

GILCREASE

MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART



Vol 12
No 3
Fall
1990
GILLIE
LIBRARY

OLAF WIEGHORST
STUDIO:
A LEGACY
IN
CREATIVITY



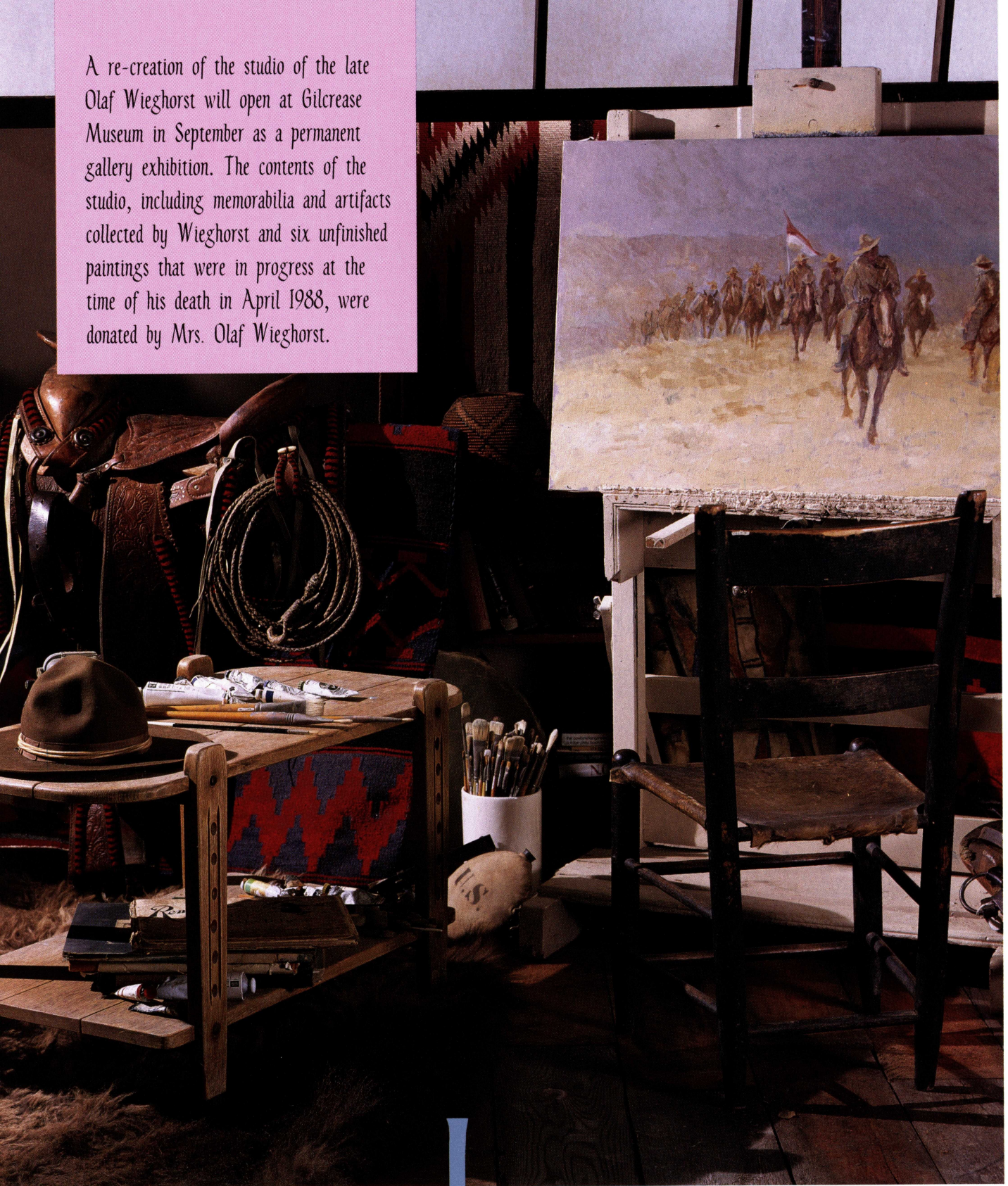
Olaf Wieghorst, Navajo Madonna, 22 by 20 inches, oil.

Wieghorst and Gilcrease Museum had a long-standing relationship. Gilcrease presented a Wieghorst exhibition in 1982. Wieghorst's well-known work, Navajo Madonna, is on long-term loan to Gilcrease and is currently on display.

A Legacy of Creativity

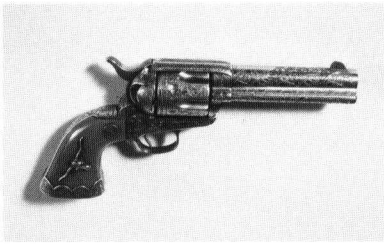
BY GINGER RENNER

A re-creation of the studio of the late Olaf Wieghorst will open at Gilcrease Museum in September as a permanent gallery exhibition. The contents of the studio, including memorabilia and artifacts collected by Wieghorst and six unfinished paintings that were in progress at the time of his death in April 1988, were donated by Mrs. Olaf Wieghorst.



Ginger Renner is a professional writer and former gallery owner. She was the owner-director of Trailside Galleries in Jackson, Wyoming, and the Desert Southwest Gallery in Palm Desert, California. Her expertise in writing centers on the works of Charles Russell and Olaf Wieghorst. She resides in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

I don't remember the circumstances under which I first heard the news of Olaf Wieghorst's studio going to the Gilcrease Museum, but I do remember with acid-edged clarity my reaction. "Great!" I said to myself,



"Absolutely great. The perfect place!" Gilcrease Museum, with its goals and philosophy handed down directly from the single-minded genius of Thomas Gilcrease, was the institution well prepared to re-establish and preserve, the working space of this remarkable immigrant artist.

Olaf Wieghorst, through years of dedicated and inspired creativity, produced an enormous body of diversified art, its genesis being found in the most treasured icons of our western American history. Olaf wasn't an institution, but there was no doubt about his place in the western art field. He was called the "Dean of Western Art," the "Patriarch of Cowboy Painters" and his name was easily clumped with Remington and Russell. I believe Olaf was aware of his own special place in the whole broad spectrum of western American art. He knew how much he had contributed over the long years to preserving the excitement, the glory, the beauty, the wonder of our western history — its myths and its legends, the romance and the reality. And I am sure in heart that nothing would please him more or give him deeper satisfaction than this special recognition from the preeminent museum of western American art and history. His special creative spot will be preserved for generations to come, to pass by and think about the many works of art that had come to reality in that unique spot.

I have been writing about Olaf Wieghorst almost a quarter of a century, going back to 1967 when I first wrote some press releases about a couple of his paintings we had newly received in my gallery in Palm Desert, California.

"Strange" I thought to myself, "I've written all those words about Olaf, his life and adventures, his friends, his charm and savoir faire, I've analyzed and critiqued his art and made all sorts of statements as to his rightful place in the world of western art. Yet, I don't think I've ever written one word about *his studio!*" And rereading all that material I find I was right — not once do I even mention "his studio." How lucky we are when chance gives us the opportunity to make amends for our sins

and omissions.

The *main* studio of Wieghorst's artistic life was built on a hillside and actually consisted of three levels, which may be difficult to arrange in the midst of a museum. Made of adobe, rough wood, fieldstone, with a Santa Fe-type fireplace, black wrought iron hardware and peeled vigas overhead, it was a small boy's (or a western artist's) dream of heaven, but probably a housekeeper's idea of a nightmare. Every possible area contained all the delightful bits and pieces of tack, gear, beadwork, souvenirs, kachinas, old guns and head stalls, silvered and tasseled. A splendid buffalo skull hung over the chimney and on the tip of a huge mounted pair of longhorns hung one of John Wayne's hats.

There were Navajo rugs on the walls and the backs of chairs, bearskin rugs on the floor, full-length eagle feather headdresses, a magnificent Sioux buckskin dress, heavily beaded across the yoke and shoulders and Chimayo blankets on the couch. Olaf's fancy, or just-extra saddles were arranged on saw horses against the wall. Cavalry sabers stood in corners and small pottery pieces and baskets were scattered about. In the north end, in the best light provided, there were the usual easels, pots of brushes, squeezed paint tubes, and half-done canvases leaning on walls or against stools to dry.

What they won't be able to re-create in Oklahoma, try as they might, is the gentle hillside outside the studio, the jasmine and plumbago blossoms spilling down the rocks, the agave and succulents that marked the path down from Olaf and Mae's home, the sweet scent of citrus trees or — when the sun pressed down on the valley — the medicinal reminder of the eucalyptus on the brow of the ridge.

It was a magical place — old-shoe comfortable, and yet intriguing with its myriad of items everywhere. Visitors were caught up in the diversity of the collection and charmed by the open-handed, laid-back hospitality of the "artist en residence" and his loving partner, Mae. Drinks would be passed around, the stories would flow. Western tales told in a Danish accent were unforgettable. Most collectors of Olaf's work could



Wieghorst, in front of his studio fireplace, enveloped by memorabilia collected over the years, including a hat worn by John Wayne which hangs from the tip of a horn in the far right corner of the photograph.

hardly keep their cool while wandering around the spacious work area, with a driving desire to find out what he was working on at the moment winning out over social manners. Olaf, the consummate director of his own visual dramas, was highly aware of the effect he and the whole ambiance of his studio had upon his friends, collectors, dealers and just casual acquaintances. His workshop became the picturesque setting for most of the sales of his paintings in the mature years of his life.

This studio, this very personal expression of its owner, was a source of inspiration for Olaf. Here, surrounded not only by the tools of his trade, but by objects of pleasure and delight. Olaf found the perfect spot to lose himself in the process of painting. He could work out the problems of composition, set the contrasting values in his mind and begin the work of bringing forth out of the canvas all the ideas, memories, small and large dramas that fomented in his creative brain.

As far back as anyone could remember, Olaf had sketched continuously — whenever he had a moment, wherever a scrap of paper or a sketch pad were available the sketches were produced. Fluid, crisp clean lines or rich tangles formed and modeled — the awkward head of a longhorn steer, a cowboy's arm throwing a rope, a calf with its legs skidding out from under him as he goes down at the end of a long lasso. These bits and pieces would eventually find a place in a finished composition, in an action-packed panorama spilling across a broad valley or in a hushed and reverent moment when a cowboy tops a hill and stops to wonder at the beauty of a sun-washed escarpment ahead of him.

In this studio, surrounded by things he loved, all of the compositional elements could come together productively. Here, the interruptions were few — and

Olaf Wieghorst, Moonlight Campfire, 11¾ by 10⅞ inches, unfinished oil.

Olaf Wieghorst, Cattle Drive, 14 by 16 inches, unfinished oil.

Olaf Wieghorst, Apache Eyes, 30 by 36 inches, unfinished oil.



usually welcome when they came. The long, long thoughts could be turned into the dynamic oils from which Olaf gained his very justifiable fame.

When this studio is reborn hundreds of miles east of its original location, visitors will pass by and wonder at the extensive collection of art and artifacts, admiring and enjoying them. For some, memories will be kindled and we will savor, once again, happy hours spent in this special room. Others will stand in awe, seeing the spot where so much beauty, so much excitement was dreamed up and permanently captured for our pleasure and inspiration.

While this re-creation is admired, will one think of the succession of “studios” that led up to this final, this truly quite perfect one? Probably not, and yet to appreciate fully the success of the life of Olaf Wieghorst, perhaps “the studios along the way” and how this uncommon man created them and used them should be recognized.

Olaf Wieghorst’s involvement with the creation of art dates back to his earliest childhood in Denmark. His photographer-painter father exhibited more ambition for the advancement, or perhaps the exploitation, of his son than he did for his own profession and he exerted considerable pressure upon this eager and multi-talented boy. Olaf’s love for horses was apparent even before the boy started school. By then his father had decreed a concentrated program of acrobatics, placing the lad under the tutelage of a professional Russian acrobat. At 9-years-old, Olaf made his debut at the old Tivoli Theater in Copenhagen, performing a tumbling and balancing act under the billing “Little Olaf — the Miniature Acrobat.”

He discovered the joy of sketching and combining that talent with his fascination with horses, he produced a continuing stream of sketches of horses in every position and from every angle possible. By age 11, his father Karl decided Olaf was ready for instruction in oil painting and thereafter the boy was seldom far away from painting and sketching.

For one so young he followed a demanding schedule of performances and his artwork offered a diversity as

well as adding another facet to his education. During these years Olaf produced hundreds of pencil sketches and small copies of scenes he found on postal cards, adding, he said, “a horse or two for interest!” There was no space in his life at this time set aside for “a studio.” He painted and sketched whenever he found room and time to do so.

Olaf was not destined to remain “the miniature acrobat” for long. He was growing into a man’s stature so quickly that his bookings in the theater were fewer and farther between. By age 14, his father Karl had apprenticed the rapidly maturing boy to the first of a succession of jobs. From a store keeper’s helper he went on to work at an assortment of farm jobs, none of them greatly to Olaf’s liking.

Olaf’s immigration at age 19 to the United States and his subsequent meeting Mabel - Mae - have been documented time and again, as have the years he spent productively in the U.S. Cavalry on the Mexican border. The sketching continued in these years. But again, while the artistic education was being refined and advanced by practice, there was no specific “space” in his life in which to produce the pictures that crowded his mind. The bunkhouse on Cunningham’s ranch in the Whitewater Canyon, New Mexico, in which Olaf lived the two years following his discharge from the Cavalry, offered little inducement for painting. But during this period he produced, directly on the wall of the back bar in Allred’s Saloon in the tiny nearby community of Glenwood, a mural of considerable size and merit.

The time for drifting, adventuring, exploring and experiencing the world of the American West was drawing to a close. The memories of Mae began to tug at his heart. He knew that upon returning to New York he would have to work at whatever jobs he could find. He was also aware of a growing desire to be more involved with his art, to expand its place in his life.

Olaf’s extensive experience with horses was a significant part of his resume when he applied for a job with the New York Police Department. During the months he awaited for a call to active duty, he worked

several "odd" jobs.

Succumbing to their growing devotion to each other, Mae and Olaf were quietly married on October 25, 1924. Their first home was a tiny apartment, with barely room for everyday living. Certainly, it did not provide "studio space."

Mae and Olaf must have felt that luck followed their decision to marry for less than six weeks later, the call came for Olaf to report to the Police Department. Four months later he had graduated from the academy with a superior record and at that time a new home seemed in order. Their second home was a larger two-room apartment on 69th Street. Here, for the first time, space was set aside as a "painting area" and the young couple were on their way toward a life that eventually brought them honors and kudos from presidents, kings and industrial giants. This "studio space" - in reality part of the living room - allowed Olaf to organize his painting schedule.

From the earliest days of his life, Olaf was a disciplined, eager artist. No one ever had to urge him to "get down to painting." He was never a "prima donna" about space, equipment, privacy or quiet. In later years, he paced himself, going to work every morning by 8:30, painting till noon and approaching every day with enthusiasm and new ideas. But in his early years, when he didn't have the luxury of setting his own painting schedule with the demands of his job at the New York Police Department, Olaf made time daily or on weekends for his painting.

In 1930, son Roy was born and another move was in order. Now, the Wieghorst family moved into the upstairs portion of a two-family house in Queens. And for the first time there was space that was simply known as "studio." A sun-room off the living room was set aside solely for Olaf's use. Because of extensive glass, black-out curtains had to be installed and florescent lights put into place, so that Olaf, who was generally on a daylight shift for the NYPD, could paint evenings.

There were other benefits to this particular house. Having the upstairs area of the house included the use of a rather extensive attic. Here, Olaf installed his



Surrounded by the tools of his trade, Wieghorst designed the perfect location for his work.

equipment for making etchings. It was one of the major tragedies of their young lives when the house caught fire and all the copper etching plates and the press were destroyed.

The last full year of World War II 1944, brought retirement for Olaf. The Wieghorsts were determined to head West, to be a part of the land, history, romance that had for so long been Olaf's principal inspiration.

A second-hand trailer was purchased and the trip was plotted to head south to Florida and then across the southern part of the United States. Gas and tire rationing proved the undoing of their westward trek. They were lucky to make it to Del Rey Beach where they settled into a small trailer court and Olaf promptly set about creating a new "studio" space. A canvas awning was rigged up along side of the trailer and Olaf, once again, was in business! Rather amazingly, some



large-sized canvases were turned out under these totally primitive circumstances.

In the fall of 1945, the Japanese having capitulated and gas and tire rationing having come to an end, the journey westward proceeded once again. A leisurely cross-country trip produced the opportunity to acquire some of the very first items of what is now recognized as a superb studio collection of artifacts. Olaf had in mind to settle in Tucson, near the country he had ridden over 23 years previously. But an unseasonal sandstorm presented a less-than-charming welcome to the Old Pueblo and Mae balked at the choice of stopping spots. On westward the little family journeyed, finding the quiet and gentle valley of El Cajon.

Again, residence was established in a small trailer court east of town and Olaf rigged up a makeshift studio outside the trailer. There is no evidence whatsoever that



Olaf ever used the excuse of "limited painting area" to avoid producing top quality art. What he could not change, he did not lament. The need to paint and desire to create was sufficient to overcome totally any shortcomings in his facilities.

In 1947, Mae and Olaf found a quarter-acre lot in the valley. There was an old shell of a house on it, in bad repair, and a shed and corral. The three Wieghorsts pitched in to create, with their own hands, a new home and an adequate studio. Some of Olaf's most ingenious and charmingly conceived compositions were produced in this spot.

During these years Olaf, Mae and Roy spent many summer months in a small trailer traveling some of the back roads of the West, finding new inspirational vistas for Olaf to commit to memory for future compositions. Meeting remarkable western characters and many unforgettable Indians on and off the reservations, many of whom became subjects for Olaf's sensitive and perceptive portraits. Being in the confines of a small trailer with a teenage son and a wife did not throw up barriers to Wieghorst's creativity. In a limited and confining area Olaf could conjure up miles of space on a small canvas.

Finally, in 1956, came the purchase of the small house on the bluff over-looking the valley of El Cajon. There was enough acreage for privacy, to expand the house and add a pool and sufficient room for a good corral and shed for Olaf's horses. Finally there was the space to begin the final studio - this time built of adobe and rock and heavy wood. And here, the wonderful collection of



"Now it (the studio) is left for all of us to peer into, to wonder over, to conjure up our own ideas of how an artist goes about producing a body of inspirational work."

bits and pieces - the Indian, Army and cowboy gear - finally found a proper home.

But still, this wasn't the very *last* studio. While this was the place of his greatest triumphs in painting technique, still he and Mae packed up their summer trailer and headed out each year to cover country which renewed his spirits and gave him ever-new vistas and ideas. In one 24-foot trailer pulled by a sleek Cadillac they traveled up through Jackson Hole, headed for the Big Sky country of Red Lodge and Roscoe and

eventually on north and west.

These were the years I spent my summers at Trailside Galleries on the east side of the square in Jackson. The memories of these years are as fresh and clear as spring rain. I can attest to the fact that Olaf could find "studio space" in a 24-foot trailer, not only to create great pen-and-ink and watercolors for which he was rightfully famous, but also small jewels of oils that exemplified the best of Wieghorst's extraordinary talent.

It seems likely that whenever the Wieghorst's

returned to El Cajon from their travels Olaf must have relished being back in the spacious and private quarters of “his studio.” Surrounded once again by his treasures, comfortable in his home territory. And yet, no one remembers Olaf being more dedicated to his painting in that very special place than he was under the most limited of spaces and accoutrements. We know, naturally, that the vast majority of his masterpieces were conceived and executed in that special studio. Now it is left for all of us to peer into, to wonder over, to conjure up our own ideas of how an artist goes about producing a body of inspirational work. Perhaps, more important Olaf left behind for us to ponder some unfulfilled dreams, half-realized canvases — small and large dramas not yet come to the climax of their being.

The six canvases, left to us as part of the “studio collection”, come as a shock. My reaction when I first viewed them was one of astonishment. I remembered so well the first time I had walked down a hall in the Academy in Rome and had discovered Michelangelo’s *Slaves*. What a powerful impression they made upon me, as they have upon all the hoards of people who have seen them. The writer, Rolf Schott, called them “. . . unborn sculpture slumbering within the marble blocks.” I, myself, thought of them as bodies twisting and heaving against the stone that was holding them encased, struggling to escape into full realization. So it is with the six canvases left behind by our friend, Olaf. There are four small pieces, entitled *Resting His Pony*, *Moonlight Campfire*, *Washout* and *Cattle Drive*. And two canvases that had they come to fruition would have rightfully taken their place with Olaf’s finest. These are entitled *Apache Eyes*, a 30 by 36 inch-canvas, and *Dust Storm*, a 24 by 36 inch-canvas. The least realized of the compositions is *Resting His Pony*, a man, off his horse, leading him across land that is not defined. There is just the broad sky and indeterminate land across which the man and horse move — slowly, we think. What was going to be the story behind this simple composition? a cowboy on a long trek — a horse that has come up lame — the man making it easy for his horse — his partner? These are all motifs that Olaf would have experienced and appreciated. No earth-shaking excitement — only a



statement of the loyalty and caring between a man and an animal.

The second, *Moonlight Campfire*, is an evening scene. A cowboy is hunkered down on his heels by a small fire, his saddle tossed on the ground. A grizzled rider comes into the circle of firelight. One of Olaf’s delights is to recreate that special quality of night, when a light source that defines the various elements of his composition is almost absent — when the soft outlines of his “dramatic personae” are more defined by starlight than by any other source. Would this have been just an evening gathering? Or would he, by his handling of body tensions, values and small bits of movement by the characters, set up a moment of confrontation? We will not know.

In *Washout*, we are aware of the two mounted cowboys sitting on a small ridge looking down into a coulee, awash in muddy flood waters. A great escarpment warmed by late afternoon sunlight is seen in the background. We, who have lived in this western land, know this scene only too well. A gullywasher has moved through the area and now, moved on, it leaves the air clean and clear. But the arroyos run full bank to bank and have there been strays caught in these swirling waters? Had Olaf brought this drama to a conclusion we would have an answer. Now, we will have to conjure up our own.

Cattle Drive may not be a major painting in size, but its theme is major to the body of artistic work that Olaf Wieghorst did over the years. He was well aware of the demands made upon men who led a huge herd of cattle across broad prairies, either to better pastures or to railheads for shipment to stockyards. We have here a tall-in-the-saddle cowboy riding point. He moves slowly

and rhythmically ahead of the leader of the herd of range cattle. An outrider comes up over the swell of the hill. The composition is fully realized and we accept the artist's direction, the scene he has conceived. But oh, what more would he have done with it? Would there have been vast spaces in the far background, reminding us of how far the cattle were driven in this annual trek to a railhead? Would we have known what the day was like - hot, dry and were they far from water? These things we would have known had Olaf put his final realization upon the canvas.

Apache Eyes would have been an important addition to Olaf's milieu. He knew so well the country in which the Apache lived and raided. We can "read" Olaf's planned drama — there is the great, broad Arizona sky, it is a summer day and the thunderheads are piling upwards into a heat-scrubbed sky. Two Apache Indians, one mounted, the other standing with his horse behind him, are seen on a rocky ledge, overlooking a deep chasm. The mounted Indian has brought his horse up short. This much we know, and no more. How much more of the story would have been revealed had Olaf not gone off one day and left us with questions unanswered.

Probably the most important unfinished piece in the studio is *Dust Storm*. A company of cavalry is moving across the land, coming up out of a deep ravine. Or perhaps the maker of this dramatic scene would have turned it into a broad valley. Having topped out on the hillside, the troops are now facing wind, the sand bites their faces. They pull up their scarves against the pitting winds or duck their heads to shield against the onslaught. One trooper grabs at his campaign hat, fighting against the gust. This would have been an important addition to the long series of paintings Olaf did over the years saluting and immortalizing the cavalry troops he knew and loved so well — the troops that played such an important part in his young and formative years.

Now he is looking back, at a time gentled by passing years, softened by nostalgia. The guidon, which Olaf followed so devotedly and with such youthful enthusiasm, marks the center of his composition. It is hard not to place Olaf, himself, in the midst of this cavalry troop. And perhaps he was doing that very thing when he laid down his brushes for the last time and left us only a shadow picture. Olaf said it all . . . "when they motorized the cavalry they lost it - its hard to fall in love with a Sherman tank."

What will generations to come know of the glory, the romance, the adventure of the old West? Well, some of them will be sensitive enough to perceive the story, the illustration, the direction left behind by men such as Olaf Wieghorst — men who had great dreams of recording the wonder of a remarkable period of our history. Olaf left us the reality of the studio in which he created his unforgettable dramas. He also left us six examples of his unfulfilled dreams — ideas that are caught forever between the edge of his eternal vision and the final palpable reality of his vibrant canvases. ◡





Views of the studio provide a glimpse of his large western artifacts collection and the spacious windows designed to provide the needed natural light for his painting.

The John Ross Papers included in the collection of the Gilcrease Museum provide an interesting insight into the political and personal life of the first Principal Chief of the Cherokees and his life-long struggle for Cherokee tribal unity. At the time of his death in 1866, these papers were divided between two great granddaughters. Thomas Gilcrease was able to acquire one granddaughter's portion during his life of collecting. In March 1990, Gilcrease Museum acquired an additional portion of the collection.

A special exhibition, "Civilization in Transition: John Ross and the Cherokees," will be on display from September 7

through November 11 at Gilcrease Museum. The exhibition will include portions of the Ross Papers, in addition to a wide range of material and paintings of that period, drawn from the Gilcrease Collection.

Letters included in this article are from the collection of the Gilcrease Museum, and have been produced to retain the writers' characteristics as closely as possible, with their intended spellings, capitalization and punctuation. Many of the letters from Ross are original hand-written drafts, which are now a part of the Gilcrease Collection.

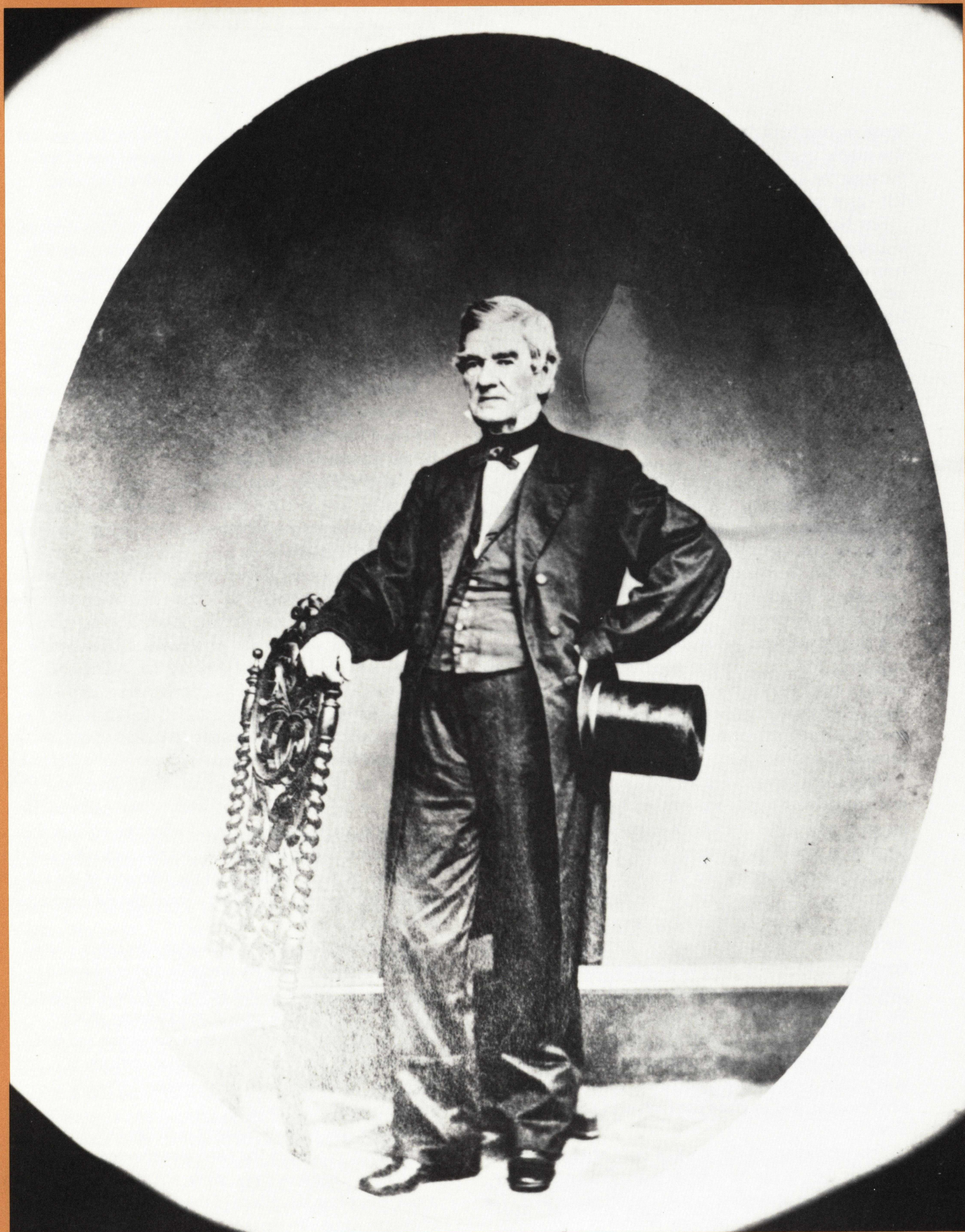
JOHN ROSS

Principal Chief of the Cherokees – 1828 to 1866

BY PAULA HALL

I am an old man, and have served my people and the Govt of the United States a long time, over fifty years. My people have kept me in the harness, not of my seeking, but of their own choice. I have never deceived them, and now I look back, not one act of my public life rises up to upbraid me. I have done the best I could, and today, upon this bed of sickness, my heart approves all I have done. And still I am, John Ross, the same John Ross of former years, unchanged." (From *John Ross, Cherokee Chief*, Gary Moulton, 1978, the University of Georgia Press)

With life ebbing away, Ross stood fast to the relentless pursuit of unity for the Cherokee Nation. Ross, 75-years-old, was still fighting for the indivisibility of his people, as he met with government leaders in a Washington boarding



John Ross photographed by F. Gutekunst in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, circa 1863.

house on that April day in 1866. Confined to his bed, he was unable to attend the treaty negotiations of 1866 following the Civil War. But his presence was certainly felt - as it had been for the last 50 years.

Few Native Americans have figured more conspicuously in United States history or served "the people," as he referred to them, with such fervent dedication. Even his bitterest enemies and critics concede that he possessed leadership ability unmatched by any of his day. Ross served as Principal Chief of the Cherokees for 40 years, during an era which is regarded the most dynamic in Cherokee history. His career spanned a time in which the Cherokees were considered to reach a pinnacle in their civilization but were also pushed to the depths of suffering and despair.

With only a small amount of Cherokee blood (one-eighth) and possessing few physical traits of his Indian heritage, Ross won the favor of the majority of the nation, full-bloods and mixed-bloods alike. In every election from 1828 to 1866, he was the overwhelming choice of the Cherokees - an accomplishment that few elected politicians have matched.

A shrewd politician and negotiator, Ross had great confidence that the American governmental system would work to help keep his people united. Critics of Ross charge this unwavering belief in the system was "naive" and that he may have used his position to further his personal and party goals.

Others who have studied his life, profess that Ross' first and ultimate loyalty was to the Cherokees and that his great goal of life was Cherokee unity. Gary E. Moulton in *John Ross, Cherokee Chief*, points to the fact that the developments in the Cherokee Nation was intertwined with the evolution of the United States.

"He was selected for leadership because he displayed the requisite qualities for the epoch of change; an unflinching devotion to the sacred homelands and a facility for articulating the Cherokee cause. Beyond simply mirroring the full-bloods' attachment to their ancient lands, he led the Cherokees into new realms by adapting a subtle blend of tribal folkways and white techniques. Ross' genius lay in his ability to recognize boundaries, geographic and psychological, and to guide the cautious Cherokees within them."

This significance of the story of Ross actually began in the early days of the New World when England, France and Spain were struggling to gain control of the land. The Cherokees laid claim to portions of what is now

Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. The Cherokees were considered one of the largest Indian tribes in the entire South at that time, perhaps numbering as many as 22,000.

Courted by English officials, Cherokee chiefs pledged their allegiance to England and were promised needed supplies in exchange for an agreement that only Englishmen be allowed to build forts or cabins among the Cherokees. This agreement was the beginning of numerous land cessions of which the Indians found themselves powerless to prevent.

William Shorey, a Scotsman fluent in Cherokee, was an interpreter at the British Fort Loudoun. Shorey married a full-blood Cherokee. Their daughter, Annie Shorey, was to be the grandmother of John Ross.

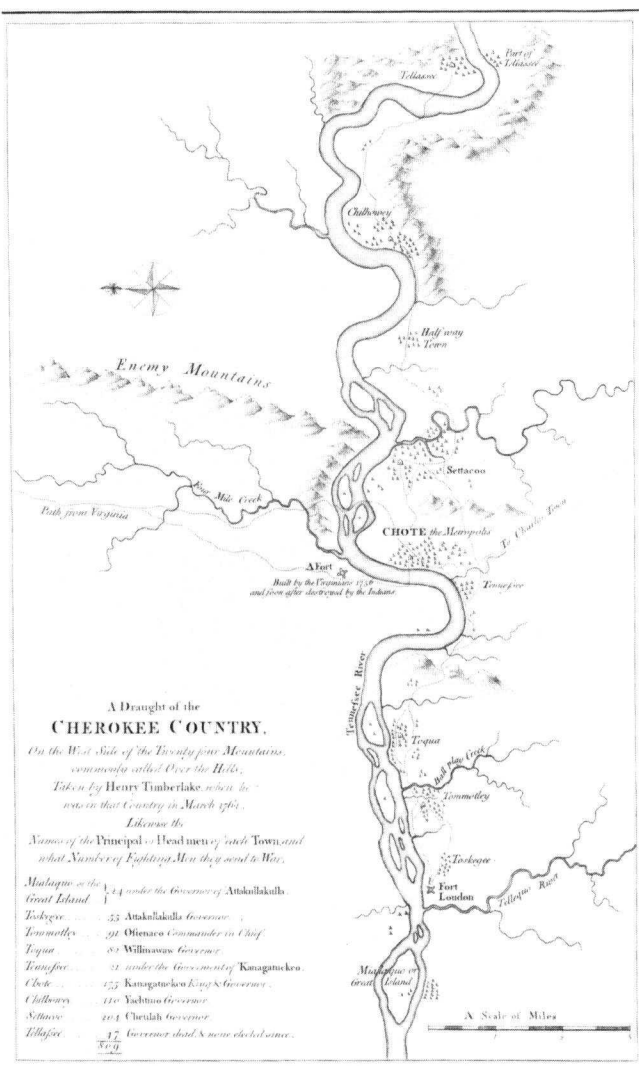
Ross' grandfather, John McDonald, was born in Inverness, Scotland, and traveled to the New World in 1766. He eventually established a store at Fort Loudoun and married Annie Shorey.

Another Scotsman, Daniel Ross, emigrated to America in the latter part of the 18th century and was orphaned at the end of the American Revolution. As a young man, he joined a trader and traveled to Tennessee. It was here that he met and joined McDonald in the trading post business and later married McDonald's daughter Mollie. During the next 20 years he traveled the Cherokee Nation, establishing trading posts and conducting successful business operations.

John, the third son of Daniel and Mollie Ross, was born in 1790 on the Coosa River in what is now Alabama. He grew up in an Anglo-Indian world where he enjoyed the free, outdoor life of the tribe in the hills and valleys of the Cherokee Nation. He observed the folkways of the full-bloods that traded at his father's store and the hardships of Indian life.

Recognizing the value of education, his father, Daniel, established a school on his premises and employed a schoolmaster. It was in this school that the foundation was laid for John Ross' writing and speaking abilities, which in later life often astonished statesmen and baffled politicians. He also attended a popular academy in Kingston, Tennessee, where he received a practical knowledge of merchandising.

Through this cultural blending of Indian and Anglo ways, Ross recognized the need for educated leadership to maintain Cherokee unity. While still a youth, he took an active interest in the affairs of the tribe. Known by his Cherokee name, Kooweskoowe, he was fluent in English



A Draught of Cherokee Country by Henry Timberlake, March 1762, published 1765.

and a fine orator. During the early 1800s he served as an aide and confidant to tribal leaders. Although it is not well documented, it is believed that Ross knew little of the Cherokee language since he chose to address most in the English language.

In 1812, Ross accepted his first public duty, traveling for U.S. Agent R. J. Meigs to visit the western Cherokees who were without an agent. One year earlier, the federal government had allotted supplies to Cherokees who would voluntarily relocate on the western border of Arkansas. Nearly 2,000 Cherokees relocated.

During this time, Ross was positioned as a successful businessman in the merchandising business. When he arrived home from his trip to Arkansas, a hostile faction of Creeks, the "Red Sticks" had seized the opportunity of the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, to band together against the whites. During the ensuing Creek War of 1813-14, the Cherokees aligned

with the United States against the neighboring faction of hostile Creeks. Ross entered military service as an adjutant in a mounted Cherokee regiment that served with Andrew Jackson's forces against the Creek Red Sticks. The Creeks were broken at Horseshoe Bend and Ross ended his brief military career, having served with distinction in many engagements.

Following his short military service, Ross married Elizabeth Brown Henley, known by her Cherokee name, Quatie. Little is known of Quatie's background. Some believe she was a full-blood of the Bird Clan, while others contend she was a mixed-blood. Kooweskoowe and Quatie had six children, one dying at birth.

Ross resumed his business interests after the Creek War and was called upon in 1815 as a delegate to Washington, D.C., to discuss compensation and boundary issues as a result of the war. Two treaties were signed in March 1816. However, unauthorized factions within the tribes signed a treaty in 1817 that sought cession of land with no monetary compensation.

The Cherokees had hoped to prevent such treaties by establishing a "standing committee" of 13 men to transact political business. But just two years later, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun negotiated a treaty that took more than half of their remaining domain in Tennessee and North Carolina. The committee, later referred to as the National Committee, firmly resolved to resist future treaty-making overtures that resulted in land cession.

By 1820 the Cherokees, engulfed in a sea of white settlements, moved many of their towns to Georgia, where they established a new capital, New Echota. As president of the newly created National Committee, Ross had put aside his business activities to devote his time to the development of the Cherokee national government and to secure provisions for education, medicine and other services within the Cherokee Nation.

Ross' efforts culminated in July 1827 with the adoption of a written constitution by the Cherokees. Modeled after the American Constitution, the Cherokee document proclaimed the existence of an independent Cherokee Nation. The Cherokees believed that this proved their right to be considered an independent political unit and demonstrated their ability to adapt to the Anglos' patterns.

Other Cherokees traditionalists fiercely objected to the new constitution and the adoption of white man's ways. These Cherokees believed that such deviation from tribal laws and customs would only lead to further decay of

tribal integrity. Some sought isolation by moving to Western Arkansas where, encouraged by U.S. officials, many had sought refuge earlier.

It appears that Cherokee independence and their ability to travel down the white man's road was questioned not only by factions within the Indian nation, but by others, including the press. In a letter to editors Joseph Gales and William Seaton of the *National Intelligencer* in Washington D.C., committee members set the record straight on who was conducting affairs on behalf of the Cherokee Nation.

Referring to a letter in the *Georgia Journal* from the Georgia delegation in Congress, the Cherokees were outraged at the accusation which leveled that "the last letter of the Cherokees to the Secretary of War, contains internal evidence that it was never written, or dictated by an Indian."

"Whilst we profess to be complimented on the one hand by this blow at our intelligence, we cannot in justice allow it to pass upon the other, without a flat contradiction. That letter, and every other letter was not only written, but dictated by an Indian. We are not so fortunate as to have such help . . . We do thank God, sincerely, and our benevolent White Brothers, (for there are some Christian hearts which regard us) who, seeing our bereaved and helpless state came into our help, with letters and the lights of civilization & christianity, we felt the necessity of our case and we have endeavored to improve it, our letters are our own. And if they are thought too refined for "Savages" let the whiteman take it for proof that, with proper assistance Indians can think, and write for themselves." (From Jno Ross, Geo Lowrey, Major Ridge and Elijah Hicks to Joseph Gales & William Seaton, April 20, 1824)

The Cherokees had long accepted assistance from Christian missionaries in establishing educational institutions on their land. The first mission station in the Cherokee Nation was established in 1801 by the Moravians and grew out of the Cherokees' desire to educate their children rather than eagerness to embrace a new religion. Within 10 years it was estimated that 13 schools were established among the Cherokees.

Meanwhile in 1821, Sequoyah, or George Guess as he was called, perfected the Cherokee syllabic alphabet of 86 characters. An uneducated mixed-blood Cherokee, Sequoyah had been fascinated by the printed pages of Americans. Around 1809 he began his quest for developing a writing system for the Cherokees which

gained wide-spread use by 1821.

Soon afterwards, a press was established and began to publish the only Indian newspaper in the country, the *Cherokee Phoenix* which was printed in both English and Cherokee. Religious tracts, hymnals, books and periodicals were soon printed in the Cherokee language.

Although these were prosperous times for the Cherokee Nation, factionalism within the tribe continued to plague the efforts for a united fight against removal. In 1828, Ross was elected principal chief, according to the provision of the Constitution of 1827. His greatest concern, at this time, was with Georgia's decision to extend its laws over the Cherokees.

Ironically, the Cherokee leaders, including Ross, were given ample opportunity to observe their current political foe in action, while serving under him in the Creek war. General Andrew Jackson played a significant role in the signing of the treaty in 1817 which took Cherokee land. He was seemingly insensitive to Cherokee deeds of heroism during the Creek war and displayed an attitude that was considered less than commendable to the Cherokee allies.

President Andrew Jackson, who had been elected to the office just one month after Ross' election as principal chief, pursued Indian removal more fervently. In December 1829, President Jackson in his first annual message to the United States Congress, spoke of his intention to initiate a bill providing for the removal of southeastern Indian tribes to lands west of the Mississippi. Eleven days later, the Georgia legislature passed a series of laws providing for the confiscation of a large section of Cherokee land.

By May 1830, President Jackson succeeded by a slim margin in pushing through the United States Congress an Indian removal bill. The new legislation empowered the government to exchange public domain in the West for Indian land in the East, if the Indians agreed to such a trade. The Cherokees refusal to attend a meeting called by the Secretary of War marked the beginning of an eight-year struggle to defend their right to remain on their tribal land.

As the struggle with Georgia state officials continued and as President Jackson relentlessly pressured the Indians to leave the South, two rival parties emerged in Cherokee politics. The majority National party was led by John Ross, who refused to relinquish any of the remaining Cherokee lands to the United States. The opposition Treaty party, led by Major Ridge, his son John Ridge and

Major Ridge's nephew Elias Boudinot, now concluded that removal was inevitable and further efforts to delay the process would only incur the wrath of federal and state officials.

Ross continued to fight the Indian removal with fellow delegates in Washington negotiations. With Ross away, government officials took the opportunity to effect a treaty with opposition Treaty party leaders. The principal provision was to award \$5 million to the Cherokees for their lands east of the Mississippi in exchange for the lands guaranteed the western Cherokees earlier.

On December 29, 1835, the United States Senate ratified the Treaty of New Echota by an extremely narrow margin. President Jackson proclaimed in May 1836 that the treaty was binding on all Cherokees and that they would have to emigrate within two years. Although Ross continued protesting against the validity of the treaty and sought recognition of a more favorable one made with the legal authorities of the Cherokees, the time drew nearer to the removal deadline.

The tragic events surrounding the relocation of the Cherokees to the West, known as the Trail of Tears, have become well-known chapters in the book of Cherokee history. Many lost not only their homes and ancestral lands, but family and friends as well. Ross' wife, Quatie died in February 1839, near Little Rock, Arkansas, while on the Trail of Tears.

As the recently removed members joined their western brothers, political problems faced the reunited Cherokees. The western Cherokees remained a loosely structured institution, in comparison to the eastern brothers' structured tribal organization. An interim government was established until a regular election was held in October 1839. The Treaty party that had relocated from the East earlier had blended with the Old Settlers (Indians who migrated voluntarily to designated lands in Arkansas and later Indian Territory before the mass move in 1838-39). Treaty party leaders, Major and John Ridge, Stand Watie and Elias Boudinot, remained out of politics for the time.

Ross continued his staunch support of a united Cherokee Nation. In a letter to the interim governing body, Ross reinforces his one desire.

"Gentlemen

From the note which you sent us, it appears that you have been requested to ask us, to state in writing what we really wish and desire!

We take pleasure to state distinctly, that we desire to see the Eastern and Western Cherokees become reunited, and again live as one people. And our sincere

wish is, that this desirable and important object may be harmoniously accomplished to the satisfaction and permanent welfare of the whole Cherokee People." (From a letter to John Brown, John Looney and John Rogers from John Ross and George Lowrey, June 13, 1839)

An impasse occurred when the two groups met at Taktoka, located about four miles northwest of present-day Tahlequah, Oklahoma. What ultimately halted the debates was the news of the brutal deaths of Treaty party leaders Major Ridge and Elias Boudinot on June 22.

Political strife continued through the summer, as western Cherokees accused the Ross faction of the murders. The Cherokee agent believed Ross innocent of any knowledge of the murders. It was believed the deaths had origins in the ancient "blood law" which called for the death penalty for any person who disposed of public lands without the consent of the nation.

In early September, the convention met at Tahlequah and formulated a constitution similar to the 1827 model. Ross became principal chief and other leading officers were all western members. For the moment, tribal differences seemed to subside as the task of building a new nation progressed. But violence persisted and unity was only a facade for long-established differences and hatreds that would emerge again.

Ross traveled to Washington in 1841 with a renewed spirit that the Cherokees could reach a settlement with the federal government. There remained the question of whether the expense of removal should be subtracted from the \$5 million to be paid for the old nation, or whether it should be reimbursed by the government.

Tahlequah was selected as the Cherokee Nation capital and negotiations continued in Washington on the final interpretation of the treaty. A new treaty was promised

The United States

38-109

In ac^t with the Cherokee Nation, for Expenses incurred under an arrangement with Major General Winfield Scott, for the removal of the Cherokees.

Detachment

	Dollars	Cents
No 1st For compensation to John Benge, Conductor, from the 28 th September 1838 to 11 th January 1839, inclusive, making 106 days @ \$5 pr day	530	"
" do to Assistant Conductor for same time " 3 " "	318	"
" do to attending Physician from 20 th September 1838, to 11 th January 1839, inclusive, making 114 days @ \$5 pr day } \$570. "		
" Allowance for returning - - - - - 120. minimum	690	"
" Compensation to Interpreter to Physician for same time @ \$2.50 pr day	285	"
" do to Commissary & Wagon Master from 28 th September to 11 th Jan'y 1839, inclusive making 106 days @ \$2.50 pr day each	530	"
" do to Assistant Commissary & Wagon Master for same time @ \$2.50 pr day each	424	"
" Hire of 60 Waggon & Teams for 1200 persons from 28 th September 1838 to 11 th Jan'y 1839 inclusive, making 106 days @ \$5 pr day each \$31800. "		
" Allowance for returning 40 days each at \$7 pr day including traveling expenses - - - - - 316800. "	48600	"
" Subsistence for 1200 persons from 1 st October 1838 to 11 th January 1839, inclusive, amounting to 103 days, and 123600 rations - - - @ 164	19776	"
" Allowance of 3 rd of Soap to each 100 rations is 3708 ^{cts} " 154	456	20
" Forage for 600 Waggon & riding horses from 1 st October 1838 to 11 th Jan'y 1839 inclusive, amounting to 103 days and 61800 rations @ 404	24720	"
" Allowance for ferriages Turnpikeage &c. - - - - -	1200	"
	\$ 97529	20

I Certify that the above acct. is accurate and just -

Wm. P. Print. Chief Agent of the Cherokee Nation for Cherokee Removals

by President John Tyler and disputes among the Treaty party and the Ross faction continued over compensations to be paid by the government.

By 1844, Ross and four others representing the Cherokees, traveled to Washington again to begin negotiations. Upon arriving they learned the representatives from the western Treaty factions had arrived in Washington earlier, calling for a portion of the lands to be set apart for their exclusive use. With work seemingly counterproductive, the Ross delegation returned home, but not before Ross visited the home of a young Quaker girl who had attracted his attention.

Mary Bryan Stapler was the youngest daughter of a Wilmington, Delaware, merchant. Her mother had died in 1838 and left Mary in the care of her mother's older sister, Sarah. Ross had met Mary while she was a student at the Moravian Female Academy in Pennsylvania where his sister Eliza Jane also attended. Only 15-years-old at the time, Mary first began correspondence with Ross in 1841. Although reared under a strict Quaker influence, Mary's letters convey playful and charming characteristics which must have been a welcome respite from the stressful struggles which filled Ross' life.

"My dear Friend and Brother,

The letter of the 21st of last month was handed to me yesterday by thy Brother the Col. It is just like thee. I should have known it were not supported by thy signature. Why so anxious to hear from me concerning the good people of Bethlehem? Did not thy Brother twice yea thrice write to thee? As to thy most ingenious mode of getting over thy promise of writing first and settling it down upon my "nodding" an assent. It will not do. So thee sees it is indeed difficult for thee and me to see these promises alike, it is not the distance that thee speaks of, or the want of comparison of notes it is reality and well thee knows it that thee was to write first and me afterwards. Yes I do see what I have brought upon myself and am quite gratified to behold it, no less than a letter from Kooweskoowe the Chief of a generous and noble race for whom flambeaus were lighted and music was made to resound among the mountains even of Bethlehem." (From a letter to John Ross from Mary B. Stapler and Sarah F. Stapler, August 10, 1841)

Although beginning correspondence was under the watchful eye of Mary's guardian, Sarah, a steady flow of secret correspondence began in the summer of 1844. Knowing her father was sure to object to the 36-year difference in their ages, the couple kept their blossoming affection hidden. In need of continuing reassurance of his



John Ross, A Cherokee Chief, lithograph, J.T. Bowen lithographer, from McKenny and Hall's Indian Tribes of North America, published 1843.

sincerity, Mary would often "scold" him for delaying a reply to her letters. She often addressed him in her letters as "esteemed Uncle" and he returned with "dearest Niece."

"Most esteemed Uncle

Has time and absence quite obliterated from thy memory one whom thee honored with the name of Niece, if so I imagine thee will have some difficulty in finding out who thus addresses thee, if separation thus effects thee be assured it has not had sufficient power to erase from the minds of those whom thee has professed to esteem the images friendship has impressed upon their hearts, and I cannot allow myself to think that we have been forgotten." (From a letter to John Ross from Mary B. Stapler, May 3, 1844)

Ross, well-known for his keen abilities in the political scene, offers an insight to his personal side through his correspondence with Mary, which seemed much like a romantic schoolboy. He sent her lovers' verses and prose, and seem quite astonished at her dutiful acceptance of his age.

"Well, Mary! I cannot undertake to judge what has been your thoughts and feelings since the delightful walk we had along the Brandywine (River) and around

MAJOR GENERAL SCOTT, of the United States Army, sends to the Cherokee people, remaining in North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama, this

A D D R E S S.

Cherokees! The President of the United States has sent me, with a powerful army, to cause you, in obedience to the Treaty of 1835, to join that part of your people who are already established in prosperity, on the other side of the Mississippi. Unhappily, the two years which were allowed for the purpose, you have suffered to pass away without following, and without making any preparation to follow, and now, or by the time that this solemn address shall reach your distant settlements, the emigration must be commenced in haste, but, I hope, without disorder. I have no power, by granting a farther delay, to correct the error that you have committed. The full moon of May is already on the wane, and before another shall have passed away, every Cherokee man, woman and child, in those States, must be in motion to join their brethren in the far West.

My Friends! This is no sudden determination on the part of the President, whom you and I must now obey. By the treaty, the emigration was to have been completed on, or before, the 23rd of this month; and the President has constantly kept you warned, during the two years allowed, through all his officers and agents in this country, that the Treaty would be enforced.

I am come to carry out that determination. My troops already occupy many positions in the country that you are to abandon, and thousands, and thousands are approaching, from every quarter, to render resistance and escape alike hopeless. All those troops, regular and militia, are your friends. Receive them and confide in them as such. Obey them when they tell you that you can remain no longer in this country. Soldiers are as kind hearted as brave, and the desire of every one of us is to

execute our painful duty in mercy. We are commanded by the President to act towards you in that spirit, and such is also the wish of the whole people of America.

Chiefs, head-men and warriors! Will you, then, by resistance, compel us to resort to arms? God forbid! Or will you, by flight, seek to hide yourselves in mountains and forests, and thus oblige us to hunt you down? Remember that, in pursuit, it may be impossible to avoid conflicts. The blood of the white man, or the blood of the red man, may be spilt, and if spilt, however accidentally, it may be impossible for the discreet and humane among you, or among us to prevent a general war and carnage. Think of this, my Cherokee brethren! I am an old warrior, and have been present at many a scene of slaughter; but spare me, I beseech you, the horror of witnessing the destruction of the Cherokees.

Do not, I invite you, even wait for the close approach of the troops; but make such preparations for emigration as you can, and hasten to this place, to Ross' Landing, or to Gunter's Landing, where you all will be received in kindness by officers selected for the purpose. You will find food for all, and clothing for the destitute, at either of those places, and thence at your ease, and in comfort, be transported to your new homes according to the terms of the Treaty.

This is the address of a warrior to warriors. May his entreaties be kindly received, and may the God of both prosper the Americans and Cherokees, and preserve them long in peace and friendship with each other!

WINFIELD SCOTT.

CHEROKEE AGENCY, }
May 10, 1838. }

"Prospect Hill" &c but, I can tell you, that, my own mind has ever since been in emotion, somewhat like the ebb & flow of Tide — or, were I to say that my heart was palpitated like the wounded fluttering bird, perhaps the comparison would be more correct." (From a letter to Mary B. Stapler from Ross, July 25, 1844)

In August 1844, Ross wrote Mary's father and aunt requesting her hand in marriage. They were married September 2, 1844 in Philadelphia. Only one dark cloud dampened the happy union as Mary was dismissed from the Quaker Church because of her decision to marry Ross. Ross returned with Mary and his sister-in-law Sarah to Rose Cottage at Park Hill just southeast of Tahlequah.

Following the example of the South, the Cherokees did not gather into towns and villages, but rather formed neighborhood settlements. Ross had chosen the Park Hill location and first established a crude log cabin when he arrived in Indian Territory, quite unlike the home he took Mary and Sarah to in 1844. The Park Hill home, Rose Cottage, was a two-story house situated on a hillside surrounded with native trees. With the arrival of more prosperous days, which were slow in coming, the house was furnished with rosewood and mahogany, with silver plate and imported china. The grounds included a blacksmith shop, kiln, laundry, smokehouse, dairy and slave cabins.

From the first, slavery became an established institution in the western nation, as it had been for those in the East.

During the years of 1845 and 1846, the internal conflicts and bloodshed continued as the Treaty party and the Old Settlers aligned themselves against the Ross party. When members of the Treaty party reached Washington in March 1846, they emphasized that division was the only possible remedy for Cherokee strife. Ross appealed to the federal government concerning the unfulfilled promises of former President Tyler for a new treaty.

The Treaty of 1846 was designed to end violence in the Cherokee Nation. On August 12, the three delegations gathered in the office of President James K. Polk to sign the treaty as approved by Congress.

During the tranquil days that followed the Treaty of

English Springs,
March 1838, 1838

John Ross, Esq.
Cherokee Nation

In a letter directed to your office dated 27th was handed to Mr. Ross which was a requisition for the following articles which was filed in part viz

30 Sticks (if we could secure them for this we will call for them before we leave here)

- X forage for ponies
- X 1 drawing knife
- X 1 Carpenter's Hand saw or slatoh
- X 2 Chisels 1 3/4 1 1/2 In
- X 2 Augers 1 1/4 & 3/4 In

for the use of the Community

- X 2 Meat Axes & 2 Butcher Knives
- X 1/2 lb of Baked Beans
- X 1 pot, that yard
- X 1 Mattock & 1 Spade & 1 grind Stone

Medicine for Horses

- 2 1 lb Calomel
- 2 2 Phils British oil
- 2 1/2 of Alum
- 2 1/2 of Salt Sticks

I hope to be able to send you a list of all that is here soon, perhaps to-morrow

Yours with due respect
J. D. Wofford

NB I think there is at this moment between 3 & 4 hundred

Sticks are badly needed we cannot remove many of the sick people for want of them

Request for additional supplies from James D. Wofford, conductor of a removal detachment, to John Ross, September 1838, from the John Ross Papers, Gilcrease Museum.

1846, Ross resumed activities in his personal financial interests and those of the Cherokees at home which had deteriorated over the years of struggle. Financial distress hindered the Cherokees' social progress and the nation's educational system. In his annual address of 1846, Ross had urged that two seminaries, both high schools, be established. These seminaries were opened in May 1851 and situated at Park Hill, just north of Ross' home.

During the 1850s, the political atmosphere of the Cherokee Nation was relatively calm. Questions over slavery began to rise during the decade however. By 1859 the slavery issue had grown to such a degree that the Cherokees were once again forming opposing camps.

Just as the Cherokees had entered their decade of progress and national unity, mutterings of the approaching Civil War began to be heard. The old factions among the Cherokees blazed up with all their original fervor. A secret organization formed among the full-bloods known

as the Keetoowah Society or the Pins, favoring antislavery positions. Members of the old Treaty party and mixed-bloods aligned themselves with the proslavery faction called the Knights of the Golden Circle.

Ross' first loyalty was to the Cherokees. Despite his own personal views, Ross attempted to keep the Cherokee Nation along neutral grounds. He felt the position was in strict conformity to the requirements of the existing treaties with the U.S. government. But by the summer of 1861 the internal pressure threatened to rupture the Cherokee Nation. Texas seceded from the Union on February 1 and by May 6, Arkansas also joined the Confederate ranks.

Albert Pike, a special agent for the Confederacy sent to negotiate treaties with Indian tribes west of Arkansas, revealed to Ross that he intended to negotiate with the mixed-bloods if Ross refused to negotiate a position with the Confederacy. Ross' old foe, Stand Watie was organizing a regiment for services, giving Pike a direct

avenue to form treaties with Watie and further dividing the nation.

On August 21, Ross called a Cherokee national conference to determine the course of action. Ross recounted the events that led to his decision.

"The great object with me has been to have the Cherokee People harmonious and united in the full and free exercise and enjoyment of their right of person and property. Union is strength, dissension is weakness, misery ruin! . . . The permanent disruption of the United States into two governments is now probable. The State on our border and the Indian Nations about us have severed their connection from the United States and joined the Confederate States. Our general interest is inseparable from theirs and it is not desirable that we should stand alone. The preservation of our rights and of our existence are above every other consideration.

And in view of all the circumstances of our situation I say to you frankly, that, in my opinion, the time has now



Cherokee Capitol Building in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

arrived when you should signify your consent for an alliance with the Confederate States upon terms honorable and advantageous to the Cherokee Nation." (Address to the Cherokees by John Ross, August 21, 1861)

Federal troops launched an invasion of Indian Territory, having defeated the rebel army and its Indian regiments in northwestern Arkansas in March 1862. Colonel William Weer met little resistance as they moved south from Kansas toward the Cherokee Nation. Ross was arrested and taken first to Kansas and then to Washington to gain President Lincoln's sympathies for the tribe. For the next three years Ross and his family remained refugees in the East.

During this time, the secessionist Cherokees who remained proclaimed Stand Watie as Principal Chief. The war in the Cherokee Nation became as vicious as that in Missouri or Kansas. The land, virtually unprotected, was ravaged by various guerilla groups, burning homes and forcing the Cherokees to huddle in refugee camps in Kansas and along the Red River. When Stand Watie surrendered in June 1865, the Cherokees returned to a land utterly destroyed and still divided.

John and Mary Ross lamented their separation and that of their family, including their two children, John Jr. and Annie. The Ross home, Rose Cottage, was burned in 1863 and Ross and Quatie's son James died in 1864 after being captured and imprisoned by the Confederates. These personal tragedies and Ross' apparent deteriorating health did not dissuade him from his continuing efforts to work for the people.

The passage of years, the devastation of the Civil War and long separations did not diminish the affection Ross and Mary shared. They corresponded regularly, as Ross did with many family members. His letters were not confined to family matters, but were often filled with updates on his work for a unified Cherokee Nation. Mary shared these ideals and missed the land to which she was readily accepted.

"Well do I recollect the first night I spent on the soil in the land I was to find my new western home at his House, the land over which My dear Husband ruled. My feelings were peculiar & never can be forgotten, the warm welcome I the lonely white stranger received, far from my childhood's home. Dear very dear did my sweet Prairie home, become to me, but I must stop or memory may have too much of sadness in it, but there are bright

beautiful spots that can never fade away. Remember me to thy Brother & William, & with Heart full of Love I am thy Devoted Wife" (From Mary B. Ross to John Ross, June 4, 1864)

Mary died July 20, 1865, of lung congestion after a long illness.

With the end of the Civil War Ross returned to the Cherokee Nation to find destruction and human suffering beyond his anticipation. Many of the Indian tribes had signed treaties with the Confederacy during the war and the government called for tribal representatives to meet peace commissioners at Fort Smith, Arkansas, in September 1865.

First arriving near Van Buren, Arkansas, in late August, Ross wrote to Sarah Stapler of his progress to his former home.

"I know that I am fast approaching my country & my people, and that I shall soon meet with my Dear children, relatives & friends who will greet me with joyful hearts — but, where is that delightful Home & the matron of the once happy family who so kindly & hospitable entertained our guests. Alas, I shall see them no more on earth. The loved wife and mother is at last in the Heavenly mansions prepared for the redeemed — and the family Homestead ruthlessly reduced to ashes by the hand of rebel incendiaries. And whilst the surviving members of our family circle are scattered abroad as refugees — I am here journeying as it were, along to find myself, a stranger & Homeless, in my own country. Yet, among relatives & friends — but, without the loved ones I have left behind, I can not feel otherwise! The picture is painful to my feelings." (From a letter to Sarah F. Stapler from Ross, August 31, 1865)

Ailing in health and bereaving the loss of his beloved wife, Ross' unyielding loyalty to the Cherokee nation helped him to face the deliberations in Fort Smith that September. Ross led the northern faction, while Ross' continual foes Stand Watie and Elias Cornelius Boudinat (son of slain Elias Boudinot) represented the southern cause. The government's new commissioner came prepared to question not only the loyalty of the Cherokees during the Civil War, but to challenge the integrity of Ross.

The southern faction still championed the division of the nation while Ross advocated unity. None of the major issues were resolved during this first encounter. Ross was appointed by the Cherokee National Council to lead a

■ CHEROKEE HISTORY

■ U.S. HISTORY

1565	SPANISH FOUNDED ST. AUGUSTINE IN FLORIDA	1830	INDIAN REMOVAL BILL ENACTED
1607	ENGLISH SETTLED JAMESTOWN, VIRGINIA	1832	BLACK HAWK WAR ANDREW JACKSON REELECTED PRESIDENT
1608	FRENCH FOUNDED QUEBEC	1835	TREATY OF NEW ECHOTA provided for cession of all Cherokee lands east of Mississippi River. Signed by minority Treaty Party.
1620	PILGRIMS ESTABLISHED COLONY AT PLYMOUTH	1836	MOVEMENT OF ABOUT 2,000 MEMBERS OF THE TREATY PARTY TO INDIAN TERRITORY TREATY OF NEW ECHOTA RATIFIED BY SENATE
1682	LOUISIANA CLAIMED FOR FRANCE	1838-1839	FORCED REMOVAL OF CHEROKEES TO INDIAN TERRITORY
1684	FIRST CHEROKEE TREATY WITH EUROPEANS	1839	TREATY PARTY LEADERS ASSASSINATED CONSTITUTION ADOPTED BY EASTERN AND WESTERN CHEROKEES
1721	FIRST CHEROKEE LAND CESSION to the colony of South Carolina	1840s	IMMIGRATION WEST OVER OREGON TRAIL
1754-1763	FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR	1841	ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM WITHIN CHEROKEE NATION
1775-1781	AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR	1845	TEXAS ANNEXED BY UNITED STATES
1776-1777	CHEROKEE WAR influenced by pro-British Tribes and opposition to settlement of Americans on Cherokee lands. Chickamaugans refuse peace terms.	1846	TREATY SIGNED TO END FACTIONALISM WITHIN CHEROKEE NATION
1785	TREATY OF HOPEWELL first treaty with United States which drew territory boundary	1846-1848	MEXICAN WAR
1788	UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION RATIFIED	1861	CHEROKEE ALLIANCE WITH CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA SIGNED
1789	GEORGE WASHINGTON INAUGURATED PRESIDENT	1861-1865	AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
1791	TREATY OF HOLSTON revised Cherokee boundary lines	1863	COWSKIN PRAIRIE COUNCIL Ross party aligned Tribe with Union. Stand Watie continued guerilla warfare for Confederacy
1794	CHICKAMAUGAN RESISTANCE ENDED last major hostilities against United States	1865	FORT SMITH COUNCIL peace treaty signed between Cherokees and United States
1794-1817	MOVEMENT OF SOME 2,000 CHEROKEES WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI	1866	RECONSTRUCTION TREATY Cherokees ceded neutral lands, the Cherokee Strip, and gave option to permit settlement of other tribes in Cherokee Outlet
1800	THOMAS JEFFERSON ELECTED PRESIDENT	1869	TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD COMPLETED
1801	FIRST MISSION SCHOOL ESTABLISHED IN CHEROKEE TERRITORY	1871	RAILROADS EXTENDED INTO CHEROKEE NATION INDIAN APPROPRIATION ACT abolished the treaty system
1804-1806	LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPLORED BY LEWIS AND CLARK	1875-1876	INDIAN WARS IN BLACK HILLS
1808	CHEROKEE LEGAL CODE ESTABLISHED	1890	BATTLE OF WOUNDED KNEE
1812-1814	WAR OF 1812	1893	DAWES COMMISSION ESTABLISHED to proceed with allotment of Indian lands.
1817	NATIONAL COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO SUPERVISE TRIBAL AFFAIRS	1898	SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR CURTIS ACT abolished tribal laws and courts in Indian Territory
1821	CHEROKEE SYLLABARY DEvised BY SEQUOYAH	1903	FINAL ELECTION OF CHEROKEE TRIBAL GOVERNMENT
1824	BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS CREATED	1907	OKLAHOMA BECAME 46TH STATE
1827	CHEROKEE CONSTITUTION ADOPTED		
1828	FIRST PUBLICATION OF CHEROKEE PHOENIX NEWSPAPER JOHN ROSS ELECTED PRINCIPAL CHIEF ANDREW JACKSON ELECTED PRESIDENT		

Information compiled by Sarah Erwin, curator archival collections, Gilcrease Museum.

delegation to Washington in November 1865, although he was not recognized as Principal Chief since his arrest and removal from the nation in 1862.

The struggle continued between the two factions. The rival delegations met on April 7, 1866. Ross was confined to his boarding house by deteriorating health, but received daily accounts of the proceedings. Ultimately a treaty was effected on July 19, 1866, containing the intent of the northern factions proposals. Ross was vindicated from previous accusations, as delegates insisted that the treaty carry Ross' signature as Principal Chief of the Cherokees.

The treaty was approved by the Senate on August 11,

1866, just ten days after Ross' death. He was buried at the Ross Cemetery near the ruins of Rose Cottage and the people he had served so long. ☹

(Special acknowledgement to Dr. Gary Moulton of the University of Nebraska, author of John Ross, Cherokee Chief published by the University of Georgia Press, and editor of The Papers of Chief John Ross published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Also a special acknowledgement to Dr. Mark Eugene Hellstern of Tulsa Junior College. His dissertation, "A Cherokee Enigma: The Role of John Drew in the Affairs of His People" and several articles he has authored pertain to the events of Ross' life. Both men have done extensive research in the Gilcrease Collection of the Ross Papers.)

NOBLE CHEROKEE PORTRAYALS

BY PAULA HALL



Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sycust Ukah, 1762, 48 by 35½ inches, oil.

The pictorial interpretation of the native people of the New World endures as one of the earliest themes in American art. Before the first permanent English settlement was established, a few firsthand observers painted and sketched life among the Indians they met for the curious Europeans back across the ocean.

These first works, depicting the general appearances and ways of life of the native people, were widely circulated engravings. Although they provided the first glimpses of these new lands and the people, they rarely

captured the detailed facial or physical characteristics of the subjects. These full-figured renderings of Indians lacked precision and individuality.

The individual Indian emerged as a subject for portraiture during the 18th century when leaders of powerful tribes were escorted across the Atlantic to visit London, the seat of English colonial power. In their quest for control of the New World, the English, as well as the French and Spanish, pursued the allegiance of powerful Indian tribes for support and positions of



G. Bickham, The Three Cherokees, Came Over From The Head of the River Savanna to London, 1762, handcolored engraving.

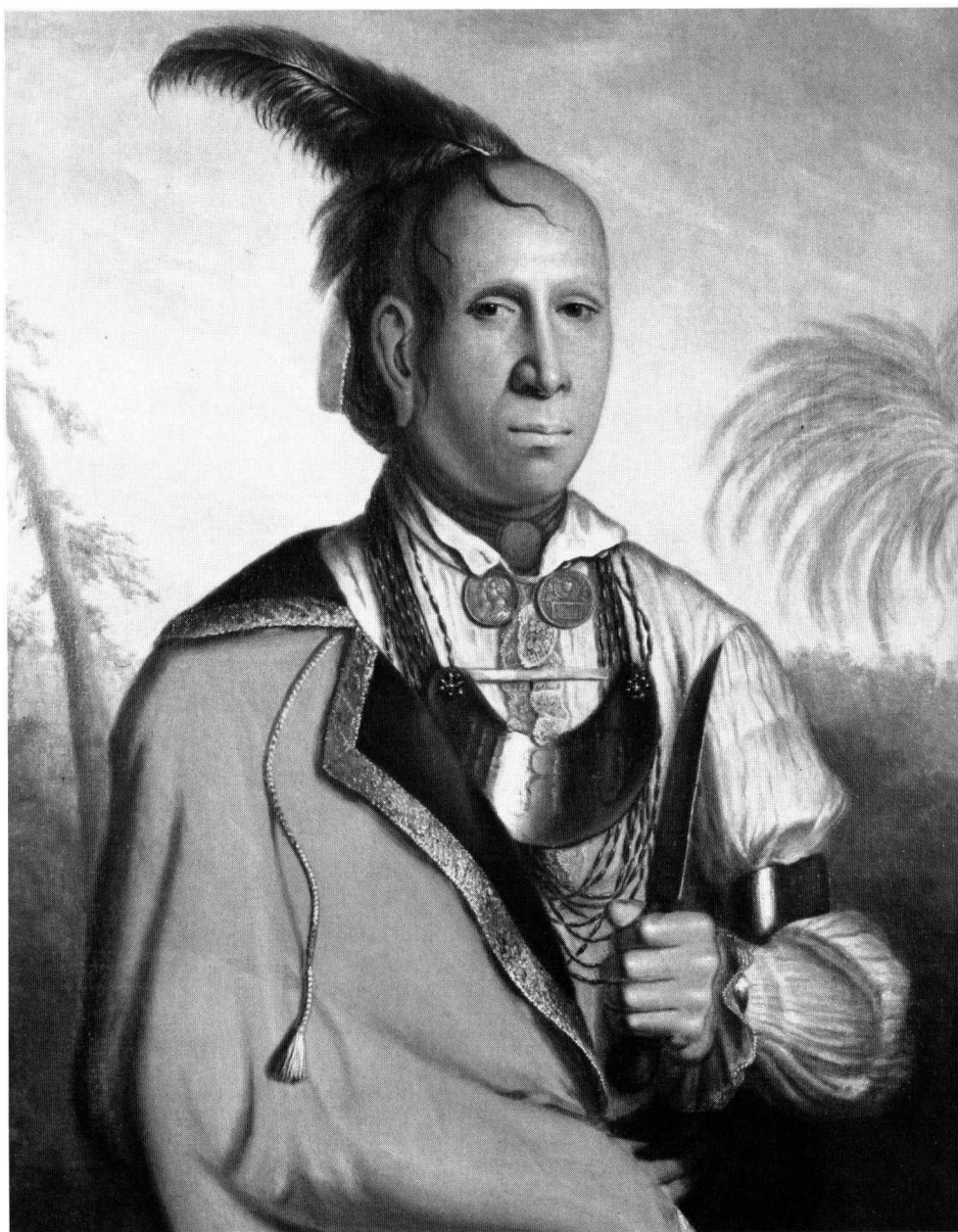
military forts in their lands. Indian leaders were courted and transported to England to meet the ruling monarch and to experience the wonders of English civilization.

As a record of these Indians' visits, professional portraitists drew or painted these noble chiefs. Notable among these portraitists at this time were Francis Parsons and Joshua Reynolds, whose pictures were sometimes reproduced in mezzotint.

The Cherokees were objects of solicitous attention from the English seeking to win the loyalty of these men

of the southern Appalachians. In the early 1720s the Cherokees acknowledged complete loyalty to King George III of England and later Fort Loudon was built in the Cherokee Nation. Growing conflict among the English military and the Cherokees came to a climax in 1760 when a group of Cherokees who had been seized as hostages were killed. The Cherokees retaliated by capturing and destroying Fort Loudon.

Lt. Henry Timberlake was sent to convince the Cherokees of the sincerity of the English desires for



Francis Parsons, Cunne Shote, Cherokee Chief, 1762, 36½ by 28½ inches, oil.

peace and friendship. On his visit, three chiefs, Ostenaco (sometimes referred to as Mankiller), Standing Turkey and Pouting Pigeon, were asked to return to London with him.

On May 15, 1762, the ship sailed for England with the three Cherokee chiefs and an interpreter, William Shorey (great grandfather to John Ross). Unfortunately Shorey died of pneumonia during the passage to England.

The noble chiefs created quite a sensation in London upon their arrival. The *St. James Chronicle* described them as “tall, well-made men, dressed in their own country fashion with only a shirt, trowsers, and mantle around them; their faces painted a copper colour, and their heads adorned with shells, feathers, ear rings, and other trifling ornaments.”

Portraits of the Cherokees were also made while the Indians toured the city. Reynolds painted a formal portrait of Ostenaco which he titled *Syacust Ukah*. For lack of an interpreter, this was the Englishman’s understanding of the Cherokee words, Skiagusta Ustanacah, meaning Chief Ostenaco.

With much the same interpretation problem, Parsons titled the portrait believed to be of Standing Turkey, *Cunne Shote*. Since the colonists often wrote his name as “Cunnicatogue,” they may have further abbreviated this spelling to read simply “Cunni” and added the name of the town from which he came which was Chote.

In many respects the United States followed the English precedent in Indian affairs when negotiating treaties. Delegations of Indian chiefs were brought to the national seat of government in Washington, D.C., to experience the civilized way of living and to meet ranking government officials. The English custom of painting such chiefly visitors also persisted.

It was Thomas McKenney, superintendent of Indian Trade, who conceived the idea of developing a government collection of portraits of prominent Indians who visited Washington. McKenney engaged the services of Charles Bird King, a well-known portraitist.

The 1820s and 30s was a very active period of governmental negotiations with numerous Indian tribes visiting Washington. Frontier settlement was rapidly moving westward and Congress decreed the removal of many tribes to lands west of the Mississippi. Numerous treaties were negotiated and made with Indian tribal delegations. King painted the majority of these chiefs and delegate members. King’s portrait of Cherokee David Vann was painted during the time of the tribal negotiations.

King painted Indian leaders of at least twenty tribes.

Probably no artist of his time, or earlier, pictured leaders of more different tribes, with the single exception of George Catlin.

Beginning in 1830, Catlin traveled widely in the Indian country to paint likenesses of leaders of more than 40 tribes. Although his painting, depicted members of tribes from all levels, he preferred to picture prominent chiefs and members of their families. They owned the finest clothing and provided the finest figures to capture their full regalia.



Charles Bird King, David Vann, 18 by 14½ inches, oil.

His original collection, composed mainly of paintings completed between 1830 and 1836, formed the nucleus of what ultimately became known as the Indian Gallery which was exhibited in the East and in Europe. In the six years Catlin traveled in the Great Plains, he completed approximately 470 paintings, a number which later grew to well over 600.

Like Catlin, John Mix Stanley had been attracted to American Indian life and for 10 years traveled extensively in the far West. He visited 43 tribes and

painted 154 portraits and scenes of everyday life. In 1842, he arrived in the Cherokee Nation and set up at Fort Gibson. The following spring he moved to nearby Tahlequah, capital of the Cherokees, to capture the principal gathering of the Cherokee National Council. He later visited Lewis Ross, brother of Principal Chief John Ross. It is speculated that it was during this visit, Stanley painted several members of the Lewis Ross family.

Stanley's collection of Indian paintings probably rivaled



George Catlin, Jol-lee, 5½ by 4⅞ inches, watercolor on paper.



George Catlin, George Lowry, 26 by 22½ inches, oil.



George Catlin, Tuch-ee "Dutch", 6 by 5¼ inches, watercolor on paper.

the War Department's gallery started by McKenney. Upon returning to the East in 1851, he loaned the collection to The Smithsonian, hoping that either The Institution or Congress would purchase his paintings as a nucleus of a national Gallery.

King's portraits painted for the War Department and Stanley's collection were placed in a second-floor gallery at The Smithsonian to form a magnificent showing of illustrations of the native Indian and his way of life. On January 24, 1865, a fire consumed the entire gallery. All

but a few of the King and Stanley paintings were destroyed. The fire left Stanley anguished and financially broken. King had died three years earlier and never knew the fate of his work.

Despite The Smithsonian fire, a number of King's American Indian portraits can be found. King painted replicas of a number of his most important Indian portraits for himself and for private collectors. Many other replicas survived and of the 32 known oil portraits which have survived, six are in the Gilcrease Collection. ◊



John Mix Stanley, Lewis Anderson Ross, 40½ by 31½ inches, oil.



John Mix Stanley, Elizabeth Ross, 39¾ by 31½ inches, oil.

John Mix Stanley, Eleanora C. Ross, 39¾ by 31½ inches, oil.

Funding for art and educational programming, acquisition, and special projects came from many individuals, foundations and corporations during the past year. Listed below are those making contributions of \$1000 and above between July 1, 1989, and June 30, 1990. Every effort has been made to assure accuracy, however, should an error or omission be noticed, please contact the Association Offices.

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FRONT COVER:

The late Olaf Wieghorst's studio built near El Cajon, California, circa 1956. A re-creation of the studio with original contents has been completed at Gilcrease Museum.

BACK COVER:

Carl Oscar Borg, *The Hush of Evening*, 34 by 30 inches, tempera, from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Hays.

The Borg exhibition has been organized by the Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, California, and has been funded in part by Wells Fargo Bank.

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VOL 12 NO3 FALL 1990

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