Congressmen, were in many cases common public knowledge. The railroads, for example, were practically given huge tracts of public land for their own use and profit.

In this atmosphere a Congressional bill to set aside thousands of acres of land for the pleasure and education of the public was, to say the least, incongruous. And at a time when ruthless political skullduggery was the standard of the day, it is even more unlikely that an artist, a photographer, and a professor of geology should play a vital part in the lobbying that insured the passage of the bill.

The bill in question was the one which set aside the Yellowstone area for the use of the American public; and the lobbyists were Thomas Moran, the artist, William Henry Jackson, photographer, and F. V. Hayden of the U. S. Geological Survey. Today we should be grateful that some men were able to think idealistically during this period of material cynicism, because this bill was the sole basis for our present day National Park system.

To fully appreciate the story behind this unprecedented Congressional action it is necessary to go back in history to the early 1800's. At this time the fur trappers first came through the Yellowstone area in their never ending search for new streams to work. They found little to excite

them in the way of beaver pelts, but they were understandably impressed with the geysers and hot springs they discovered. However, when they tried to tell outsiders of the wonders they had seen it was like another case of crying "Wolf!" The trappers had a vast store of tall tales to tell about the Rocky Mountains just as the lumbermen told of Paul Bunyan and his adventures in the North Woods. In moments of relaxation they would tell anyone who would listen of the wonders of the "putrified" forest they had visited where even the birds and flowers had turned to stone, or of the mountain of pure glass shaped like an enormous telescope that caused men to shoot at animals that were actually fifteen miles away. In view of these tales, descriptions of Yellowstone were considered by the most broadminded to be just another addition to this droll form of American humor. To the more literal minded they were absurd lies and no more. So, until the gold seekers came more than forty years later, Yellowstone had its place in the frontier mythology, but was a complete blank in the formal geographic knowledge of the West.

In the early 1860's gold was discovered in western Montana, and soon hordes of goldseekers were fanning out through the whole area. The first prospectors came through the Yellowstone district in 1863, and others followed over a period of several years. Astonishingly, the gold seekers were so engrossed in their dreams of sudden mineral wealth that the natural wonders they passed made practically no impression. It is recorded that one party travelling through the

SKETCHES WITH To Prove a T

heart of the geyser district duly noted the strange activity but were in such a hurry to find their lode that they did not even stop to look. Because of this wonderfully blase attitude on the part of the prospectors, the wonderland of Yellowstone was still undiscovered so far as most of the outside world was concerned. But some of the citizens of Montana were beginning to wonder if there could be something to the strange tales being told of the area.

Three men from Helena thought it was at least worth investigating. D. E. Folsom and two friends braved the dangers of the current Indian uprising to travel to Yellowstone in 1869. What they found, of course, made them feel like apologizing to Jim Bridger and the other spinners of tall tales. The real thing far surpassed the most far-fetched stories they had heard. However, fate almost played another strange trick on the American public. On returning to Helena, Mr. Folsom was asked to appear at a public meeting to recount his adventures. Soberly considering what he had seen, he backed out of the engagement. He was afraid he would be laughed out of town if he told the truth.

Fortunately Folsom talked to some close friends. Next year, another, larger expedition went back to Yellowstone because of what he had to tell about the country. And in 1870 the news of a systematic examination of the Yellowstone country was for the first time released to the public. H. P. Washburn with a group of eight men travelled through most of the present day park; on their return, they were not reluctant to tell of their adventures. They wrote articles for Montana newspapers and for national publications. The illustrations for one of these articles were done by a young Eastern artist, Thomas Moran, who based his finished drawings on field sketches made by the explorers.

Many people were excited by the news of the Yellowstone discoveries, but few were in the position to do anything about it; Dr. F. V. Hayden

WHICH WENT TO CONGRESS

Myth and Preserve a Park

was. He headed the government geological survey which was systematically mapping and describing the geology of the little known sections of the West. Hayden changed his existing plans to arrange for an expedition to Yellowstone in the summer of 1871. Fortunately for posterity, Hayden was a geologist who thought of more than minerals and rock formations because he asked Moran, whose drawings he had seen, and William Henry Jackson, a photographer, to accompany the expedition.

Yellowstone was a revelation for Moran. The other expedition members were surprised at the durability of this frail looking Easterner who worked so dilligently, but Thomas Moran was a man inspired, and the paintings he made clearly show it. He had found in the spectacular landscapes of Yellowstone a challenge that called forth all of his latent talents as an artist.

Before the Hayden party had started for Yellowstone, several prominent men in Montana were laying plans for a revolutionary experiment. They wanted the government to set aside the area as a national park. By the time Hayden returned to Washington, a bill to this effect was being drawn up to present to Congress. Dr. Hayden, with his new knowledge of the territory, was called in to help set the boundaries, and more important, he was asked to help lobby for the bill. This bill of such a strangely non-political nature was to be the basis for one of the most carefully worked out campaigns in congressional history. N. P. Langford, W. H. Clagett, and Hayden personally talked to every Congressman. There was a great deal of talking about the beauty of Yellowstone, but Hayden did not depend on talk alone. He quickly called for the Moran sketches and the Jackson photographs. He showed these to all the Congressmen he canvassed, and it is not hard to imagine that these were the proverbial pictures that were worth a thousand words.

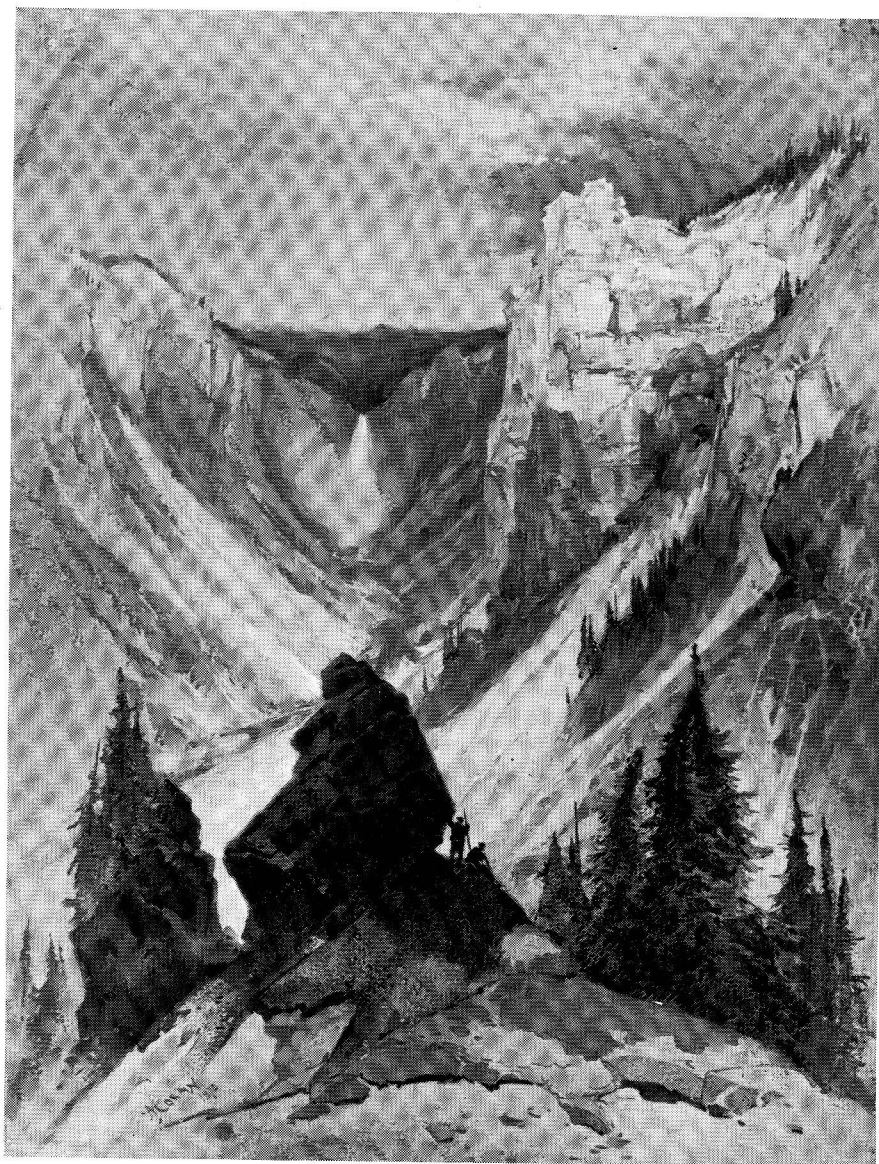
The Gilcrease Institute has in its collections sixteen watercolors done

in 1871 and 1872 that are finished versions of the sketches Hayden used. Two of these are used to illustrate this article. Now 87 years old, they show in a remarkably concise way the wonderland that no amount of verbal description could convey. The crucial point so far as this story is concerned is that they encompass not just the cold facts about Yellowstone but the

mystery and romance that every visitor to the area experiences. A good painting is an invaluable descriptive device because it is first a concrete visual experience. But it is also an experience that has been interpreted and refined by another human being, the artist, in terms of his own reaction to the actual situation. Moran was deeply moved by what he saw at Yellowstone and his excitement is perfectly captured and conveyed to the viewer in these watercolors.

To complete the story, the Yellowstone bill was passed by an almost unanimous, non-partisan vote to create the first American national park. We can only speculate about the part that the Moran paintings actually played, but we do know that most of the Congressmen saw them, and we do know that they speak very powerfully for their subject.

YELLOWSTONE FALLS (1872)



THE LAST CAMP

The Tragedy at Wounded Knee

The Ghost Dance religion has been called "the last hope of a desperate people," and it is wisely named. Bitter and starving, the Sioux were living on a reservation in the territory of Dakota; their herds of wild cattle, the buffalo, had been destroyed and the cattle given them by the white man were diseased. Even their crops had failed, and epidemics were spreading through their camps.

Everywhere in the West the mighty chiefs had been stripped of their power and their people had been confined to reservations. The Indian civilization, as a whole, was idle, with only dreams of the old days of hunting and fighting. It was during this period that the medicine men ruled, and the desperate tribes were easily convinced of most anything that gave hopes of freedom.

Many years before, great numbers of the Indians had been converted to Christianity, and it is easy to see how they accepted the claims of a Paiute called Wovoka to be the Indian Messiah. Wovoka's father, Tavibo, said he had revelations from the divine spirits first in 1870. He proclaimed that all the people of the earth would be destroyed, but at the end of three days the Indians would be resurrected in the flesh to live forever. However, he said, it was necessary for the Indians everywhere to dance continually.

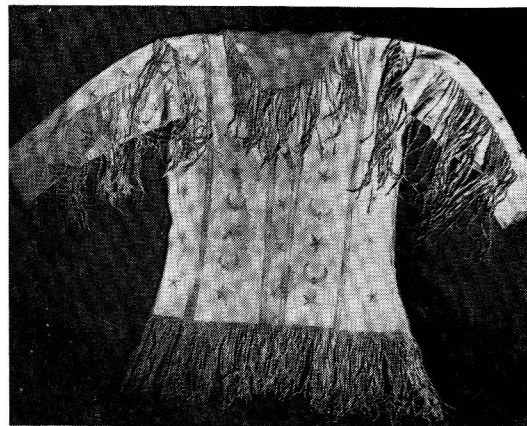
Tavibo died shortly after he told these things, but his son Wovoka was considered, by those who believed the religion of the dance, to be the natural inheritor of his powers.

Although Wovoka was "adopted" by a white farmer he continued to receive his father's revelations and told of the dance that was eventually to sweep the Indian nation. The first "Ghost Dance" was enacted at a site chosen by Wovoka on the Walker Lake reservation in January, 1889.

The second ceremony was visited, out of curiosity, by several Utes. The dance was passed from tribe to tribe until in the autumn of 1889 several medicine men of the Sioux traveled from the Dakotas to view the ritual.

The Sioux were perhaps the most anxious to accept the Ghost Dance religion, and in the spring of 1890 they began dancing, adding new symbols to Wovoka's original dance. Their costume consisted of ghost shirts painted blue around the necks with bright colored thunderbirds, bows and arrows, suns, moons, and stars painted on them. The sacred shirts were believed to be bulletproof.

The dance was not easy and the



"GHOST SHIRT"

GILCREASE COLLECTION

dancers were required to fast, but this was not hard for the already starving Sioux. Wovoka preached that soon the earth would be covered with dust, but that the Indians who were dancing would be suspended above it. He further declared that all the Indians who had died would come back to life, and that the great herds of buffalo would return.

Sitting Bull, greatest of the Sioux, was blamed for much of the frenzied dancing, although in truth he had very little, if anything at all, to do with it. Because of the feeling abroad regarding the great Sioux chief, the reservation agent, James McLaughlin, decided to take him into custody himself and thus prevent a dangerous disturbance which he feared would result if the military authorities forced the issue and tried to make an arrest. Just before dawn on December 15, 1890, forty-three Indian police, authorized by McLaughlin and whom Sitting Bull called traitors against their own people, surrounded the old chief's cabin and dragged him from his bed. Sitting Bull submitted to the men at first, but when his loyal followers who gathered around his cabin, heard him say he was not going, they immediately hurried to his rescue. First hand accounts relate that Sitting Bull did not resist arrest, but that all involved were somewhat "trigger happy" and in the wild fight that followed, the chief was killed. Only the timely arrival of a cavalry detachment saved the Indian police from complete extinction.

The news of the great Sitting Bull's
(Cont. P. 8)

"SIOUX CAMP AT WOUNDED KNEE"

JOHN HAUSER



A Rare Volume Discloses

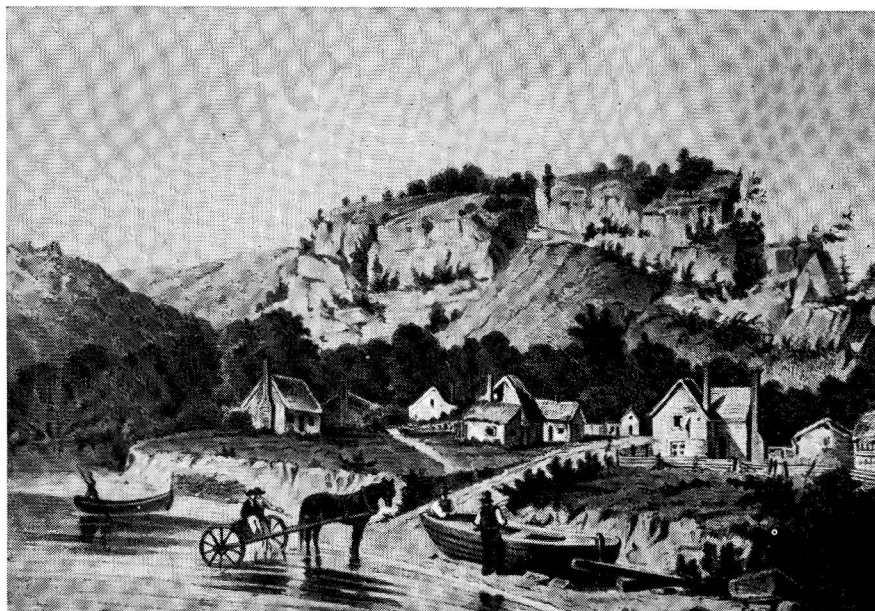
THE AMERICAN SCENE

We who live in the mid-twentieth century are apt to forget that a hundred years ago the camera had not yet come into extensive practical use. The artist of the times performed a highly valuable service to society as illustrator as well as a creator of purely esthetic art. Closely related to the role of illustrator was the role of the popular artist whose compositions offered both entertainment and education for the general public.

During the 1840's an unusual medium of popular art came into vogue to amuse and instruct the people of the United States. This was the panorama which consisted of a series of views painted on canvas and mounted on a frame so that it could be rolled from picture to picture. Accompanied by a lecturer these panoramas, some of them 1200 feet long and 12 feet high, were shown throughout the country. Frederick Catherwood, who later became famous for his illustrations of the ruins of Mexico, was one of the first to introduce the panorama to America. By the late forties the panoramas, forerunner to the slide lecture and travel movie, were very popular and many artists such as Leon Pomerade, John Banvard, John Rowson Smith, John Stevens and Henry Lewis were busy painting scene after scene for them.

One of the most successful of these travelogues was a panorama of the entire Mississippi Valley created by a self-taught artist named Henry Lewis. From 1846 through 1848 he travelled down the river from Minnesota to Louisiana sketching and painting scenes of the countryside, the Indians, the frontier towns, and the river life. From these he painted a series of canvas murals and opened his show in 1849; two years later after touring the East he took the show to Europe where it also met with great success. Lewis settled at Dusseldorf where he took up the formal study of art.

At this time interest in the Mississippi Valley was great both in America and Europe. This was a period of rapid growth and expansion; life in general was bustling and a significant westward movement had



"CASSVILLE, WISCONSIN"

By HENRY LEWIS

begun. In Europe the revolutions of 1848 had prompted a wave of migration to the United States. As a result, Lewis struck upon the idea of publishing a descriptive book about the Mississippi Valley using his paintings to illustrate it.

A Dusseldorf publisher issued the work in serial form. It was published in both the English and in German. The English edition, however, was never completed and today only a fragment of one copy is known to exist. But the German edition, called *Das Illustrierte Mississippithal*, was published in book form in 1857 and it contained 78 beautifully colored lithographs of scenes along the Mississippi River. Unfortunately the publishing company failed and nearly all copies of the handsome book were destroyed. Except for a few which were rescued by Lewis, all the copies were sold for waste paper. John Francis MacDermott estimates that there are less than fifty copies of the book in existence today of which about twenty are in libraries. *Das Illustrierte Mississippithal* has become one of the prized rarities of Americana. Its colored lithographs are invaluable to

the historian for they reveal the life and scenery of the Mississippi Valley just before the flood of migration came to obliterate forever the pristine beauty of that frontier.

There is in the Gilcrease library a copy of this book. It reveals the contribution which the artist has made to American history. One looks upon the plate of St. Paul, Minnesota, and marvels at the pretty town destined to be completely transformed in appearance as it became a teeming metropolis. Or else one sees Hannibal, Missouri, as it looked when Mark Twain was a boy; or the bluffs of Vicksburg fifteen years before Grant laid siege to them. "Steamboat Wooding at Night", "Little Crow's Village", "Prairie Fire", and many other scenes bespeak more eloquently of the life along the river than words can ever do. Had it not been for the artists of the times we would have a much more imperfect understanding of American life before the days of the camera; Henry Lewis, though not well known, deserves to be ranked with Catlin, Bodmer, Stanley, Eastman, Bingham and the others who preserved on canvas the America of yesterday.

The Last Camp

(Cont. From P. 6)

death spread throughout the Indian nation, and many of his frightened followers surrendered. Others fled to the west. Those who fled traveled to join the forces of Ghost Dance believer, Chief Big Foot, at the mouth of Deep Creek, a few miles below the fork of the Cheyenne River. This band had increased in number since the beginning of the Ghost Dance, and even before the fatal shooting of Sitting Bull, a small party of cavalrymen had been watching them. After the death of Sitting Bull, Big Foot's band prepared to break camp, explaining to the cavalry that they were going to the Standing Rock reservation for the winter. When those who fled from Sitting Bull's camp joined forces with Big Foot, the officers accepted the explanation that the chief felt sorry for these Indians and so had permitted them to join his group. Big Foot seemed so friendly that he and his followers were even permitted to keep their arms. The next morning the band departed going not to the

reservation, but in the opposite direction towards the Bad Lands.

In order to prevent the escape of the band, the Seventh Cavalry was dispatched to intercept. Big Foot was ordered to lead his people back to Wounded Knee Creek to make camp. The Indians seemed to be agreeable, but the cavalrymen neglected to notice that they were all wearing sacred ghost shirts, which the Indian strongly believed would protect him from the soldier's bullets. When they reached the camp all were carefully counted; one hundred twenty men, and two hundred thirty women and children. During the night additional troops rode in.

The next morning the soldiers began disarming the runaway Sioux and found the women concealing bundles of weapons. A medicine man was making speeches, later interpreted as reminders to the Indians that bullets could not go through their ghost shirts. The cavalrymen who were only six or eight feet from the Indians, sensed trouble and dropped back a short distance. It is not really known who fired the

first shot, but a witness reported: "The medicine man threw a handful of dust in the air, put on his war bonnet, and an instant later a gun was fired." With the powerful Hotchkiss guns firing, it was only a matter of minutes before the dead and wounded numbered two hundred Indian men, women, and children and sixty soldiers. Some Indians escaped to a near-by ravine and some even continued their flight up the slopes to the south.

It was evident that a blizzard was approaching, and the survivors began to gather up their dead and wounded. It was not until several days later that the exact number of casualties was known since a heavy snow had completely covered the area. Many bodies were found frozen where they had fallen.

Thus ended the last attempt of the redmen for freedom, and the belief in the Indian Messiah was destroyed. Wovoka, the Paiute dreamer, like so many others, decided that the white man's road was the only alternative and lived as a farmhand in Nevada to the age of seventy-eight.

The Gilcrease Institute with their co-sponsors, the Fourth National Bank of Tulsa, will hold a competition, the Representational Art Annual from May 15 to June 16. Mr. Thomas Hart Benton, one of America's most important artists, served as a one man jury for the competition. Awards were announced the evening of May 15th at the museum.

Entries were received from all over the United States, including Missouri, New Mexico, Kansas, Texas, New York, Colorado, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Arkansas, Montana, Florida, Oregon, Tennessee, Arizona, Pennsylvania, California, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Mexico.

In keeping with the tradition of the institution an attempt was made to encourage contemporary artists to contribute to the theme so well established in the American school of representational art. The Institute agrees that restrictions should not be placed on the artist in his creative work, but rather those who wish to create with a realistic interpretation should be encouraged.

"We believe that good, creative work is being done today in all media and in the varying concepts, but we feel that the uniqueness of the Gilcrease collections provides us with a

singular frame of reference which should be maintained and developed", stated James T. Forrest, Executive director.

Mr. Alfred E. Aaronson, president of the Institute, and Mr. James T. Forrest, director, traveled to Washington, D.C. on March 17 to confer with Dr. Laurence V. Coleman, president of the American Association of Museums, about Gilcrease's proposed building plans.

Dr. Coleman's remarks on location of the museum were of particular interest, in light of the diverse opinion in Tulsa regarding the proposed Civic Center: "Often there are special circumstances that effect our blanket recommendation to museums. In the case of your Institute there are such considerations, it seems to me. Your nearness to the business district now, your favorable spot in relation to highways, the special nature of the Institute itself, the splendid site you already have, and other facts, all make me advise you without hesitation to develop where you are—not to be drawn into a center with municipal bureaus, courthouse, and kindred buildings not related in pur-

pose or spirit to your setup."

"We feel that the expert advice of Dr. Coleman, a leader in the museum world for many years, is valuable to us at this time. When we build we hope that it will be with realistic consideration for our needs for the next 25 years, years which we know will be ones of progress", stated Mr. Forrest.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS AT GILCREASE

- May 15-June 17—Representational Art Annual.
- June 19—7-9 p.m. Opening of Western Landscape exhibit 8 p.m. Films, titles to be announced.
- June 19-Sept. 30—"Western Landscapes"
- Oct. 2-Nov. 13—"Paintings from the W. B. Davis Collection"