

The American Scene

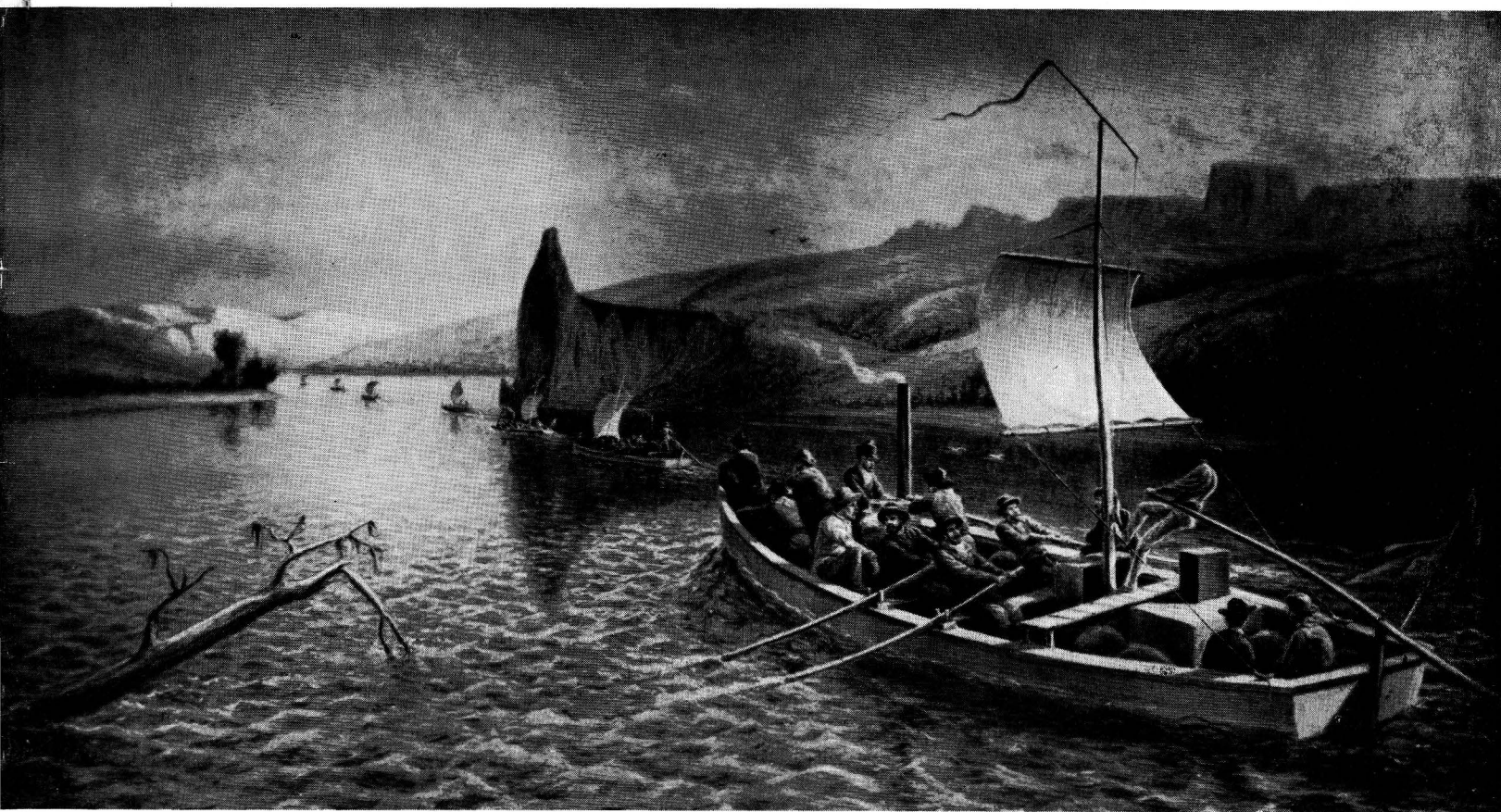
A Quarterly Devoted to American History and Art

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Gillie Library



Return of the Northern Boundary Survey Party

In this age of the atom, when mighty things come in small packages, it is hard to imagine a time when it was more practical for explorers and surveyors to take an artist with all his equipment along to record the scenes encountered, than it was to employ a photographer. But during the first half of the nineteenth century this was true and as a result American artists such as William de la Montagne Cary, George Catlin, and Alfred Jacob Miller are now acclaimed "documentary artists."

On March 19, 1872, an act was approved by the United States government authorizing a survey to determine and mark a boundary line between the United States and British possessions as defined in the second article of the convention between the United States and Great Britain of October 20, 1818. There had been much controversy over the boundary before 1870, but the immediate cause of the authorization

Continued on Page 2

by Congress was stated by the President, Ulysses S. Grant, in his annual message to Congress dated December 5, 1870. "In April last, while engaged in locating a military reservation near Pembina, a corps of United States engineers discovered that the commonly accepted boundary-line between the United States and British possessions at that place is about forty-seven hundred feet south of the true position of the forty-ninth parallel, and that the line, when run on what is now supposed to be the true position of the forty-ninth parallel, would leave the fort of the Hudson Bay Company, at Pembina, within the territory of the United States. This information being communicated to the British Government, I was requested to consent, and did consent, that the British occupation of the fort of the Hudson Bay Company should continue for the present . . . The land-boundary has already been fixed and marked from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the Georgian Bay. It should now be in like manner marked from the Lake of the Woods to the summit of the Rocky Mountains."

The field work of the Survey occupied a part of the summer of 1872 and of the two following years, 1873 and 1874. The expedition did not actually have an artist during the full time, but William de la Montagne Cary joined it on its return. In a letter from Lt. F. V. Greene to Mr. Cary, when the artist was working on his well-known painting "Return of the Northern Boundary Survey Party" in 1908, Greene states that a draftsman, Mr. Downing, did

field sketches on the journey. This letter is now part of the Cary collection of the Gilcrease Institute.

In one of his journals, now also in the Gilcrease collections, Cary recalls: "It was about July 1st, 1875, that I was on my way up the Missouri, on the steamboat 'Fontenelle', in an endeavor to overtake Major Twining, chief of Engineers, U. S. A. The party had started up the country to the Northern boundary of Montana, which is familiarly known as the 'Hoopup' country, by the Montana men.

"I had received a letter from Major Twining to meet them at St. Pauls, Minnesota, and accompany the expedition of the Northern Boundary Survey, but as I had only the invitation too late to make the necessary arrangements with the party before they left Bismarck or Fort Lincoln, I followed on the next steamboat up the Missouri. Having spent some time in the Northern Country of Dakota and Montana, before and during the war for the Union, I was not a stranger and met some of the old pioneers, who still remained in that country. Some were well off, while others were in the same circumstances as I knew them many years before."

Arrangements for the return of the survey party, which William Cary has pictured, had been made by Major W. J. Twining, Captain of Engineers and Chief Astronomer for the United States Northern Boundary Commission, early in the season. The plans included the construction of Mackinac boats at Fort Benton, on the Missouri, for the

purpose of transporting the party down the Missouri River to Bismarck, the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and thence to Saint Paul by railroad, to be discharged, with the exception of the assistants who were required to do the office-work of the commission. By the 12th of September, the various parties in the field having assembled at Fort Benton, the fleet of six Mackinac boats started down the river. Major Twining and his assistants accompanied the expedition. At night the boats were fastened to the shore, and the whole party, including officers bivouacked. They reached Bismarck in eighteen days.

The Gilcrease Institute is fortunate in having many of the original sketches done by Cary on the return trip of the Northern Boundary Survey. Some of these picture deck hands on board the "Fontenelle," roustabouts, and individual portraits of some of the men. Included in this collection are two small oil sketches of scenes on the boat. On one of these, Cary has noted, "The Northern Boundary Survey, 1874, Dr. Coues of the Smithsonian Institute in lower left corner of sketch." One of Cary's pencil sketches is pictured on page seven of this issue. This sketch pictures the steersman, tiller in hand, on the "Fontenelle."

The Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art houses a great collection of 170 original works of art by William de la Montagne Cary. These include watercolor washes, pencil sketches, oils and bronze statuary. A true pictorial history of the American frontier in the 1860's and 70's is preserved in Cary's work. The subject matter is varied and the titles are often descriptive, serving to identify this collection: "Early Settlers Coming up the Missouri," "Roustabouts of the Far West," "Indian Boy Feeding Pet Crow," "Old Fort Walla Walla Washington Territory," "Buffalo Bill on His Favorite Horse 'Charlie'," "The Grub Call," "Crossing the Plains in 1849," "The Paper That Talks," "Pioneer's Wagon Train," "Crow Indian Dandy," "Medicine Man Offering Peace to Setting Sun," "Belle of Indian Fort," "Fire Canoe," "Enroute to Trading Post," "Going the White Man's Road," and "The Coming Storm on the Stake Plains of Montana."

INDIAN CHILDREN LEARNING TO RIDE

BY WILLIAM CARY



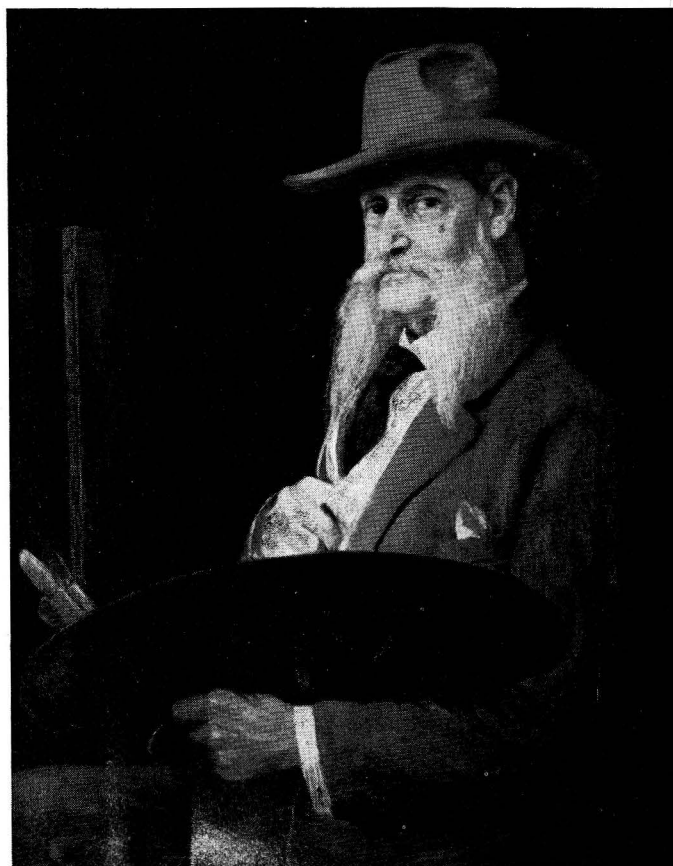
William de la Montagne Cary

It has been less than 100 years since William de la Montagne Cary journeyed into the American Northwest, yet the swift passage of time and events has all but obliterated the world of 1861 as seen through the eyes of the 20-year-old artist-adventurer. Even as long ago as 1917 George Bird Grinnell, author of many western stories, contemplated the swift passage of events when commenting on the historical canvases by Cary then being exhibited in the American Museum of Natural

History. Grinnell said of this exhibit: "Recently there has been on exhibition in the American Museum of Natural History a collection of paintings by William de la Montagne Cary, which is of much historic interest. Most of the scenes were painted between the years 1861 and 1875, and present faithful pictures of many phases of plains life before the coming of the railroad.

"Mr. Cary and his two companions, Messrs. W. H. Schieffelin and E. N. Lawrence, left New York in the spring of 1861, made their way to St. Louis, and from there up the river by steamboat toward Fort Benton. One may imagine how the places and the people and the methods of getting about impressed these city boys. We can picture the slow progress of the steamboats up the river; the way in which the vessel walked on her 'stilts' over the sand bars; the stops at the different forts with their motley gatherings of Indians and of capoted and brass-buttoned fur traders hurrying to the landing to see the boat come in and depart; the tying up to the bank to cut wood for the furnaces; and the hunting excursions made by the young men during these stops, while men felled and split the wood and carried it aboard."

William Cary was born at Tappan, New York on June 30, 1841. Little is known of his childhood or early education except that at an early age he delighted in drawing animals and hunting scenes to amuse his sister. When he was in his teens his natural ability led to his apprenticeship to an engraver. When he was just 20 years old he and two young companions journeyed into the west and returned by way of a ship from California to the Panama Isthmus and then through the Caribbean and the Atlantic to their homes in New York. Cary was to make another trip into the West in 1867 when he met George Custer at Fort Riley, Kansas as well as William "Buffalo Bill" Cody. In 1874 he was invited to accompany the Northern Boundary Survey Party, but arrived in the area only in time for the latter half of the epic trip. He camped on the ground which is now the site of Helena, Montana, but which was then called the Gulch of the Last Chance. Cary painted and sketched as he went, making hundreds of pencil sketches later incorporated in his oil paintings which serve so well to portray episodes in



WM. de la MONTAGNE CARY

HAMILTON HAMILTON

the every day life of the Indian and the frontiersman of the 1860's and 70's. His intimate pictures of Indian camp life are especially valuable for the student of the American Indian.

Fortunately, Cary made notes and later wrote reminiscences of his personal experiences in the West. Some of his adventures were as exciting as the fiction created for Beadle's dime novels. In 1861 the Chippewa, a Missouri River steamer, caught fire and burned leaving Cary and the entire party stranded on the upper Missouri. He participated in several buffalo hunts and was more than once surrounded by unfriendly Indians. In one instance his small party owed their lives to the fact that their Indian guide recognized his father-in-law among the attacking Crees. Cary visited Ft. Berthold, Ft. Union, Ft. Peck, Ft. Benton, Ft. Randall and other stopping places along the route to the West, many of which he preserved on canvas.

Cary's paintings obtain their chief value as graphic documents contributing directly to our scant first hand knowledge of the West during America's great expansion per-

Continued on Page 8

One of the young men who accompanied William Cary on his first trip West wrote a delightful account of the adventure. It is a plain and unadorned narrative reflecting those experiences and feelings which impressed a boy of twenty. As such it is not only a charming glimpse into the everyday life of early western river-travel, but it is also valuable social history. The story is also important for being perhaps the only first hand account of the sinking of the "Chippewa," an Upper Missouri river steamboat laden with government supplies and American Fur Company goods destined for Fort Benton. The version which appears here has been edited from a manuscript copy of the article by W. H. Schieffelin which originally appeared in *Recreation Magazine* for 1895.

The reading of the history of the Lewis and Clark expedition and of Fenimore Cooper's tales awakened in us a spirit of interest and desire for travel and adventure. By us I mean E. N. Lawrence, W. M. Cary and myself.

We determined upon a buffalo hunt and a journey across the continent, and after securing complete hunting outfits, saddles, bridles, blankets, and tents we set out for St. Louis which was the rendezvous of nearly all west bound travelers at that time.

About the 12th of May, 1861, having letters of introduction to Mr. Pierre Chouteau of the American Fur Company, we left St. Louis on two of that company's steamboats,

A YOUNG ARTIST'S ADVENTURE IN THE EARLY NORTHWEST

the "Spread Eagle" and the "Chippewa," for Forts Union and Benton on the Upper Missouri.¹

The distance from St. Louis to Fort Benton is 3000 miles. It took us about six weeks to make the trip traveling by day only. At night we made fast to the shore or in case of danger from hostile Indians anchored in the middle of the river. The vessels were loaded principally with goods for the trading posts in the far Northwest, there being but few passengers for that remote country in those days.

Every afternoon a landing was made and the crews were employed for two hours or more in cutting wood for fuel and putting it on board for use the next day. These stops gave us ample opportunities for hunting and there was always plenty of game hung on the lower deck of the boat such as elk, buffalo, bear, duck, geese and swans.

The trip was in every way a most delightful one. The days were full of incident and adventure: now a snag, then a sandbar over which our boat was lifted by stilts which were part of the steamboat equipment

and which operated like legs. We saw many Indians and wild animals but the nights were always quiet and restful.

I killed my first elk one afternoon when the boats were tied up to the bank taking on wood. Lawrence, Cary and I went on a hunt about a mile from the boats and came on three or four elk which were kind and gentle to us. They seemed to know no fear of man and probably had never seen one. I crawled up to within one hundred feet of them and, taking careful aim at the largest bull, fired. I confess I was surprised to see him fall for I was not then a good shot with a rifle. I foolishly laid down my gun, now unloaded, and ran to cut his throat with my hunting knife. As I put the point of the knife in his neck he made a jump for me. His foot struck my hand and sent the knife ringing twenty feet away while I was sent as far the other way. Fortunately the elk was too badly hurt to follow up his advantage and I scrambled back to my gun, loaded up, and shot him dead. I doubtless owe my life to the fact that it was the spring of the year when the elk are hornless.

We cleaned the animal and started to drag the carcass to the boat. When we had gone about ten feet we discovered it was a very hot night and the mosquitoes were numerous, so we cut off the head and shoulders and started again with the hind quarters. By this time the night seemed hotter and the mosquitoes thicker than ever. We had gone only about a hundred feet when we cut off the hind quarter and started on with that. We dragged this about a quarter of a mile further when we concluded there was enough game on the boat and if the captain wanted more he could send for it. So we dropped our load and started on the run for the boat leaving the mosquitoes in possession of the ground. They were too many for us and I regret to say that my first elk was wasted.

BUFFALO AND WOLVES

FROM PAINTING BY WILLIAM CARY



ADVENTURE IN THE WEST

On arriving at Fort Union the boats were unloaded and since the river was very low only the small stern wheeler was loaded to go up to Fort Benton and the passengers were crowded aboard. This was very unlike the ease and luxury we had enjoyed on the larger boat, the "Spread Eagle," where each had a stateroom to himself.

One beautiful Sunday evening after supper when we were enjoying our smoke on the upper deck a cry of "Fire!" was raised and on going forward we saw smoke pouring from the forward hatch. One of the crew, being thirsty, had taken a lighted candle, gone below, and bored a hole into a barrel of alcohol. As the liquid poured out it ignited and set him and the boat on fire. He was hauled out but was so badly burned that he died some days later.

All of us knew there were some 300 kegs of powder in the bow of the boat so we did not want to stay aboard long. A panic ensued. The women and some of the men lost their heads and were with great difficulty prevented from jumping overboard. The shouts and screams of the people and the column of smoke and flame leaping up from the hold into the open hatchways were enough to shake the nerves of the bravest men. Several of us rushed to our staterooms, grabbed our best guns and belts and prepared to escape at the best opportunity. The engineer stood at his post and ran the boat ashore. Our captain had the instinct of self-preservation strongly developed. He stood on the prow without a package of any kind in his hands and as soon as the boat got within six feet of land he leaped like a wild man. In doing so he pushed the frail little steamer out into the water again, but the engineer drove her up to the shore and held her there until all the passengers were safely off. Then he too went ashore.

We took refuge behind some large cottonwood trees and watched the



"WATCHING THE FIRE CANOE"

BY WILLIAM CARY

ill-fated craft float helplessly out into the stream. In about twenty minutes the fire reached the powder and the unlucky steamer went up in a cloud of smoke with a roar that must have startled the wild beasts for miles around.²

Some of the wreckage could be seen floating down the river. We recognized a choice saddle, a bundle of clothes and some heavy blankets. Oh, how we shivered when we thought how cold we would be next fall for want of those heavy blankets and clothes! How we ached when we thought of the hundreds of miles we must ride on the bare hurricane decks of Indian cayuses and how we would long for those saddles! How our mouths watered as we thought how good that currant jelly would taste on venison and buffalo steak. But, alas, it was now in the bottom of the "Big Muddy," food for vulgar turtles and catfish. Yet we knew there was no use crying over lost jelly and supplies, and the best we could do now was to do the best we could.

In order to be prepared for prairie-hen shooting I had bought a pointer dog in St. Louis. He was said to be well-trained but like some children he liked to have his own way and was slow to obey orders when he did not see the necessity of it. This trait cost him his life for when the "Chippewa" took fire he was lying on the upper deck and when I ran for my gun I called him to follow me. But he did not stir and after calling him three times I left him to his repose. That was the last I ever saw of him. He is, no

doubt, in repose yet, but he must have been rudely disturbed for an instant when the boat blew up. Moral: Children obey your parents, and do it quickly or you may get left!

Fortunately we found an old flat boat nearby which belonged to the fur company. We rigged a shelter over it and returned down the river to Fort Union. Another lucky thing happened when an Indian camp appeared from which we obtained buffalo meat, else we might have starved.

Our hunting party remained at Fort Union six weeks while Mr. Andrew Dawson, chief factor of the American Fur Company, went up to Fort Benton and brought down a train of wagons to carry back the supplies and merchandise for trade with the Blackfeet Indians. During this long wait we had some interesting experiences. We passed our time in hunting and fishing in the vicinity of the Fort and in watching and mingling with the Indians. At one time there were 400 lodges of Assiniboines camped near, and we enjoyed the Indian dances, amusements and horse races.

Early one morning some of our hunters crossed the Missouri to hunt buffalo and Cary, Lawrence and I went on a hunt of our own. The weather was very hot. Cary and Lawrence saw a large buffalo bull coming down the trail and stationed themselves on each side of the trail. As the buffalo came near, Lawrence set the hair trigger of his rifle so as to be ready, but, unfortunately

he touched the trigger too soon and the buffalo turned, almost running over Cary who rolled out of its way. In doing so he took a flying shot at the animal and apparently hit him. But the buffalo kept on for some two hundred yards and then made a bad shy at something in the bushes that frightened him. We hastened to the fort at once knowing that it was hostile Indians and later they managed to steal some of our horses.

The Indian dances were interesting. They were the same as so well described in Catlin's works. The music was very monotonous; it consisted of banging a drum stick on a sort of tambourine, a long note and a short one and singing a song that sounded like "Hi, ya," the "Hi" being a long note and the "ya" a short one.

One of the Indians of the fort concluded one day to be a good Indian, that is, he up and died. The funeral ceremonies were very impressive: the relatives of the departed mourned and howled until you could hear them 200 yards. We did not sympathize with them as we ought nor did we regret the death since he was one of the Indians who, we believed, had at one time stolen our horses. As a fitting close to the obsequies a fine horse belonging to the dead brave was turned out. Two of the young warriors then ran up and shot him with arrows and the horse was buried near his master.

Finally after six long weeks at Fort Union, Mr. Dawson returned from Fort Benton with wagons. Our party bought an old Red River Cart, put our provisions, traps and skin

lodge in it and started with the train of twenty-one wagons on what we knew was to be a long journey.

We passed through a large camp of Crow Indians and called upon the chief who invited us to dine with him. The appearance of the lodge and his squaws did not hit our appetites but as a matter of policy we had to accept his hospitality.

A large iron pot was placed on the ground in the center of the tipi. We were seated around it and told to help ourselves. The meat was tender and had a really delicious flavor. We enjoyed it and thought it to be fawn or kid antelope, but as we rode away, Mr. Dawson rudely destroyed the relish by telling us we had been eating dog.

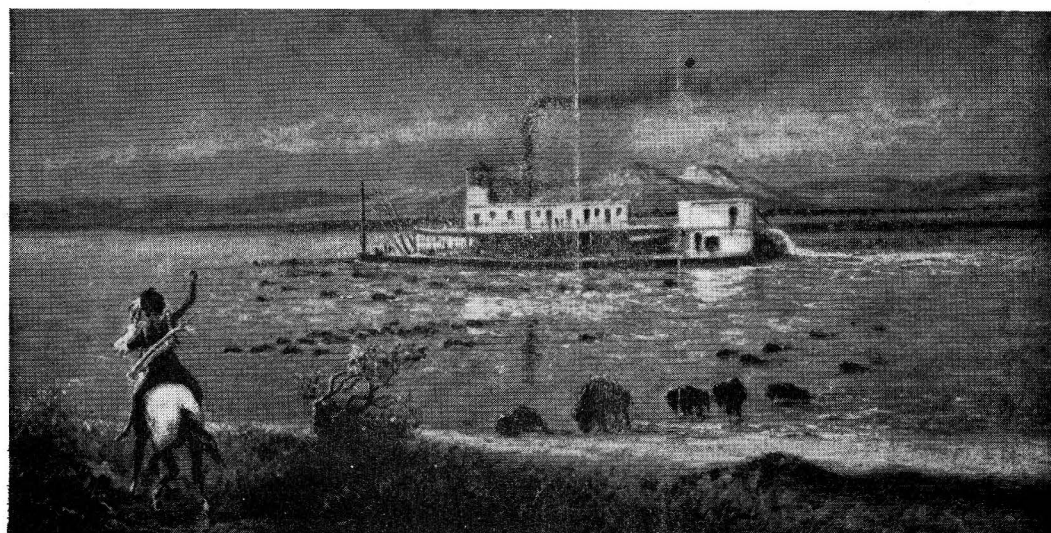
On leaving the chief we found that the Indians had been trying to stop our train. They were sharp enough to know that the wagons contained some of the goods destined for their trade and if the goods were allowed to reach Fort Benton the Indians would not get as much for their furs as formerly. While trying to steal some extra ox bows which hung under one of the wagons, an Indian was kicked down by a half wild ox. One of the wheels had run over the red man before the driver could stop the team. He was badly hurt and his friends stopped the wagon preparing to shoot the oxen and take the goods when Mr. Dawson and four of us rode up.

Mr. Dawson tried to conciliate the band but they paid little attention to him. Finally Mr. Dawson lost his temper and pulled his revolver. This was a serious error and it was

at once taken by the Indians as an excuse to open hostilities. All of us were immediately seized and taken prisoners with about 200 Indians aiming their arrows and guns at us and all anxious for an excuse to fire. I knew the Indians had guns which had a way of going off too soon. Had a shot been fired by us we would have been killed in a few seconds. At this moment the chiefs who had been dining with us rode up and rescued us from their men.

A large circle was formed. A council held, and by the payment of sundry blankets, provisions, etc. the affair was settled. Then the train strung out and we moved on our way. We had gone about a mile and were congratulating ourselves on our rescue from death when we saw riding toward us with the speed of wind eleven naked Indians in full war paint and feathers and horses covered with foam. They were led by a noble looking old white haired chief and were a fierce looking lot, nearly all stripped naked, armed and full of fight.

Dawson took a good look at them and said, "That's all right, they are friends." The old chief dismounted and Dawson turned to us saying, "Gentlemen, let me introduce you to my father-in-law, a Blackfeet chief. He said he heard we had been seized and were about to be killed by the Crows and that while he and his ten warriors could not do much against 3000 Crow they had come to die with us." We appreciated this true nobility, courage, friendship, and self-sacrifice. It shows the real character of the Indians.



Buffalo crossing the Missouri River.

From an oil painting by William Cary.

Gilcrease Collections.

We learned that when we were first seized a small half-breed boy who was with our wagon train rode on ahead and informed the Blackfeet of our trouble. The chief and his party came to the stream which was the boundary of the Blackfoot country and were waiting there to meet us when he heard of our capture, stripped for fight and entered the Crow country ready for fight. You can imagine what a picture these excited braves and horses made when they hauled up in front of us: eleven heroic Indians rushing to sure death, as they thought, motivated only by loyalty to a white man!

One day about five miles back from the trail we saw a large black animal moving slowly. Someone shouted "bear or buffalo!" I was riding a good horse and at once went after the game. It proved to be a big buffalo bull. He stampeded when he saw me coming, but my horse soon pulled me along side the great brute and kept me there until I emptied my revolver in his shoulder. Thanks to the horse I got my first buffalo without assistance from anyone. While I was cutting out the tongue, Mr. Cary came up and made a sketch of him. He was a fine old bison but had made no objection to being killed.

Buffalo were abundant all along the Upper Missouri and at times the plains were covered with them as far as the eye could see. One morning we awakened to see what seemed to be millions of them and as we were short on meat we prepared for a hunt. About ten of us mounted for the fray. We were advised to go as light as possible so most of us wore no coats, used light pads with stirrups in place of saddles and carried revolvers. I had two. We were told to obey the orders of our half-breed guide and not to charge until he told us, but then to go in as fast as we could. We cantered up to within 200 feet of the herd before the buffalo began to move. The guide gave the word, "Charge!" We rushed in and the entire herd started up and flanked to the left so that we suddenly were in the midst of them. We had been told to select fat cows. The race was very exciting. I rode beside a fine looking cow being jostled and rubbed against by the other buffaloes, and I shot her three times in the shoulder before she left the herd. I passed on, selected another and fired three or four times when she

too dropped out. So I kept on until I had emptied both revolvers. When I turned back to finish off those I had wounded I found some twenty buffalo either dead or wounded. We had a great feast that day and all agreed that a fat buffalo cow's rib was the best meat in the world.

At last after many days of slow but interesting travel we reached Fort Benton, head of navigation for the Upper Missouri river. We were hospitably entertained by the Post Trader and Indian Agent and enjoyed two weeks of rest. There were some good horses at the post and a natural race course four miles long and level as a floor. It encircled a hill from which could be seen a fine view of the races from start to finish. Several were run between the white men and the Indians for our entertainment.

As a rule the white men we met on the frontier though fair with us were not so with the Indians. They (excepting the leading men of the fur company) thought nothing of cheating and robbing or killing the Indians and the wonder is that the Indian is as good as he is. We found some exceptions in white trappers adopted into the tribes for they were loyal to the Indians. Many of the frontiersmen were outlaws from the States and neither by their precepts or examples did they do the Indian any good.

Having completed our arrangements for crossing the Rockies, Cary, Lawrence and myself left Fort Benton on a bright September morning with fifteen horses purchased from the American Fur Company, one cart, one Blackfeet Indian, a half-breed boy (as driver and herdsman) and a colored man engaged from the steamboat as cook. An old trapper whom we had hired for guide was to meet us about forty miles out toward the Rockies. But just as we were starting he sent word that he had changed his mind for he feared Indian trouble and had decided to remain with his squaw and children. So my friends and I decided to go it alone.

On the very first day out we met with an accident some fifteen miles from the fort. In crossing a hill with our cart the leaders took an Indian trail which made a shortcut instead of going over the top. The side of the hill was so steep that our cart turned over taking with it two



horses and a dog. Our flour, coffee, other food, tinware and personal effects were scattered by the wayside well mixed together. We looked down from the hillside in dismay and after a few feeble remarks appropriate for the occasion we slid down to the wreck. To our great relief we found that the only damage was a broken shaft and a few slight scratches on the horses and dog. We gathered up our duffle, went into camp, and sent back a messenger for help. A blacksmith and a new shaft were sent out and we were able to start afresh the next day thankful the accident had happened so near the fort.

As leader it was my duty to ride ahead of the party every afternoon to select a camping place where there was good water and grass. One fine evening when about a mile ahead of the party I saw a large bush in great commotion shaking as if in a hard wind. I approached to find out the cause of the disturbance when an immense grizzly bear came out, rose up on his hind legs, and looked at me, apparently as much surprised as I. My horse, though

Continued on Page 8

Continued From Page 3

iod. Some of his paintings certainly have merit for their esthetic worth alone in spite of the fact the artist's interest was largely in telling a story with as much detail as was possible. His paintings are somewhat like his writings in that he tells his viewer or reader everything and with all the color and drama he felt at the moment of experience.

Cary did many illustrations for the periodicals of his day, including *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated*. His paintings and drawings were reproduced by Currier and Ives, Charles Clackner and Fisher as well as Adler and Schwartz. Not all of his illustrations were of the West but a majority of them had the authenticity made possible through personal experience.

Cary's paintings have been exhibited in many galleries throughout the United States and Europe. During his life time his paintings were exhibited in Berlin and at the Royal Academy in London, as well as the Cochran Galleries in Washington, D. C. and in the American Museum of Natural History. After his death the collection of paintings presently owned by the Gilcrease Museum was exhibited at the Newhouse Galleries in New York, at the Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City, in Topeka, Kansas, in San Francisco and several other major American cities. As late as 1921 Cary was active in his studio on West 14th Street in New York City. Sometime prior to this time he had a studio on West 55th Street where his comrades in art were Albert Bierstadt, Elihu Vedder, George Brown and George Innes. Cary died in January of 1922.

Continued From Page 7

terrified, made no effort to run. He simply stood trembling violently and I think I was about as frightened as he was. Fortunately for me my gun was in a tight buffalo skin case across the pommel of my saddle and I was unable to get it out in time to shoot. If I had done so the chances are I would have wounded the bear only because my horse shook so that I could not have taken good aim. Old Ephraim seemed to tower above my horse as he stood up and inspected me but after a few whiffs he seemed not to like my appearance and started down the mountain side making thirty or forty feet at a jump. My horse was a fast runner but the bear could go three feet to my one; he was soon out of sight and I had lost a bear. After that I carried my gun without the skin case but two days later dropped it from the saddle and broke the stock which ended its usefulness for that trip.

In approaching the mountains we met a party of Flathead Indians who were going over to the Missouri to hunt buffalo. On the divide we found a few inches of snow but had a pleasant trip. We had to find our own way as there was little or no trail only a wagon having gone over the year before. It certainly was a rather foolhardy undertaking for three city boys, but Providence was kind to us and we came through safely.

After 275 miles of traveling we were glad to arrive at a place called "Hell Gate."³ There we found a train of government supplies about to return to Walla Walla so we disposed of our cart and only took our saddle horses with us. We also disposed of our cook who was ugly and insubordinate. Soon after leaving us he stole a horse from one of the settlers and the last time we saw him was on our first day's journey out.

We met him on a horse with his hands tied behind his back and a rope around his neck held by a frontiersman who rode behind him with a loaded gun.

We arrived at Fort Walla Walla about the first of November. After staying there a week we sold our horses and went by stage and steamboat to Portland where we took a steamer to San Francisco.

After staying a while in San Francisco we returned by way of the Isthmus of Panama. When near Cuba we were chased by a black steamer in the confederate service. But after dark the captain of our steamer put out all the lights, we changed our course, and the next morning our pursuers, perhaps the "Alabama" or "Sumpter," was not to be seen. We arrived safely in New York in February, 1862.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ft. Union was an important fur post situated where the Yellowstone River empties into the Missouri some 1760 miles up from St. Louis. Ft. Benton was a fur post located another 500 miles up the Missouri, a short distance below the Great Falls of the Missouri.

2. The "Chippewa" was built in 1859 specifically for use on the upper waters of the Missouri where the larger steamboats could not go. In 1860 it became the first steamboat to reach Ft. Benton. The disaster reported here occurred just east of the Poplar River some fifty miles from Ft. Union.

3. The boys probably crossed over Mullen Pass west of Helena, Montana, which was then being surveyed by Captain John Mullen of the U. S. Army engineers for a wagon road. One of his camps was located at Hell Gate on the west side of the Divide near what is now Missoula. The name is derived from a nearby canyon which provided a natural site for the Indians to use for ambushing an enemy.

The American Scene

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