

THE GILCREASE

MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART



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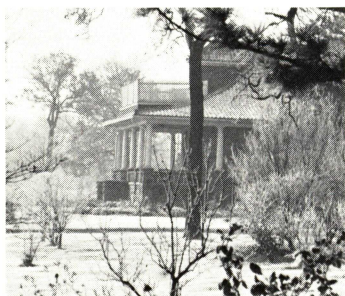
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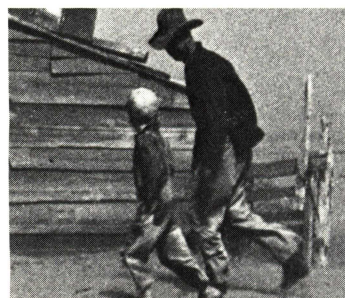
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Front Cover — Cunka Wakan Dance by Oscar Howe (1962) 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches, casein. Collection: United States Department of the Interior, Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Washington, D. C.

Back Cover — Roundup Boss by Olaf Wieghorst, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, oil. Collection: Mr. and Mrs. R. Parker

Upcoming Events

November 20 - January 30

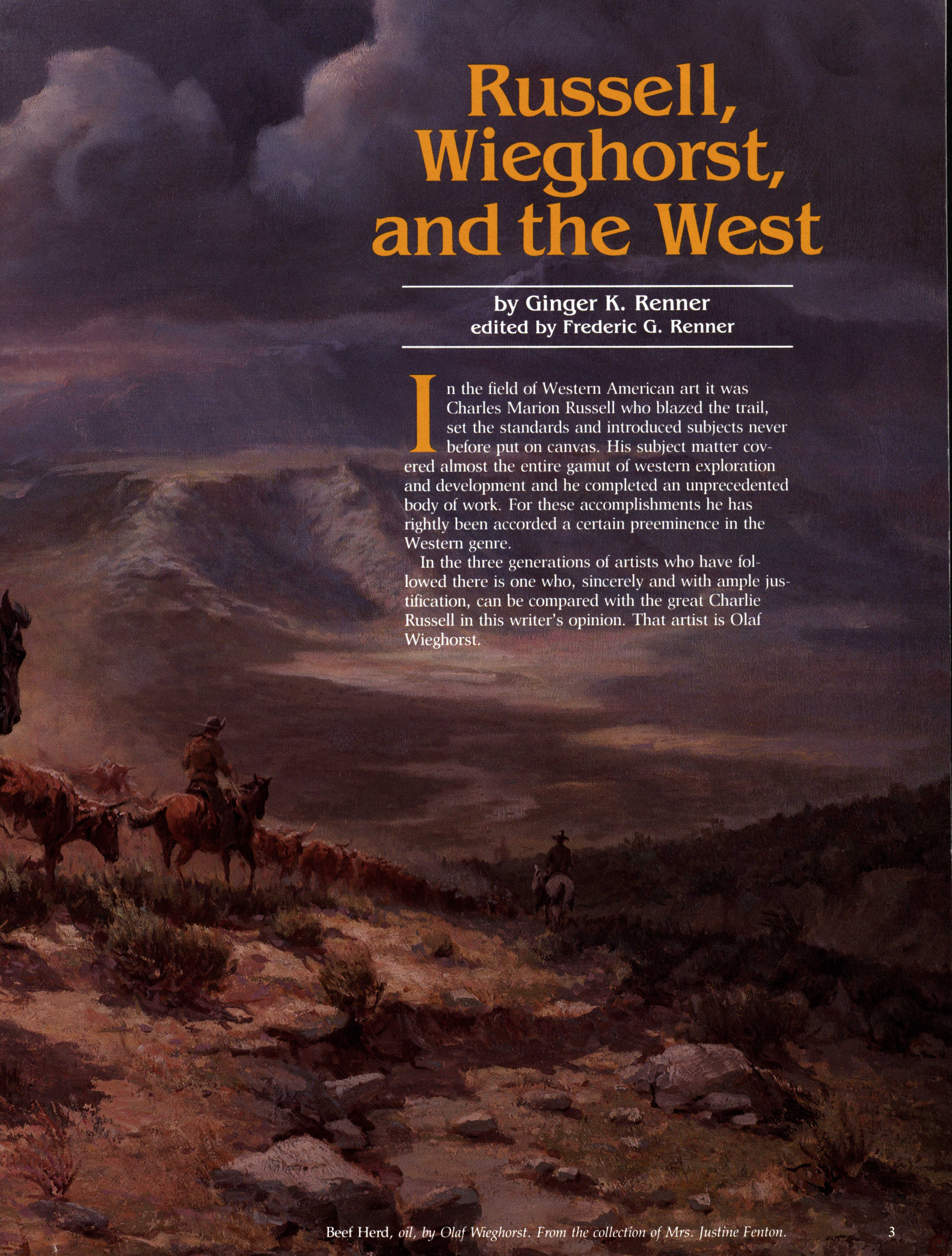
“OLAF WIEGHORST, DEAN OF WESTERN PAINTERS” a retrospective exhibition. Gena Gilcrease Gallery. Paintings and sculpture by one of America's foremost cowboy painters — some works for sale.

January 23 - February 26

WICHITA MEMORIES

Gallery 14. Photographs and artifacts representing the Wichita tribe, organized by the Stovall Museum and the University of Oklahoma.





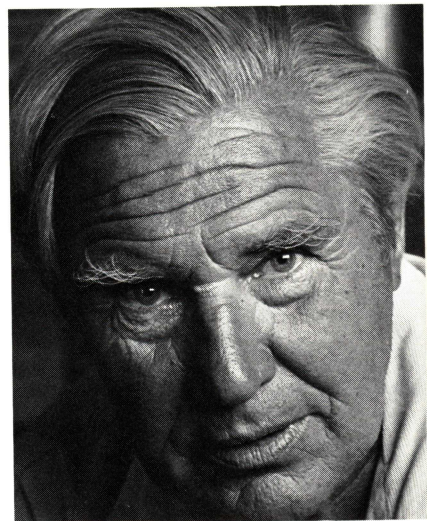
Russell, Wieghorst, and the West

by Ginger K. Renner
edited by Frederic G. Renner

In the field of Western American art it was Charles Marion Russell who blazed the trail, set the standards and introduced subjects never before put on canvas. His subject matter covered almost the entire gamut of western exploration and development and he completed an unprecedented body of work. For these accomplishments he has rightly been accorded a certain preeminence in the Western genre.

In the three generations of artists who have followed there is one who, sincerely and with ample justification, can be compared with the great Charlie Russell in this writer's opinion. That artist is Olaf Wieghorst.

Wieghorst. . .



Olaf Wieghorst



Rocky Mountain Trail, oil, Olaf Wieghorst. From the collection of Dr. and Mrs. John Murphy.



Meat's Not Meat Till It's In the Pan, oil, by C. M. Russell. From the collection of the Thomas Gilcrease Museum.

This comparison does not come about because they both painted horses and cowboys or that they emphasized a quiet dignity in their portraits of Indians. Nor can it be justified because both men loved the drama, excitement and romance of the development of the West and sought to preserve it through their art. While an analogy can be drawn in these specifics, they are by no means unique to these two artists. Most of the artists of the Western art scene have done the same.

Between Charlie and Olaf there are some remarkable parallels. Both had dreams of the West from boyhood. Charlie, from St. Louis, the gateway to the West, longed to experience the life of a cowboy. A third of the way around the world Olaf, in a small city in Denmark, had that same dream. Both of them from earliest childhood sketched on every scrap of paper they could find, some of which weren't meant to be drawing pads. Neither man had the usual number of years of schooling expected for boys of their time and eventually they became consummate artists without the benefit of academic training. However, both learned

by looking — by the concentrated study of the techniques of master artists.

Considering how many bears and buffalo Charlie painted some might question the assessment that his favorite animal was the horse. But it was true and there is little doubt that noble animal has always been first in Olaf's heart. With the exception of his portraits there are few paintings he has done that have not included a horse.

Moreover, both men drew upon their personal experiences for the subject of their art work. Russell had eleven years following the beef herds, working mostly as a night wrangler, living the life he had dreamed of as a lad. Olaf served three years in the cavalry along the Mexican border at a time and in a place where many aspects of pioneer life were still evident. He followed that by working as an all-around cowboy in an isolated area of southwestern New Mexico. They both knew long hours in the saddle, dusty trails, bitter cold, loneliness, cantankerous cows and skittish horses.

When it came to their art work, both were dedi-

Wieghorst. . .

cated to painting the West as it *really* was, as they had seen it and known it. Charlie said of his art, "[I] paint things as I see them in nature . . . [an artist] should paint things as they *are* . . . his pictures should be true." And of his own work Olaf has said, "I figure a man can't be too careful researching authentic detail in a Western painting . . . I base all my canvases on personal experience, observation and careful research."

Early in their careers both men tended to emphasize violent action in their art. Wildly bucking horses, stampedes, inter-tribal warfare or surging buffalo hunts are reoccurring themes in Russell's earlier works. Olaf found his young inspirations in the ex-

ploding action of the rodeo, cowboys toppling off spooky horses, careening stagecoaches or full-feathered Indians, lances raised, charging in a head-on attack. Maturity brought a more contemplative mood to both artists and many of their master works are infused with a great stillness.

Charlie and Olaf created prodigious bodies of diversified art, both working in oils, watercolors, pen and ink, and bronze. Charlie also produced a great number of charming creations that could only be classified as "found art", utilizing bark, moss, twigs, horse hair, and red flannel. Olaf's oeuvre includes a splendid group of etchings, an art form Russell never attempted.



Cutting Horse, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst. From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Eiteljorg.



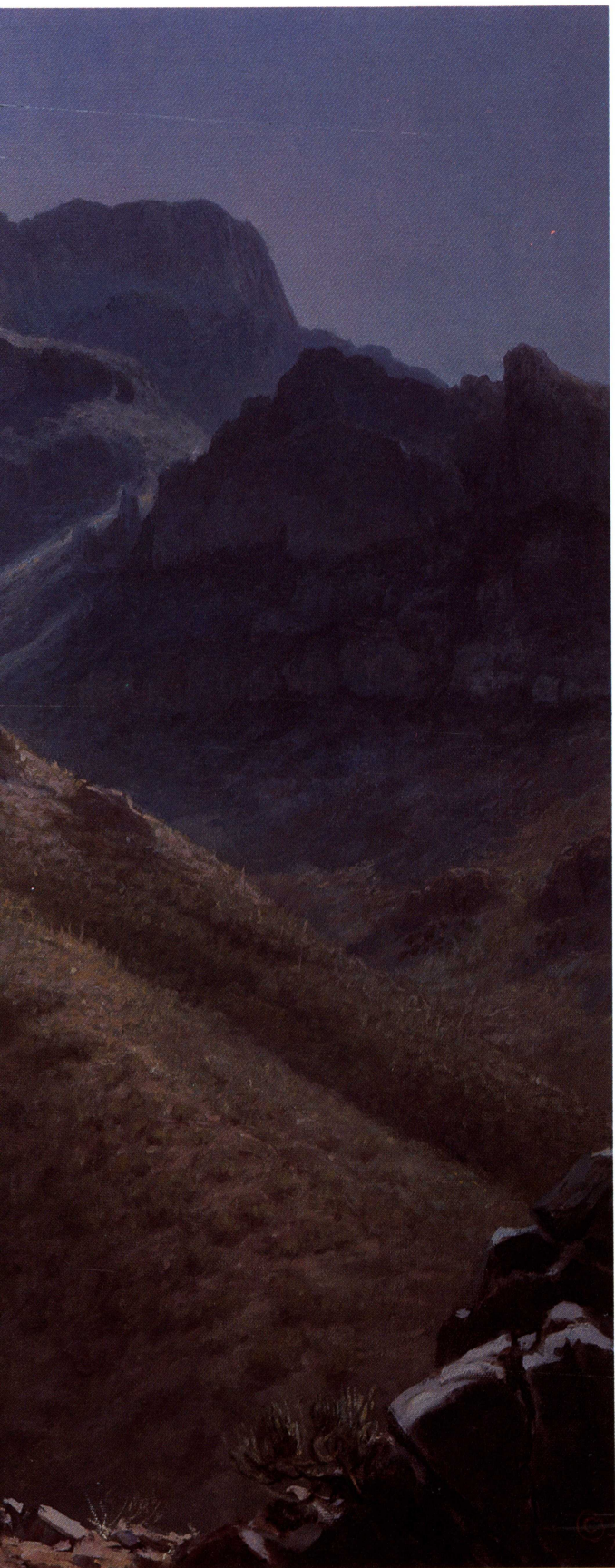
*Superstition Trail, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst.
From the collection of
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Trumbel.*

*Big Bend Patrol, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst.
From the collection of Master John K.
Goodman, II.*





Partners, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst. From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Wieghorst.



Spring Rain, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst. From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Fales.

Wieghorst. . .

Compulsion to create — or perhaps the joyful participation in an activity they loved — marked the lives of these two remarkable artists. Russell was known for sketching and modeling incessantly, almost as a habit, and these bits and pieces often were handed over to friends who expressed admiration for them. Olaf is known throughout the Western art world as a “telephone doodler”, but unlike most people who, while phoning, will make “bird’s nests” or interlocking squares, Olaf carries on a conversation while whipping off delightful sketches of Indian heads, horses in profile and other vignettes of Western themes. Innumerable examples of his generosity can be found, lovingly framed, in homes and galleries he visited.

The worth of art should not be predicated on the personality of its creator but the charm and charisma of these two artists have contributed significantly to their own legends. Both have been widely eulogized for their wit and humor, for their wonderful story-telling ability, and their friends and admirers are legion.

Of far greater significance than all the analogies in their personal lives and talents is an element which

Wieghorst. . .

the two artists brought to their finest works of art, an element which set those works on an elevated plane and which seldom has been duplicated or surpassed by others in the field of Western American art. This is the superb quality of the landscapes they have created in which they place their thematic material.

Both men have painted numerous canvases in which the horse and rider (or a group) have been subordinated to the magnificence of the landscape that surrounds them. The profound love these men have had for the vast lands of the western United States is manifest in many paintings. Both have known the endless sweeps of prairies rising up to shining mountains. They came to maturity in big sky country where nature's elements are a viable, even palpable, force with which to be reckoned daily.

Unlike their predecessors of the eastern seaboard who brought landscape painting to a position; hereto-

fore never achieved, these men did not equate the vastness of the wilderness or the magnificence of the Rocky Mountains with a sublime experience. Their concern has been with the temporal, rather than the more spiritual aspects of the American scene painters. It was with a much more secular eye they viewed the western frontier. Bierstadt exalted the land, placed it "out-of-reach" of man's understanding and minimized man's place in that vastness to a mere dot. Russell's and Wieghorst's man is an active *part* of the land. He has been pitted against nature and he is a survivor. This somewhat-less-than-transcendental view of the splendor of the West does not minimize these artist's appreciation of their own particular world. They have both celebrated its beauty and its awesome space in their works.

It is time critics, historians and museum people give recognition to the art form known as Western Ameri-





Watering the Remuda, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst. From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. William Casper.

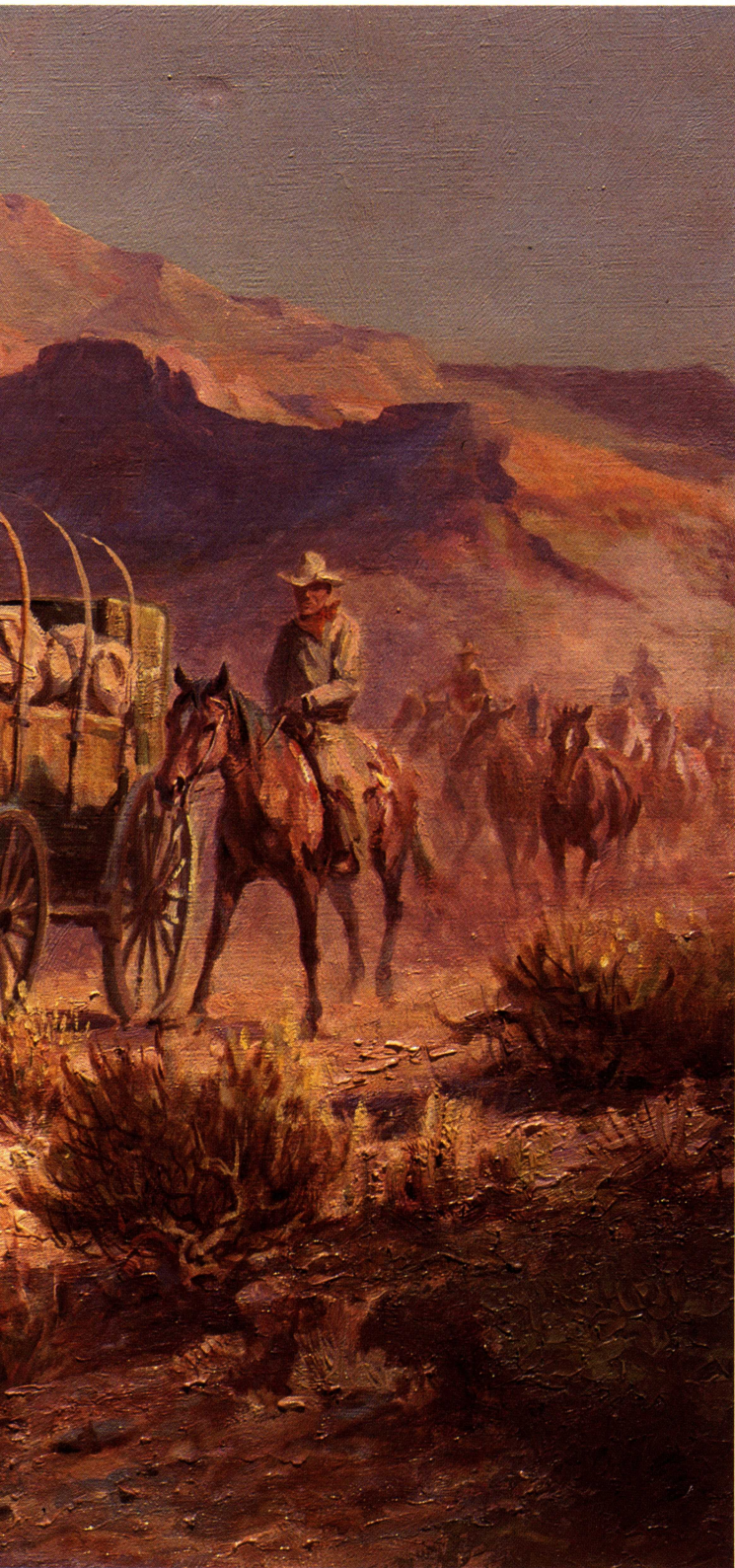
New Mexico Ranchero, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst. From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Adams.

can. They have recently embraced “Realism” but apparently only to the extent its viewpoints are reflected through studies of half-naked young women, urban sprawl, or freeway kitsch. The art of the American West is a specialized, if perhaps derivative, form which achieves its uniqueness from its subject matter — thematic material which can be found nowhere else in the world and which has a continuing appeal for a great many viewers. Heir to the same goals set by the Hudson River School, American Scene painters, Regionalists and Native artists, the creator who works in the field of Western American art is carrying on an established tradition. It is one which places the same artistic demands on him as those which were accepted

by Cole, Gifford, Bierstadt, Bingham and many others.

It is past time for national, not just regional, acceptance of the art form when one considers the diversity as well as the quality of the large body of work Olaf Wieghorst has produced throughout his career. He has preserved historical events of great interest and pride to Westerners as well as created quiet moments of everyday life and work. His canvases have included those brilliantly awash in the hot sun of the southwest, mysterious and serene in moonlight or compellingly “wet” by torrents of seasonal rain. Olaf has arrested at the moment of greatest tension great clashes of action — stampeding cattle, wildly twisting broncs and run-away teams of horses. With sensitivity





Chuck Wagon, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst.
From the collection of Mr. and Mrs.
William Schofield.

Vaquero, oil, by Olaf Wieghorst.
From the collection of
Mr. Olaf Wieghorst.

Wieghorst. . .

he has drawn haunting portraits of Indians, investing dignity and wisdom in his subjects. Early in his professional career he did a series of paintings depicting wild game hunting, that possess tension, excitement and suspense. His techniques, always personal, vary widely with the demands of the media. His pen and inks are crisp and clean; his watercolors are fluid and spontaneous and his oils are orchestrations, rich in controlled and muted hues.

In this, his 83rd year, Olaf Wieghorst still paints regularly. He still loves horses and goes on a trailride annually. His accent can "still be cut with a knife" and his rich, full voice carries more than a hint of a chuckle. He still embraces each day with his life-long enthusiasm. He has received honors and awards from kings and commoners alike. He has justifiably been called the "Master of Western Art" and the "Patriarch of Cowboy Painters." Perhaps, best of all, we might just call him the *The Great Dane!* 🐕

Ginger and Frederic Renner are both professional writers and experts on the art of Charles Russell. They reside in Phoenix Arizona.



NOW AVAILABLE



WIEGHORST LIMITED EDITION PRINTS

A Limited Edition offset lithograph in color of the painting *Opening of the Cherokee Strip* by Olaf Wieghorst is available for sale in the Gilcrease Museum Gift Shop. Each print is \$150 and is signed in pencil by the artist. The original oil painting will be for sale during the Olaf Wieghorst exhibit from November 20 through January 30, 1983.

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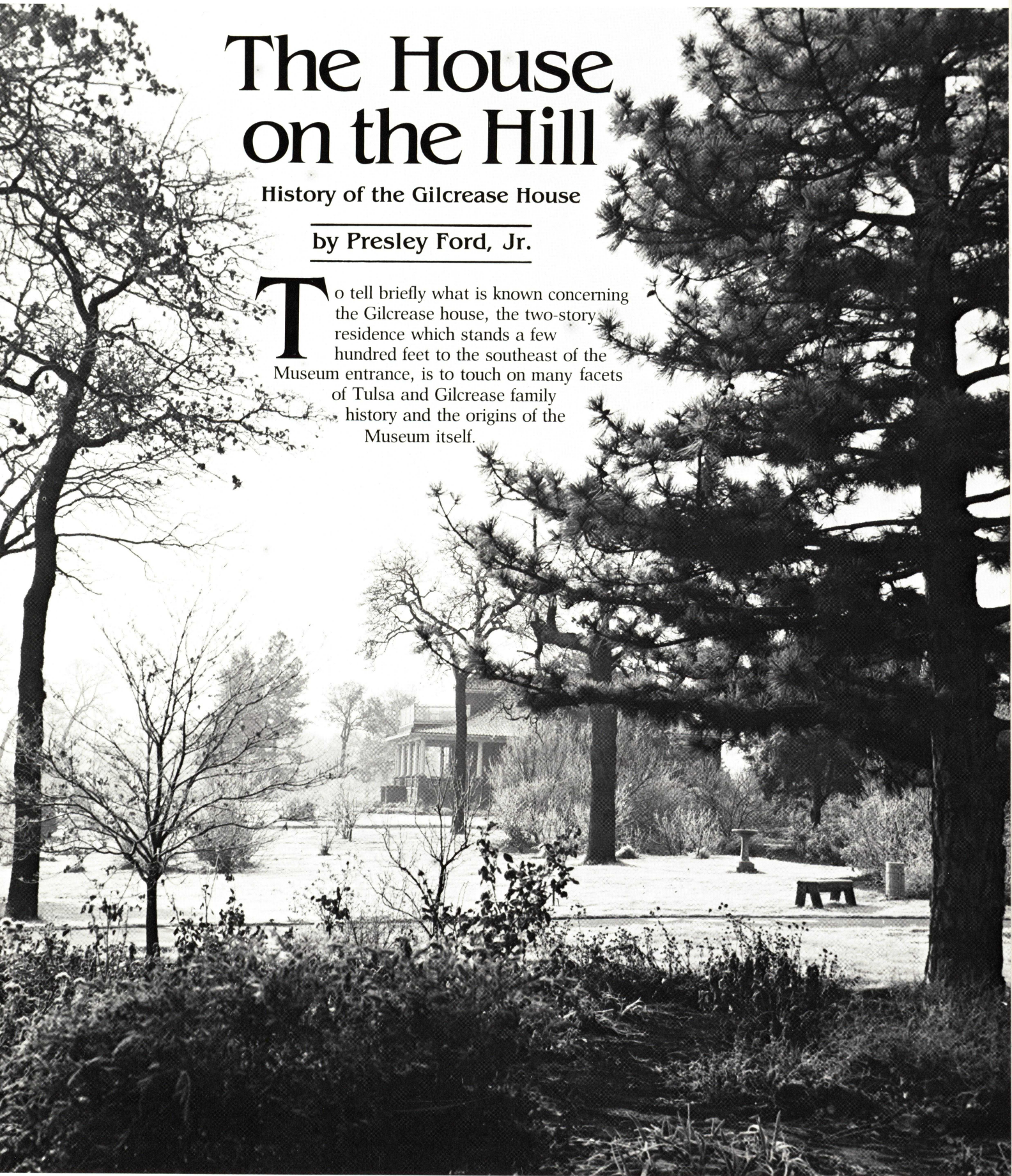


The House on the Hill

History of the Gilcrease House

by Presley Ford, Jr.

To tell briefly what is known concerning the Gilcrease house, the two-story residence which stands a few hundred feet to the southeast of the Museum entrance, is to touch on many facets of Tulsa and Gilcrease family history and the origins of the Museum itself.



An early view of the house shows the elaborate landscaping.

House. . .

THE LAND

The long view tells us that the hilltop on which the Gilcrease house stands was acquired by the United States in 1803 in the Louisiana Purchase. In 1835, as part of a vast territory called the Cherokee Outlet, it was ceded to the Cherokees. In 1866 the Outlet was separated from the Cherokee Nation to the east and made available for the resettlement of other tribes. In 1872 the hill was included in the land purchased by the Osages to permit their removal from a reservation in Kansas. Under an act passed in 1906 the lands were allotted to individual Osages; the land on which the Museum and house now stand was allotted to Grover Mackey. Three years later Grover and Pearl Mackey sold an eighty-acre tract to Flowers Nelson.

FLOWERS NELSON

Flowers Nelson, a Mississippian who had come to Tulsa in 1895, was a prominent attorney. He represented Tulsa and vicinity in the constitutional convention preceding statehood in 1907 and from 1907 to 1911 was a trustee of the University of Oklahoma.

The 1909 Tulsa directory showed that the Nelsons lived in the six hundred block of South Boulder. Theirs was one of the finest houses in the town. The 1911 to 1913 directories give their residence as northwest of the City. Evidently the family had moved to the Mackey tract. What was to be the Gilcrease house, however, did not exist at that time. Whether they lived in the small sandstone house which fronts on Newton or in some other house since removed is not known.

In June, 1911, Flowers' wife Birdie died. By early 1913 Flowers had remarried — a mortgage dated April, 1913, and the deed to Thomas Gilcrease dated December, 1913, were executed by Flowers and Carrie Nelson. After the sale, Flowers and his second wife returned to Mississippi to manage the family plantation.

THE BUILDERS

At the time Nelson sold the property to Thomas Gilcrease a sandstone house was under construction on the hilltop. It was completed in 1914. The construction was supervised by Charles W. Kern, who is listed in the directory as a carpenter living at 602 North Detroit (on Standpipe Hill). Kern had settled in Tulsa in 1894 after a visit to Oklahoma Territory to witness the opening of the Cherokee Strip the preceding year. Painting and decoration were by Hiram I. Tracy who lived on South Quaker.

Stone masonry was by Jacob Moran who had come to Tulsa in 1895 and later served as a city commissioner. He was assisted by his brother Peter Moran. Jacob lived with Peter and his wife at 202 North Maybelle. Stone was quarried on the hillside



behind the present Museum building. Evidence of this later quarrying activity is still visible.

THE GILCREASE PURCHASE

Thomas Gilcrease married Belle Harlow in 1908. Their sons, Tom, Jr. and Barton, were born in 1909 and 1911, respectively. Directories show that they lived at 823 South Cincinnati until 1914 when residence in Osage County is indicated.

Belle Harlow Gilcrease was one-eighth Osage. In the allotment of 1906 she had drawn a farm which was located a mile west of the Museum site on Harlow Creek. Here the Gilcrease family also maintained a residence. In 1913, Newton Street continued west — neither 25th nor 36th West Avenue were then open from Edison to Newton. Gilcrease biographer, David Milsten, recorded that Thomas noticed and admired the house under construction as he came and went from town. He purchased the property from Flowers Nelson a short time later.

THE BELLE HARLOW YEARS

When it was completed in 1914 the Gilcrease house had solid native sandstone walls, a wrap-around veranda with a sandstone balustrade and a porch roof supported by white wooden columns together with a porte cochere, a green metal pagoda roof with a railed balcony on the east slope, and a basement. It is believed that the interior was arranged as follows: on the ground floor an entry hall which led from the east



Thomas Gilcrease is shown standing on the porch of his home in 1958.



An interior view of the Gilcrease House in 1958 looking from the sitting room into the dining room, both on the north side of the house. The portrait above Mr. Gilcrease is of his daughter, Des Cygne, which now hangs in the Museum.

door past the stairwell to the kitchen at the rear and a narrow hall which led from the stairwell to the south door; on the north of the entry hall the library with the dining room behind it; three rooms to the

east of the north-south hall and two bedrooms and a bath behind it with two bedrooms and a bath upstairs.

In addition, there were at least two stone outbuildings. One was the barn, a U-shaped structure with the main barn running north-south and two carriage houses extending east. The family installed an electric plant in the north carriage house and used the south one as a garage where Mrs. Gilcrease parked her electric car. The second structure, it appears, had a chicken house on the ground floor and servants' quarters upstairs.

Tom, Jr. and Barton grew up in the house, except for periods when the family lived in San Diego or Long Beach, California.

Marital difficulties arose. Thomas and Belle were separated in 1922, were reconciled, and were divorced in 1926.

THE LIGON INTERLUDE

Thomas Gilcrease, in 1924, contracted to sell the property to W. O. Ligon, Jr. and Ada Blanche Ligon. Mr. Ligon was one of Oklahoma's first certified public accountants and founder of the firm which bore his name. Many years afterwards his firm was merged into Deloitte Haskins & Sells.

In 1928, Mr. Gilcrease repossessed the property in a compromise settlement with the Lignons in which he gave up a town property.

THE NORMA SMALLWOOD YEARS

Norma Des Cygne Smallwood, won a local beauty contest sponsored by *The Tulsa Tribune* and became Miss America of 1926. Two years later she and Thomas Gilcrease became husband and wife. In the following years their only child, Des Cygne L'Amour Gilcrease, was born. Their marriage ended in divorce in a case which began in 1933 and concluded in 1936.

During this marriage extensive changes were made in the Gilcrease house. The three rooms on the east side of the north-south hall were converted into a living room; the hall was removed and the rooms to the west converted into a master bedroom and bath. Upstairs cedar-lined closets were probably installed at this time. In addition, the south carriage house was redone as a studio.

THE ORPHANAGE

Gilcrease lived in San Antonio, Texas, from the mid-thirties until the mid-forties where he operated the Gilcrease Oil Company. In 1942, he deeded the property in "the Osage" to the Thomas Gilcrease Foundation and from 1943 until he returned to Tulsa it was used as an orphanage for Indian children. Burton and Lena Logan, the superintendents, lived downstairs in the house. Upstairs a bath and a sleeping room with an exterior stairway on the west side of the

House. . .

house were added to complete a girls dormitory. The boys lived on the second floor of the servants' quarters building north of the barn and the ground floor was used as an office.

THE MUSEUM YEARS

In 1941, Martin Wiesendanger was employed in San Antonio as the first director of the Museum. The collection was moved to Tulsa the following year. The first gallery was in the barn, the south carriage house held the library and the north one, drawings and prints. Mr. Wiesendanger's office was on the ground floor of the servants' quarters building.

Between 1945 and the formal public opening of the Museum in 1949 other native sandstone rooms were built using the walls of these existing buildings as a nucleus. Construction was done by a crew of Indian workmen supervised by Vernon Ellington. Among them were Bible and Legus Chalakee, Nick and Wiley Thornton, and Cephas Stout.

Today, when a Museum visitor enters the gallery which holds Hispanic and Revolutionary documents he stands within the walls of the old barn. The north carriage house is the orientation room, the south one, contains the cloak room and lavatories. The walls of the servants' quarters building form part of the library.

Unlike the outbuildings whose walls are permanently incorporated in the Museum building, the Gilcrease house is not assured of perpetuity.

From the time Mr. Gilcrease returned from Texas until his death in 1962, the house was his residence. The outside stairway at the rear was removed and the door and adjacent windows sealed off. Undoubtedly extensive refurbishing took place.

In 1963, the Thomas Gilcrease Foundation gave the house and land to the City of Tulsa. From about 1965 to 1970 it was occupied by Paul Rossi, then director of the Museum.

More recently it has served other purposes. For a time it housed a children's museum and later a geological exhibit. Changes have been made. The basement stairwell has been closed and paneling installed in certain downstairs rooms which covers the interior of certain windows. The balcony rail on the roof has come down and deteriorating sections of the veranda have become rock gardens.

Because the sizeable sums which would be required have not been available the old house which holds so much history has not been restored to more appropriate use. Sadly, its only present use is for storage.

It is an old house and it is a dilapidated mansion. It was, however, a beautiful home for a man who wished to be surrounded by the things he loved and admired. It was also home to children; a place to start a new and better life. It could be an historical landmark. 🏠

Presley Ford, Jr. is a retired C.P.A. and a member of the Gillies at Gilcrease.

HOUSE
CARR
HOUSE

THE LIBERATION OF INDIAN ART



Sioux Seed Player, by Oscar Howe (1974) 14¼ x 20 inches, casein. Collection: University Art Galleries, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

By Dr. Frederick J. Dockstader

The career of Oscar Howe, whose artistry is celebrated in the Retrospective Exhibition presented at the Gilcrease Museum, October 15 — November 30, 1982, is an illuminating instance of the “full circle” which so often occurs in art: one sees *objets d'art*, ideas, or concepts and innovations which appear and reappear with almost mystical repetition.

Just a quarter of a century ago Howe, then an active painter, but by no means the leading figure which he has since become, submitted a colorful work titled *Umine Wacipi* (loosely translated as representing “the beginning and ending, as does the “War and Peace Dance”) to the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, for inclusion in the 1958 Indian Art Annual. It was in a style which he had independently developed and which was clearly identified with his departure from more traditional work. It did not, however, comply with the then highly-regarded “Santa Fe Studio”

school of Indian painting which was the standard by which Native American easel art was judged. The result was that the jury, faithfully observing the institutional rules, rejected the painting as not reflecting the basic premises of the Philbrook Exhibition. It was termed “a fine painting, but not Indian art.”

The result of that rejection is a page in Indian art history. Howe was outraged — he was a full-blood Yanktonai Dakota; he had conceived, composed and painted the work himself; and the subject was purely Native-inspired, drawn from his own traditions — why was it not Indian art? The feeling that he and other younger painters were imprisoned within a cultural and artistic straitjacket imposed by others — and non-Indian at that — provoked him to write to the Curator of Indian Art (now the Registrar at Gilcrease Museum) in terms which have become a milestone statement in the maturing of Indian art. Perhaps no other event has been as dramatically influential to



Sioux Riders (c. 1936) 9 x 8 inches, gouache. The typical "Santa Fe School studio" style regarded as characteristic of Indian painting, 1920-1950. Collection: Dr. and Mrs. Frederick J. Dockstader

Howe. . .

Native American artists since the introduction of pencil and paper.*

It should be noted that this problem of interpretation or placement of Indian art had long been a controversy in the art world. Feelings of romantic nostalgia, pseudo-primitivity and the fascination of something new were complicated by undeniable elements of racism plus a certain distance from the Indian on the part of the larger art world itself. These were of course not limited just to Indian art, but also to all non-Western art forms as part of the "primitive art" debate then current. But they were above all a carry-over from the earlier decades when Indian curios were regarded as such, rather than the products of skilled, artistic hands, or as art — paintings sold for \$1 per figure; a clay vessel might bring the maker \$2.50 or \$5.00; and handwoven blankets were sold by the pound. If this seems to overemphasize a shameful period, it must not be forgotten; for not only was the Indian artist a victim of this selfish myopia, but the non-Indian patron was the loser as well. And certainly none who lived through the experience has

forgotten — it is brought vividly to mind whenever one sees those same objects eagerly sought after today, and at prices in the thousands of dollars.

The subsequent change of the rules of "eligibility" for the Philbrook Exhibition opened doors to all Indian artists — not at Philbrook alone, but throughout the museum and gallery world, since this was by far the most influential institutionally-sponsored event of its type. With the establishment of new rules at Philbrook, the Indian art world at large took a wholly new approach, with innovative composition, color, and subject matter; and has had as a result not only a freeing of design, composition and subject, but also of technical and political concern — even though in some instances the results are not always artistically successful.

Therefore, with the presentation of the Oscar Howe Retrospective this October, the results of that dramatic shift can clearly be seen in Tulsa, where it had its origin, in a sense. It seems fair to say that had such a change not occurred, Native American art would not have enjoyed the opportunity to develop the varied experiments and expressions which are everywhere evident today. Certainly there would still be a preponderance of the more stylized figural compositions so familiar in earlier years.

Oscar Howe's biography has been well-detailed in the *Catalogue Raisonné* of the Retrospective Exhibition; a brief summary will suffice for this essay. Born on the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota, May 11, 1915, he was the son of George T. Howe and Ella Fearless Bear, both Yanktonai Dakota. Oscar had an unhappy youth; afflicted by physical illness and a serious skin disease (apparently a form of acne) which was so disfiguring that his friends avoided him and he became a withdrawn recluse, happy only when he was doing what he most enjoyed: drawing. He had little encouragement until he was eventually enrolled in the Santa Fe Indian School in 1935. There he was one of the fortunate youngsters who became the pupils of Dorothy Dunn, the justly-famed founder of The Studio, and a champion of Indian art.

And she was a champion just when such support was most needed; it was during the years in which White efforts were concentrated on efforts to eradicate Indian cultural traditions in the firm conviction that such wholesale assimilation was the only way to "save the Indian," however ruthless the avenue, and regardless of the heartache. Needless to say, there was no place for art in the curriculum of the day, unless it reflected European ideals. She was on her own,

* The complete text of Howe's letter is printed in the Exhibition Catalogue.

and it is surprising that she was able to proceed with only minor obstruction, even if there was no support for her efforts.

With the patient guidance of Miss Dunn, Oscar slowly developed his skills and ideas, and in time found what was to him a style which seemed "right." While it did not entirely please his teacher, he still was able to continue his independent approach, which grew out of his use of traditional Sioux forms. This he terms "point-and-line" — working from point to point in establishing the composition, with accepted motifs, while introducing such visual qualities as the graceful sway and curve of the women's hair or buckskin garments. The straight line, as he points out, is a Sioux symbol for truth, while the curved line represents unity, movement, and the openness of the sky. These along with the triangle, circle and line which embodies the principle of *tahokmu*, the spider web, provide him with a full range of esthetic elements upon

which to base his work.

When World War II erupted, Oscar was called into the Army in 1942 and assigned to Germany, where he served for three and one half years, and in the process met his future bride, Heidi Hampel; but there was no time for art. Upon his release in 1945, he returned to the United States and resumed painting. In 1947 he was invited to enter the second Philbrook Indian Art Annual. His painting, *Dakota Duck Hunt*, won the Grand Award and enough prize money to enable him to send for Heidi, and the two were married. A year later, a daughter, Inge Dawn, was born. This painting is now in the Philbrook collection.

Following his Philbrook success, he plunged more fully into his art, teaching as artist-in-residence and Chairman of the Art Department at Dakota Wesleyan University from 1948-1953; and as Art Director of the Pierre Indian School from 1953-1957, during which time he also earned an MFA degree from the Univer-



Oscar Howe. Mazuha Hokshina (Trader Boy)

Woman and Wolves (1946) 14 x 13½ inches, gouache. A sketch for a mural. (Right panel). Collection: University Art Galleries, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

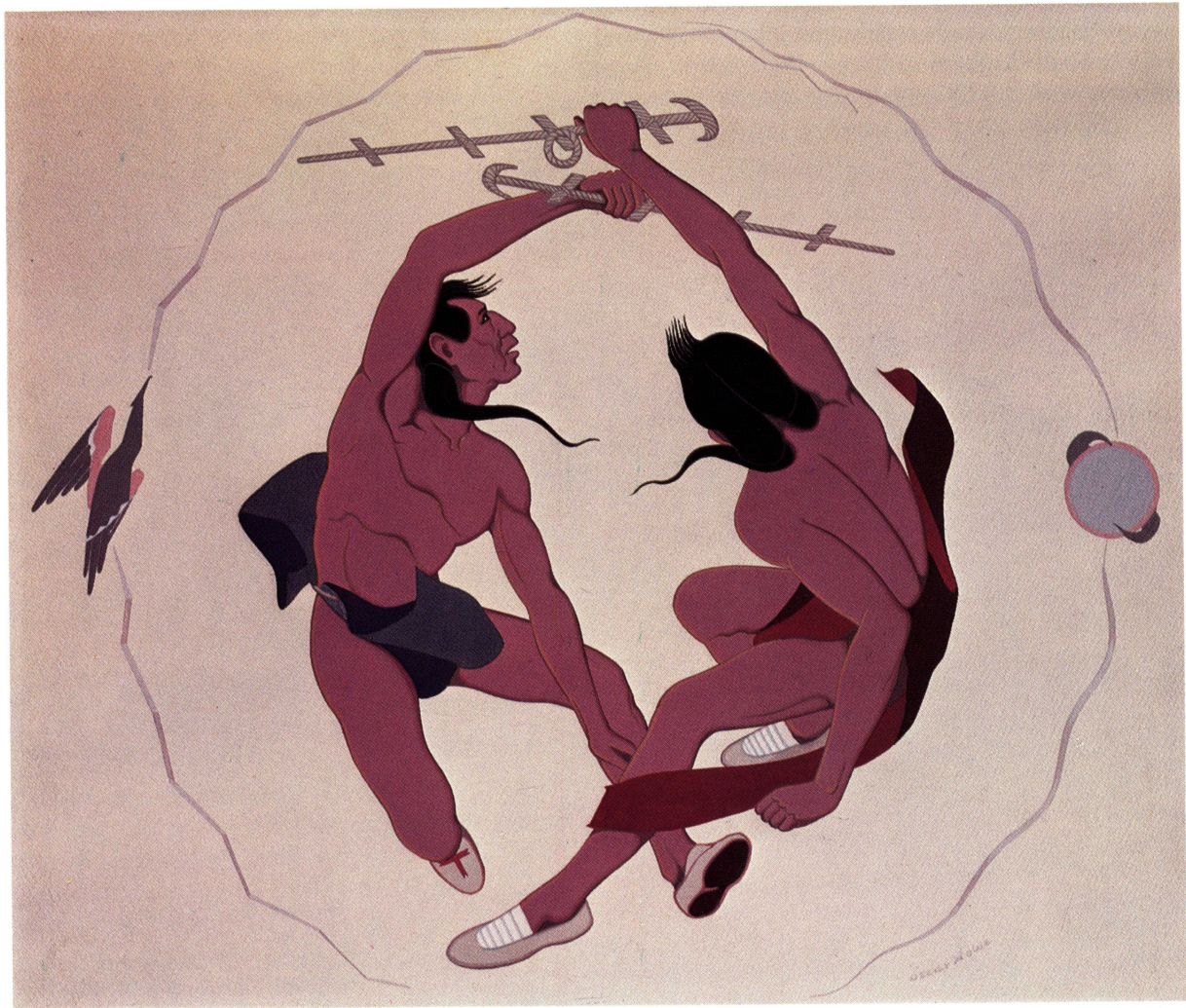
Howe. . .

sity of South Dakota. So, it was as a fairly well-established artist that he entered the Philbrook Annual in 1958 and one can readily understand why he was so furious at the rejection of his work — the “non-Indian art” label stuck on to his painting was far more obnoxious than any judgment of his esthetic abilities.

But it was with his appointment to the faculty of the University of South Dakota Art Department that he became permanently established. For the balance of his career he has been identified as art teacher, professor of Native American art, and an expressionist in his own right. He has entered many competitive shows and exhibitions, regularly winning major honors, and has successfully made his own contribution to the culture of his people. In so doing, he has established himself as a primary force in the new direction which Native American art was taking — and thereby strengthened the field for his students and younger

colleagues. As a teacher, Oscar gave fully of his time to his students, seeing to it that they gave their best; he opened doors to new careers, and by leading a group who would in time pass on their own beliefs and influence, extend his theories of art into the future.

However, upon achieving a mature style, he was astonished to find himself labelled a “Cubist,” and his compositions regarded as having originated with the Cubist School of the mid-1930s. These charges annoyed him, for he knew that not only did he not have exposure to the Cubist influences during his European tour of duty, but that wartime service allowed no spare time for gallery-hopping or museum visiting (most all were closed during the time, anyway); but even more, he clearly recognized the actual genesis of his style as wholly from within his own background. His own comments on this germination of art refer



Elk Game (1948) 18½ x 21¾ inches, gouache. An early circular composition. Collection: United States Department of the Interior. Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Washington, D.C.



Sioux Sun Dance (1956) 18 x 22½ inches, casein. The abstraction of figures, linear development of composition, and use of color can be readily sensed from this early work. Collection: United States Department of the Interior, Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Washington, D.C.

frequently in his writings to the basic traditions of his people; consideration for others; and his efforts to maintain the best of the old culture while enjoying new innovations freely; in short, to take the best of both worlds, and discard the less beneficial. It should not be overlooked also that in his abstractist works, he was simply drawing upon that strength of abstract form which has always been an age-old Plains trait. At first glance, Howe's work may be regarded purely as quasi-realistic, but examination in depth reveals elements which have themselves been conventionalized or abstracted from the more traditional Dakota elements.

Due in part to the geographic locality in which he

has lived, as well as to his own reticent nature, his work is not widely known; content to apply himself to the easel in relative privacy, he is not the more flamboyant, gregarious individual more familiar in art circles today — nor has he enjoyed the support and promotion of a major gallery, with the undeniable asset of a public relations service. These are indispensable in today's art world — and more particularly in the field of ethnic art, which still remains within the province of a small segment of art activity.

Tragedy struck several times in the life of Oscar Howe, and it is surprising that his early bout with skin ailment, a later heart attack at the height of his career, and more recently, the disabling effects of Par-



Buffalo Calf Woman (1967) 21 x 26¾ inches, casein. In this superb use of figure with fringing to form a strong circular composition, Howe demonstrates his mastery of dynamic motion. Collection: United States Department of the Interior, Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Washington, D.C.

Howe. . .

kinson's Disease, which now renders him totally unable to paint, have not made him bitter. These physical problems, combined with his tendency toward self-effacement have all combined to make him less well-known than would normally be the case and for this, we are all the losers.

In sum, the work of Oscar Howe shows such great strength and development, originality of expression, remarkable sense of innovation, coupled with fierce individualism, that his importance cannot be overstated. The influence which he has had upon those students who have worked with him is profound, al-

though this has not extended beyond a relatively limited region. Among collectors, connoisseurs and art historians, his place is secure, and his work is eagerly sought after. Today he enjoys a major position among the leading exponents of Native American art; it is not amiss to place him among the five foremost Indian painters today — a position which his colleagues heartily endorse. His own people know him as *Mazuha Hokshina*, Trader Boy; one might feel that he has perhaps traded material wealth and fashionable glamor for greater personal dignity, honor, and contentment at being his own man. 🏞️

Dr. Frederick J. Dockstader is one of America's foremost authorities on Native American art. He is the former director of the Museum of the American Indian; he is a lecturer, consultant and appraiser specializing in Indian art of the Americas; he has authored numerous articles and major volumes on Indian art and was editor of the Oscar Howe Retrospective Exhibition's *Catalogue Raisonné*.

THE HOWE RETROSPECTIVE

The Howe Retrospective was conceived and developed by Professor John A. Day, Director of the University Art Galleries, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, and Margaret Quintal, Director of the Oscar Howe Art Center, Mitchell, South Dakota.

Funds for the exhibition were provided by the South Dakota Committee on the Humanities through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the South Dakota Arts Council; the Affiliated State Arts Agencies of the Upper Midwest, through funds from the National Endowment for the Arts; and the Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association. In addition more than 200 individuals, companies and students at the Oscar Howe Elementary School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, made contributions.

Before its showing at Gilcrease, the exhibition was shown in South Dakota at: University of South Dakota; Oscar Howe Art Center; South Dakota Memorial Art Center. On December 15th it will open at The Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, where it will remain until February, 1983.

A *Catalogue Raisonné* is available through the Gilcrease Gift Shop for \$15.00. Also available are a select number of offset lithographs (in color) of Howe's work and a poster which announces the exhibition at Gilcrease Museum.



Rider (1968) 17½ x 26 inches, casein. The maturity of his *tahokmu* principle is basic to this abstract landscape with horse and rider. Collection: University Art Galleries, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

DUST BOWL DAYS

By Ernest F. Darling

The Dust Bowl has gone down in history as our worst ecological blunder, but geologists assure us that it was not all mankind's fault. In their language it was only a common occurrence over the last 50,000,000 years. The scientists also claim there have been innumerable dust storm cycles, and many vastly worse than the latest. This seems more convincing when they point out the rich, black deposits of loess in Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois and say it is the result of a recent duster of 10,000,000 years ago.

When the first white men appeared on the southern Great Plains in 1541-42 their journals left the impression of more plentiful vegetation than at any recorded time. Instead of finding gold and similar riches, Coronado's chronicler writes disappointingly of "such monotonous, waving oceans of grass." We know the expedition used between 2,000 and 3,000 horses, cattle, and sheep for transportation and food supply, yet nowhere do we find any complaints of a food shortage. The party covered territory in eastern New Mexico, northern Texas, western Oklahoma, and Kansas — the heart of the future Dust Bowl.

After the Civil War when stories of great and easy wealth in cattle abounded, huge companies were promoted in the eastern United States and Britain to speculate in the beef business. Soon enormous herds appeared on the open range without a plan for pasturing it wisely. By the end of the nineteenth century over-grazing caused pasture land to become so thin that ten acres per cow were required where one or two had been sufficient. In the process of proliferat-

PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTHUR ROTHSTEIN, COURTESY AMON CARTER MUSEUM



"Farmer and Sons Walking in the Face of a Dust Storm" (1936).



Dust Bowl. . .

ing cattle many of the best native grasses completely disappeared.

New land developments before World War I furthered the setting of the stage for what the prominent Kansas editor, William Allen White, called the "greatest show since Pompeii was buried in ashes." A revised homestead law now allowed a settler 320 acres of land, doubling the earlier size. And the increased demand for wheat caused by the war called for a speeded up use of the land. Large scale production moved in. One "wheat tycoon" employed fifty tractors on a 23,000 acre enterprise.

During the 1920s, the wheat crops continued to pay off. The weather conditions were normal, yet erosion by wind and rain had begun. Years of over grazing and now the cultivation of the top soil left the surface without the grass and its matted roots, which had held it together for ages.

In 1930, there was a general drought over the eastern half of the United States. The next year the dryness centered on Montana and the Dakotas, and a year later it moved to the Southern Plains. That area carried the title "Dust Bowl" for the next ten years. The federal government officially proclaimed the stricken areas as Western Oklahoma, Western Kansas, Southeastern Colorado, Northeastern New Mexico, and the Texas Panhandle.

Cimarron County, Oklahoma was designated the center of the Dust Bowl. Many photographers and journalists won fame for their reports of this county. In the 1920s, Cimarron County's wheat production averaged a fair fifteen bushels per acre. For the 1930s, the average was less than one bushel, and in 1937 not one head of grain was harvested in the county.

Both farmers and cattlemen were aware of the cycles of drought (on the Plains it was always 'drouth') that occurred more or less regularly, but no one was prepared for this one. The dust storms didn't happen just in the spring, they could arise any windy day throughout the year. They actually became commonplace in the Dust Bowl and surrounding counties.

The first big blow came in November, 1933. It carried huge clouds of western soil as far as the Appalachians. Then in May, 1934, came the biggest — in only three days an estimated 350 million tons of earth were scattered over the eastern United States and on ships 300 miles at sea.

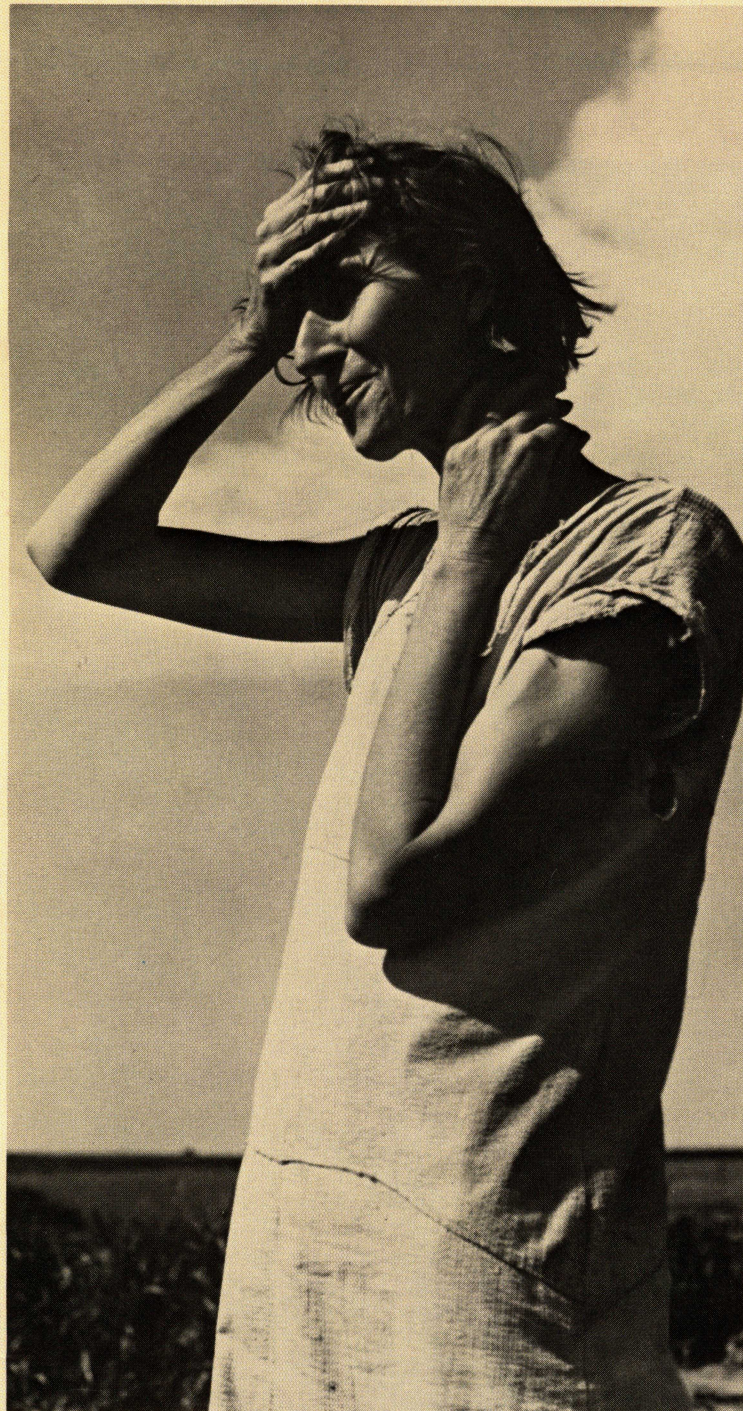
The blackest year was 1935. One duster after another would fan out from Colorado and Wyoming over Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. On April 14, with six weeks of storms, came the grand finale of the spring. It was dubbed "Black Sunday."

The day started clear, beautiful, and summery. People were at church, gardening, or visiting neighbors. By mid-afternoon the temperature fell fifty degrees, birds began chattering excitedly, and cattle started running in circles. Within a few minutes a black fog appeared along the north-western Kansas horizon rapidly approaching. By evening the tumbling dust cloud had reached the Oklahoma Panhandle and raced on into Texas that night.

Motorists caught on the road pulled off and parked, or

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOROTHEA LANGE, COURTESY AMON CARTER MUSEUM





PHOTOGRAPH BY DOROTHEA LANGE, COURTESY AMON CARTER MUSEUM

Above, "Woman of the High Plains — If you die, you're dead — that's all." Texas Panhandle (1938).

Upper left, "Drought Years." Texas Panhandle (1938).

Left, "The Trail Boss" by Will James illustrates how thousands of head of cattle were relocated because pastureland in the Dust Bowl became inadequate.

drove up to farm houses seeking protection from the blinding and suffocating particles. Animals ran from the encroaching onslaught until exhausted or could find a hiding place.

Newsweek Magazine, March 30, 1935 stated: "The storm carried away from the plains twice as much earth as was removed to build the Panama Canal."

To label the dust a household annoyance would be a sheer understatement. It seeped through the tiniest cracks. Homes, hospitals, schools, and businesses tried vainly to keep the dust out with tape, felt strips, and oily rags, only to find the pestering grit in food, in bed, and clogging keyholes. Cleaning up after a duster became routine. Brooms and shovels were required in some localities for clearing porches, yards, and streets. In farmlands drifts of dirt and tumbleweeds mounted to the fence tops, allowing animals to stray at will, and in more than one instance trains were delayed on account of similar deposits.

The peak year for the storms was 1937. That year the Soil Conservation Service noted seventy-two cases where visibility was cut to less than a mile, which still left plenty of dust blowing. The dust storms gradually subsided until 1941 with the return of the first appreciable rains.

Not only was there land erosion, but there was human erosion. Few direct casualties were attributable to the storms, but the increase in tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases proliferated and a national publication estimated 4500 deaths by 1936 were attributed to respiratory ailments. The dust clouds were made up of sand — sand grains of all sizes. The farther the wind transported this swirling, grinding mass, the closer the grains came to pulverized silica, which health officials pronounced "as poison as lead." One poignant statistic was that of a seven-year-old Kansas boy who wandered into the night during a storm and was found later suffocated in a drift.

Another facet of human erosion included those who left the blighted area in search of a better existence. Many joined the nation-wide upheaval brought on by the Great Depression, which overlapped and added immensely to the Dust Bowl's problems. These migrations seem to be the enduring image of the 'dirty thirties.'

In all probability Oklahoma received more than its share of bad publicity. According to California records, destitute Oklahomans outnumbered those of any other state, and the opprobrium "Okie" was applied to all migrant arrivals who poured in from Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Oregon. Although there was basic truth in the works of novelists, artists, reporters, and photographers, much was done for dramatic effect, which resulted in the creation of many misconceptions and misunderstandings.

To quote the earth scientists again, "The ultimate meaning of the Dust Bowl was that America as a whole, not just the plains, was badly out of balance with its natural environment." 🌾

Earnest F. Darling is a retired Tulsa history teacher, freelance writer, and a survivor of the Dust Bowl.

GLIMPSES of GILCREASE

GOLD

Gold is up again at Gilcrease. Not the price — a display of 84 pieces of gold from the permanent collection has been reinstalled in the Gena Gilcrease Gallery. The items on view are decorative ornaments fashioned by ancient American craftsmen into shapes of animals, birds and beasts of fantasy. All were made by Indian workmen living in Panama, Mexico, Peru and Columbia before Columbus arrived in the New World.

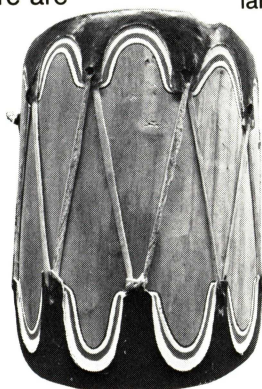
Columbus himself expressed astonishment about the gold earrings, pendants and bracelets worn by the Indians he first encountered in the New World. This craft was widely distributed through Central America. Some of the light weight objects were simply hammered into thin shapes. Others were cast by the complex lost wax method.

The opportunity to view a portion of the over 200 pieces of gold treasure has not been available for several years and the display contains some of the most exciting and beautiful objects in the entire collection.

DRUMS

Something to toot our horn about is a new exhibiton entitled "No Silent Drums" — a compilation of Indian musical instruments from North and Middle America.

There are a number of drums (which are the universal instruments of Native Americans) drumsticks, and handles, flutes, whistles, and rattles. There are also Indian paintings depicting the use of these instruments. Each item is a unique expression of the ingeniousness of the American Indian.



CHAUTAUQUA

A-push-ma-ta-ha-hu-bi, better known as General Pushmataha, intrepid Choctaw warrior/leader and forest orator, as he appeared for the Gilcrease Chautauqua, September 18 and 19, and for the Gilcrease Museum Association membership preview on September 17.

Enacted by Dr. Danney Goble, prominent Oklahoma political historian and instructor at Tulsa Junior College, Pushmataha shared the first series of appearances with a pioneer woman (Joan Stauffer) and Congresswoman Alice Robertson (Frances Herndon Heller). The second evening's session featured Governor William G. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray (Paul Johnson), Commissioner of Charities and Corrections Kate Bernard (Connie Cronley) and E.W. Marland, Ponca City oilman (Karl Janssen).

Preceded by calliope music and featuring musical entertainment at intermissions, the Chautauqua was produced as Gilcrease's part in the Oklahoma Diamond Jubilee.

PEOPLE &



Board of Directors Emeritus Paul H. Johnson (left) and David R. Milsten in front of painting from the Gilcrease Collection on loan to the Amon Carter Museum at the preview in Fort Worth.



PERSONALITIES



Anne Morand, Curator of Art at Gilcrease, and Melissa Thompson, assistant registrar at the Amon Carter Museum, prepare to hang the works for the exhibit "Between Friends".



Mr. and Mrs. Byron Nelson recently visited Gilcrease during the PGA held in August.



Attending the preview of "Between Friends" at Gilcrease in July were Mr. and Mrs. David Milsten and Jan Mulhert, Director of the Amon Carter Museum.



Attending the preview of the Amon Carter exhibit at Gilcrease in July were left to right, Board member Burt B. Holmes, Charles Thornton, president of the Gilcrease Museum Association Board of Directors and the late Amon Carter, Jr.



From left Gillies June Mustari and Eloise Funk compare notes with Assistant Director Tom Brayshaw during the Gillie Intern Program.

Mrs. Solomon McCombs recently donated to Gilcrease "Preparation for the Ribbon Dance" an award winning painting by her late husband. In addition, she also gave his headdress and other ceremonial items as well as some excellent photographs of her well-known husband.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Mildred D. Ladner

Pardon us for placing first our own publication — *Art Treasures of Gilcrease Museum* by Gilcrease Director Fred A. Myers.

"Between Friends," the exchange exhibition between Gilcrease and the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in Fort Worth, spurred the production of a long over-due survey of Gilcrease's art holdings.

Largely in color, the book is arranged alphabetically with most of the major artists represented in the collection accorded a single page, headed with a choice piece of their work, a brief description of it and a biographical note, and listing below the nature and quantity of their output held by Gilcrease. A handful of artists whose names are prominently associated with the Gilcrease collection — Bierstadt, Catlin, Farny, Miller, Moran, Remington, Russell, Schreyvogel and Seltzer — are given from two to six pages.

The author's brief introduction sets forth Thomas Gilcrease's background and modus operandi in acquiring his fabulous collection. The book can be ordered from the Gilcrease Museum Gift Shop for \$20, plus \$3 for tax and shipping costs.

With perfect timing, the museum at the other end of the "Between Friends" exhibition released its latest book simultaneously.



Alfred Jacob Miller: Artist on the Oregon Trail (\$45) consists of essays edited by Ron Tyler, history curator at Amon Carter, along with a voluminous catalogue raisonne by Karen Dewees Reynolds, Carter research assistant, and William R.

Johnston, assistant director of the Walters Art Gallery in Miller's hometown, Baltimore.

Johnston wrote two essays — "Early Years in Baltimore and Abroad" and "Back to Baltimore." Carol Clark, art curator for the Fort Worth museum, contributed an essay on Miller as "A Romantic Painter in the American West," and Tyler wrote about Miller and his travels with his patron, Captain William Drummond Stewart, to the fur trappers' and traders' rendezvous in 1837. There is an introduction by Peter Hassrick, director of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming.

This will probably be the most definitive book on Miller to come on the market for many a year. The amount of research that must have gone into this close to 500-page book with its lengthy and detailed catalogue raisonne is staggering.



Speaking of definitive — it would be hard to imagine a more complete and valuable book on Frederic Remington than Peggy and Harold Samuel's *Frederic Remington — A Biography* (Doubleday, \$24.95).

The couple, well known for their comprehensive first book, *The Illustrated Biographical Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West* and *The Collected Writings of Frederic Remington*, possess the largest private Remington library in existence.

You will not find much to admire in the man Remington as he emerges from these pages. (Had he been mainly a writer instead of a painter, he might well have made the recent

New York Times' list on "Obnoxious Writers," along with Waugh, D.H. Lawrence, Frost and Swinburne.)

The Samuels have sketched a detailed portrait, working into the fabric of this multi faceted self-indulged genius's brief life history a chronological development of his creative work, from illustrations and paintings to sculpture and fiction writing.

Don't miss this intriguing biography. If you're short on reading time, try to attend Gillie Mary Brett's review during the Books Sandwiched In fall series in the Tulsa City-County Central Library in October.



Menominee Drums — Tribal Termination and Restoration, 1954-1974 (\$19.95) by Nicholas C. Peroff has been added to the books on American Indian policy and history published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Also from the OU Press comes *Many Strange Characters* (\$10.95) by James Willard Schultz, edited by Eugene Lee Silliman. Schultz was an associate of the noted Indian trader, Joseph Kipp.

Two OU Press reprints of note are *Navahos Have Five Fingers* (\$6.95) by the husband-and-wife writing team known as T.D. Allen (fourth printing of a book first issued in 1963) and *Fire the Spiring — Cherokee Law from Clan to Court* (\$9.95) now in its second printing. *Four American Indian Literary Masters* by Alan R. Velie, covers N. Scott Momaday, James Welch, Leslie Marmon Silko and Gerald Vizenor. This is its first printing.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Fred A. Myers

It is my belief that we live in the museum age. Others may contend that ours is the age of television, or jet travel, or even the age of the parking garage. Such characterizations have their validity, but they do not take away from the fact that our time is a time when museums have flourished.

A recent publication by former Gilcrease curator, David Hunt, surveys museums in Oklahoma; nearly 150 are listed, 58 of which have been founded since 1950. (Gilcrease Museum is, of course, counted in this group). Similar statistics hold true for most other states in the nation.

Museum attendance, despite the widespread imposition of an admission charge, has burgeoned. Astounding numbers of people throng museums, especially in the large metropolitan centers. Travelers to New York and Washington nearly always interlard their reports of visiting the "Met" or the National Gallery with remarks on how crowded the galleries were.

The biggest of the new museum hoards are attracted to the periodic traveling exhibition of blockbuster proportions. Despite its uncultured overtones, no word other than "blockbuster" adequately describes what happened when sculpture and jewelry, furniture and vases from

King Tut's tomb recently toured the land. Likewise with the *Art of Dresden*, the *Gold of Peru*, and the Charlie Russell show on view at the Arch in St. Louis. Even xenophobic China has used the appeal of the blockbuster exhibition by making displays of its newly discovered archaeological treasures available for inspection in the West. China's choice to showcase its culture and new global awareness through museums rather than through the media of television, films, or books is confirmation from an unlikely corner that museums are important instruments of education and enjoyment in the second half of the twentieth century.

It seems to me that it is the heady combination of palace and public, of treasures available to everyone, that underlies the special appeal of things shown in museums. Interestingly enough this combination characterized the first important art collection opened to the public — the Louvre in Paris. Formerly the locus of the supremely rarified life of the court of the Kings of France, the doors of the Louvre were thrown open in 1793 exactly one year after the monarchy had been swept away by the Revolution. Other princely collections were similarly transformed in the course of time, such as the Medici collections in Florence

and the Vatican's collections in Rome. The wonder of those first visitors to previously sequestered treasures is hard to imagine. In England the National Gallery was founded in 1843 for the purpose of making an art collection for general cultural uplift, as were the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts thirty years later.

As museums grew in sophistication beyond a cabinet-of-curiosities mentality (i.e. collections of more or less curious things, more or less related to each other), a peculiarly American system of support developed. A partnership between public and private support was forged by most of the larger museums in this country. Typically in Europe what had once been the collection and perhaps the palace of the prince became the responsibility solely of the central government. In America the typical pattern has been sharing the burden of support among philanthropic individuals, government, and lately business.

The historical view suggests an important reason why — that at the very inception of the idea of museums as we know them has been the intention of providing rare, and inevitably expensive, things for the public to enjoy. 



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