

American Scene



THE GILCREASE MAGAZINE - TULSA OKLAHOMA

a New Building a New Era

Last November Tulsa taxpayers voted by a resounding majority to expand their city-owned Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art.

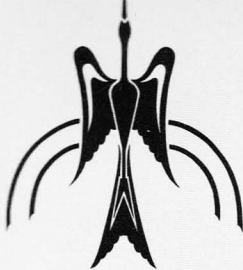
The \$600,000 approved by Tulsans for the museum will provide new galleries to exhibit paintings and artifacts never before shown to the public due to the lack of display space. The proposed Thomas Gilcrease Memorial Lounge will pay tribute to the founder of the museum and the new Hall of the American Indian will present an eloquent pageant of western history. Another gallery will be devoted to the exhibition of some of the greatest book rarities and documents in all the Americas while a new assembly hall will provide citizens — school children in particular — with a meeting place for lectures and study to develop a deeper appreciation of their own American history.

Tulsa's Gilcrease museum was founded in the nineteen forties and became the property of the citizens of Tulsa six years ago. Today it is a source of pride for all Oklahomans as a cultural and educational institution.

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American Scene

THE HISTORY MAGAZINE WITH A PURPOSE

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VOLUME IV

1962

NO. 3

CONTENTS

The Gilcrease Image.....	3
Alfred Jacob Miller.....	7
Gilcrease Album.....	9
Sir William Drummond Stewart.....	20
The Miller Collection.....	23

This issue of the *American Scene* introduces a new and more colorful format. Other innovations are being planned for future issues and a new philosophy for the presentation of the Gilcrease collections. A development program designed to increase the magazine's national appeal is being undertaken.

John Francis McDermott is guest contributor for this issue which features the paintings of Alfred Jacob Miller. Doctor McDermott is an authority on the frontier of the Upper Mississippi Valley and the author of many books and articles dealing with early travels, explorations and paintings of the region. His most recent book is *Seth Eastman, Pictorial History of the Indians*.

In his article, "The Gilcrease Image," Dean Krakel, Director of Gilcrease Institute, presents an intimate glimpse of Thomas Gilcrease and the spirit in which he assembled the Gilcrease Collection.

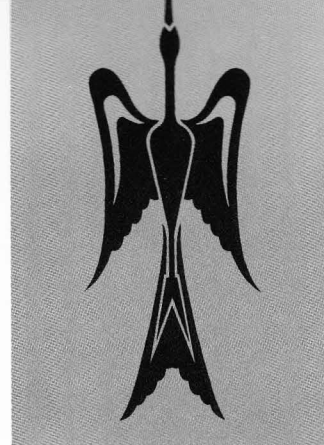
Paul A. Rossi of Denver, Colorado, formerly deputy curator of the Colorado State Historical Society, has been appointed Curator of the Gilcrease Institute. Mr. Rossi, a graduate of the University of Denver, was most recently associated with the Martin Missile Company as a staff artist and designer. He is in charge of the Gilcrease design and exhibits program and is Art Editor of the *American Scene*.

COVER: Alfred Jacob Miller called the attractive water color which appears on the front cover "Scene on the Big Sandy." • BACK COVER: "Watering Horses."

The American Scene is published quarterly by the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, P. O. Box 2419, Tulsa, Oklahoma. All illustrations are from the Gilcrease collection. Institute membership from \$5.00 includes subscription to the magazine. Copyright 1962 by Gilcrease Institute. Single copy \$1.25.



Thomas Gilcrease's youthful appreciation of his American heritage inspired him to assemble the collection of Americana that has become Tulsa's outstanding cultural institution.



The Gilcrease Image

by Dean Krakel

IF YOU ASK NINETY PEOPLE the same question generally you will get ninety different answers. At Gilcrease we mailed out questionnaires. We received ninety answers. But they were not different. Not in the least. And add to it the fact that it had been more than two years since these "select" signers of our guest register had been to Oklahoma. Thirty states and the District of Columbia were heard from in the study.

If the replies to our questions could speak collectively, they might say: "We enjoyed Tulsa's Gilcrease Museum. Grounds there are well kept and refreshing. The building is distinctive. Don't change it. And how does it happen that so many classic American paintings like Winslow Homer's seascape, a prize Whistler, or 'The Wild Turkey' by Audubon, works of George Inness and Thomas Eakins and a host of others are there? How come?"

Twenty-nine percent of the replies complimented Fred-eric Remington's genius in bronze. A lady from Cincinnati, Ohio, about summed it up with: "I don't know how Mr. Remington made his statues, but they are surely beautiful and tell so much about life in the West, and his paintings they are more than swirls and splotches . . ."

Charles M. Russell was mentioned in a lighter vein, ". . . his horses," they said, "can be the onriest critters, buckin' and snorting. The landscapes he did are among the world's best—bright sunsets, gold and purple skies. And Russell's character situations are filled with real cow-country humor, as shown in 'Bronc to Breakfast,' and 'Meat's Not Meat 'Til It's In The Pan.' Of course his Indians are colorful."

These comments would fill a small ledger. Yet some of the replies picked on us a little. Why don't you publish a handbook to the Museum was a common complaint. Others remembered our sales desk as being rather jumbled. Only two percent of those polled knew we offered a membership or published the *American Scene*. A writer from Wisconsin said she could not tell our floor guards from ordinary visitors. A little boy added a touch of humor to his answer

when he wrote, "honest . . . I can't seem to remember a single thing about Gillcrestt."

Like those who participated in the survey, questions came to my mind while I was here last May. I was one of several applicants for the Directorship of Gilcrease. After being given a hurried tour of the Catlin and Alfred Jacob Miller galleries, and seeing so many familiar faces in the Russell and Remington rooms, I was sold. And as yet I had not had the critical interview with the Board of Directors. On the flight back to the Rocky Mountains I couldn't help but compare what I had been given a glimpse of with the stiff military portraits we had in the Air Force Academy Interim Museum where I was Deputy Director. The Colorado institution had no case—for me Gilcrease was love at first sight. Lady Luck was riding with me all the way . . . the answers to my many questions came later.

It's a well known fact that Mr. Thomas Gilcrease spent most of his life and a "pile of nickles," as he says, locating and then buying. If a painting told a story about America he bought it. The latter is one of the reasons so many colonial masters hang on our walls, Rembrandt Peale, John Vanderlyn, Thomas Sully, Thomas Cole, Robert Feke and a long list. To compliment his historic art, Mr. Gilcrease carefully pulled together thousands of select books, letters, documents, and manuscripts. For example, one letter, dated July 1, 1776, reads: "If any doubt has arisen to me, my country will have my political creed in the form of a declaration . . ."—the signer was Thomas Jefferson; he had in mind his Declaration of Independence. There is an original copy of the Articles of Confederation in our vault, next to it is a letter written by Diego Columbus, Christopher's son—one of the first communications to come from the New World. An item that causes most of our visitors to gasp is signed by a General Warren and concerns one Paul Revere, who, it says, is authorized to proceed on a ride with all dispatch. The year of the order is 1775, the month April.

Most Tulsans will boast that their Gilcrease Museum



Thomas Gilcrease in Alaska with a Dall sheep he had just killed.

is worth at least twelve millions of dollars, especially if a Texan happens to be within earshot. Rumor has it that some years ago a committee of ten-gallon-hat-wearing oil magnates from the Lone Star tried to convince silent man Gilcrease into believing their Austin town would become the cultural bandwagon for all the Great Southwest. Tom studied their proposal awhile, then shook his head sideways.

Tom Gilcrease dismisses his life-long globe circling collecting spree lightly. He intimates that in addition to his own likes he wanted to do something for the people of Oklahoma. And when Mr. Gilcrease talks of people, he means the Creeks (of whom he is a blood brother), Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole. These descendants of The Trail of Tears People will always be dear to him. He wanted them and all Oklahomans to share with him the pleasure of unmarred beauty on canvas and to read nothing but pure truth in print. And if friends came from out of state, they too would be welcome at the "stone council house" overlooking the Osage Hills. His intention

was that the priceless objects he collected should never leave the Museum, because "Indian Territory," he philosophised, "has always been mighty short of fine things to see."

In 1954 local citizens and Mr. Gilcrease got together, largely through the energy of Mr. Alfred Aaronson, civic leader, and champion of any project to improve Tulsa. Tom said he was beginning to realize that his old bones weren't going to hold together forever while planners figured their city of a quarter of a million needed a public museum. And the institution offered just happened to be of a high magnitude. But how much was pure speculation. Mr. Gilcrease's lips were sealed. A proposition was made and the bargain struck.

Since the original transaction both parties have sweetened the pot considerably. In 1958 the benefactor presented Tulsa the building with walls 30 inches thick and the thirteen acres of land it was situated on; it kinda cemented things. Now Tulsa owned the whole shebang, lock-stock-and-barrel. Tulsans countered by naming a proposed super highway "The Gilcrease Expressway," then followed up last fall by enthusiastically voting a bond issue of \$600,000 to more than triple the facility's size. It's the City's Museum—but undeniably it's a memorial to the greatness of the man.

"By and large it's been a good proposition," said Thomas Gilcrease while looking down at the museum from the porch of his spacious home, adding "... today half a dozen



The Nora Brown. This was the first well brought in by the Gilcrease Oil Company.

Thomas Gilcrease on Cuter, the horse he used in herding cattle as a young man.



good men and all the gold in Fort Knox couldn't duplicate what's there."

Tom Gilcrease, who is no stuffed shirt, has made and spent a fortune in his three score and ten span of years. The generation of his fondest memories was one of giants. Big oil, big money, big spirit and big men: Phillips, Bill Skelly, John Mabey, Amon Carter. A different breed. "They're all under the sod," Tom says, "no different than any good Indian who had used up his allotment of time."

His beginnings in life were humble, filled with long hours of thrift and hard work and lots of short, staple cotton to pick. "Yet," he says, "I read every book I could get my hands on while growing up, and vowed someday to get an education." When a break came he realized how to handle it. He went to Bacone College for "Injuns." Think and plan before you act is a Gilcrease motto. He isn't capable of a hasty decision. A dark seepage on the family homestead aroused his curiosity; what he reckoned led him straight into the budding new oil business. Then he hit his first well—a real gusher. He hadn't figured to do that good right off. It was think and plan some more. He

bought up all the oil leases he could get and started drilling. And suddenly he had more holes spouting black gold than a wagon's hind wheel has spokes.

By the time he was ready to vote in a national election, handsome young Tom cut a wide swath wherever he went; he had a million or more silver dollars scattered in hard money banks throughout the Southwest. In spite of his youthfulness, he had watched others squander their wealth and made up his mind that here was one Indian boy the palefaces wouldn't cheat. He wanted to do something worthwhile. It would take a lot of thinking to figure it out, but he wanted to leave some kind of a track in life for all the living he had in mind.

It may never be told, at least not by the unusually reserved and forceful Mr. Gilcrease, when or how he planned to accumulate the greatest collection of Frontier Americana in the world.

It is said that he purchased his first piece of art in 1910. Maybe it was on top of a clanking oil rig when it all crystallized, or while crowding the first car he ever owned south to a Texas gas field, or fly-fishing along the Hoback River in Wyoming. When wherever it happened, young Gilcrease figured out what to buy with his "pile of nickles" and he vowed not to tell a soul, not even his children when they came along.

Yes, he, Thomas Gilcrease, would collect the finest things from all over the world and bring them to the Southwest. He would study and appreciate his finds, one by one, even if it took him away from his big oil corporation. In time it would all add up to a portrait: that of Frontier America. He would capture every detail of this great movement—with its lessons.

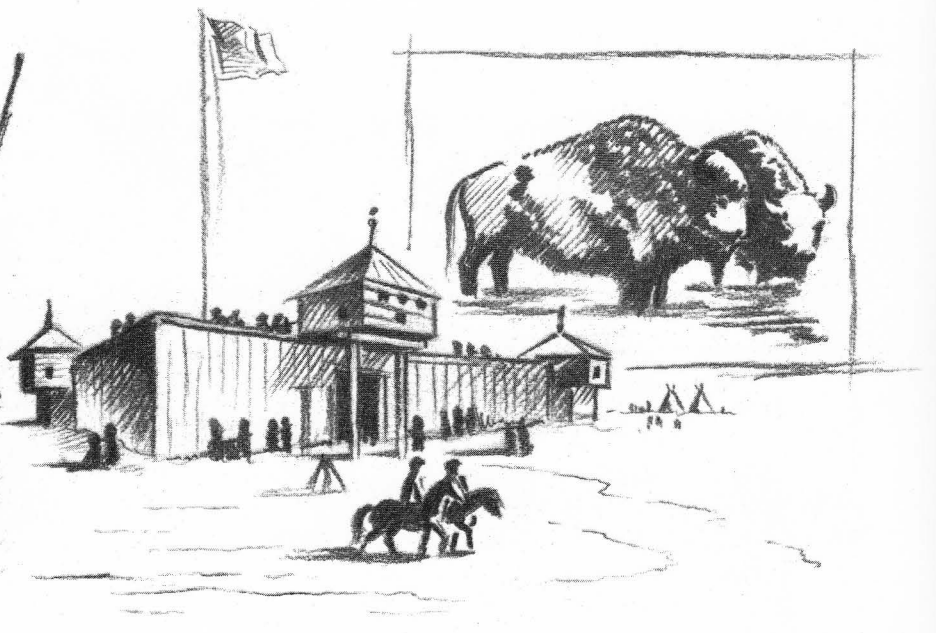
Here was the Gilcrease image in the beginning. This is the Gilcrease image today—almost forty years later. ●



Mr. Gilcrease as a young man.

Miller

by John Francis McDermott





Indian Procession in honor of Captain Stewart.

NO YOUNG PAINTER ever had a greater stroke of luck than Alfred Jacob Miller. Baltimore-born, Paris-trained, he was quietly painting portraits and landscapes in New Orleans in the spring of 1837 when a stranger "with a military air" entered the studio, looked at the canvases on the walls, and made a brief approving comment about the picture on which the young man was working. Returning a few days later, the visitor introduced himself as Captain W. D. Stewart of the British Army, said he was in search of a competent artist to accompany him on an excursion to the Rocky Mountains "to sketch the remarkable scenery and incidents of the journey," and asked Miller if he would go.

It was certainly the opportunity of a lifetime. Stewart had first visited the mountains in 1833 and had been back every year since. Scottish aristocrat and bold sportsman, he

had developed a passion for the western mountains. Such a chance for a romantic-minded young man to record the wild scenery, the wild animals, and the wild Indians was irresistible. The thrill of the hunting trip beyond the frontier—the chance to paint what no artist had yet painted—with such appeals it could not have taken Miller long to say yes.

Samuel Seymour, it is true, had been the first artist to have a "distant view of the Rocky Mountains" when he traveled west as staff artist with Major S. H. Long in 1820. He finished sixty of his one hundred and fifty field sketches but only nine of them had appeared as illustrations in the American and English editions of Edwin James's account of the expedition. George Catlin's work was much better known, for in more than one city since 1833 he had exhibited hundreds of pictures, but his western subjects were

largely Missouri River scenery and tribes — he had nothing at all of the mountains. Carl Bodmer was yet unknown, for Maximilian of Neu Wied was not to publish until 1841 the *Atlas* to his *Travels* in which more than fifty of the plates would put the young Swiss before the world as a great portrayer of Indians, and Bodmer's, too, would be Missouri River scenes and figures. The way was open to young Miller to be the first painter of the Rockies and, with Stewart for his patron, to become the first great painter of the wild sports of the Far West.

To St. Louis went Miller with Stewart and Antoine Clement, his half-breed hunter. After days of preparation and nights of talk with Stewart's old friends William Sublette and Robert Campbell and with the patriarch of western explorers, William Clark, they set out for Independence to join the caravan for the American Fur Company. Thence they moved out over the Oregon Trail, along the Platte, stopping a few days at Fort Laramie, and on to the rendezvous of the traders on the Green River and to Stewart's favorite hunting ground at the headwaters of New Fork in the Wind River Mountains.

It was a rough journey, this in pursuit of "wild sports," made no easier by Captain Stewart who, Miller later wrote, "was the military martinet and rigidly exacted from me all the duties of the Camp — said I had been spoiled at home." Permitted to "buy out" his turn at guard at night, the young man was allowed no other privileges. He must picket his horse at night and catch him up in the morning. But in his business as artist he was on occasion ready to assert himself. Once when the Captain, watching him at work, undertook to tell him "you should sketch this thing

and that thing," Miller grumbled sharply, "if I had half a dozen pair of hands, it should have been done."

Returning from the mountains in October, Miller went first to New Orleans and some time after to Baltimore to paint for his patron many large canvases based on his field sketches. Some of these he exhibited in Baltimore in the summer of 1838. New York the next spring had the chance to see eighteen of his "spirited delineations of the wild sports of the Far West" before they were shipped off to Scotland. And to Scotland went Miller in 1840 to have a large hand in the decorating of the hunting lodge at Murthly Castle in Perthshire (the Captain was now Sir William and quite rich enough to indulge himself in any whim). There he painted possibly a dozen more oils recording the "remarkable scenery and incidents of the journey."

After a stay in England Miller returned to Baltimore to resume normal life as a portrait painter. But life for him never quite returned to normal. The western wilds were always with him. How could he ever forget the excitement of the excursion with the fur traders, the thrill of the rendezvous, the grand novelty of mingling with the Indians, the splendor of the mountain scenery? Again and again he turned to his portfolio of sketches, for his own pleasure, I am sure, as well as for the satisfaction of his romantic-minded patrons, and produced nearly one hundred oils in addition to those painted for Stewart and more than three hundred of his glowing water colors.

Miller's duty was to record the experiences of the excursion. Likely enough he sketched Mississippi River scenes,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Threatened Attack.



GILCREASE ALBUM

72
 67
 Indian Encampment on the
 "Eau Sucre" River.

The sketch presents an almost Arcadian scene, the simple minds of the savages give them no brighter heaven hereafter, - their paradise is constructed with (at least) as much facility as a Persian's.

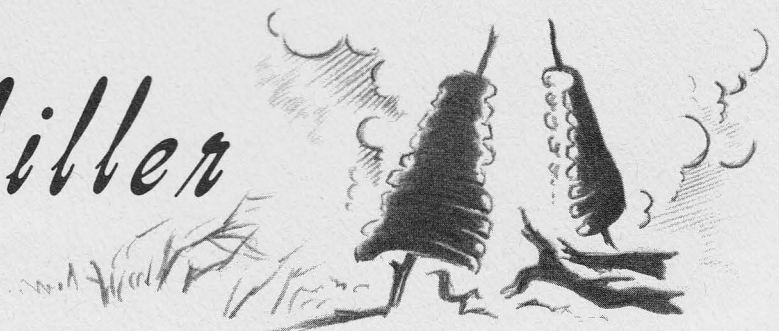
"A Persian's heaven is easily made,
 'Tis but black eyes and lemonade.

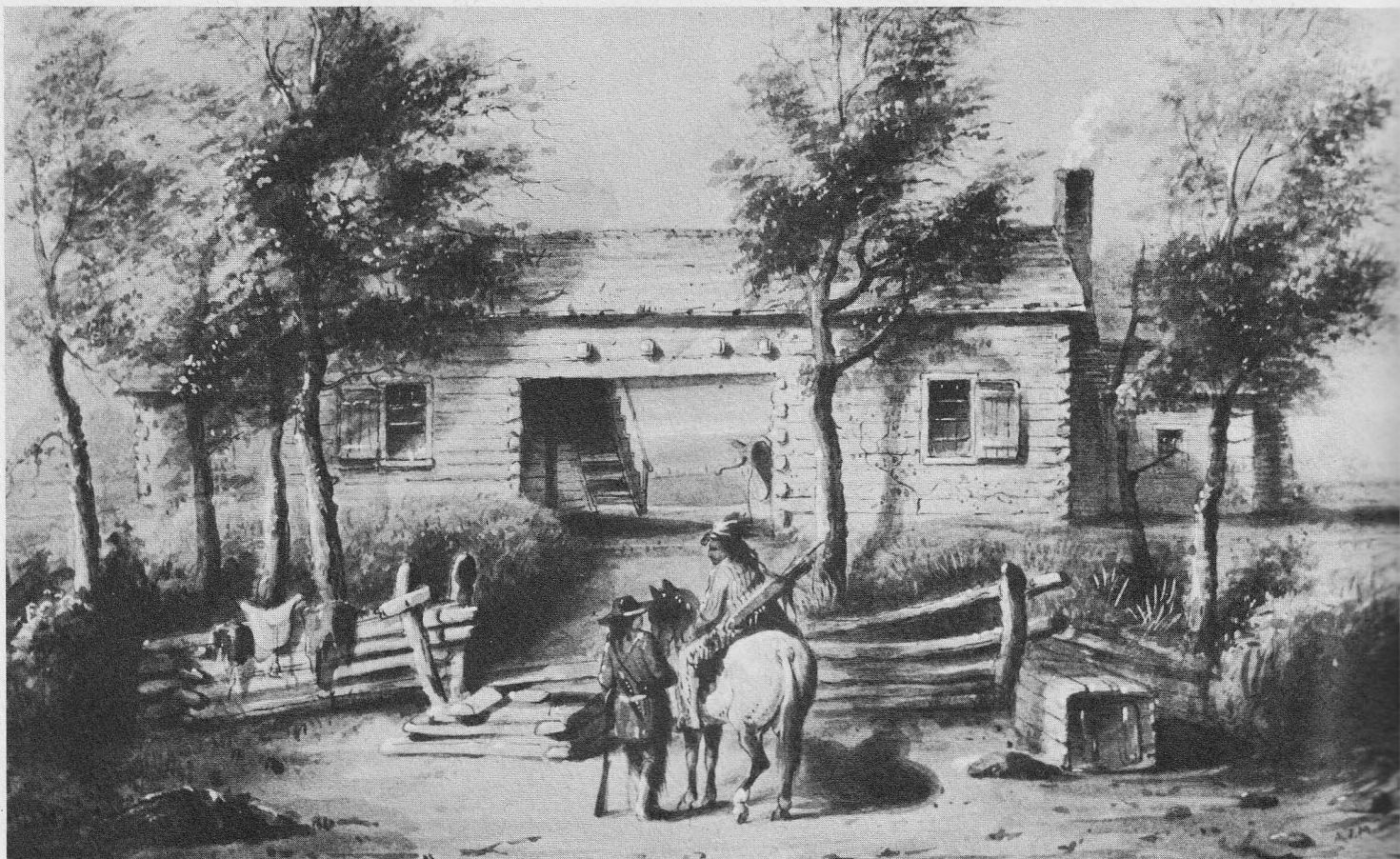
It is a question whether with all our boasted civilization, we enjoy more real happiness than these children of the prairie, on whom we exhaust a deal of superfluous sympathy; - They would certainly not be willing, or in a hurry to exchange with us, - and are at least contented with their lot - We (generally speaking) never are. - So that after toiling through pain & suffering for a life time, without, rarely if ever, being able to accomplish the work before us, - we go out of the world in about the same sort of stupid astonishment with which we came into it.

The scene is on the River "Eau Sucre" Two Indian women are seated on its border, & in the distance an encampment. - In the immediate foreground is an Indian canoe, made of Birch-wood bark. - These boats are light & swift, - are beautifully modelled & remind one much of the Gondolas of Venice. -

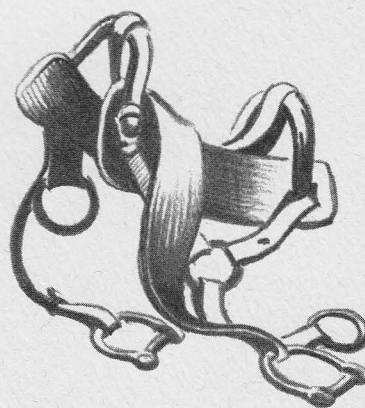
Miller's "Notes on Indian Sketches"

of A. J. Miller





WESTERN CABIN *"This building was the last house we encountered... While getting everything ready for our departure, we occupied the attic... A violent storm one night gave us a foretaste of what we had to expect in our distant journey knowing full well that no friendly roof after that would shelter us."*



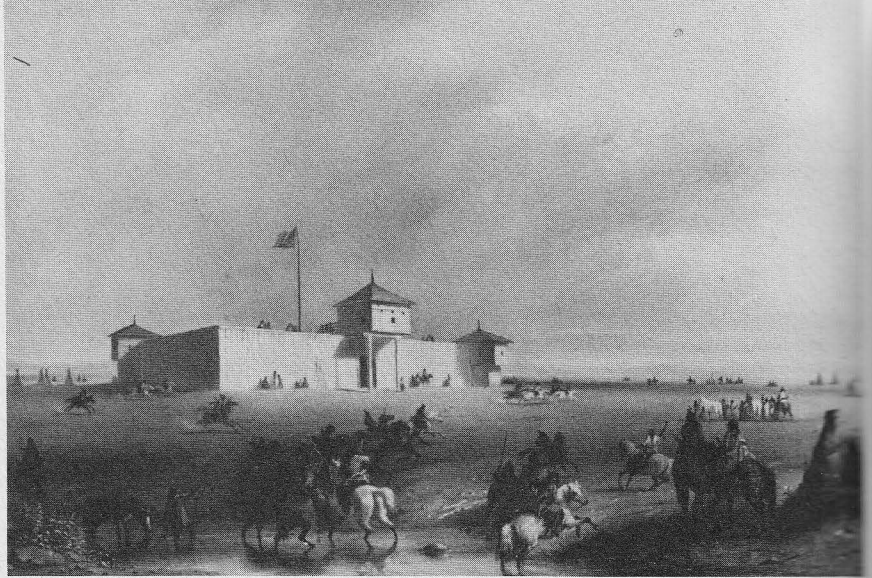
KANSAS INDIAN *"A tribe of these Indians we found encamped on the Caw or Kansas River — as the buffalo and elk have been driven long ago from this district, their hunting is now confined to the black bear, turkeys, prairie hens and common red deer."*

THE LOST TRAPPER *Enroute West the cook boasted of his prowess as a buffalo hunter. Captain Stewart put him to the test and he got himself lost, spending two nights alone on the prairie. When rescued the trappers taunted him unmercifully.*



PRAIRIE SCENE — MIRAGE *"The caravan is proceeding at its usual steady pace, both men and horses suffering for lack of water. The day is hot and oppressive. Suddenly in the distance a lake looms up, delightful to the eye, the surface reflecting islands of trees on its border—but what is the matter with the horses? They neither raise their ears, quicken their motion or snort, as is their wont on such occasions. Poor brutes!—well do they know that there is no water for them—it is the mirage, an optical illusion. The deception is so perfect that you can scarcely credit your senses."*





FORT LARAMIE "The view is from the great entrance looking west and embraces more than half the court area. When this space is filled with Indians and traders, as it is at stated periods, the scene is lively and interesting. From the Gila at the South, the Red River at the north and the Columbia River West, each has its quota of representatives — Sioux, Bannocks, Mandans, Crows, Snakes, Pend Oreilles, Nez Perces, Cheyennes and Delawares . . . There was a cannon or two sleeping in the towers over the two main entrances — the Indians having an aversion to their being awakened, entertaining a superstitious reverence for them. They are intended to keep the peace . . . This post built for the American Fur Company is situated about 800 miles West of St. Louis is of quadrangular form with block houses at diagonal corners to sweep the front in case of attack."



SNAKE AND SIOUX INDIANS ON THE WARPATH *"In looking at a body of these savage fellows scouring the prairies, one cannot fail to be impressed with their admirable horsemanship . . . A piece of buffalo robe serves for a seat and their bridle is simply composed of plaited bull hide attached to the lower lip of the horse . . . Their usual arms are a lance about 8 or 9 feet long tipped with an iron spear, bow and quiver of arrows, tomahawk and a shield covered with tough bull hide painted with figures and ornamented with eagle feathers and scalps."*



Miller's field sketch for the painting that appears above.

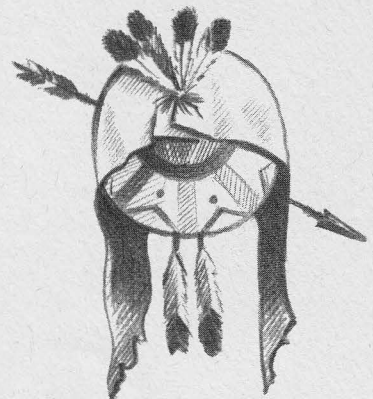




TRAPPERS ON BIG SANDY *"The trappers may be said to lead the van in the march of civilization: from the Canadas in the North to California in the South, from the Mississippi East to the Pacific West, every river and mountain stream in all probability have been at one time or another visited and inspected by them. Adventurous, hardy, and self-reliant. Always exposed to constant danger from hostile Indians and extremes of hunger and cold. They penetrate the wilderness in all directions in pursuit of their calling."*



A Nez Perce Warrior.

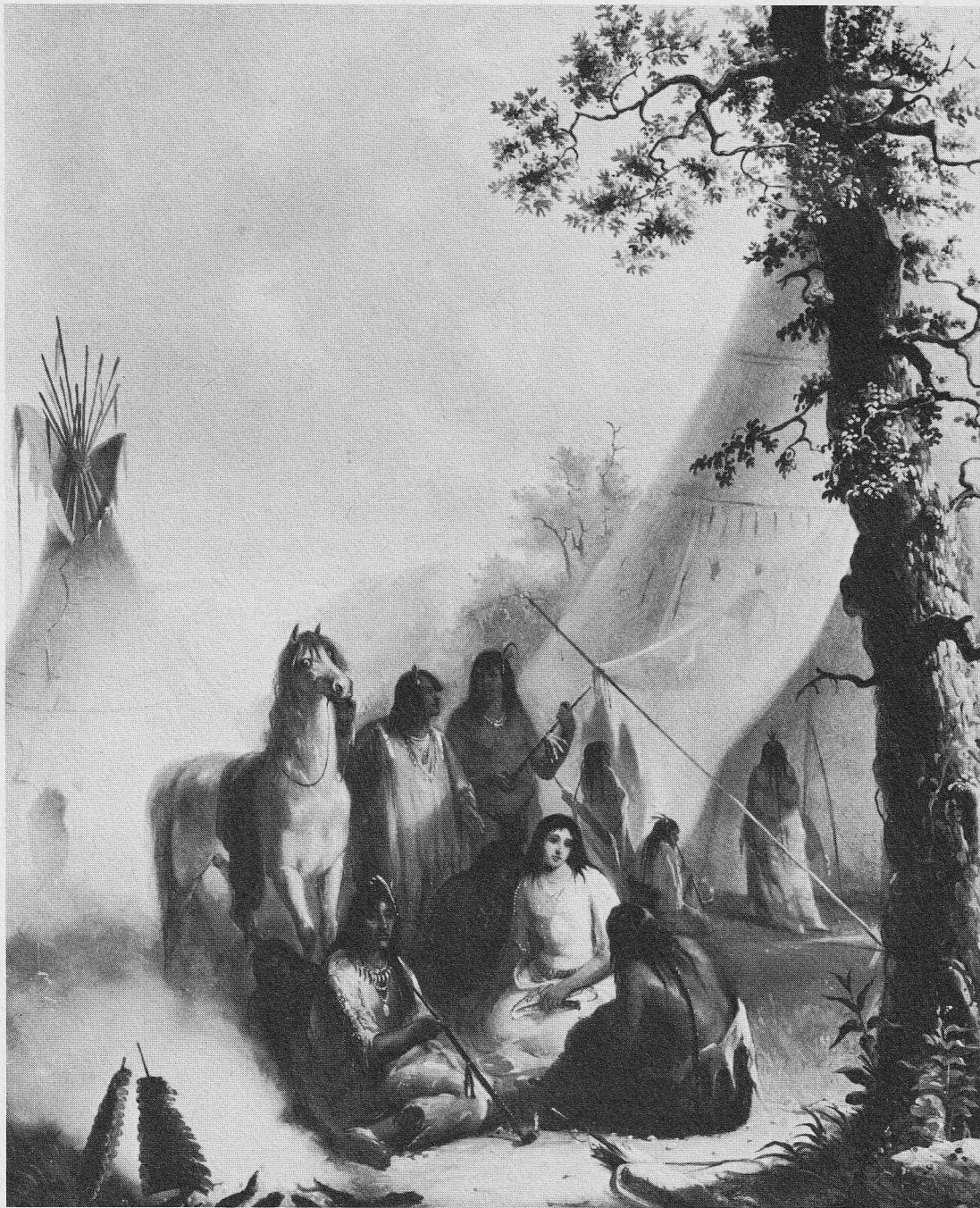


PIERRE *"The subject of this sketch was at the time about 17 years of age—a half-breed Canadian with a complexion lighter than that of a Spaniard, extremely good natured and a great favorite. Although so young he was a capital hunter, active in the chase, courageous and very successful."*



GREEN RIVER OREGON *"The source of this river is near Fremont's Peak and runs southerly making one of the tributaries of the Colorado; as it is in close proximity to the mountains every bend of the river is productive of noble scenery, the Rocky Mountain forming the background. We found at intervals tribes of Indians encamped on its borders—their white and brown lodges forming picturesque objects in the landscapes, and their warriors, some mounted on hardy and wild looking animals waiting their chief's order, either for the hunt or foray, others reclining in the shade smoking, shaping bows and arrows or sleeping."*





ENCAMPMENT OF INDIANS "It is near the close of day and the sun is throwing a warm glow over the distant hills. The group represented in the sketch is simply some Indians seated near their campfire talking and smoking, while preparations are briskly going forward for a feast. A warrior chief has just dismounted from his horse returning from hunting or something worse and the inevitable pipe is ready for him. In the distance are lodges, Indians preparing their bows, etc."



Sketch of a Kaw girl.

life on the steamboat, the bustle of St. Louis, frontier Independence, but the adventure on which he was embarking really began for him as for his equally enthusiastic employer only when he had crossed the line that marked the limit of the civilized world. The pictorial record opens with a sketch of the loghouse of Joe Parks, a Shawnee Indian farmer well known to all western travelers, where they spent the last few days before setting out over the plains for the Rockies. Riding at Miller's shoulder we cross the Kansas River, reach the broad, shallow Platte, pass tall Chimney Rock, Scott's Bluff, approach that last outpost, Fort Laramie, and enter its courtyard, stop at Independence Rock, pass through the forbidding Devil's Gate, pitch tent at the rendezvous, camp on the blue lakes in the Wind River Mountains.

So vividly does he paint that we share in every action. We sit around the evening camp fire preparing a meal, we smell the hump ribs roasting, we breakfast and break camp at sunrise, we stretch out at the noonday rest, we bob across a river in a bullboat, picket horses at night and catch them up in the morning after a brisk run. With our fresh eyes we watch the trappers starting out for beaver, preparing for the buffalo hunt, running buffalo, shooting buffalo, running from a grizzly. With eager interest we note the elk swimming in the Platte, a herd of antelopes on the plains, a stampede of wild horses, herds of buffalo drinking and bathing at night. Around us are our companions, real as life—Captain Stewart on his white horse or sitting under a tree or talking with Indians—Antoine and Pierre and Auguste.

We stand apart to watch the caravan cross a river. We shiver with excitement as a great crowd of mounted Indians dash forward in threatened attack on our wagon train. We stroll curiously among the traders and the Indians at the rendezvous. Bourgeois Walker and his Indian wife are there. There yonder is Jim Bridger in the suit of armor Stewart has brought out for him. We stare at the grand show put on by the Snakes to entertain—and impress—the white visitors.

Everywhere Indians—Kaws, Shoshones, Pawnees, Nez Perces, Bannocks, Iroquois, Snakes, Crows, Flatheads, Sioux, Arapahoes, Blackfeet. On the lookout, shooting elk, standing guard, preparing a meal, smoking, on the warpath, migrating, reconnoitering, capturing wild horses, receiving presents, returning to camp with game, running buffaloes, in council, dodging an arrow, fording a river, pursuing a horse thief, eloping, in camp, at a grave, testing their bows. And not men only! Our young artist has an eye for the ladies. An Indian girl with a papoose on her back crosses a stream, an Indian woman makes a war dress, another rides past chasing a buffalo, an Indian girl is married to



Indian women crossing stream.

The Trapper's Bride.



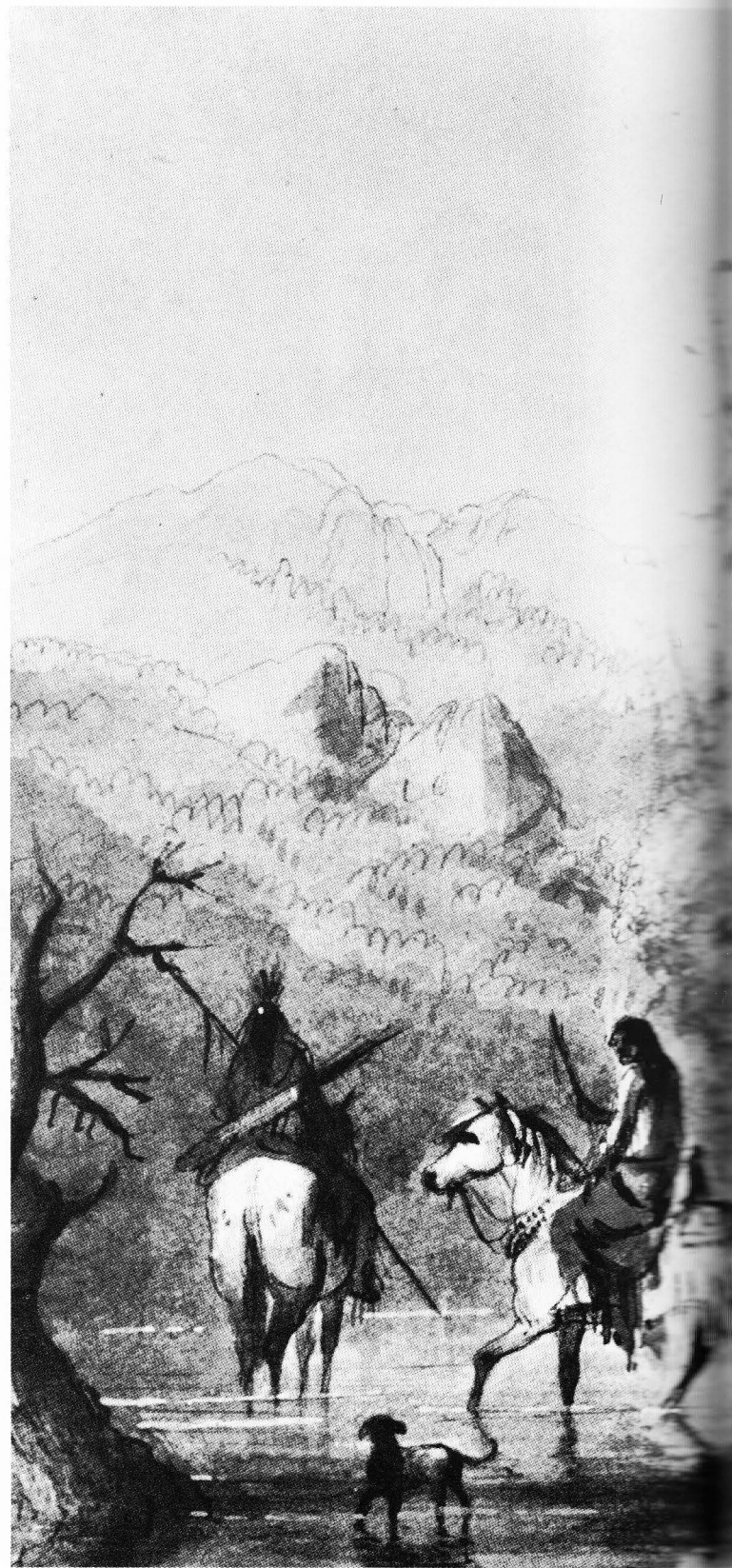
a trapper (not fewer than seven times was Miller to paint this scene). A girl lies asleep by a stream. A girl hands a horn of water to a thirsty trapper. Girls swing from a tree limb, race on horseback, wash their hair, swim naked in the river.

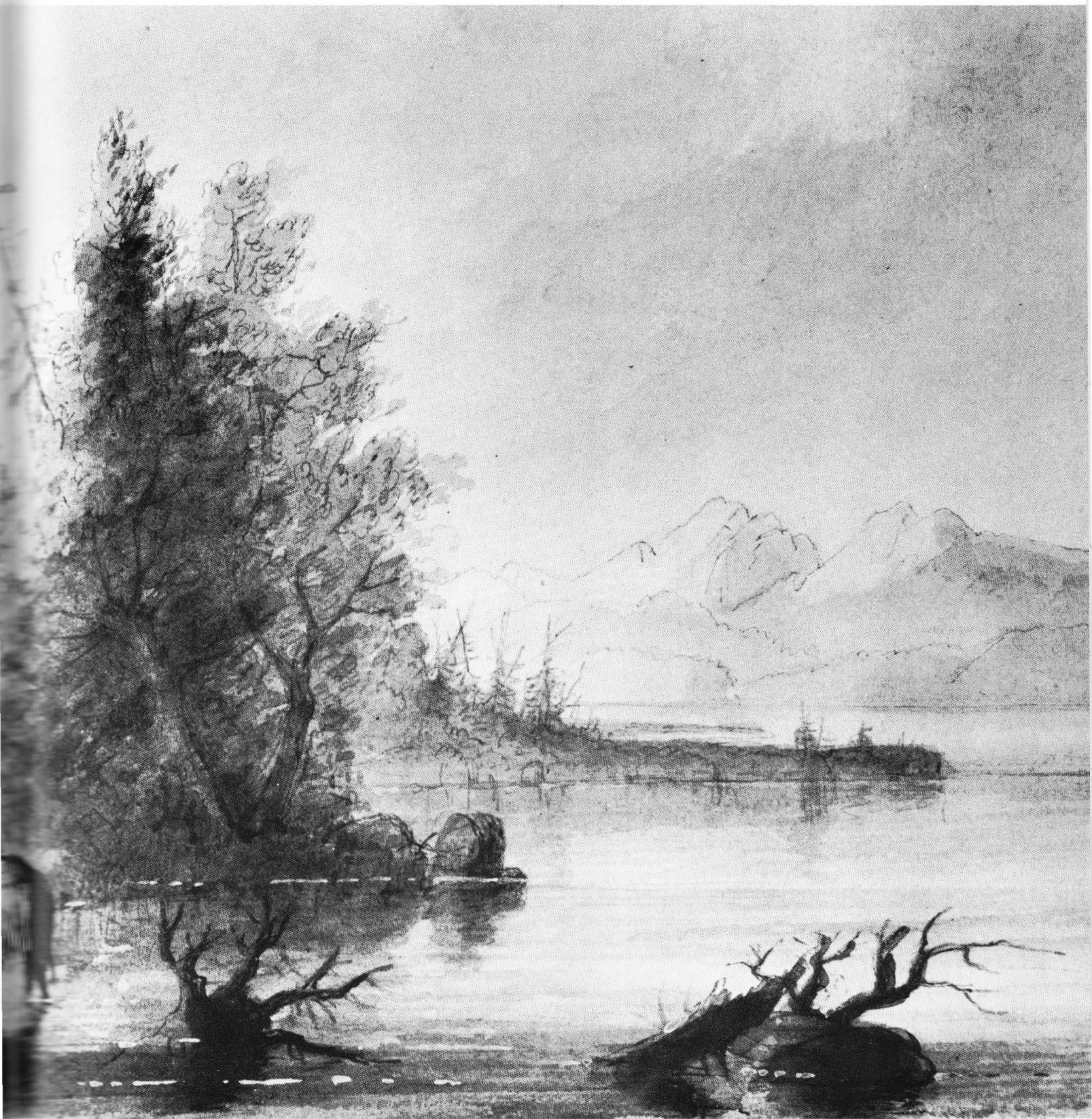
These are the incidents, these are the scenes and the people chosen by a painter who sees the West for the first time. This is the pictorial account of a summer's pleasure excursion to the mountains. It is unique. Not until Remington will there be another painter who will catch the spirit of the Wild West as Miller has done. Nowhere at all will be found such another record of a summer's adventure.

Miller's excellence is not in precision of report but in his grand ability to capture the spirit of the occasion. When he wishes, he can render carefully a frontier loghouse. His exterior and interior views of Fort Laramie show clearly the construction of the wooden trading post that preceded the better known adobe building. These are sound pictorial documents. But his interest is not in literal report. It is in impressions, in flashes of experience. He does not choose to make a study of the fur trade but he creates the romance that shines about the mountain man in the eyes of his fellow Easterners—or of the twentieth century American. There are few distinct details in his paintings of weapons or equipment but his trappers are alive. He is not a careful student of Indian custom or costume like Bodmer and Seth Eastman. Few artifacts could be reconstructed from their representations in his pictures, many facets of Indian life are not portrayed. But his Indians have color and dash. His lakes and streams do not provide a complete portfolio of western landscape. His hunting scenes have not so much variety as we at first think. But his pictures embody the splendor of the mountains, they pulse with excitement. Here is the reality of romance.

His achievement lies in his verve, his vivacity, enthusiasm, his youthful eagerness, his response to the spirit of adventure. He is a young man out for an exciting summer beyond the bounds of civilization but luckily he is more than a young man engaging in adventure—he is a painter of great talent. Rough life or not, he is eager for every new experience, every fresh glimpse of this new world and through his brush he can express what cannot be reduced to words. His magnificent scenery, his Indian girls and warriors, his bold hunters and powerful beasts form both a real world and a world of the spirit.

Here is the never-to-be-forgotten West of Alfred Jacob Miller. ●





Shoshone Indians crossing a river.

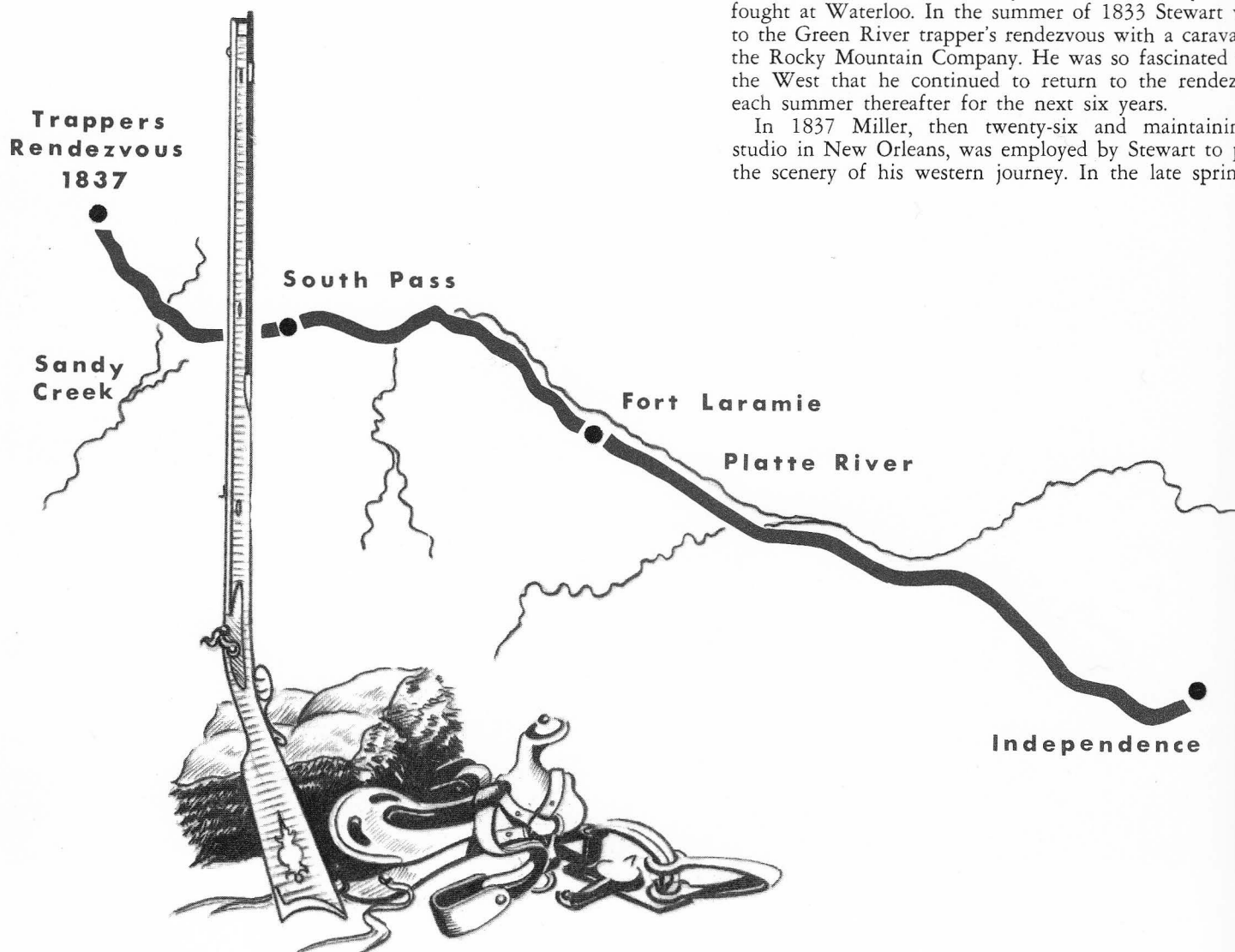


Captain Stewart and Antoine.

Sir

THE MAN who made it possible for Alfred Jacob Miller to paint the life and scenes of the fur trapping days of the West was Captain William Drummond Stewart, an adventurer from Scotland. Stewart was a nobleman who was fond of traveling and hunting. He had served in the British army for some twelve years and fought at Waterloo. In the summer of 1833 Stewart went to the Green River trapper's rendezvous with a caravan of the Rocky Mountain Company. He was so fascinated with the West that he continued to return to the rendezvous each summer thereafter for the next six years.

In 1837 Miller, then twenty-six and maintaining a studio in New Orleans, was employed by Stewart to paint the scenery of his western journey. In the late spring of



William D. Stewart

that year the Stewart party composed of some six or eight men joined a group of American Fur Company trappers under Tom Fitzpatrick for the trip across the Plains to the Green River country. No notes made on the journey have been found but Miller's *Notes for Indian Sketches*, the original copy of which is now in the Gilcrease Library, gives us a vivid account of the excursion.

Captain Stewart's ability to handle men was such that Fitzpatrick gave him authority over the company men for the duration of the trip. The caravan started from the vicinity of Independence, Missouri, and followed the North Platte River to Fort Laramie then up the Sweetwater River, across South Pass, and into Green River Valley. As the caravan moved west Miller spent his time sketching scenes and events of the day.

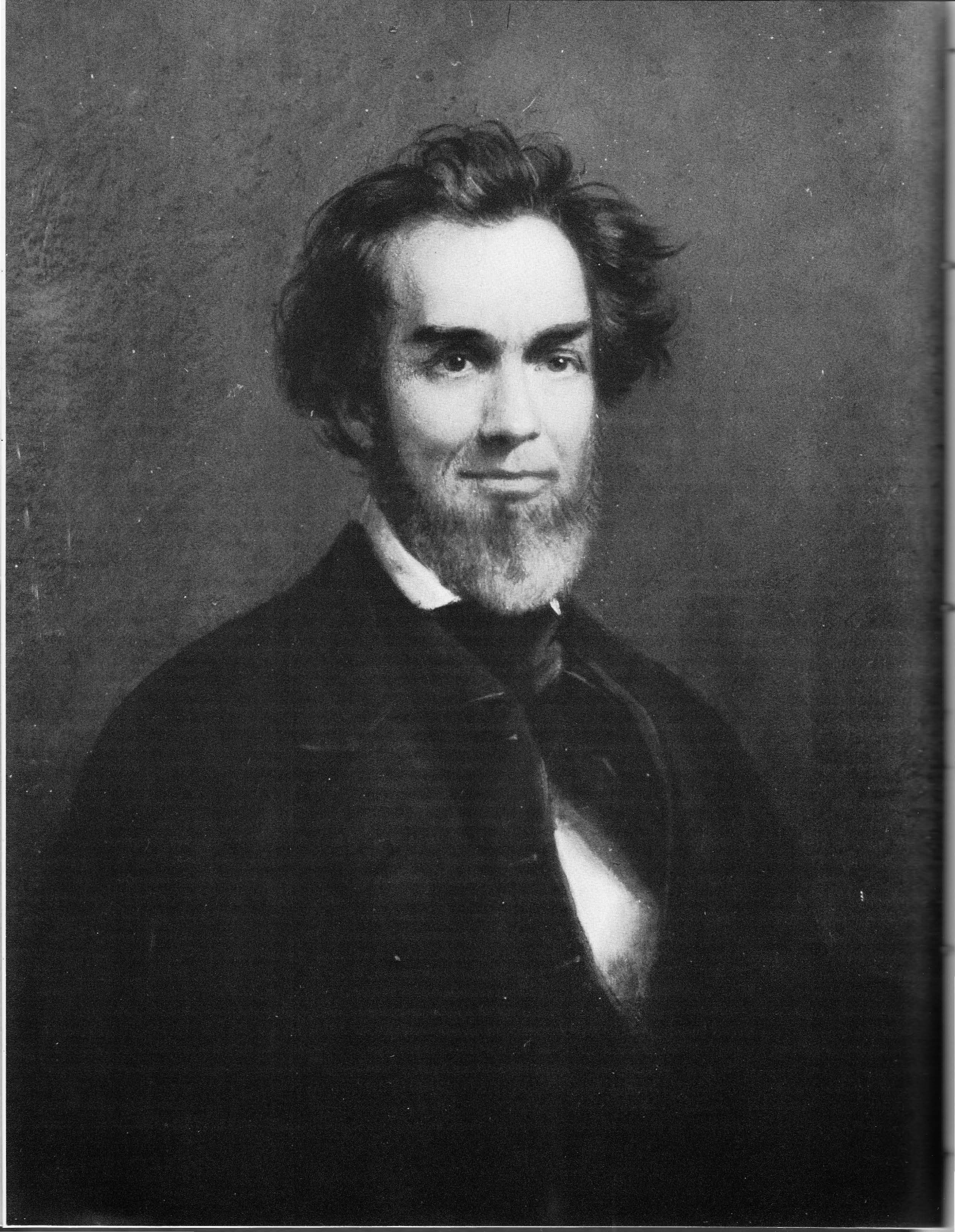
Following the summer in the mountains Stewart returned east and Miller went to New Orleans to paint finished pictures for him. In 1838 Stewart was again in

the West but his brother died that year and Stewart became head of the family inheriting the estates of Murthly, Grandtully, and Birnim Wood near Perthshire in Scotland. Two years later Stewart brought Miller to Scotland to paint more scenes of the West for him.

In 1843 when the fur trade was declining and migration westward was increasing, Sir William Drummond Stewart made another pleasure trip to the Rocky Mountains. He was accompanied by Antoine Clement, the French-Canadian whom Miller had painted on the 1837 trip, and by Matthew Fields, a newspaper writer from New Orleans. This was his last trip as Stewart now returned to Europe to manage the affairs of his estates. He did however find time to write two novels based on his experiences in the West. These were *Altowan* in 1846 and *Edward Warren* in 1854. Stewart, the Scottish adventurer whose spirited imagination enabled Miller to record the romantic beauty of the early West, died in 1871 at the age of 77.

William Drummond Stewart and Indian chiefs.





THE

Miller

COLLECTION

The Alfred Jacob Miller Collection of the Gilcrease Museum is outstanding. It was acquired by Thomas Gilcrease some years ago to enhance his collection of original materials relating to our American frontier heritage. Miller was the first painter of the Northern Rocky Mountains. He arrived at the Green River rendezvous in present-day Wyoming with the Stewart party in 1837 during the time when the great fur trapping period was at its height. This was a number of years before the opening of Oregon and California brought settlers to the region. The historical importance of his work is apparent. Miller was a well schooled artist who had studied in Europe and was influenced by the French romantic style of the time. Miller's paintings of the West thus have more than mere documentary appeal; they also contain attractive qualities as works of art.

The Gilcrease Miller collection is represented by 102 water color sketches which were done during and immediately following Miller's return from his journey west. For instance the collection contains a wash study of the Devil's Gate on which is inscribed the words "the first original sketch." There are 27 oils in the collection most of which are on permanent display in the galleries. The Institute also owns the original notes which Miller wrote annotating some 166 of the water colors. A facsimile of one page of this notebook, "Rough Draughts of Notes for Indian Sketches," appears in this issue together with excerpts from some of the notes which are used as captions for the illustrations of the center pages. Included in the collection are such prized paintings as the self-portrait, the portrait of Stewart and Antoine, and the interior and exterior scenes of Ft. Laramie. Some of the paintings were formerly owned by L. Vernon Miller while others once hung in Scotland.

Alfred Jacob Miller was born in Baltimore, January 2, 1810. He displayed artistic talent early in childhood and at the age of twenty-one was studying under Thomas Sully. In 1833 he went to France and entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He returned to the United States in 1834 and opened a studio in Baltimore. Miller moved to New Orleans in 1837 and it was here shortly afterwards that Captain William Drummond Stewart walked into his studio at 123 Chartres Street and invited him to become the artist for his hunting expedition to the fur country. Miller spent the summer in the West with Stewart and returned to New Orleans in November.

During the winter Miller painted scenes of his trip from the original field sketches. The next summer he again opened a studio in Baltimore and exhibited his Western paintings. His paintings received favorable attention from the local press as did a group owned by Stewart which were exhibited at the Apollo Gallery in New York in 1839. Stewart took these and others to Scotland to hang in Murthly Castle near Perthshire. In 1842 Miller himself was in Scotland living in the castle and painting scenes of the West for Sir William Stewart. (Stewart had become head of the family in 1838 following the death of his brother.) The artist returned to Baltimore in 1843 and settled there permanently to become a portrait painter and to be known as the "Lawrence of Baltimore." Miller died there on June 26, 1874.

The work of Alfred Jacob Miller depicts the beauty of the wilderness of the Wind River country during the day of the mountain man. The delicate colors of his paintings, particularly his water colors, lend a charm which is captivating. Upon looking at them one is transported to the pristine wilderness of the Indian, and the vivid appeal of the trapper's life becomes more romantic than ever. The Alfred Jacob Miller collection is a most important portion of the Gilcrease presentation of our frontier heritage.





Crow Encampment.

