

GILCREASE

MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART



Kachina



Santero



Currier
&
Ives

Vol. 12
No. 4
Winter
1990

GILLIE
LIBRARY

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

For thousands of years man has continuously lived in the American Southwest — a land of great diversity in topography, climate, vegetation and cultures, both historically and presently. 🧱 **T**he Pueblo cultures have been a part of this glorious land for over two thousand years. They created villages that melded with the landscape, developed well defined ceremonial and social structures and eked out survival through their agriculture. 🧱 **T**he Pueblo peoples were ancient when the first contact with Europeans occurred in the 1500s. Cabeza de Vaca learned of their existence when he was shipwrecked on the coast of present-day Texas in 1528. Eleven years later a Catholic friar, Fray Marcos, and the Moor, Estebán, who was de Vaca's manservant, made a journey north to the fabled Seven Cities of Cíbola which were actually the Pueblos of the Zuni. Estebán preceded Marcos to the Pueblo of Hawikuh where he was slain for his conduct with the Zuni women. Marcos quickly returned to New Spain but told tales of great wealth held by the Indians. He claimed to have seen cities of gold, when what he really saw was the setting sun reflecting from the golden adobe structures. The area was searched for the reported treasure by Coronado for a year and a half, but to no avail. 🧱 **T**he Pueblos were left in isolation for 40 years before the Spaniards again began exploration and subsequent settlement. They were welcomed at first as they brought with them wonderful additions to their culture, such as the horse and chili peppers, but the Spaniard's commandeering of food and materials soon caused resentment. The Pueblo at Acoma was destroyed in 1599 and many of its inhabitants taken captive. This set the stage for the next 81 years as the Pueblo peoples existed under the Spaniards in their seat of government at Santa Fe. Missions were established at

many of the Pueblos and their cultural ceremonies suppressed as churches were built over their kivas.

The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 was the culmination of their frustration and anger and has been considered the most triumphant rebellion of any native peoples in what is now the United States. Twenty-one of the 33 Franciscan friars were killed and the Spaniards were routed from their territory. The victory was fleeting, and the Spaniards soon sent General Antonio Otermín to reconquer the land. Some of the Rio Grande Pueblo people, particularly the Tewa, fled to the west to join the Hopi who had moved many of their villages from the canyon floors to the tops of the mesas for greater protection. The Spaniards were relentless in their efforts to recolonize and subjugate the Indians and by 1694 were once again in full control.  **M**issionaries were sent out in force, including three to the main Hopi village of Awatovi.

Being the most southern of the Hopi habitations, Awatovi was the main stop on the ancient trade routes and perhaps the villagers were more accepting of other peoples. The Awatovi people received the priests and allowed a church to be built over their chief kiva, much to the disapproval of the other Hopi who jealously guarded their cultural ways. Awatovi was attacked in 1700 by a group of warriors from the Hopi Pueblo of Walpi. Most of the inhabitants were killed and the Pueblo destroyed.  **T**o this day, whether by isolation or temperament, the Hopi remain influenced the least by outside culture and religion of any of the native peoples the Spaniards found living in the Southwest. The Kachina Cult is an expression of their partnership with the land and is also an inspiration for continuity of their culture. In comparison, the Santos of New Mexico reflect the establishment of the new regime in a conquered land.



The Spirits of the



All kachinas shown range in height from 7¼ to 16½ inches.

Mesas



Kuwan Heheya frequently dances in groups at Niman and is accompanied by kachinmanas. This colorful tihü's cheek symbols indicate clouds. He is present on all three mesas.

The Hopi word kachina can be translated as *life father* or *one who sits with the people*. A kachina is the spirit of everything in the real world and is capable of communicating the needs of this world to the gods. The supernatural kachinas are present in rising mist and steam and the clouds that bring the life-giving rain. When a Hopi dies, his final breath rises to join the clouds and over his face is placed a fluffy cloth made of cotton which resembles the clouds he has joined.

There are kachinas for animals and insects, wild and domestic plants, humor and discipline, the sun and neighboring tribes. Some kachinas have healing powers and some are ogres, though all are essentially benevolent. Some run foot races with spectators and will exact a penalty such as cutting off their hair or ripping their clothing should their competitor lose. No one knows the exact number of Hopi kachinas as some fall from favor and do not appear for many years. New kachinas are created from time to time and if their appearance is followed by good weather and crops, they will find a place in the lives of the Hopi. But it is generally the ancient kachinas which demand the most respect and possess the best songs and dances. The newer arrivals might almost be placed on a social level, but what they represent has no less a spiritual essence than the kachinas the Hopi have known for centuries. New kachinas can present themselves to a kiva member through a dream, be borrowed from other pueblos or created for newly introduced elements like the cow, horse and sheep which were brought by the Spaniards.

Living in such a harsh environment, it is imperative every Hopi work toward the good of the pueblo to insure survival. Social rules are strict and there is small room for



individuality or personal expression. These constraints are eased through the physical depictions of kachinas.

The masked impersonators are always men, even when representing a female kachina, or kachinmana. Their identity is unknown to uphold the honor of the spirit the dancer will become. The dancer prepares himself to portray the supernatural according to tradition which includes fasting, constructing feathered prayer sticks and observing celibacy. New masks may be made beginning with a basket or a helmet of leather, and more recently, a felt hat. The color they are painted indicates the direction from which the kachina comes; yellow for north/northwest, red for south/southeast, white for east/northeast and blue for west/southwest. Black represents the region from above; all colors represent from below.

Masks may have ears, snouts, feathered or tablita headdresses, horns or flowers, depending upon the spirit they represent. To complete the costume a neck ruff is constructed to conceal the bottom edge of the mask, clothing or body paint is designed and items for the kachina to carry are gathered. Old masks may be refurbished by replacing the perishable material used in their construction. Very few of the ancient masks have survived for most were destroyed in 1682 when Governor Antonio Otermín attempted to erase the Kachina Cult. Should a mask with sufficient antiquity exist, it is stored with reverence in a niche in the pueblo and considered a *woye* or spirit of the ancients.

With the opening of the kachina season after the winter solstice, the kachinas begin to appear in the villages. At first there are restricted nighttime affairs held in the kivas of the clans, as the nights high on the mesas are too cold

Kokopelli is represented in many cultures throughout the Southwest and into South America, most frequently as a flute player. Among the Hopi he is sometimes known as the Assassin or Robber Fly Kachina because of his humped back. He is a merry dancer, an imp, and a seducer of young girls. The phallic symbol of his mask announces his behavior which is not given undo importance among the Hopi.



Tawa is a kachina that is disappearing and even though there are many legends that include the sun, when he does dance it is always in a mixed group. The design of his mask is used as the symbol for the sun on other kachina masks.



to be outside. The Powamu or Bean Dance is the first major public kachina event and is held in February. A wide variety of kachinas come to the Powamu, many that may not have been seen for years, for this is a special time. In the dead of winter, newly sprouted bean plants are brought from the kivas to signify the coming spring.

The large plaza dances begin in April. A member of any kiva asks the village chief for permission to sponsor a dance and the date is set. New songs and dances for the kachinas are written and rehearsed. On the chosen day the participants follow the path of sacred cornmeal to the south side of the plaza and line up facing east to perform the dance. They next move to the east side of the plaza and face north to repeat the performance. They then have a rest period before repeating the entire sequence, for the plaza dances last the entire day. The dancers may all be costumed as the same kachina in a startling repetition, or appear in pairs or singly in a riot of design.

The final dance of the kachina season is the Niman which occurs in July. This is the last time the kachinas will be seen until December. The Kachina Clan from each village decides which Kachinas will appear. Just before the kachinas leave to return to the San Francisco Mountains, the village chief beseeches them to carry a message for mercy on the Hopi and the blessing of rain so that all things will grow and life be bountiful.

The tihü (kachina dolls) are carved by the men to be given during the dances as gifts to children, and sometimes to women. They are made to teach the recipient about the individual kachinas and to be a constant reminder of the supernaturals while they are enjoyed as toys or hung from the rafters of the pueblos.

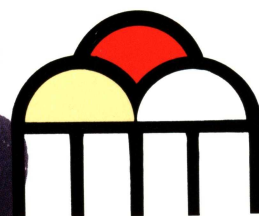
Reports from the 1500s by explorers document the





existence of tihüs at that time. The original rather flat form that was made for centuries merely indicated the rudiments of the kachina's costume. Later they became rounded and subsequently evolved to truly sculptured forms that are anatomically correct, fully costumed and at times, indicate motion.

Not only has the style of the tihü changed through time, the materials to make them have also undergone revolution. There are more carvers today and the wood of choice, the root of the cottonwood tree, is scarce and expensive. Formerly a carver would scrounge the roots from a tree swept down the river in a flood. Now, the supply comes from across the Southwest and is dear in price. The traditional coloring pigments made from ores,



Hopi children are terrified of Nataska Kachinas who always come as a pair. They accompany other frightful kachinas who demand tributes of food and know all the transgressions of the children. When their demands are met it is never enough to please the kachinas and adults must intercede on the children's behalf for it is known that Nataska can swallow children whole. He is fearsome to behold with his pointed ears and long gourd snout and makes a terrible noise with the saw he carries. Known as the Black Ogre, the modern saw replaced a tool of flint or obsidian.



Legend has it that Yapa, or Mocking-bird Kachina, taught women to talk. His costume includes a ruff of fox fur, feathered arms and body paint.

clays and vegetable dyes have been replaced by tempera and acrylics. The objects of adornment such as marine shells and parrot feathers that were historically obtained from Indians in Mexico or on the Pacific coast through the well-established trade routes, are now no longer used. The buffalo and migratory birds are protected. Substitutes might be mirrors, dyed chicken feathers or sheep wool.

The traditional tihüs were only for internal use by the Hopi. But as their isolation on the mesas lessened there were attempts to purchase the tihüs. At first the Hopi offered resistance to this for it seemed an adulteration. Pressure increased and many tihüs secretly found their way into collections far away from the three mesas. However, many of the tihüs that were carved for this purpose displayed intentional mistakes in the mask, costume, coloring or hand-held objects to protect the integrity of the kachina. Many misconceptions and much confusion of the complicated topic of kachinas is a result of this protectionism. Today, specific tihüs are ordered by collectors and particular ones become favorites. Many Hopi feel this distorts the importance of those Kachinas.

The isolated life of the Hopi has changed rapidly and drastically in this century. No longer is the culture bound to the land as it once was. They are now a cash-based society influenced by Anglo ways and the amount of land in the production of corn which was the historical staple of life, continues to decrease. Ironically, the Kachina Cult is stronger than ever with the kachinas appearing at the dances doubling in number. To quote Frederick J. Dockstader, author of *The Kachina and the White Man*, "If the time should ever come when the final Niman is danced, it will not be until Hopi culture is no longer a vital force." ❖



SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Harold S. Colton, *Hopi Kachina Dolls*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, revised 1979.

Frederick J. Dockstader, *The Kachina and the White Man*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, revised 1985.

Jesse Walter Fewkes, *Hopi Kachinas*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1985.

Barton Wright, *Hopi Kachinas*, Northland Publishing, Flagstaff, 1977.

Barton Wright, *Kachinas: a Hopi Artist's Documentary*, Northland Press, Flagstaff with the Heard Museum, Phoenix, 1973.

Handbook of North American Indians, Volumes 9 & 10 - Southwest, Smithsonian Institution, 1983.

Several of the above books and a wide selection of hand-carved tihüs are available in the Gilcrease Museum Shop.

Saintly Images of New Mexico





When French-born John Baptist Lamy became the first bishop of the New Mexico Territory in 1851, nine thousand of the Pueblo inhabitants could be listed as Catholic. The territory had been under United States control since 1846 following Mexico's independence from Spain and the subsequent Mexican War. Bishop Lamy thought the natives' and the colonists' church discipline extremely lax. Furthermore, he discovered in almost every church and private home a form of folk art he found grotesque. He ordered the monstrosities to be destroyed and replaced with religious images from France.

The folk art Bishop Lamy found so disgusting was created by the New Mexican *santeros*, creators of saintly images. These artists were formally untrained, New Mexican colonists or immigrants which began their art form around 1750. The fact that they must have been quite prolific is attested by the many *santos*, images of saints, that remain to this day.

The need for the *santos* grew from the isolated location of the missions. It was 1,000 miles from Santa Fe to Mexico City along the *camino real* which was a tortuous, dry and expensive journey to undertake. The balance of trade was one-sided, for Santa Fe and its surrounding region had little to offer the merchant centers of New Spain. Thus the treasured relics of saints of the Church that the Franciscan friars gently carried to their outposts became the centerpieces for the missions they established. Whatever else they might have needed had to be built with their own hands, or the hands of others who acquired the crafts and skills. They were adaptive and developed the adobe mission style for their churches and homes and filled them with handmade furniture. As the missions became more entrenched and the number of colonists grew, the demand for religious furnishings grew also. The *santero* filled this need, traveling the region from commission to commission much as the itinerant New England portrait painters.

The *santeros* used the materials at hand to make the *retablos* (flat painted panels), or the *bultos* (sculptured figures in the round). The soft wood of cottonwood or pine trees proved to be the best for beginning either form for the *santero* did not have advanced tools. After shaping, the porous wood was smoothed and then covered with *yeso* which was made from locally available gypsum. The gypsum was baked in an oven until white and dry, ground to a powder and mixed with egg yolk or glue from cattle hooves or animal hides. For paint, the *santero* used only water soluble pigments as oil paints were unavailable. Most were gathered plants and earths; black was made from soot and charcoal, and occasionally dyes imported for cloth were used. The final product was smeared with grease or a varnish made from resin to retard the flaking of both pigment and *yeso*.

The *bultos* were very seldom carved from one piece of wood. The arms, head or items they might be holding, all were carved separately and attached with pegs and glue. Portions of the *bulto's* costume, such as a cape or the skirt of a gown, might be made from cloth soaked in *yeso* and draped in the desired shape. Frequently the *bultos* were designed to be adorned with clothing much as a doll is dressed.

Though all *santos* were honored, they were particularly venerated if made by a *santero* considered holy. The artists were actively sought and the *santos* that remain can be attributed to only a handful of men. Some have unknown identities and are named by the attributes of their work, other have been identified. The mystery of who the *santeros* were has been solved largely by scholar E. Boyd who through diligent study has been able to trace the lineage of several. Whoever they were, with their passing came the end of the *santo*. Only in recent years has the folk art been taken up once again by contemporary New Mexican craftsmen and being a *santero* returned to a viable way of life.



NUESTRA SEÑORA GUADALUPE

(Page 11, 20 inches high)

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a saint from the new world. It is said that one December in Mexico, Guadalupe appeared to an Indian boy named Juan Diego. She instructed him to carry a message to the bishop of Mexico to build her a chapel on that spot. When Juan Diego related his tale, the bishop asked for a sign of proof. As the boy returned home, Guadalupe appeared again and learned what the bishop had said. She directed Juan Diego to go to the bare rocks to gather flowers. He obeyed, even though he knew no flowers bloomed at that time of year or grew from bare rock. To his amazement, he found the flowers which he then gathered in his serape and carried to the bishop. When the flowers were tumbled from their wrapping, Juan Diego's serape showed a picture of the virgin surrounded by an aura. She stood on a crescent of the moon which was supported by an angel.

The santos of Guadalupe closely adhere to the image described in the legend. The aura is signified by the pointed beams and her features may have Indian characteristics. There are two bultos and one retablo of Guadalupe in the Gilcrease Collection. The base of the left bulto has two additional angels sketched in black.

SANTIAGO

(Page 13, 11½ inches high)

Santiago was one of the rare saints readily accepted by the Pueblos. Being the patron saint of horses and battle, he represented something new to the Indians that was not answered by their culture. When the Spaniards arrived with their horses, Santiago was an old saint who had first appeared in the 9th century. At the ruin of the Pueblo at Acoma in 1599 it was reported that Santiago rode amidst the battle on a white steed with a flaming sword and billowing banner. When the battle ended, this resplendent warrior could not be found.

The Gilcrease Santiago bulto is dressed in a cloth coat and the pennant is of plaid, woven fabric. It is unusual in that the mane and tail of his white horse are created of animal hair.

SAN RAFAEL

(Below, 12 inches high)

The archangel Rafael took on the form of a man and accompanied a young boy on a perilous journey to find a fish that would cure his father's blindness. The wings of these bultos signify the subject is an angel and the fish identifies him as Rafael. Sometimes thought of as a saint for fishermen, sometimes for travelers, he is also felt to have curing powers. Along with Santiago, he was accepted by the Pueblo of Tewa.





LA NUESTRA DOLORES & PENITENTE PROCESSION

(Shown above left, 7 1/4 inches high and right, 10 inches high)

The Penitente, or Brothers of Light, is a Third Order lay segment of the Church, which began in New Mexico under the Franciscans. The order stresses the physical sufferings of Christ. During ceremonial processions the participants are known to flagellate themselves as the final figure of this bulito is doing. Santos of La Nuestra Dolores, also known as Our Lady of Sorrows, are frequently involved in the Penitente reenactment of the Passion. She is identified by the sword piercing her breast, which in some portrayals becomes several swords.



SAN YSIDRO

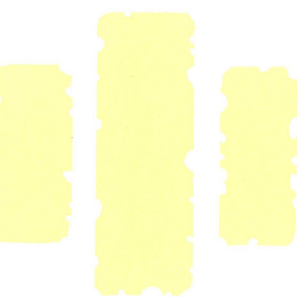
(Above, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches high)

The patron saint of farmers in New Mexico is San Ysidro. He is asked for rain and protection against plagues that might attack the crops. In the most common form of bulto of this saint, an angel guides the plow and oxen to release San Ysidro from this duty so he can converse with God. The man who was the actual San Ysidro was born near Madrid, Spain, in the 12th century. He was a farmer who led a quiet life but was considered to have the power of answering prayers for others. He was canonized in 1622.

THE TRINITY

(Right, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches high)

The rope surrounding the three identical figures in the bulto expresses the belief that the Trinity is threefold and yet one. The father, the son and the holy spirit are implied by the symbols in their hands. Santos of the Trinity were extremely popular in both Mexico and New Mexico and were sometimes portrayed as a man holding a child who held a dove.





CHRISTO

(Left, 12½ by 9¼ inches)

This bas-relief retablo of Christ is uncharacteristic of this form of folk art. The background and face are one piece of wood to which yeso was applied in a thin layer and then painted. Barely discernable on the band around the head are markings which indicate thorns. From the wounds caused by the thorns the red streaks of blood drip down the face and onto the chest. The white above Christo's head could represent a halo. The frame consists of four separate pieces, each carved differently and then attached to the panel. The frame may have been painted at one time for there are slight remnants of yeso adhering to the wood in the cracks.

SAN MIGUEL

(Shown right, 15¼ by 9¼ inches)

Saint Michael, the English pronunciation of San Miguel, was the archangel who threw Lucifer from heaven. As the fallen angel plunged to earth, his angelic body took on devilish features. In this retablo the devil is represented by the dragon. Saint Michael's foot is placed on the head of the dragon in a symbol of victory. The archangel holds the scales with which he will weigh the souls on Judgement Day. The santero has placed him in a costume reminiscent of European military uniforms. The red fabric and scallops suggest the curtains of a stage or swags of drapery, a not unusual inclusion in retablos. 🌿



SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

E. Boyd, *Popular Arts of Spanish New Mexico*, Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, 1974.

E. Boyd, *Saints and Saint Makers of New Mexico*, Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe, 1946.

Thomas J. Steele, S. J., *Santos and Saints*, Ancient City Press, Santa Fe, 1974.

Mitchell A. Wilder with Edgar Breitenback, *Santos*, Taylor Museum, Colorado Springs, 1943.

Colorful Pictorial

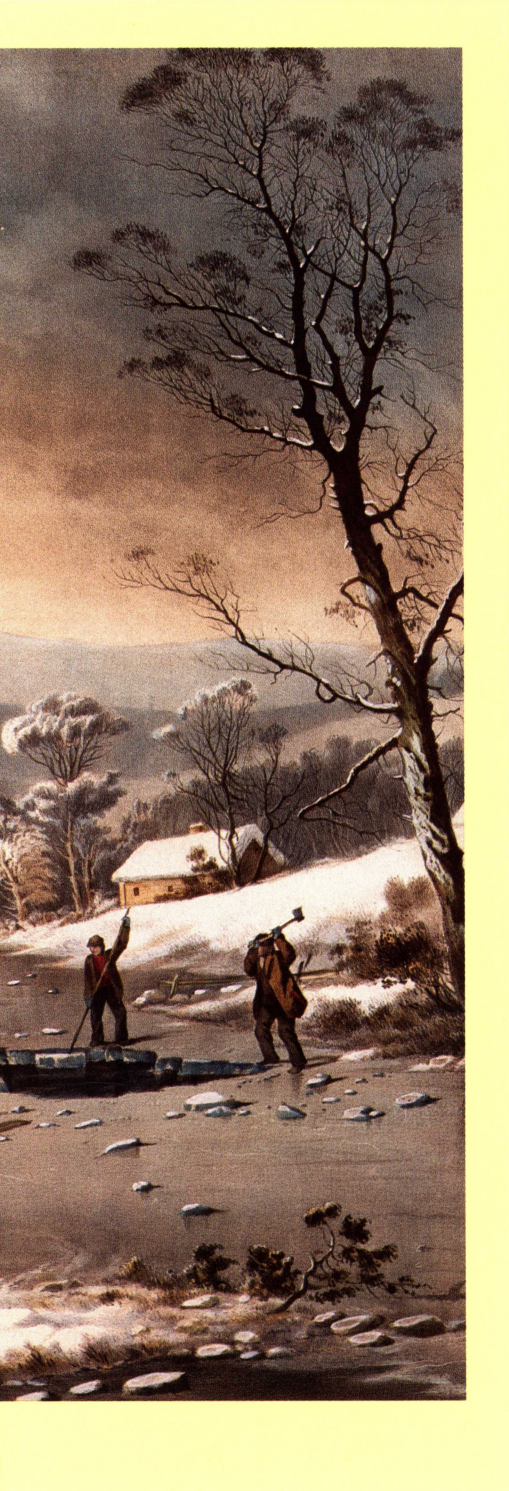


WINTER IN THE COUNTRY: GETTING ICE

CURRIER & IVES

Records for the People

BY PAULA HALL



Often discovered in the forgotten niches of old attics and barn lofts, the lithographic prints of Currier & Ives reveal with great clarity and force, images of mid-19th century America. They yield the most extensive visual display of an era which could otherwise only be lived through the written pages of history.

Judged strictly as art alone, Currier & Ives prints may have had a difficult time surviving the passage of time. Although this well-known firm reproduced some of the most prominent artists of its time and employed the finest lithographers, their primary purpose was to provide the people of the day a view of their world, at a price the most common person could afford. These artists and workers on stone were chroniclers of history.

Self-described as "Publishers of Cheap and Popular Pictures," Currier & Ives produced well over 7,000 individual lithographs during their 60-plus years of business. The number of prints produced from each stone engraving is not known, since very few records were kept or survived through the years. Few prints have fared well over time, despite their prolific popularity and distribution. Because they were first sold inexpensively (for as little as 20 cents to three dollars) they were often mishandled or tossed aside, forgotten as newer pictorial reproduction methods began to emerge. However, at the time of their introduction, these prints provided the first glimpse of American life to the public. By the end of the era and close

George H. Durrier, Winter in the Country: Getting Ice, 16 1/2 by 22 inches, lithographic print, published by Currier & Ives, 1864.



F.F. Palmer,
The Rocky Mountains:
Emigrants Crossing the Plains,
18 by 25 inches,
lithographic print,
published by Currier & Ives, 1866.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

of their business, the Currier & Ives collection provided the greatest panoramic picture of an emerging nation.

The year was 1835 and the primary mode of transportation was horse-drawn carriages, wagons and steamships. Texas was still a part of Mexico and the Great American West was an enigma to the majority of Americans and Europeans. The use of color illustrations was virtually unknown in the publishing business. There were newspapers, a few magazines and only a small number of book publishers.

Nathaniel Currier, a young lithographer who had apprenticed a few years earlier in America's first commercially successful lithography firm, had just opened his own business in New York, printing sheet music and other commissioned lithographs. On January 13, 1840, the popular steamboat, *Lexington*, burned and sank in Long Island Sound and the direction of Currier's business was to change forever.

Acting quickly, Currier and the publisher of *The New York Sun* collaborated to produce an "extra" edition of the newspaper with an account of the event and an illustration based on early reports. Within three days of the disaster, the edition was distributed and Currier received national recognition for his "immediate" depiction of the event.

Firmly planted in journalistic endeavors of the day, Currier continued to illustrate current events. But his insight into the commercial market and what the public

would purchase led him to produce a variety of prints, illustrating daily life, historical events and the activities of a changing nation.

Producing color images through the printing process was unknown. Chromolithography, pictures reproduced in color through the use of several printings, did not emerge in America until late in the 19th century. Illustrations in books, magazines and newspapers were in black and white except for a few books which had hand-colored illustrations – considered cost prohibitive to produce on a large scale. Currier improved the profitability of color print-making by using assembly line methods for coloration.

Small folio prints were produced by a group of women employed by Currier in his shop. Using a model prepared by the artist and/or lithographer, each woman applied a single watercolor, then passed the print to the next, until the coloring was complete. Large folio prints were colored by more expert colorists where more time and care was used in applying the colors. Young, struggling artists of the day were often employed for the coloration of these larger folios.

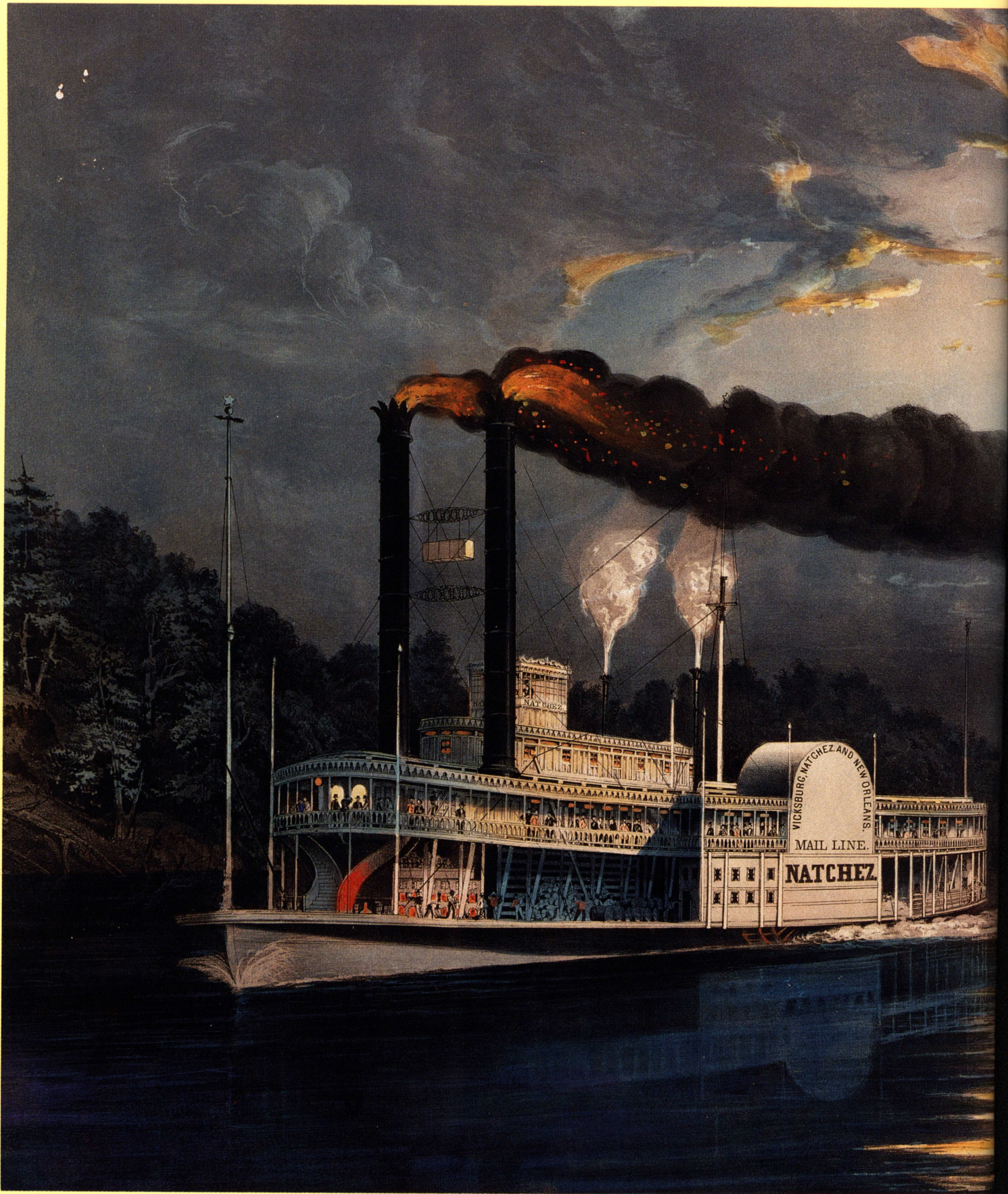
The name of "N. Currier" was carried on all prints up until 1857 when James Merritt Ives became a partner in the firm. Ives had joined Currier five years earlier as a bookkeeper, but had shown such enthusiasm and knowledge of art that his role in the firm expanded rapidly.

His knowledge of art lent a new perspective to the firm's

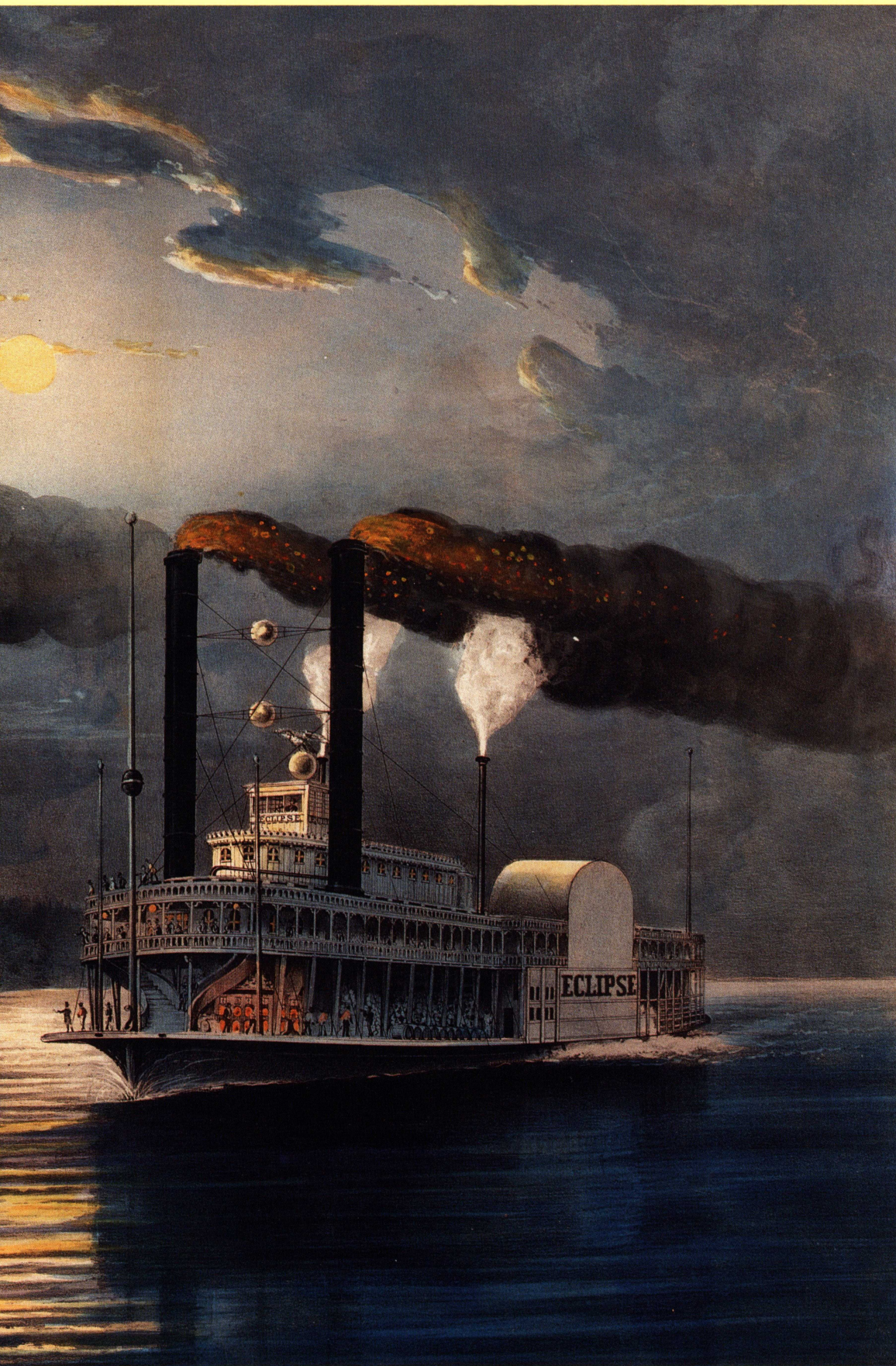


THE LIGHTENING EXPRESS TRAINS: LEAVING THE JUNCTION

F.F. Palmer, The Lightning Express Trains: Leaving the Junction, 18 by 27 1/2 inches, lithographic print, published by Currier & Ives, 1863.



A MIDNIGHT RACE



ON THE MISSISSIPPI

*F.F. Palmer,
from a sketch by H.D. Manning,
A Midnight Race on
the Mississippi,
18 by 27½ inches,
lithographic print,
published by
Currier & Ives, 1863.*

The Lithographic Process

Engravings on stone mediums date to the 16th century when stones from the district of Franconia near Solnhofen, Bavaria, were first used as inscription plaques. But the first step forward in the printing process called "lithography" is credited to a young Bavarian playwright, Alois Senefelder, who in 1796 was searching for a more cost effective method of reproducing his manuscripts than through the copperplate engravings or woodcuts used exclusively in that time for reproduction.

The new process discovered by Senefelder depended on the simple principle that grease and water do not mix, and requires the use of the very soft and porous stone discovered earlier in 16th century Bavaria. The surface of the stone is prepared to a very fine velvety texture. Special grease, water-repelling crayons are used to draw images onto the stone. With the drawing complete, a chemical reaction secures it on the surface through a bath of gum and nitric acids. Those parts of the stone not protected by the grease will react to the acid, bubbling up, and the grease design, hardy enough to resist the acid, will stand out in low relief.

After water is applied to the stone, the non-image areas are protected and reject ink, while the grease drawn areas repel water and receive the ink. Paper is placed on the inked stone plate, pressure applied and released, and a print is “pulled” from the press. Ink is applied to the stone plate as each print is pulled.

The grease crayons used for drawing during the time of Currier & Ives' production, varied in width from very delicate to coarser grades up to one and one-half inches wide. The work was extremely delicate and required precision and faultless accuracy. Lines could be removed, but nothing could be put in its place without preparing the entire stone again to its velvety texture.

Charles Currier assisted his brother Nathaniel in the lithography business and invented, during that time, a lithographic crayon which was said to be far superior to the French crayons formerly used. The crayons, made of wax, soap, shellac and other water-repelling substances, were manufactured and sold by Charles. After their invention, no other crayon was used at the firm.

In commercial lithography of today, the cumbersome and expensive stone has been replaced by metal plates. The more efficient photographic processes in printing today have taken the place of the grease drawing crayons.



THE TREE OF INTEMPERANCE

ability to evaluate and select sketches for reproduction and his skills as a lithographer often carried him into the process to work on stones himself.

Currier & Ives became undoubtedly the most prolific firm of lithographers, producing more prints than all other firms combined during their time. Collectively, the prints today provide practically the only source, and certainly the largest, of colored pictures illustrating every phase of American life and history of their period.

From the snow-covered scenes of country life to the conquests and defeats of the Civil War, and through the detailed chronicles of the pioneering “iron horse,” the list of subjects portrayed in Currier & Ives prints seems endless. Fond of horses and sports, Currier sought and produced some of the best hunting, fishing, racing and other sporting scenes. His influence and attitudes can also be recognized in many of the political and temperance cartoons produced by the firm.

Ives, on the other hand, had knowledge and true appreciation of art which probably influenced the firm to

Artist unknown, The Tree of Intemperance, 12¼ by 8¾ inches, lithographic print, published by N. Currier, 1849. The following appears below the print:

"Wine is a Mocker, Strong drink is raging,
and Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.
Proverbs XX.1. At the last it biteth like a Serpent,
and stingeth like an Adder. Proverbs XXIII.32.
For the Glutton and the Drunkard shall come to
Poverty and drowsiness shall clothe a man with
rags. Proverbs XXIII.21."

F.F. Palmer,
Yosemite Valley, California,
The Bridal Veil Fall,
17½ by 25 inches, lithographic print,
published by Currier & Ives, 1866.



YOSEMITE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, THE BRIDAL VEIL FALL

produce some of the more well-known artists' works of the day. Ives was recognized in artistic circles outside the firm and served on many artistic committees and boards. Perhaps the more sentimental side of the Currier & Ives collection can be attributed to his influence. He has been described by many historians as a family man who enjoyed a tranquil home life and took an active part in civic work.

Currier & Ives employed or used the work of many of the celebrated artists of the day including Louis Maurer, A. F. Tait, George Durrie, George Catlin, Eastman Johnson and many more. Perhaps one of the most often seen credits on Currier & Ives prints is that of F.F. Palmer, an artist whose work might never have stood the test of time or been seen by so many, if it were not for the firm.

During an age when women did not generally work for a living, Frances Flora Palmer supported a large family. Born in England, Palmer and her husband Edward moved to New York, along with their two children and Mrs. Palmer's sister and brother. Although the exact date of their arrival in America is unknown, they seem to have come from a background of some wealth which was no longer the case upon their arrival in America. The sisters and Mrs. Palmer's brother-in-law were well educated in art, literature and music and all three worked to some degree in the arts. Edward Palmer pursued no trade apparently and Mrs. Palmer was the primary breadwinner of the group.

There are no accurate records to determine the exact number of Currier & Ives prints to which Fanny Palmer contributed, but she is said to have contributed more than any other single artist. Best known for her talents to paint background and scenery, she often worked in conjunction with other artists. However, she proved versatile in her own work through various subjects including detailed sketches of steamboats on the Mississippi, railroad prints and excellent hunting and wildlife scenes.

Palmer worked for Currier & Ives until her death in 1876 at the age of 64. Although not recognized as an equal to some of the more distinguished Currier & Ives



*Eastman Johnson, Husking,
22½ by 28 inches,
lithographic print,
published by Currier & Ives, 1861.*



HUSKING

A.F. Tait,
Life on the Prairies: The Trapper Defense,
Fire Fight Fire,
18 1/4 by 27 1/2 inches,
lithographic print,
published by Currier & Ives, 1862.

artists, her work offered great charm, comfort and attention to detail.

The charm of rural life was also the theme of George Henry Durrie paintings which remain some of the most popular Currier & Ives reproductions. The firm reproduced only a few of Durrie's paintings, most of which serve as records of the old days on New England farms.

Sentimental yearnings and simple beauty may have been the call for many Currier & Ives works, however the events of the day more often served as the pinnacle for many prints. Realistic portrayals of the move west served as a repeated theme throughout the history of the firm. By oxen-drawn wagons, ships or trains, the westward movement, and what these pioneers encountered, was recorded time and again by Currier & Ives artists.

Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait provided some of the most memorable scenes of western life in the Currier & Ives series, *Life on the Prairie*. A collaborative work with Louis Maurer, a recognized artist and longtime lithographer employed by Currier & Ives, these scenes of the West were some of the most sought after prints ever produced by the firm. It has been documented by Currier & Ives historian, Harry T. Peters, that neither Tait nor Maurer had any firsthand knowledge of the Indian subjects they painted in the series. Neither had the thousands of Americans and Europeans who enthusiastically purchased these prints, seeking first glimpses of this new western frontier.

However, Tait and Maurer were influenced by firsthand accounts brought back by frontier pioneers and by other western painters such as George Catlin. Currier & Ives reproduced several of Catlin's paintings, in addition to many other western artists.

The sea and ships played an important role in the development of the new world and served an equal place in importance by way of Currier & Ives prints. The Age of the Clipper Ship and the Golden Age of Sail served as expanded subjects for Currier & Ives artists. Equally important to recording the development of America on the waterfront were the steamships and the handsome group



LIFE ON THE PRAIRIES:

of prints produced by the firm of the early epic days on the Mississippi.

Later the railroad, whistles screaming and wheels flashing, to some degree surpassed the ships as subjects and perfectly fit the Currier & Ives pattern for recording history in the making.



THE TRAPPER DEFENSE, FIRE FIGHT FIRE

Poetry and other works of literature served as important themes, particularly in the eyes of Currier himself. Long established in the field of journalism, Currier was said to have been acquainted with several writers, poets and journalists of the day. Many ideas for the firm's prints may have been formed during visits to the area newspaper

offices for which he was often known to frequent or during chats with his literary friends.

Currier & Ives prints covered almost every subject of the day. Perhaps no era of history has been more fortunate in its portrayals. Currier & Ives pictured their own times with meticulous accuracy and detail, leaving behind to



HIAWATHA'S WEDDING

F.F. Palmer, *Hiawatha's Wedding*, 13 1/2 by 18 1/2 inches, lithographic print, published by Currier & Ives, 1868. The following appears below the print:

*"From the Wigwam he departed leading with him Laughing Water,
Hand in hand they went together thr'o the Woodland and the
Meadow."*

*"And the ancient arrow maker sat down by his sunny doorway.
Murmuring to himself and saying Thus it is; our daughters leave us."*

posterity a graphic record. The firm provided the public with pictures that were easy to understand and appreciate, typically American. They provided methods of production and distribution that were decades ahead of their time and the public responded. During their prime days of production, Currier & Ives prints adorned the walls of almost every public establishment, as well as the homes of the rich and the less fortunate.

Currier retired from the firm in 1880 after 55 years of working in the business. He died just eight years later. Ives remained an active member of the firm until his death in 1894. Currier was succeeded by his only surviving son,

Edward, and Ives's role in the firm was assumed by his son, Chauncey.

But the times were still changing and the lithograph print as produced by the firm was being pushed aside to make way for more advanced reproduction methods. In 1907 the firm was liquidated and all the lithographic stones were destroyed.

Currier & Ives left behind records of the romance, charm and quaintness of a lifestyle now past; the excitement and exuberance of discovery and adventure, and most importantly, history as seen through the craftsmen and artists of their time. ◻

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Harry T. Peters, *Currier & Ives, Printmakers to the American People*, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1942.

Craig McClain, *Currier & Ives, An Illustrated Value Guide*, Wallace-Homestead, 1987.

Russel Crouse, *Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives*, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1930.

The Spirits of the Mesas 2

Saintly Images of New Mexico. . . . 11

Currier and Ives:
Colorful Pictorial Records for
the People20

FRONT COVER:
Tsitoto Kachina

BACK COVER:
N.C. Wyeth, *The Pay Stage*, 38 by
26 ½ inches, oil on canvas.
Courtesy of the First Interstate Bank of
Arizona.

Rodger Randle
Mayor, City of Tulsa

Fred A. Myers
*Director, Thomas Gilcrease
Institute of American History
and Art*

Paula Eliot
Director of Public Relations

Paula Hall
Editor

Bill Patterson
Art Director

Shane Culpepper
Photographer

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE THOMAS GILCREASE INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART

Lawrence A. Reed
Chairman of the Board

Lucia Freeman
Vice Chairman of the Board

David F. James

Stuart Price

Rodger Randle

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE THOMAS GILCREASE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

Roxana Rozsa Lorton
Chairman of the Board

Jon R. Stuart
President

Terese T. Williams
President-Elect

Mary Jean Brett
Vice-President

Mary Ann Burdett
Vice-President

Bill Kellough
Vice-President

Linda Malone
Vice-President

Milann Siegfried
Vice-President

Peter M. Walter
Vice-President

Ed Tomlins
Treasurer

Bob Soza
Assistant Treasurer

Sandra Pitman

Robert J. Riggs, Jr.

Ken Selby

Ross Swimmer

Priscilla Tate

Clifton Taulbert

James A. White

Beverly Wilcox

Nan Williamson

Richard Williford

David Winslow

Maxine Zarrow

Jeannie Guthery
Secretary

William S. Atherton

Molly Shi Boren

Neva Brannin

John Brock

Lynda Dickerson

Robert E. Downing

Ronald E. Hall

Ronald G. Harper

Kathy Kraft Hilti

Barbara Hirsch

Robert G. Hunt

Donald F. Marlar

Ed Mascarin

Bill Nash

James R. Phillion

DIRECTORS EMERITUS

Lindsay Alexander

William S. Bailey

Robert F. Biolchini

Marian Bovaird

Corwin Denney

William F. Fisher, Jr.

Gregory Flanagan

Barton Gilcrease

Gordon T. Hicks

Burt B. Holmes

Paul Johnson

James C. Leake

Patsy Lyon

David R. Milsten

Robert L. Parker

Wayne R. Rumley

Joan J. Stauffer

Eudotia Teenor

Charles E. Thornton

Patricia W. Wheeler

Jack Zarrow

All illustrations in this issue are from the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art unless otherwise indicated.

Additional copies of this issue and many back issues of the *Gilcrease Magazine* may be purchased in the Gilcrease Museum Shop at \$6.00 each. To order by mail, send a check for \$7.00 (includes \$1.00 postage and handling) to the Gilcrease Museum Shop, 1400 Gilcrease Museum Road, Tulsa, OK 74127-2100.

THOMAS GILCREASE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
1400 GILCREASE MUSEUM ROAD TULSA, OKLAHOMA 74127-2100

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 226
Tulsa, Oklahoma



N.C. Wyeth's Wild West

FEBRUARY 15-APRIL 7, 1991

**N.C. Wyeth's paintings and drawings
of the American West.**



Organized by the Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford, PA.