

The American

Scene

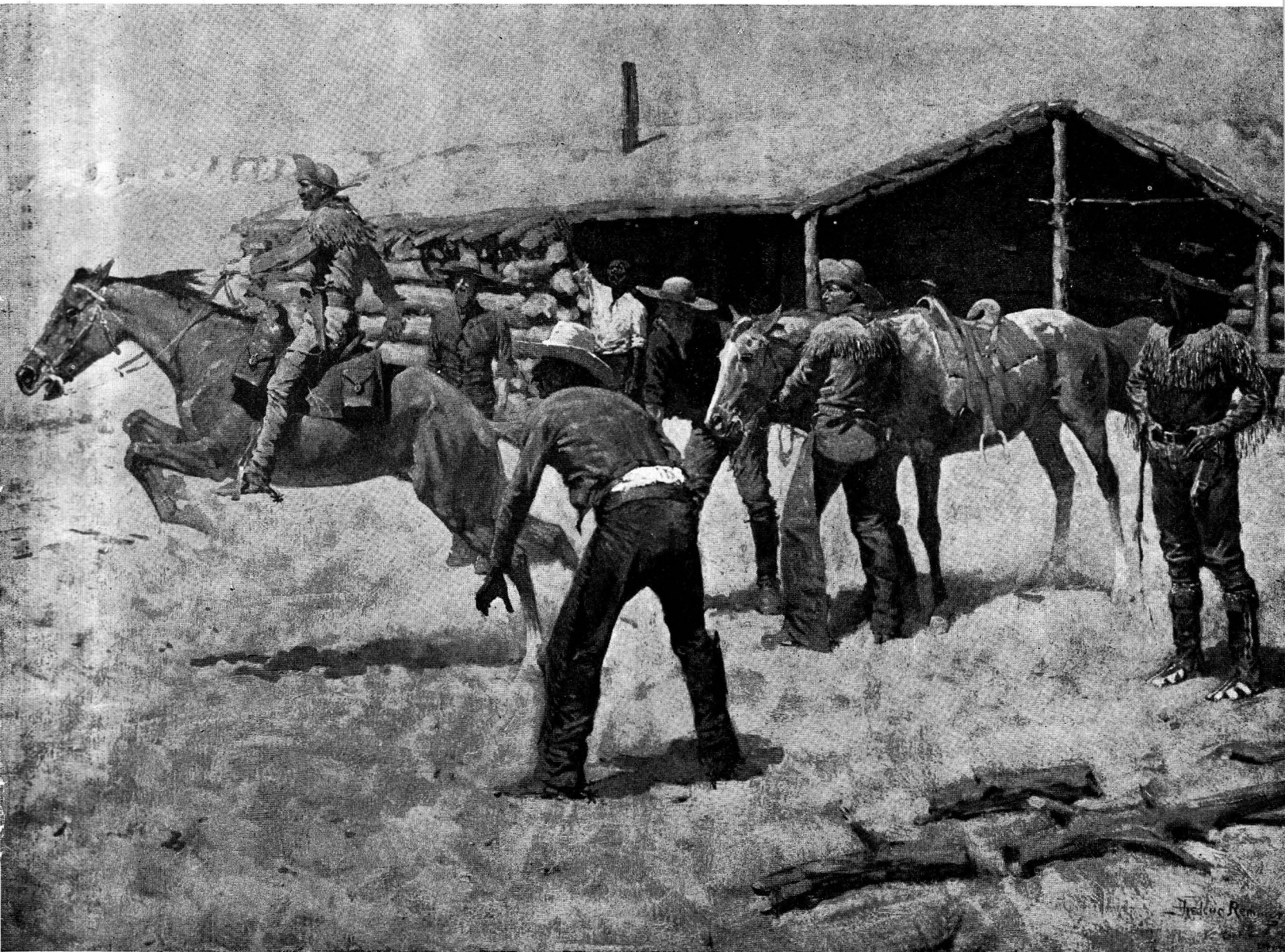
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THE COMING AND GOING OF THE PONY EXPRESS

FREDERIC REMINGTON

The Story Behind the Painting . . . Most of the paintings in the collections of the museums of the nation bespeak a story—the story as seen through the alert eyes of the artist.

The printings in the Gilcrease Museum are by their subject matter—relating generally to the history of America and especially to the American West—rich in story value. Sometimes, however, the paintings tell or suggest only a fragment of the scene, episode, event to which they relate; thus, the story behind the painting, when discovered or discerned, serves to augment or round-out our knowledge and appreciation for the artist's "visual document". This issue of **The American Scene** is devoted, in part, to telling The Story Behind the Painting.

Remington's Pony Express

The Pony Express has become one of the symbols of the western movement, and yet it existed less than two years. The reason for its importance

and fame rests with the intrepidity of the enterprise and the persistent courage of the men who "carried the mail" from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. Relay stations were established all along the route with home stations 40 to 50 miles apart. The riders made the 12 miles from one relay station to the next in about 30 to 40 minutes; it required 3 to 4 hours to cover the distance from one home station to the next, but the men were required to ride as far as necessary in order to deliver the mail bags to another able rider. On occasions, riders rode as much as 340 miles without sleep or rest before they found relief. The pony riders were attacked by Indians and halted by highwaymen; they were confronted by snow and sand storms, but the mail always went through. The

usual time for the run between California and Missouri by way of Salt Lake City, a distance of over 2000 miles, was between 8 and 11 days. In November of 1861, the Pony Express was abandoned after the completion of the transcontinental telegraph line.

Remington in his painting (see front page) has depicted a rider changing from a spent horse to a fresh one at a log relay station somewhere along the express route. The rider and station attendants are rugged men of the West; some of them wear the costume of the mountain men—buckskin and beaded moccasin. Many famous men were a part of this team, including: William Cody, Bob Hasslan, William James and Jack Keetley. In all, about 110 riders rode for the Pony Express during 1860 and 1861.

AN AMERICAN SAFARI

A Buffalo Hunt with the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia

The artist perhaps best known for painting "visual accounts" of famous western incidents is Charles M. Russell. Having lived the greater part of his life in the West, Russell presented many first hand accounts as well as many he had not seen, but was commissioned to reproduce on canvas. "Running Buffalo", in the Gilcrease collection, is such a painting whose story has been

told in many annals of the West. The painting pictures General Phil Sheridan, W. F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, and the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia on the famous buffalo hunt staged for the Duke on a visit to this country in 1871-72. General George Custer, though not pictured, was also on the hunt. Russell was commissioned by Thomas F. Cole, a wealthy mining man, to do several historical canvases dealing with the life of Buffalo Bill.

One of the paintings included in the Cole commissioned series was "Running Buffalo". The story behind this painting actually began about the first of January, 1872, when General George A. Forsyth and Dr. Morris J. Asch, of General Sheridan's staff came to Fort McPherson, in western Kansas, to begin preparations for a large buffalo hunt in honor of the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia. This was to be no ordinary hunt, but rather a gala affair with all the trimmings. A few days later the Grand Duke and his party of western dignitaries arrived at Kit Carson, in eastern Colorado, and departed for the hunting grounds.

The camp itself was quite impressive. General Custer and General Sheridan shared one large tent, while

(Continued on P. 8)



OLD HICKORY

BEFORE

JUDGE HALL



Visitors to the Early American Room at the Gilcrease Institute are nearly always keenly attracted to the painting by Christian Schussele showing Andrew Jackson before Judge Hall. The painting shows General Jackson, surrounded by his lawyers and aides, in a spectacular pose, obviously making a dramatic appeal to the judge. Sunlight from the window behind the judge floods the crowded little courtroom as if to deliberately illuminate the general with a special glory for his recent victory at New Orleans. Yet it is probably true that few of the visitors who stop to admire this striking painting know anything about the incident it depicts.

The time is March, 1815, barely two months after Andrew Jackson's armies have repulsed the British attempt to capture New Orleans. Yet here the national hero stands before a federal judge summoned to answer a charge of contempt of court. It might be noted that he was found guilty and fined \$1000. Although the incident is all but forgotten it is no wonder that it attracted the attention of all the nation at the time.

Briefly told, the story of Andrew Jackson's appearance before Judge Dominick Hall shortly after the close of the War of 1812 is this:

Late in the year 1814 the British began massing troops and a fleet at Jamaica for an invasion of Louisiana to capture New Orleans. When the British objective became obvious, General Jackson was sent to prepare the city's defenses. He arrived in New Orleans on December 2nd and found great confusion. To ward off the consternation, to stop the activities of spies and to control a recalcitrant state legislature, Jackson proclaimed martial law on December 15th.

On the night of December 22nd the British made a surprise landing below New Orleans and the first battle in defense of the city came the next day. Thereafter the fate of the city was uncertain until January 8th when a supreme effort by the British was overwhelmingly repulsed. Jackson was of course elated over stopping the enemy but he was still wary for the British armies had not left the mainland. He thus continued in force the proclamation of martial law.

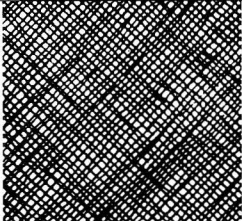
Indeed even after travellers arrived in New Orleans on February 19th with news that the war was ended, Jackson continued martial law issuing a statement in which he said, "We must not be thrown into false security by hopes that may be delusive." A newspaper, the *Courier*, published an unsigned letter from a "Leading Citizen", which bitterly assailed Jackson's order and demanded the end of martial law. Jackson learned that the author was Louis Louaillers, a member of the legislature, and had him arrested.

When Judge Hall granted Louaillers a writ of habeas corpus, General Jackson, instead of releasing the man, arrested the federal judge! But in a day or so Hall was released from confinement and sent out of the city. Then suddenly the official announcement of the end of the war reached Jackson and martial law was lifted.

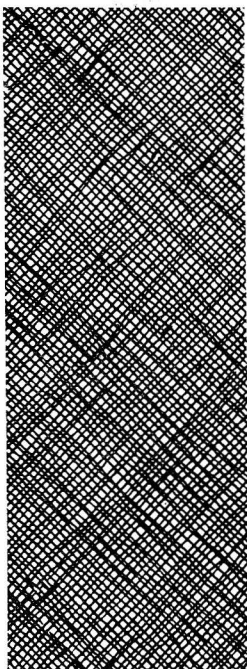
Almost at once Hall returned to New Orleans and summoned Jackson before his court to show why he should not be held in contempt.

In the Gilcrease Library is an original letter from an aide on Jackson's staff who was present at the courtroom scene. This letter from R. K. Call, former governor of Florida, describes the courtroom scene. According to Governor Call, on finding Jackson guilty, Judge Hall announced that in view of the general's great patriotism and service to his nation the fine would be suspended, whereupon Jackson raised his hand and said: "That language ill becomes a judge on the bench, if I have violated the laws of my country, I am ready to receive the full measure of the penalty." Judge Hall then levied the fine which was paid at once and Jackson left the courtroom to enter a carriage which a wildly excited crowd pulled to a nearby coffeehouse.

Christian Schussele painted the picture in 1859 over forty years after the event. He tried to recreate the scene as it actually happened and did considerable research, interviewing those people still alive who had been associated with the incident. Schussele, who was born in 1826 and died in 1879, is noted today primarily for his historical paintings of which "Andrew Jackson before Judge Hall" is a superb example.



PIECES OF EIGHT



By Hope Holway

"Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!" We have no piratical parrot to scream when we find a treasure, nor do pieces jingle, or shine; yet no chest full of golden doubloons unearthed from its burial place in the seacoast sands was ever more exciting to the treasure hunters than are the yellow sheets of paper laid away in their brown folders in the files of the Research Library of the Gilcrease Institute. To count only a few of this precious specie, there are:

The Seminole papers, containing the final capitulation on the sixth day of March, 1837, of that proud tribe to Major General Thomas Jesup, who had been the punishing arm of the United States Government for years against them. Two pieces of paper, the ink still dark with angry rancor, one the authorization by Principal Chief Miconopy, who was to be held as a hostage, for his chiefs Jumper,

Holahtoochee or Davy, and Yaholoochee to act for him, fully empowered by his mark witnessed by four officers of the Army of the South. The other, a four-page document, signed at Camp Dade by the Seminole deputies and thirty-six officers of the Army of the South, is the agreement that hostilities shall cease and not be resumed, that the entire nation shall immediately emigrate to the country assigned to them by the President of the United States and subsistence for the chiefs and warriors and their families guaranteed from the time they assemble at Tampa Bay to twelve months after they arrive at their western homes. They must assemble by April 10th (five weeks' farewell to their native home) and transports will be waiting for them. Major General Jesup guarantees that they shall be "secure in their lives and and property, that their negroes shall accompany them to the West, and that their cattle and ponies shall be paid for by the United States Government at a fair valuation". What was in the hearts of those Indian chiefs as they placed their marks on that sheet one hundred and twenty years ago?

In those same papers is the sad letter of Parch Corn to his son Hon-ata-sis-ki, interpreted by Prisoner Harris and found in the possession of John Ketchum, Cherokee. "There is no date." The father says to the son, "You must make haste and come on, there is nothing that will keep us here—'twas said we would get the land back—now I have no doubt we shall go to the West. I do not think you will be treated well where you are and I cannot find anything good for us here . . . Now the time has come for the soldiers to go through

the nation . . . and now you will be arrested the same as Wa-a-hi-sa was and no way for you to get around it. We have to come. That is all I can tell you. I thought I would tell you this that you may be ready when they come. Parch Corn." These words of despair were repeated in thousands of Indian fathers' hearts in those years of the removal. One wonders whether "Prisoner" Harris wrote with sympathy or whether it was a routine duty, merely part of the day's work.

For many, this emigration of Indian peoples was merely a piece of business, an opportunity for making some extra money. Such were those, probably, who answered the advertisement in the **Tennessee Journal** of January 29th, 1834. (Now a part of the Cherokee papers in the Institute's files). It is signed by Joseph W. Harris, Lieut. Disbursing Agent, Cherokee Removal. "WAGONS WANTED. Sixteen first rate road wagons with bodies of the largest kind, each to be drawn by a first rate six horse team complete in Gear and Harness will find employment during the removal of the present Emigration of Cherokees from their homes to their respective points of Embarkation upon the rivers, by the owners of such enrolling their names immediately at the agency. To be called Feb. 1-20, 1834. Loads (children and infirm included) to be 3500 lbs per wagon, to be determined by the Wagon Masters. Full compensation \$3.50 a day. A loaded team shall travel 15 miles per day, unloaded 20 miles; ferriages (except over the Hiwassee) to be Government charges. Wagoners are requested to call upon the Agent, Col. Montgomery."

Little did these wagoners know what lay before them: quicksand and swamp, fallen timber, mud deep on

the faint trail after the icy storms, steep-banked rivers to ford, and over it all a dark blanket of grief and sorrow, people bitter with resentment at being forced to leave a gentle land, home for generations. There were little children who walked most of the way to make more room in the wagons, uncomfortable conveyance for the infirm and the many seized with sickness on the way.

There were probably few old people—the life span of the Indian was short then. In the John Ross papers is a Muster Roll of Captain John Benge's Detachment of Emigrating Cherokees in 1838—a party totaling 1103, but only 17 men over fifty and 20 women over sixty. There were 326 children under ten and about the same number between ten and fifteen. There were 242 negroes, 41 children among them. Imagine the noise and confusion at camping time—the burden on the shoulders of the mature women, about 250 of them, who had to see that the fires were built and the rations dealt out.

And those rations! What a tremendous job to gather them together at the proper places and to issue them as promised. The "bookkeeping" alone stupifies one, as you look at the summaries of those handled by John and Lewis Ross, draw up in clear, clerkly hand on large sheets of varying size and shape for thirteen "Conductors", each with a party of emigrants traveling west between October, 1838, and March, 1839. Among those conductors are familiar names of Indian Territory history—Jesse Bushyhead, George C. Lowry, Elijah and George Hicks, Evan Jones (the Baptist missionary who believed this emigration was for the true good of the Indian who was being exploited back in Georgia), Peter Hildebrand, Stephen Foreman, John Drew.

The days on the journey varied for each detachment from 93 to 140; the number in party from 700 to 1766. One mysterious fact noted, perhaps reasonable to those who know more of this history than the writer, is that the total who began the journey is 12,263. Those who arrived at the new home is 12,783. Were there more children born on the way than there were travelers lost by death? Did late-comers at the rendezvous catch up with the party? Were these stragglers from previous detachments who

joined this group? (Or are these figures accurate?)

The rations were issued in two groups—Subsistence and Soap. Subsistence was meat, breadstuff, salt, sugar, and coffee—1,372,937½ rations issued. An explanation that is not complete because it does not contain the partial rations issued. But "½" stares you in the face! Of soap there were 1,345,510 rations issued. Imagination can ask a question or two about this huge quantity of soap. Winter-time, few clear-water streams; why so much soap?

There are other treasures in the Gilcrease Library, too many to discuss, like the original of Samuel Worcester's agreement with the Cherokee Council concerning the establishment of his printing press at Park Hill. This is among the Grant Foreman papers. Among the Peter Pitchlynn papers is what must be a copy made at the time the original letter was written of the communication to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, dated November 18, 1855, written from Pine Ridge, Choctaw Nation, and signed by Cyrus Byington, Ebenezer Hotchkin, Charles Copeland, and Oliver P. Stark. This letter states that the missions under the care of these men, long servants of the Board bringing the Gospel to the Choctaw Indians, are withdrawing from the Board's support because of its attitude toward slavery. These missionaries are of the opinion that abolition will do their work more harm than good and they have no choice but to withdraw from under the care of a Board which has ordered them to excommunicate the slaveholders from their congregations. This opens to the curious reader long avenues of research in the areas of human relationships back in those troubled days.

For the most part these men and women out in the Indian country had worked in almost complete isolation. Even on this urgent matter of slavery, it took almost six months for a letter to go to Boston and an answer to be received. Now and then, along the way, there had been contacts of encouragement, and one evidently was either a visit or correspondence with the Rev. Cyrus Byington perhaps before he settled in the Choctaw Nation, from that poetess of Hartford, Connecticut—Lydia Sigourney. Who

was she? You may not know her name but you do know her famous creation—"The boy stood on the burning deck . . ." She writes to Cyrus in the early days of his service (1829) "... Thank you for your interesting account of Mishamsis and rejoice that he has been called out of darkness into the light of the Gospel. Remember me to him and likewise to Capt. David Folsom and his brothers with my best wishes. The success which has been granted to missionary efforts among our red brethren is regarded with deep interest by Christians in our region; and their sympathy and regret are in proportion at the recent measures instituted to dislodge such multitudes from their territory, just as they began to prize the blessings of social and religious order. Oh! as if our sins against Africa were not sufficient to swell our last account, but we must open new sluices of blood and misery.

I send you some lines . . .

Firm Justice reared her balance,
and the life

Of glad Religion told the way to
Heaven.

But **who are ye** that bid him to the
beasts return again? . . .

And ye are Christians! Christians!!
. . . Oh! take heed—

Earth hath a tale for the High
Judge's ear,

And better 'twere to break the
thorniest paths,

Crushed low neath persecution's
heaviest load,

Than stand before his bar with the
stern front of the oppressor!"

Miss Sigourney tells Rev. Byington he may use these lines in any way he chooses for the good of the Indian. But it is to be feared that the red man's lot was not appreciably brightened by them.

There are other treasures in these file drawers, some not yet discovered and some whose value is not yet weighed. As time goes on, it is the hope of the Gilcrease Institute that qualified students may turn them into a specie which will add to the records of that history which is one of our country's great treasures.

The Obscure Path To Glory

Hawk War. The interview between the leaders was part of the punishment of the Indian who had unsuccessfully tried to defend his homelands against white encroachment. Black Hawk, his son, and several other Sac warriors had, in 1833, been taken to Washington as part of a plan to impress the captive Indians with the overwhelming numbers and striking accomplishments of the white man so they would never again be tempted to fight against the United States.

Black Hawk might have been impressed but he was far from subdued. On meeting the President he looked silently for a moment at this

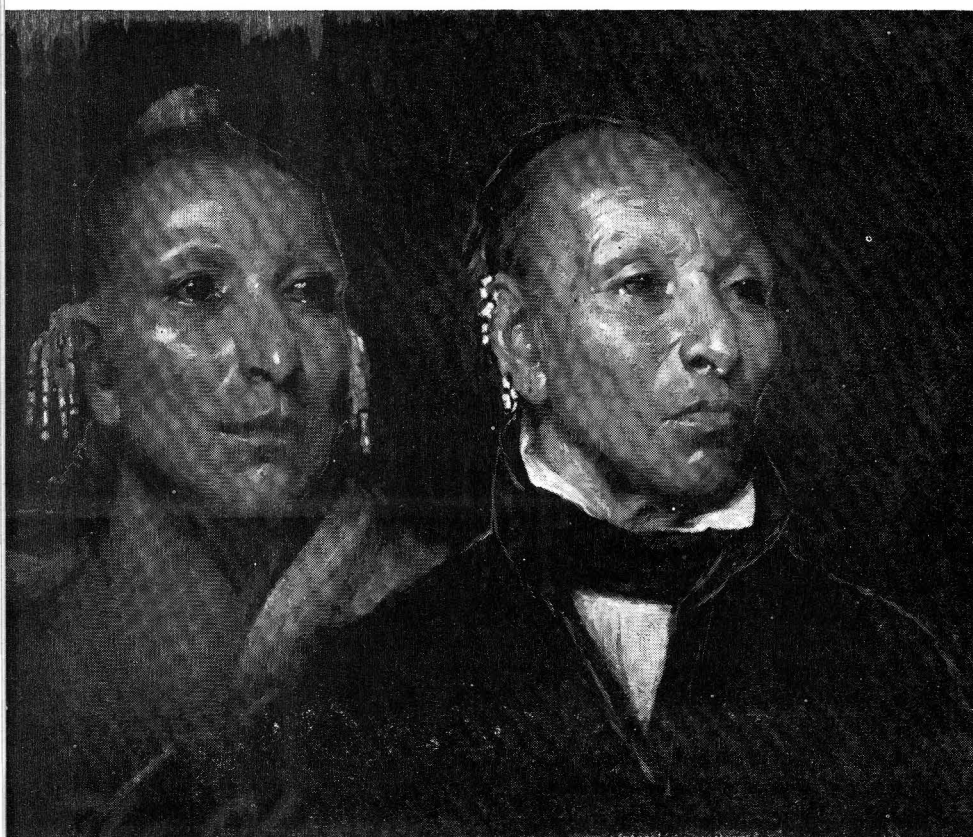
fer the white man's way of doing things to his own. Of the railroad he said, "It is the most astonishing sight I ever saw . . . I prefer riding horseback, however, to any other way."

But Black Hawk was more than an unusual tourist. As he progressed from city to city, it became apparent the trip Jackson had planned as a chastisement for the old warrior was turning into a triumphal tour. And this was due, ironically enough, to a colossal misjudgment on the part of President Jackson of the temperament of the American people and the personality of Black Hawk. Jackson was traveling to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York to test and strengthen his political popularity in these cities. He planned Black Hawk's itinerary to coincide with his, presumably so the Indian would have the humbling experience of seeing with his own eyes the great power and popularity of the President. This plan was a fatal trap.

The President found himself sharing his triumphal tour with the Indians. The public was anxious to see Black Hawk, and they were enthusiastic with what they saw. He and his companions were lavishly entertained, and were continually surrounded by people when they moved through the streets. The press was delighted. They made elaborate and none too subtle jokes about the President being overshadowed in the public eye by his supposedly humbled captive. The defeated warrior was having his day of public glory at the expense of the President of the United States!

Old Hickory was not the sort of man to take this gracefully. With little show of diplomacy or tact the Indians were bundled up and sent home at the end of their stay in New York, although they were scheduled to follow the President through New England. Thus ended Black Hawk's chastisement by his conquerors.

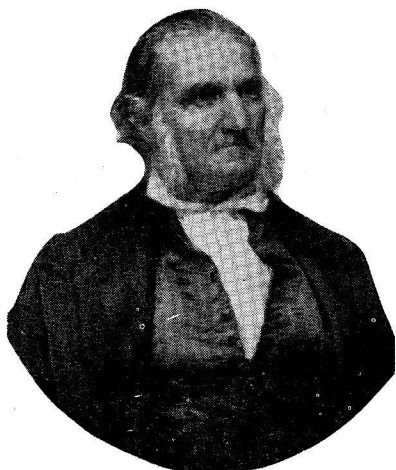
While in New York Black Hawk and his son, Whirling Thunder, sat for their portrait by John Wesley Jarvis. Looking at this painting in the Gilcrease Museum it is not difficult to see why the American public was taken by this man with his overpowering appearance of dignity in defeat. And it is pleasant to know that as he sat for the portrait he was experiencing his short moment of glory in the eyes of the American public; for, as Black Hawk said of his own career, "the path to glory is rough, and many gloomy hours obscure it".



We did not expect to conquer the whites. They had too many houses and too many men. I took up the hatchet, for my part, to revenge the injuries which my people could no longer endure. Had I born them longer without striking, my people would have said, 'Black Hawk is a woman; he is too old to be a chief; he is no Sac.' In this way the Sac war chief, Black Hawk, explained his personal feelings to the President of the United States, Andrew Jackson, about what we now call the Black

leader of a great nation, then said, "I am a man and you are another". This was the attitude Black Hawk maintained throughout his trip. He did not judge people according to their rank or condition, and he expected the same treatment in return.

After meeting the President, Black Hawk and his retinue toured many of the cities of the East. An interested and accurate observer, Black Hawk was impressed with many of the things he saw, but he was seldom impressed enough to pre-



Audubon's

WILD TURKEY

When the first portion of John James Audubon's monumental **Birds of America** appeared in 1827, plate number 1 was the wild turkey. It is fitting that Audubon should begin his work with this majestic painting of America's most famous bird. If he had never painted another bird, he would have lived in the memory of man.

When the Spaniards first explored and settled the wilds of North America during the sixteenth century, their chroniclers noted the great abundance of the chestnut tailed turkey. In the days of the Puritans the bird was so plentiful that it was natural for the colonists to use it for their Thanksgiving festivals. During the eighteenth century the population of the wild turkey began to diminish as the line of settlement moved westward, and in those days when romantic Audubon roamed the American back country and wilderness ways, the bird was already fast disappearing. Thus, in a way, Audubon's wild turkey is symbolical of America's vanishing frontier.

Audubon's wild turkey is not the turkey we know and usually think about when we hear that word today. The domesticated turkey is a European import of the Mexican white-tailed turkey. The native American wild turkey is now nearly extinct and survives only in small numbers in remote areas. Efforts to domesticate it have proven futile; to survive the American wild turkey requires a sizable wilderness area—such areas have all but disappeared from the American scene.

The wild turkey thrives on herbs, berries, nuts, fruit and corn. In winter it can roost steadily for several days without the need for food and in

damp weather it has a habit of ranging far over the countryside. As a runner the turkey is awkward but very fast.

In early spring the females leave the flock to be vigorously pursued by the cocks. Thus begins a period of courtship during which the hens sound a love call which instantly brings forth the males who spread their handsome tails and begin a pompous parading about, puffing and strutting in an amorous ceremony designed to win a mate. When the hen has chosen her favorite cock the couple will roost together until she begins to lay. They then separate and the male does not return to the flock until August when it is time to prepare for winter.

Benjamin Franklin, a man of wisdom and of learning, wrote in a letter to his daughter in 1784: "For my own part I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country . . . the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird and withal a true original native of America . . . he is besides, (though a little vain and silly, it is true, but no worse an emblem for that) a bird of courage . . ." Franklin would have been pleased with Audubon's selection of the turkey to adorn the first page of his gigantic and sumptuous book, **Birds of America**.

The elegantly engraved color plates were 38 by 25 inches in size because Audubon insisted that each bird be presented in life size. The reproduction of the turkey was made from a watercolor painted some years earlier. The impressive masterpiece which hangs in the Early American Room at the Gilcrease Institute is a life-size oil rendition of the earlier watercolor. Audubon painted it at his home, "Minnie's Land," on the Hudson River, about 1845. It possesses those characteristics for which Audubon's

art is noted: dramatic forcefulness, a clear, strong line and brilliant exaggerated color; meticulous detail; noble vitality. No reproduction can catch the emotion that the richly colored canvas evokes in the onlooker. Audubon's spirit seems to permeate the canvas.

The painting hung in the Audubon home for many years. In 1881 it was sent to the artist's granddaughter, Mrs. Morris Tyler, in New Haven, and she in turn gave it to her son, Victor Tyler, in 1910. Today it hangs on permanent display at Gilcrease helping to perpetuate the spirit of a great American naturalist and the memory of a great American bird.



(Continued from Page 2)

the Grand Duke occupied the one next to them. The other tents housed not only the members of the Duke's suite, but a large company of newspaper reporters, photographers, army officers, scouts, soldiers, and a wide assortment of cooks, waiters, and servants. In all, the party totaled nearly one hundred and fifty persons.

On the first morning General Custer, Buffalo Bill, and Texas Jack, a well-known scout, rode up to the Grand Duke's tent and presented him with the best trained buffalo horse to be found in the area. The four hunters started out in search of the herd, followed by a large group of spectators from the camp. The buffalo were grazing in a little valley only a short distance from the camp, but at the sight of the large party they started to move. The hunters overtook them and on the first encounter the royal sportsman killed a large bull and two cows. General Custer sent Texas Jack back to the camp for some hunters, and the buffalo were skinned and the hides taken back as trophies. It is reported that these were later sent to Russia as evidence of the Duke's prowess as a hunter. Upon their return to camp the party began celebrating the first day's hunt in grand style, but the festivities were interrupted by a party of soldiers, seen in the distance, chasing a small herd of buffalo. The Duke, General Custer and several scouts jumped on their horses and started in the direction of the new hunt. When they approached the running buffalo they divided their party, half going on either side. This maneuver startled the animals and one of the largest bulls lowered his shaggy head and charged the Duke. Fortunately the royal visitor

was an excellent equestrian and his pony was one of the finest. He avoided the charging animal and swung wide to approach his aggressor from behind; when the bull turned, witnesses say, the Duke dropped him with a single shot.

The next morning the scouts reported sighting a much larger herd than that of the previous day, and the camp turned out in full force. Every hunter got his buffalo that day.

On their return to Kit Carson the Duke held a reception for the whole town and made arrangements with the Perry House to supply every citizen with cake and wine. Upon his departure the Duke delighted the population with this statement: "This has been the best entertainment we have received in the United States, and I shall always remember with pleasure my visit to Kit Carson, especially the good friends I have made during my stay. I want to thank you one and all."

Many legends have grown around the Duke's buffalo hunt, and though some are based on fact, most are purely fiction. The true account, alone, is exciting enough, and there is no doubt that the story of this "American Safari" will always have a place in the stories of the West. The Russell painting recreates a colorful vignette from this exciting episode.

This is only one of many stories told by Russell in which he portrayed the hunter. In other paintings he depicted the happy days for the Indian when millions of buffalo roamed the plains and food was plentiful, the hide hunter who almost completely extinguished the great herds of buffalo taking only the animal's hides, and finally of a West all but devoid of its once boundless game.

In This Issue

The guest contributor for this issue of the American Scene is long-time Tulsa resident, Mrs. W. R. (Hope) Holway. Mrs. Holway is a graduate of Radcliff College at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and since coming to Tulsa has become an avid student of Oklahoma history. She is vice-chairman of the Library Committee of the Gilcrease Institute and attended Harvard University's Institute of Archival Management last summer, bringing back much valuable information to the Institute. She has devoted many hours to the Gilcrease Library working as a volunteer.

A 17" x 22" color reproduction of the Frederic Remington painting featured on the cover of this issue may be purchased from the museum for \$5.00.

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