

THE GILCREASE

MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART



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THE GILCREASE

MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART

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*Front cover: "The War Bonnet
Maker," oil by Joseph Henry Sharp.
According to the artist, the bonnet in
the painting was in the Custer battle
and is authenticated - procured in
1897 or 1898.*

*Back cover: Part of the artifact
collection at Gilcrease is the warrior
figurine probably from Colima,
Mexico, 1,500 to 2,000 years ago.*

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Sharp



Hummingbird

When we look upon a work of art such as a fine painting, or listen to a musical composition, or read an intriguing article, sometimes we become lost in the creative mastery of it all.

Thus, often we fail to realize the toil, the technique, the accuracy, and the historic significance of the objet d'art, and what the artist, be he painter, musician, or writer, endured in order to complete his work.

Joseph Henry Sharp, the first artist to visit Taos, used accuracy of detail as one of his cardinal rules in painting. And that's one of the reasons his paintings are not only important historical records, but ethnologically valuable as well.

Sharp is represented by over 200 paintings in the Gilcrease collection. But, just as important, perhaps, is the fact that many of the Indian artifacts he used in his paintings are also part of the Gilcrease collection.

In this issue of the magazine, Anne Roden, curator of art at Gilcrease, tells us about the material in the collection which was collected by Sharp and used to aid in accurate portrayals of the various Pueblo and Plains Indians. Mrs. Roden received her degree in art history at the University of Tulsa and did graduate work at the University of Chicago.

One of our favorite Sharp paintings is "Crucita, A Taos Indian Girl" which hangs in the Southwest gallery. Gilcrease Photographer Mark Haynes, tells us that Crucita's son came to visit Gilcrease a few years ago. He did not know the painting of his mother was in the museum, and, when he saw it, recognized his mother in the painting.

Hummingbirds have been called the feathered jewels of the Western hemisphere, and we must admit their jet-like flight and highly iridescent plumage have always been a source of amazement.

Sally Campbell also amazes nearly all who know her. Like the hummingbird, she is full of energy, a woman who finds time to

devote to volunteer work for her city, travel, and engage in birdwatching.

Put another feather in Mrs. Campbell's hat. She makes her debut as a writer with her story on *The Hummingbird*. Her words are informative, and the stunning Gould handcolored lithographs from the Gilcrease collection truly capture the beauty of the tiny birds.



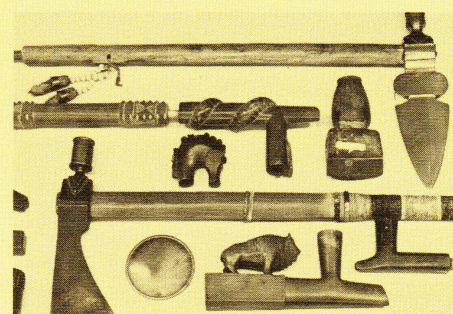
Visting the Roman Forum in Rome and standing amidst 2,000-year-old ruins of our civilization had been one of my most memorable moments until recently. The same sense of historical excitement struck me as I stood in the artifact storage room at Gilcrease and held in my hand a projectile point known as the Sears spear which is 8,000 years old.

Dan McPike, Gilcrease senior curator, writes in this issue about the museum's outstanding artifact collection. Old friend Dan is himself quite outstanding. Example: He plays the bagpipes, in a kilt. Really. An anthropology graduate of the University of Oklahoma, he has been on the museum staff for 15 years. During that time he has been on the University of Tulsa-Gilcrease "digs", and has become an expert source of information about the artifact collection. And what is Dan's favorite artifact from among over 40,000 objects at Gilcrease? It's the bottom of a broken bowl (Mimbres), A.D. 1300, which features two Kachina figures.



Several years ago I once asked an Indian painter to explain his paintings and his style to me. "Ask Jeanne," he replied. "She knows more about my painting than I do." Well, he was right. We're referring to Jeanne Snodgrass King, registrar of Gilcrease.

Before joining the staff at Gilcrease nine years ago, she spent 13 years as assistant director and curator of Indian art at Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa. She is listed in *Who's Who In American Art*, and was the recipient in 1966 of a citation for outstand-



Artifacts

ing work in the field of Indian art from the U. S. Department of Interior.

Mrs. King also writes. In fact, she is the author of a directory of American Indian artists, the only such directory in existence. In our magazine this time, she weaves the story of another Taos artist, Bert Phillips, and his correspondence with Thomas Gilcrease.



Other articles we know you'll find interesting include the book reviews of new art and history books by Mildred D. Ladner; the message from our director Fred Myers giving some statistics concerning museum visitors; and photographs of recent visitors to the museum, including more celebrities such as the Ambassador of Nigeria, the wife of the former premier of Israel, feminist author Germaine Greer, and National Academy of Design artist Doel Reed.

Wm B

William J. Butler
Senior Editor

JH SHARP.

Authentic Indian Artifacts Used to Highlight Paintings

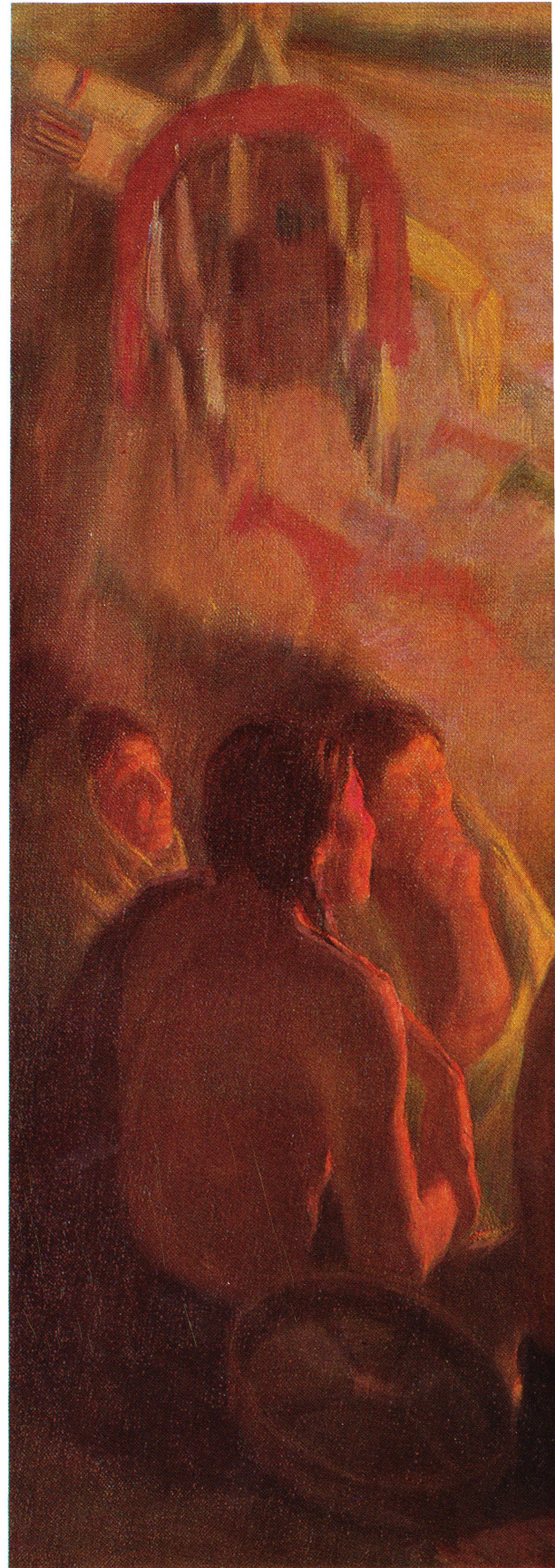
By Anne Roden

Joseph Henry Sharp's paintings are very familiar to visitors at the Gilcrease Institute and he has become one of the collection's most admired artists. His scenes of Taos Pueblo and the Crow Reservation in Montana have been favorites for years and are recognized for their use of authentic Indian artifacts collected by the artist. Most of the material is in the Gilcrease collection.

Sharp is said to be the first artist to visit Taos. In 1893, while on a sketching trip through the West, he came upon the beautiful Taos country. He looked upon it as an artist's paradise and decided to return. Soon after he met Ernest Blumenschein and Bert Phillips in Paris where they had all gone to study, and he told them about the Taos scenery and the Indian and Spanish peoples of the New Mexico country. Blumenschein and Phillips went to Taos in 1898 and stayed to establish the first studios of what was later to become the Taos art colony. A few years later Sharp returned to Taos and established a home and a studio. He spent most of his summers there painting the Indians and scenery of the New Mexico desert.

Sharp's first hand knowledge of the Crow Indians was the result of his spending several winters in a small studio and cabin near the Custer battlefield at the Crow Agency in Montana. He painted some 200 of the Custer battle warriors.

The reasons for the popularity of Sharp's works are many. He had a deep love and respect for the Indians of the Pueblos and Plains. He understood and appreciated their way of life and had a great sympathy for the plight of those caught in a cultural transition. Living and working with the Indians enabled him to express his feelings in his paintings and create a highly personal view of





"The Orator," oil by Joseph Henry Sharp includes a bonnet, drum and other articles collected by the artist.



"The Chant of Vengeance," oil by Joseph Henry Sharp features Hunting Son, Taos Indian.

these people. One is aware that Sharp was not simply a disinterested viewer but was very much involved with the subjects of his paintings.

Sharp's technical ability as a painter can only enhance the appreciation of him as an artist. His artistic training was one of the finest. After his initial study in the United States, he traveled and studied extensively in Europe. He spent time in Antwerp, in Munich at the Royal Academy and he toured Italy and Spain studying the masters. He also spent some time in Paris, involved in both formal and informal study. After he returned to his home in Cincinnati and had established himself as an artist, Sharp continued to travel abroad as often as possible, between trips to the West. His artistic background showed in compositions that were always sound and pleasant, though not exciting or innovative. In some are the evidences of the effect of French Impressionism, seen in the use of color, brushstroke, and the understanding of light. In others, the dark tonality of the Spanish masters he admired can be seen.

Sharp took his classical training and combined it with the unique and inspirational quality of the Southwest and western landscape and culture. From this he created a very American style of art. That he was successful is proven by the large body of work he produced (over 200 paintings in the Gilcrease collection alone), and the fact that his work is so well-liked today.

Another important reason for the popularity of his work is the authenticity of his compositions. This is particularly true in light of the character of the Gilcrease Institute as a collection of materials relating to the history and development of America and all who have ever lived here.

As an artist, Sharp was a stickler for accuracy of detail. Because of this, his paintings are not only important historical records, but valuable ethnological ones as well. The historical importance lies in the fact that his paintings of the Crow Reservation captured for the future the last vestiges of historical Plains Indian culture. To aid in accurate portrayals, Sharp collected various Indian artifacts which he included in many of his paintings. Sharp eventually sold much of the material to Thomas Gilcrease and it is now a part of the Gilcrease Institute artifact collection.

The degree to which he carried the desire for authenticity can be clearly seen and greatly appreciated in comparing details of articles of clothing, ritual objects, or everyday items in Sharp's paintings with the actual artifact. Since many of the artifacts remain in the museum's storage areas, the opportunity for such examination is not always available. One example is



"The Tribal Historian," oil by Joseph Henry Sharp depicts a story-telling session in the tipi.

the display at this time in the Art and Artifacts of the Southwest Gallery. In the center of the west wall is a painting of one of Sharp's favorite models, Crucita, of Taos Pueblo. On the display case opposite the painting can be seen four items from the composition: the dress, sash, boots, and pottery bowl. The dress is a beautiful example of the Pueblo weaver's art. This traditional style was woven from cotton, as has been done since long before contact with the white man, and embroidered with wool. The sashes are also of woven cotton and attest to the skill of the craftsmen, who were men. The boots are exceptionally fine. Made from the softest buckskin, this pair is particularly beautiful because of

JH SHARP.

"Crucita, A Taos Indian Girl," is one of the most popular paintings by Joseph Henry Sharp. The girl is in an old Hopi wedding dress and the floral arrangement is of dry flowers. She posed for several Sharp paintings and was the mother of Tony Reyna, a well-known Taos citizen.





the whiteness of the skin. The bowl is striking in its simplicity. This type of vessel, made in Picuris and Taos Pueblos, is of clay with a high mica content. Such vessels are usually undecorated and unmarked, except for dark smudges which occur during firing. The same articles of clothing also appear in "The Ceremonial Song Lesson," "The Green Corn Dance," and "The Pottery Decorators."

Often, Sharp attached handwritten tags to the artifacts, explaining their use, where he acquired them, or from what materials they were made.

After examining the collections in order to correlate artifacts with the paintings in which they are included, it appears that some very striking materials in the artifact collection have come from Sharp. In the absence of written records of sale, such correlations can be made simply on the basis of convincing visual evidence. One Sioux shirt that is seen in "The Story of the War Robe," "Chant to the War Bonnet," and "The Tribal Historian" is of an incredible design. The soft buckskin has been dyed blue and is decorated with brilliant orange quillwork, some beading, and long tassels made of horse hair on the sleeves and body. A pair of soft yellow buckskin leggings appear in at least six different paintings. They are decorated with twisted green buckskin fringe and rows of blue and white beading that band the sides and cuffs.

Several drums are featured in Sharp's paintings. One of the most interesting is a single-face, early 20th century drum. It is made of rawhide stretched over a wooden frame with rawhide lashing across the underside which serves as a handhold. Brass tacks ornament the sides and also serve to hold the rawhide cover in place. The face of the drum is painted dark red and blue with designs of a horse, sun, curved lines, and a sketchy horse and rider. The underside is unpainted except for four yellow horse track symbols. The drumstick most often seen with this drum is quite simple — a curved wooden stick covered with a padded, ochre colored cloth. The drum and drumstick appear in "The War Bonnet Maker," "The Story of the War Robe," "The Drum Song," "The Orator," "Chant to the War Bonnet," and "Chant of Vengeance."

A very beautiful war bonnet appears in "The War Bonnet Maker," "The Drum Song," "Chant to the War Bonnet," "The Tribal Historian," and "The Orator." The most recognizable part of the bonnet is the white beaded band decorated with red and green quarter diamonds, blue crosses, and a single row of blue beads along the edge. The eagle feathers at the sides are dyed red and tassels of fur, ribbon, and feathers hang from the



All the artifacts shown above were collected by Sharp and used in many of his paintings. Many of the authentic Indian items collected by the artist are now a part of the Gilcrease collection. At right is Sharp's oil, "The Chant of the War Bonnet," which includes the drum, bonnet, and sash shown in the photograph at left. Sharp wrote about this painting: "Interior of teepee (sic), firelight and little twilight from teepee (sic) opening. When two or more Indians get together and a drum is handy, it is generally war, horse raids, or love songs and hunting songs."



point at which the red feathers are attached. One feature not seen in the paintings is the addition of tiny blue dyed feathers on the crown of the bonnet.

There are also various other shirts of skin and cloth, several more war bonnets, some with long feather trailers, a number of Catlinite pipes, beaded and quill decorated pipebags, and quilled moccasins, an old buffalo hide war shield, other leggings of wool and buckskin, blankets, robes, bows, quivers, parfleche bags and much more.

In the Gilcrease Institute's long-range plan for exhibit development the idea is to combine, to a greater extent, materials from each area of the collection. This has been done in the previously-mentioned Southwest Gallery. When the gallery devoted to the Plains Indian culture is completed, many of the materials mentioned in this article will be on display. 🏠

THE HUM



Topaza Pyra, Gould.

Fiery Topaz.

MINGBIRD

Gould's Lithographs Capture Tiny Feathered Jewel of the New World

By Sally Campbell

In 1519 when Cortez, with 400 men, landed at the present-day site of Vera Cruz, Mexico, his thoughts were on finding gold and spreading the Catholic faith to the heathen population in the New World.

Not many of those on the expedition were naturalists, but as the men began their slow journey to the Aztec's interior capital of Tenochtitlan, they must have noted with interest the many forms of plant and animal life so different from those they had known in Spain. They must soon have become aware of the tiny birds with long slender beaks and brilliantly iridescent throats hovering about the open flowers, the Huitzil, or Little Bird, as the Aztecs called it.

On arriving at Tenochtitlan, the Spaniards, dazzled with the splendor and richness of the city, were received with guarded civility by Montezuma. They saw the palaces and temples, the floating gardens and the emperor's aviary where, in huge airy cages woven of reed and bamboo, hundreds of brightly colored birds, including the Huitzil were tended by many men. The feathers were carefully gathered at molting time for use on the brilliant feather cloaks and ornaments worn by the priests and rulers.

The Spaniards soon discovered that the new bird, in the Aztec canon of beliefs, was their special tribal god. It was he, the Huitzilopochtli, the hummingbird god, who had spoken to them in the dim past from within a mountain and had led them away from their home in the middle of a lake to their permanent dwelling place.

The legend also tells that Coatlicue, the ancient earth mother, discovered a small bundle of feathers

one day while she was sweeping. She put the feathers inside her dress between her breasts and soon discovered she was pregnant. Her daughter, the moon, and her sons, the stars, were about to kill her for her immorality when the child in her womb emerged in a blinding flash of light and vanquished his sister and brothers. He was Huitzilopochtli, God of the Sun and of War. It was believed that the battle between the lights of day and of night took place once every 24 hours. In order to nourish the sun god for his nightly struggle, he must be fed, the Aztecs were sure, with the blood of men. This was the basis of the Aztec ritual of daily human sacrifice.

The Spaniards admired the hummingbird but were aghast by the bloody ritual. In a few short weeks, with an equal brutality, the Aztec power was crushed, their temples razed, and the Catholic cross was presented as replacement to the Huitzil as a religious symbol.

Since the arrival of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere, the white man has been fascinated by these beautiful little birds. The genus or Family is named Trochilidae, "Little Bird," and its 319 species are found from Alaska to Tierra Del Fuego.

The varieties which nest in the far north or extreme south are highly migratory. The Rubythroat, nesting throughout the United States and Canada east of the Rockies, and the Rufous Hummingbird of the Pacific northwest and Alaska, travel 2,000 miles to Mexico or Central America for the winter. The Eustephanus Galeritus or Chilean Fire Crown travels from southern Chile to Peru at the opposite time of the year. Most species of hummingbirds migrate



Eutoxeres Aquila.

Sickle Bill.

shorter distances or merely up and down in elevation within a restricted mountain range. Some kinds inhabit only one Carribbean island or are associated with certain foliage along streams in a few high mountain valleys of the Andes.

Each of these tiny birds possesses amazing powers of flight and highly iridescent plumage. The smallest, the Cuban Bee Hummingbird, is the size of a bumble bee, and the largest, the Giant Hummingbird of the Andes, is eight and one-half inches in length but weighs less than an ounce.

During the 16th century, following the Spanish conquest, and in the 17th century, as the English colonies were developing, the hummingbird is mentioned admiringly many times in accounts of the New World. Gilcrease Museum has several examples of these early and not always accurate references. Thomas Morton (1622-1647) wrote *New English Canaan* and described the *Hunningbird* (sic) which he says is "no bigger than a great beetle; that out of question he eateth on the bee which he eateth and catcheth among the flowers."

In the early 18th century books began to be published describing the natural history of various parts of the New World. Marc Catesby, an English traveller issued such a publication in 1754. Gilcrease has the two volume set — *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. Catesby has a full page illustration of the Rubythroat etched in copper and hand colored.

Gentlemen travellers, who considered the New World, both North and South America, to be a great invitation and challenge for adventure and exploration, were usually well educated scientifically or included in their entourage people who were, and every remote nook and cranny of the two continents was probed for the sake of adventure and for the discovery of new species.

The "stay-at-home" public in England and the continent was eager to share vicariously in these adventures. Hence the publication of handsome volumes of natural history became very popular.

In the Gilcrease collection is such a publication, the 25 volume *Monograph of the Trochilidae or Family of Hummingbirds* by John Gould. The set, complete and in excellent condition, contains 360 large handcolored lithographs.



Selasphorus Rufus.

Rufus Flame-Bearer.



Trochilus Colubris, Linn.

Ruby-Throated Humming-Bird.

John Gould (1804-1881), was the son of a gardener at Windsor Castle. He studied nature as he learned to garden and also became an expert taxidermist and artist. In 1827, he was employed by the newly formed Zoological Society of London. He produced his first folio of lithographs *A Century of Birds in the Himalayas* in 1830. His wife, Elizabeth Coxen, drew the stone plates from Gould's sketches. He could not find a publisher and as a result he published them himself. He was eventually very successful and amassed a large fortune. After his wife's death, his plates were drawn by H. C. Richter and W. Hart. In the course of his life he produced 41 folio volumes with 2,999 plates — an amazing accomplishment, and no small contribution to scientific knowledge.

The Hummingbird series was issued from 1849 to 1861. Each of the 360 handcolored plates has a descriptive text. Gould was a respected scientist of the day. He was a member of most of the scientific societies of England and the continent. He amassed a collection of 3,000 hummingbird skins which he exhibited in London in 1851. He also had access to the collections in museums and of other naturalists. In 1857 he came to America and saw his first live hummingbird, the only eastern species, the Rubythroat. He related that he captured one, keeping it with him continually for several weeks and feeding it sugar water from a bottle he kept in his pocket.

It is inevitable that some comparison be made of Gould's work with Audubon's *Birds of America* which was printed in England from 1827-1839, about ten years before Gould began his hummingbirds. Audubon's etchings were much larger. They were made by the more expensive method of copper engraving from watercolor drawings made by Audubon. Of course, they too, were hand colored after printing. The enormous pages were needed by Audubon to render each bird life size — even the herons and large hawks. The original *Birds of America* has no accompanying text. Later, when Audubon published his smaller octavo edition he also issued *Ornithological Biographies*.

Both artists took great pains with the hand coloring of the plates. However, with 300 to 500 copies of each plate and hundreds of different plates (for Gould 360 and for Audubon 455), the coloring



Augastes Lumachellus.
Hooded Vioz-Bearer.

process, was of necessity, done by many people. Havell, Audubon's engraver, supervised 50 women in the task of hand coloring the plates. Both men insisted on paints of excellent quality. Both also experimented to produce an iridescent effect for the hummingbirds. Audubon sprinkled gold powder. Gould discussed his efforts but he did not release his formula.

Audubon prided himself on his extensive field work. Most of the birds he depicted he saw wild and alive. While he no doubt made quick field sketches, his compositions were carefully made later using stuffed birds. In fact, Audubon often gave lessons in his "method" which consisted in shaping the bird to the desired pose by the use of wire and fastenings.

Many of Gould's hummingbirds are also in exaggerated positions to show off the detail of plumage and for artistic effect. Audubon shows only four species of hummingbird, of which one is not now recognized as being in the United States.

The two men are interesting contrasts in character traits. Gould, true to his British middle class background was conservative, industrious and a successful business man. He was a careful and respected scientist — "of the armchair variety." The only real field work he did was in Australia in 1840. *The Birds of Australia* which was produced during the same years as the Hummingbird monograph added much to scientific knowledge. It gathered together the information then available from all sources.

Audubon, on the other hand, continually struggled for scientific recognition. He was proud of his field experience, but kept getting himself into



Lesbia Gouldi. Bogota Train-Bearer.

controversies over some of his statements which he felt he had to defend to the bitter end. He was self-taught and defensive about his scientific knowledge. His colorful appearance and flamboyant personality made him a sought after guest in English drawing rooms, but he remained a frontiersman and vagabond. So his moods fluctuated between delight in his notoriety and the depression of homesickness for the woods of his home.

It is not known that Gould and Audubon ever met but they were well aware of each other. Audubon and Havell, his engraver, envied Gould's success. Gould quoted Audubon in his text for the Rubythroat, saying that others write better than he did. He disagreed with Audubon's correct report that the Rubythroat fastens its nest to the branch with saliva. This was one of several field observations made by Audubon and disputed by European naturalists. Gould stated that only two species of hummingbird are found in "North America" (meaning North of Mexico). Audubon presented four, one of which is now considered a species of the West Indies. Gould said he expected more varieties to be discovered in the future. The United States now is known to have 14 species that nest within its borders. All of them retire to Mexico or Central America for the winter.

Gould spoke of the 2,000 mile journey that some of these tiny birds take each spring and fall. He said Alexander Wilson thought the Rubythroat "may make part of the journey over water." Gould could not accept this. However, it is now well known that Eastern Rubythroats do fly non-stop at least 500 miles over the Gulf of Mexico. They have been seen by boatmen, flying purposefully, a few feet above the

water and they are observed each September coming across the beaches by the hundreds near Rockport, Texas.

The brilliantly iridescent head and throat feathers of hummingbirds have always been a source of delight and wonder. Each species has its special form — some have crests, others have beards, others have elongated tail feathers, and some have bloomers.

Gould told of the study to find the cause of this quality of the plumage and that the feathers had been examined under a microscope to find that the minute parts of each feather are placed so as to reflect colors when the light strikes at the right angle. He added that further knowledge "must await greater magnification." In the mid-20th century the feathers were studied under an electron microscope: The iridescent colors of a hummingbird are structural (like a prism or a drop of oily water) and they do not have pigmentation. For the iridescence to show the bird must receive direct lighting from behind the observer. When the bird turns its head ever so slightly, the colors appear and disappear instantaneously.

Each species of hummingbird has its own elaborate and often spectacular courtship flight pattern. By these exercises the male displays himself and establishes the mating bond with the female. Gould quoted a number of naturalists who described these amazing flight patterns. However, the significance of the behavior was never recognized. The observer saw and heard the male but never noticed the tiny female modestly perched close to the ground in the shelter of some shrub.

In the century since Gould issued his beautiful monograph, some of his hummingbirds are no longer



Lophornis Regulus, Gould.

Great-Crested Coquette.

recognized as separate species and 60 additional varieties have been discovered — making a known total today of 319 species.

The wholesale shooting of birds has now stopped. In 1860, thousands of hummingbird skins, not to mention those of other exotic tropical specimens, were shipped to Europe for scientific collections and for ornaments of the dress and drawing room. The study of birds has shifted from an analysis of their bones and the contents of their stomachs to the time-consuming observation of the life habits in the natural setting.

Modern color-printing techniques make the reproduction of bird paintings a much less laborious process. Color film and the modern camera have also provided a most effective method of recording bird life. Fine volumes of bird portraits remain popular with the public today. 🐦



One of the most impressive parts of Gilcrease Museum is seldom seen by the visitor. In fact, it is not even known to exist by the majority of visitors.

The vast extent of the Gilcrease collection is visually overwhelming as soon as one steps inside the door of the storage area. Thomas Gilcrease



"Long Nose God" ear gorget (ear ornament) above is of the Illinois Mississippian Period, circa 700 years old.

The beauty and craftsmanship of the Indians is highlighted in the hard soled "Plains" moccasins, right, which are decorated with beads or quills.



The Falcon effigy platform pipe is of the Illinois Woodland Period, circa 2,000 years old.



really began seriously collecting artifacts in the 1940's and 1950's and amassed quite a collection.

Today there are over 40,000 objects in the artifact collection. Several well-known items are in the collection, including an Ohio dovetail projectile point of some 8,000 years of age known as the Sears spear; a Hopewell platform effigy pipe in the shape of a falcon which is about 2,000 years old; and a pair of shell "long-nosed god" gorgets from Illinois which are approximately 700 years old.

Actually the Gilcrease artifact collection is comprised of two categories, the archaeological collection, and the ethnological collection.

But, what is an artifact? What is included in an artifact collection? How does one define artifact?

The definitions of the term "artifact" as a "product of human endeavor" or as an "object of art" are too broad to be useful in a museum. According to the first definition, the Gilcrease Museum's artifact collection would include all the ball point pens, typewriters, desk calendars, and the building that



houses them as well as the oil paintings, watercolors, etchings, prints and documents. All of these are "artifacts" but for convenience are not called such.

A definition of "artifact" as "art"; in common usage, eliminates many tools and implements, despite the use of esthetic skills in their manufacture.

A more useful definition of "artifact" in a museum such as Gilcrease is "a tool or ornament" of archaeological or historical interest. This definition of the term by no means implies that many of the tools and objects of adornment are not art. Many such objects are art of a noble order: from a beaver effigy platform pipe of 3,000 years age, to a pair of moccasins made last year by a Cheyenne girl for her brother.

Thus defined the Gilcrease artifact collections — which are primarily American Indian — can be further divided into two categories. The archaeological collection refers to those objects which have been dug from the ground; or collected

on the surface of the ground after having been exposed, lost, or abandoned. In the Gilcrease collection these archaeological objects are predominantly pre-historic, and the identity of the individuals, tribes, or other groups who made them is not ordinarily known. Archaeological gleanings from historical sites can frequently be attributed to a group or tribe and often include items of European manufacture. There is some of this material in the Gilcrease collection.

The ethnological collection consists of items, rarely dug up, but, more often, purchased or given to the museum or otherwise collected or passed down from the individual who made them. Generally speaking there is a high percentage of perishable items in an ethnological collection. Stone, bone, shell, antler, ceramics, and occasionally, wood, copper and basketry are the usual archaeological items. Tanned, and rawhide, trade beads, trade cloth, feathers, thread or sinew, basketry and pottery are the more common constituents of an ethnological collection.

Wood and copper can be included so long as they are not produced as "art" in which case they would be assigned to the separate art collection. Introduced materials frequently found in ethnological collections are trade beads, trade cloth, silver, sequins, copper, thread, dyes, and paints, and objects or decorative items of iron.

The artifacts are stored in the lower level of the museum in an area especially constructed for such items. Dust is kept to a minimum and the temperature and humidity are controlled. The area is protected from fire by a system which would cause little, if any, damage if it were ever required to be used.

Let's take a quick trip, through the storage areas where those artifacts (not on display) are stored. The collections at Gilcrease are vast. Comments from researchers and visitors to this storage facility have ranged from "I feel like a kid in a candy store", to "Let's leave, it's too much, I can't absorb anymore."

The first view as you enter the storage area, is of an 1874 newspaper press used by the Cherokees until



about 1905 to publish *The Cherokee Advocate*. This tribal newspaper was printed both in English and the Cherokee Syllabary which was devised by a tribesman named Sequoyha in the 1820's. Beyond the press and to the left, are religious carnival masks from Mexico. To the right are rawhide containers, called parfleches from the Plains, beaver traps, a bear trap, baskets from the eastern and western reaches of the continent and Alaska. In the boxes are hundreds-of-years-old stone implements from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri.

The next aisle holds African material collected by the artist William R. Leigh. It includes a heavy hide shield, matting, clothing, beads, and gourd "milk bottles." There are also bows and arrows from the east and west of America, dolls and miniatures from Alaska to Arizona and a sort of "catch-all" assortment, from an Egyptian scarab to a little hand-crank player organ and other pioneer materials.

A long row of drawers, with southwestern rugs and blankets stored overhead, houses clothing from

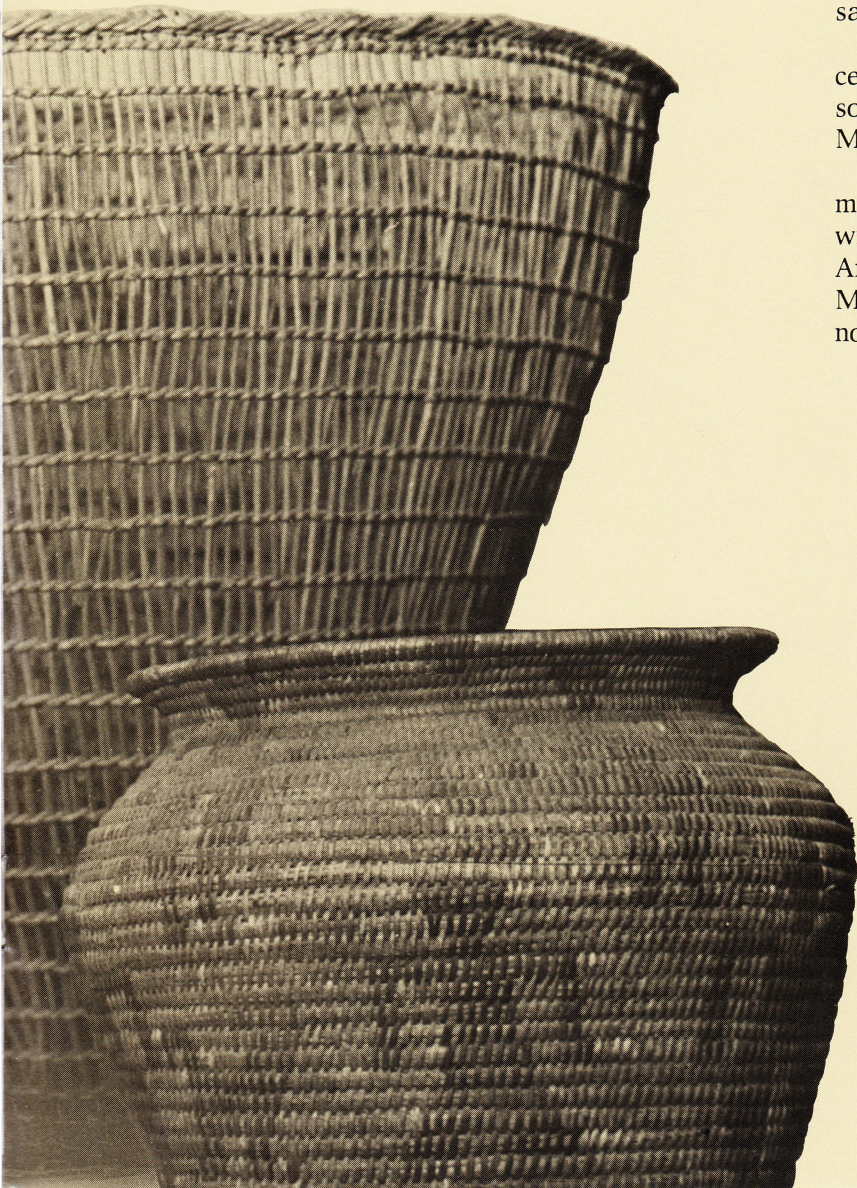
the Plains, Prairie, and southwestern regions and from such exotic places as the Caribbean and the Philippines. There are also Philippine basketry, Plains horse trappings and rifle scabbards, Peyote fans, beaded belts and painted hides, Northwest Coast baskets, otter hide bags, a small collection from the 101 Ranch and William R. Leigh's field equipment.

Glass cases hold clothing from the Plains, Plateau, and the northeast, sashes, blanket strips, and beaded "bandoliers" from the Great Lakes region. This is a good place to notice the use by Indians of all "native" material: tanned hide and porcupine quills; and a mixture of native and trade materials such as tanned hide and trade beads.

In the "shoe store" and rug storage areas are more indications of the adaptation of European materials in native manufacture. This shows in the beaded moccasins and boots and the Navajo wool blankets and rugs which are of sheep wool but may be woven of wool dyed with native dyes or purchased commercial dyes. There are also Mexican blankets and serapes, woven items from Chimayo in New Mexico, Chilkat blankets from the Northwest Coast as well as moccasins and boots, beaded and quilled pipe and tobacco pouches and Eskimo boots made of salmon skin.

In the archaeological collection are hundreds of ceramic specimens from Arkansas, with a few from southwestern Missouri, — mostly from the Mississippian Period of circa A. D. 600 to 1600.

The archaeological pottery of the Southwest is mostly from the Keyenta area of northern Arizona with some pieces from the Hohokam of southern Arizona and Mimbres from southwestern New Mexico. There is Casas Grandes pottery from northern Mexico, a few pieces from Mesa Verde and



An extensive number of historic period Indian baskets, left, is a vital part of the Gilcrease collection.



Exceptional design elements make up this urn of the Aztec area of Mexico, circa 500 years old.



The engraved conch shell, above, is from the Spiro, Oklahoma-Mississippian Period, circa 700 years old.

Chaco Canyon, and some pre-historic pottery from the Hopi area.

The highest percentage of the large Mesoamerican collection consists of ceramic vessels and figurines from the areas of Colima and Nayarit in Mexico. There are also many from Chupícuaro and Michoacan and a few from the Mayan area; Aztec, Toltec, Oaxaca and other areas and time periods in Mexico. There is a significant collection of Coclé from Panama, a few pieces of stone sculpture and pottery from Costa Rica, jade from southern Mexico and elaborate carved stone specimens from Vera Cruz, Guerrero, and Teotihuacán. This is one of the largest collections of Mesoamerican artifacts in the world.

Specimens from the Bank's Village and Cherry Valley sites in Arkansas were excavated by former Gilcrease Staff Archaeologist Gregory Perino. Temporarily stored in this aisle are the table and chest of drawers which belonged to Lewis Ross and were brought to Oklahoma following the "Trail of Tears" in the 1840's.

There is enough which is not shown or mentioned here to fill a few books. Not shown, or mentioned, are the war bonnets, the Bird-stones, the Banner stones, the Boat-stones, the modern southwestern pottery, the Catlinite pipes and tomahawks and the collection of Spiro Mound material and the Eskimo collection, the list is almost endless. 🏠



The "Sears Spear," above, is of the Ohio Archaic Period, circa 8,000 years old.

BERT PHILLIPS

and His Letters to Thomas Gilcrease

By Jeanne Snodgrass King

"He must become an architect! To be an artist is not a proper career."

That was the tone of the discussions which often came from the farm home of William and Elizabeth Phillips outside Hudson, New York, in 1884. They were deeply concerned that their son, Bert, might choose the undesirable career of an artist since he had displayed talent in drawing even before he could write. Mr. Phillips made a strong effort to channel the boy's interests in a direction which would result in his becoming an architect, but young Bert G. Phillips was totally against an architectural career. He and his father eventually struck a bargain — he would go — in that year 1884 at the age of 16, to New York and undertake to study "beauty."

Bert Phillips studied at the National Academy of Design and at the Art Student's League in New York City for five years and graduated in 1889. Winning the Academy's prestigious Bronze Medal in Life Class the same year, he was armed with confidence in his ability to establish a painting studio in that city for the next five years. Then unrest and a desire for more study took him to England and Paris. In Paris he studied at the Academie Julian and met many leading artists. It was during this period that he met Joseph Henry Sharp and Ernest L. Blumenschein. Sharp eagerly told them of the "magic of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the infinite beauty of the desert, and the people living in the vicinity of the Spanish villages and the Pueblo of Taos, New Mexico." His enthusiasm made them realize the area was an inspiring, untapped source for creative artists.

After returning to New York, Phillips and "Blumy" shared a studio — and a dream. They dreamed of going "out west" to paint people and mountains there. Finally at Denver, after years of planning, in May, 1898, their dream became a reality. They purchased horses and a wagon and filled the wagon with supplies and set a southward course for Mexico.

It is a well known fact that at 30 years of age, Phillips chose to go no further than Taos, New Mexico — it could be said he had very little choice in the matter at the time, since he was broke and the wagon would certainly never make the trip to Mexico. But there were other reasons he remained: he found the region just as inspiring as Sharp had indicated; he had not only grown fond of the Indian people, but, the Spanish people, too; and the following year he fell in love and married Rose Martin, a Pennsylvania girl who had gone to Taos to visit her brother.

In the northern New Mexico atmosphere, Phillips and other artists who sought to develop their own technique of expression through painting and printmaking, had unknowingly established by 1900 what was being referred to elsewhere as the Taos School. Phillips and Blumenschein then co-founded, in 1914, the Taos Society of Artists for the purpose of generating good art and making it available for exhibition anywhere and everywhere. By 1927, the Society was no longer needed and it was dissolved. But the truly fine artists remained there and others continued to arrive and experience a love affair on canvas with the area and its people.

Today the art created by Phillips, and other members of the Society, is in major collections, world wide. It has been said that Phillips never tired of showing collectors (and other interested visitors), through his studio and talking about his work. One such person was Thomas Gilcrease. Mr. Gilcrease enjoyed his close friendship with the early Taos artists and often asked them to write the "story" associated with paintings he purchased from them. After memorizing the stories, Gilcrease relayed them to visitors in his museum. On September 12, 1945, Mr. Phillips sent the following letter to Mr. Gilcrease, concerning his painting *Taos Deer Hunter*:

Dear Mr. Gilcrease,

A few years ago in company with two Taos Indians, just before Christmas, I went into the mountains (a spur of the Sangre de Cristo Range) with the intention of painting a deer hunting scene. The painting was purchased from me recently by Mr. Thomas Gilcrease. We left Taos, N. M. early in the morning with our supplies in a lumber-box wagon drawn by two horses and drove up the Hondo Canyon about 20 miles, until stopped by the depth of the snow, then leaving the harness and wagon, we packed the horses and continued the journey across the divide (about 10,000 feet in altitude) into the headwaters of the Red River in the Kit Carson National Forest.

We arrived at the cabin of a miner whom I knew, where we stopped for about a week. The cabin contained two rooms, so to prevent over-crowding I



"Taos Deer Hunter," oil by Bert Phillips, above, was the subject of correspondence between the artist and Thomas Gilcrease.

suggested to the Indians that they could sleep in one of the rooms that contained no heat, as I knew that they slept in open camps while hunting on such trips. They immediately registered a protest for, of course, it was more comfortable to sleep in the room warmed during the day by the miner's cook-stove; because of the justice of their objection, and the fact that the thermometer registered 14 degrees below zero, we consented to the bringing of their camp-beds into the room with us. In spite of the cold nights it became warm enough about noon to work out-of-doors.

On the second day (afternoon) my miner friend, Joe Cannard, who was hunting alone, returned with the good news that he had shot a deer having a good winter coat which I desired and which the poor luck of the Indians had failed to produce up to that time. It was nearly dark by the time the miner and I brought the deer to the cabin, the Indians also arrived from an unsuccessful hunt at the same time.

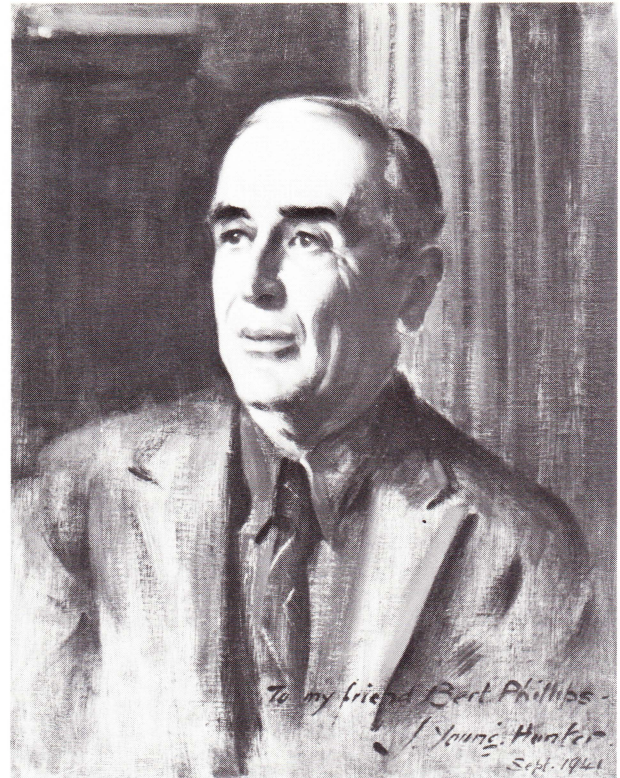
It was getting very cold so I asked them to bring the deer in as I did not want it to freeze stiff enough to prevent my being able to arrange it in poses to sketch for my picture. They brought it in and placed it on the floor near to my place at the table, I could have reached down and touched it, its head being between the Indian on my left and me while the other Pueblo man was on my right. During the meal I happened to glance to the left and caught an eye-sign from one to the other, a sign that made me guess what was up. I kept guessing until bed-time when one of them said "Mr. Phillips, or rather Tzu-bahtu-nah, as they had named me, many years before on my arrival among them – we will sleep in the other room to-night" – then it dawned on me – "Ah! I thought, this is not a sacred deer, no ceremony has been performed upon it, it would be dangerous to their hunting success, for this trip or perhaps for a year, maybe forever." Well! I was in no hurry then to finish with Mr. Deer, the Indians gladly slept in a cool room until we finished the picture business and returned to Taos where the finishing touches were added.

Sincerely,
Bert G. Phillips

During the winter of 1950-'51, Phillips took his ill wife to the warmer climate of southern California. It was there that he received a letter from Mr. Gilcrease in which he outlined his wish to acquire a self-portrait of each famous, early-day Taos artist. The following, written two years before Mrs. Phillips died and five years before Phillips himself died, is Phillips' answer of February 26, 1951:

Dear Mr. Gilcrease,

Your letter of February 19, forwarded to me from Taos, received this morning.



Portrait of the artist Bert Phillips painted in 1941 by John Young-Hunter.

On our return to Taos about April first I shall take great pleasure in presenting you with my portrait painted by the famous painter of portraits, Mr. John Young-Hunter in 1941.

Since Rembrandt, the greatest of all time, in my opinion, did not do any too well on the one of himself and since most of the painters since his time are not or have not, painted any better, I am inclined to believe that you will be willing to accept this offer, realizing that "it don't pay to look a gift horse in the face."

We are getting anxious to return home, since we left Taos, October 15 for benefit of Mrs. Phillips health which, I am thankful to say is much improved.

Mrs. Phillips joins me in all good wishes for you and yours.

Sincerely,
Bert G. Phillips

Although Phillips felt he should not paint his own portrait, he never failed to capture the true image and spirit of the Taos people. He painted them night and day — in all kinds of settings and lights — in their Arabian looking J.C. Penney sheet blankets and in their ceremonial clothing; among the pines and snow, as well as in the midst of brilliant gold and yellow aspens — wherever they were they accepted him and permitted him to portray them in his own individualistic and graphic style. 🏔️

BOOK REVIEWS

By Mildred D. Ladner

Every admirer of the folklore of the Old West should own "*Paper Talk*" *Charlie Russell's American West*, (Ridge Press/Knopf, \$17.95) a book beautifully written by Brian W. Dippie and published in association with the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art.

Dr. Dippie, who teaches at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, has researched the story behind dozens of the delightfully illustrated letters and cards written by Russell to a host of friends. In a pleasing format — he places a comprehensible reprint with each reproduced letter — Dippie interprets letters and greetings and provides meaty background information on the persons to whom they are addressed and the circumstances of their relationships with the cowboy artist. Interspersed are a number of Russell paintings from the Carter collection.

Gilcrease visitors are familiar with the Young Boy letter and envelope on permanent display in the Russell gallery. Dippie explains that Young Boy, brother of a Cree chief, frequently hit up Charlie for a loan. Russell's kindness would be repaid with Indian artifacts such as the shield shown in the letter. Charlie's last letter, addressed to Dr. Philip G. Cole and a prized possession in the Gilcrease collection, is among the last entries in "*Paper Talk*."

Richard Erdoes' *Saloons of the Old West* (Alfred A. Knopf, \$13.95) is an attractive, spritely book, but its research appears to be superficial.

A Vienna-born artist and photographer with four previous books about the Indians of the American West to his credit, Erdoes introduces his subject with a chapter on the role of taverns in Colonial history. He treats saloons topically — what they served, how their patrons viewed "wimmin," entertainment offerings. The book is entertaining and profusely illustrated. Four of O. C. Seltzer's *Western Characters* from the Gilcrease collection are included (Barkeep, Circuit Rider, Pioneer Mother, Dance Hall Girl) along with Cary's "Strong Cup."

One finds it hard to understand how Erdoes could have missed Seltzer's depiction of "The Faro Layout in the Mint Saloon" or overlooked any textual reference to the

Mint, the Silver Dollar and similar watering places made famous by Russell, Seltzer and other artists who crossed Montana. Erdoes' Old West seems to have been centered in Colorado.

The serious student of Indian ways will welcome M. Gidley's *With One Sky Above Us*, a pictorial record of "Life on an Indian Reservation at the Turn of the Century" (G. P. Putnam's Sons, \$14.95).

Gidley, chairman of American and Commonwealth Arts at the University of Exeter, uncovered dozens of photographic studies of the Nez Perce taken at the turn of the century on the Colville Reservation in Washington by Dr. Edward H. Latham, an Indian Agency physician and amateur photographer.

Gidley authenticated the photographs from letters in government files. His explanatory text provides a unique record of a period when the traditional cultures of Native Americans were threatened with extinction.

The book takes its title from an 1879 statement by Chief Joseph:

"Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other, than we shall have no more wars. We shall be all alike — brothers of one father and mother, with one sky above us and one country around us, and one government for all."

From the University of Oklahoma Press

comes a valuable anthology, *American Indian Literature*, edited by Professor Alan R. Velie and illustrated by Cherokee artist Danny Timmons, who also teaches at the University. (\$15.95 hardback; \$6.95 paper).

The book is divided into tales, songs, memoirs, oratory, poetry and fiction. Included are such classics as the Delaware epic *Walam Olum* and Red Jacket's famous reply to Missionary Cram as well as contemporary works by N. Scott Momaday, James Welch and Lance Henson.

The O. U. Press also has released a new printing of *The Grizzly Bear* edited by Bessie Doak Haynes and Edgar Haynes (\$6.95). This is the fourth printing of a 1966 anthology of writings about the fierce grizzly, updated with new material.

Another offering of note is *Birds of the Great Plains* by Paul A. Johnsgard (University of Nebraska Press, \$25) professor of zoology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and author of eight previous books on wildlife.

For the young scholar, two books have been issued by David McKay: *American Indian Clothes — and How to Make Them* by Alex Whitney (\$7.95) and *American Indian Utensils — Make Your Own Basketry, Woodenware and Pottery with Natural Materials* by Evelyn Wolfson (\$8.95). Each could provide endless hours of creative entertainment for youngsters old enough to read. 



Illustration from "*Paper Talk*: Charlie Russell's *American West*."



One of the early photographs by Edward Latham from "*With One Sky Above Us*."

Doel Reed, internationally known for his aquatints, chats with Anne Roden, curator of art, and Fred Myers, director of Gilcrease Museum, at the recent opening of Reed's one-man show at Gilcrease.



PEOPLE & PERSONALITIES



Mrs. Leah Rabin, wife of the former premier of Israel, admires a piece of sculpture during a recent tour of the museum.

This creative little creature was a part of the annual Tulsa schools' art competition and exhibit at Gilcrease. The exhibit featured work in all media.



Author and scholar Germaine Greer talks about women painters during a television filming session in the Gilcrease library.



The Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Olujimi Jolaoso, toured Gilcrease during a recent visit to Tulsa. Guiding him through the Remington exhibition are, left to right: Michael Starr, museum education coordinator; Richard Soudriette, aide to the Tulsa mayor; Fred Myers, Gilcrease director; Mr. Jolaoso; and Mayor James M. Inhofe.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Fred Myers

I have been doing some ruminating about who visits Gilcrease Museum and how often. It is part of my job to evaluate such things, and, while it might not be at the top of the agenda for you, I thought you might be interested in some recent attendance information.

First of all, the trend of our attendance in the last year and a half is up, not dramatically up and not nearly as high as it ought to be, but nevertheless up.

Second, did you have any idea that the typical visitor at Gilcrease is from outside the Tulsa metropolitan area and is visiting Gilcrease for the first time? As a matter of fact, on weekdays the great majority of our visitors are first timers while on weekends about half are. I must confess that I had no idea this was true until I saw the results of a little, informal survey that we ran during late October and early November.

My interest in finding out such information was piqued by conversation I had this fall with administrators of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, where practically every visitor is a one-time-only visitor. Considering the small population of Cody and the town's proximity to Yellowstone Park, I guess this statistic should not be surprising.

While Tulsa isn't Cody and vice versa and while our survey needs to be done again at each season of the year before any reasonable conclusions can be drawn, ruminating on such information leads a director's mind down some startling by-ways.

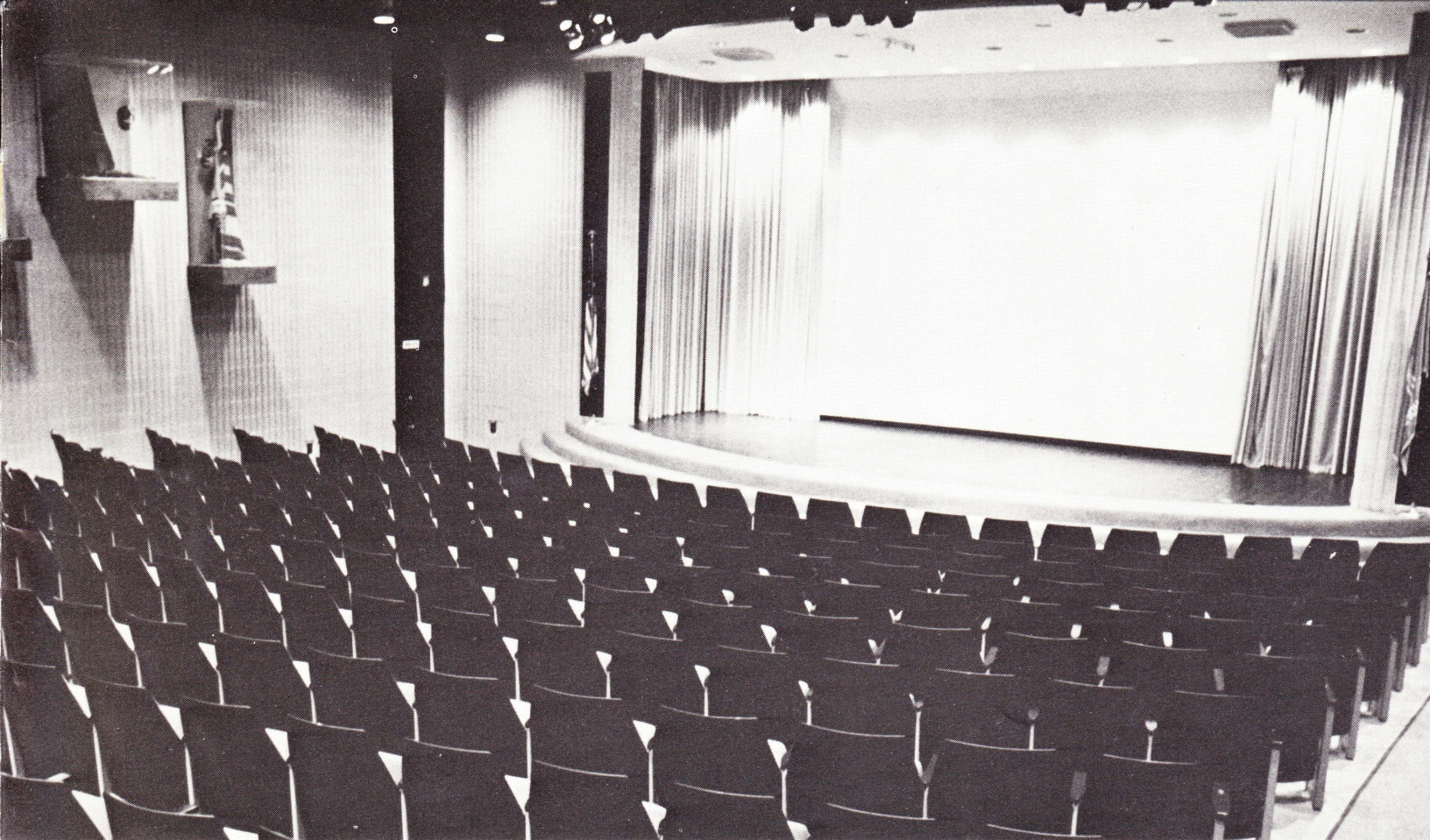
If you are willing to continue this exercise in mutual speculation, did you know that some rooms at Gilcrease Museum are available for use by groups on a first-come first-served basis? Available are the auditorium, the Special Events Gallery (the big room with the huge oak tree outside the window), and occasionally other spaces if needed. Although there are modest usage fees keyed to recovering the cost of personnel overtime and utility charges, bookings of the meeting spaces increase all of the time.

From a director's point of view such use of the museum is a wonderful opportunity for people to learn a lot about the Gilcrease collection more or less by osmosis, and to have a warm feeling about the place all at the same time. Sometimes the friendship struck up between the collection and the group-meeting-visitor quite naturally leads to good things for the collection and its renown.

I know that only directors need to speculate about such things, but don't you find it interesting that among the groups that have met at Gilcrease Museum recently have been the Associated Press Managing Editors national convention, the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, the Mid-America Arts Alliance museum administrators, the City of Tulsa Capital Improvement "Summit Conference," and the Oklahoma Humanities Council? I find this line-up of users very interesting, and, following the example of Mary, I am pondering these things in my heart.

As the People and Personalities pages in this





Full facilities, including stage and audio/visual equipment, are offered at Gilcrease's auditorium, shown upper right. The auditorium seats 248. At lower right is the special events gallery, a large room suitable for receptions, meetings, exhibits, and featuring an outstanding view of the "Gilcrease oak" tree and the distant Osage Hills.



magazine illustrate, among the first time visitors at Gilcrease are quite a number of bona fide celebrities. Showing such people around the collection is usually fun and often stimulating, celebrities leading the kinds of wide-ranging lives that they do.

I will run the risk of sounding like Rona Barrett for a moment to tell you that Leah Rabin, wife of Yitzhak Rabin, former premier of Israel (the one who ordered the raid on the Entebbe airport), was fascinating to listen to as she speculated on how our Gilcrease Americana fits into what was going on contemporaneously in the Old World, and that Henry Kissinger (not as short but just a brilliant as you thought) was so fascinated by Plains Indian

warfare that he asked Education Coordinator Mike Starr what book he would recommend on the subject. Dr. Kissinger also asked if he could be furnished a copy of the text of a speech by Red Jacket that we have on display in the galleries.

May I directorially suggest that you, too, take advantage of Dr. Kissinger's observation, not by asking for a photostat of the speech but by looking it up the next time you visit Gilcrease. As a clue to its location in the galleries I will tell you that the speech was recorded by George Catlin on the back of one of his paintings.

I will wager that you will agree with me. Henry is right; it is a remarkable document of man's history. 🍷

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