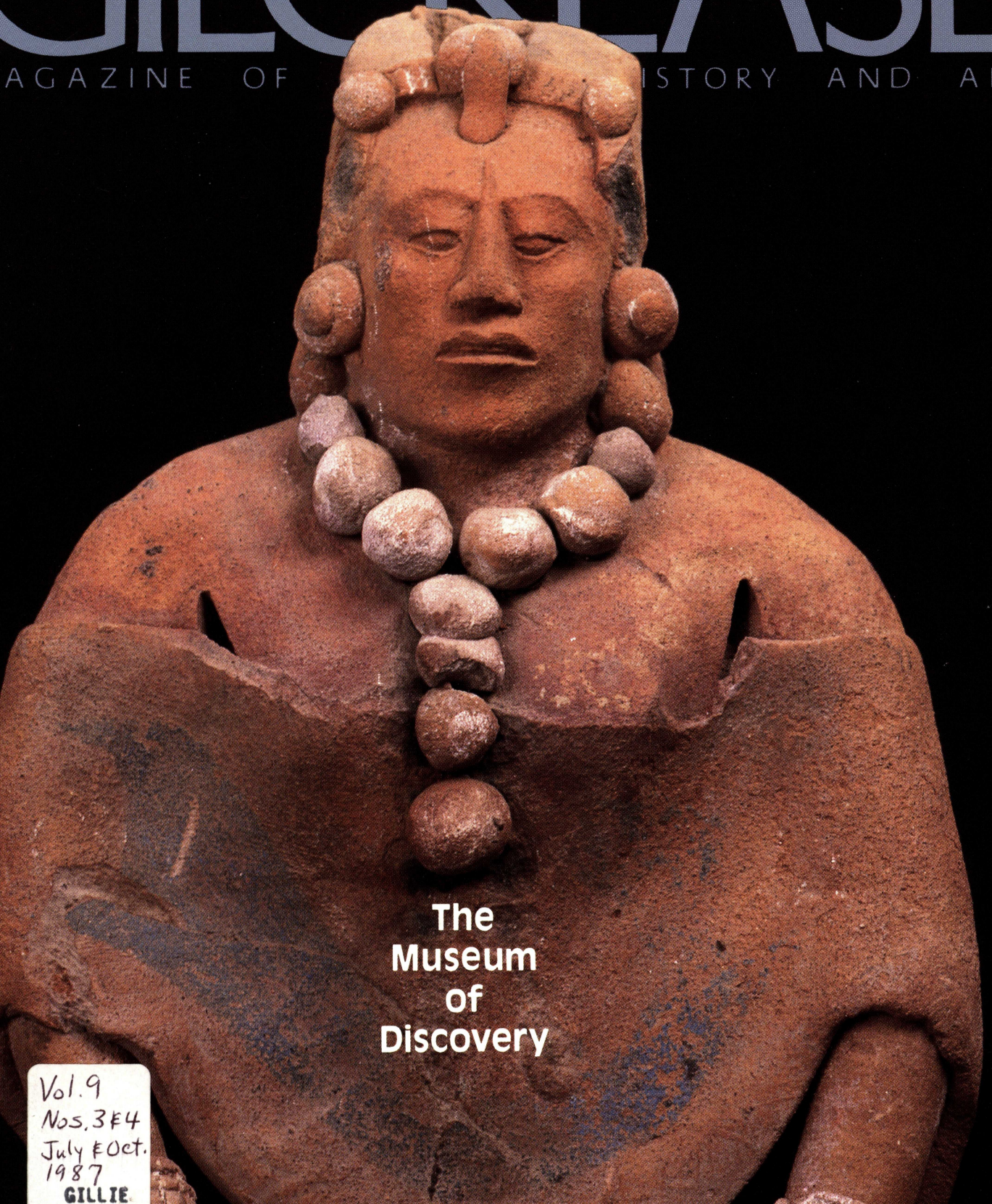


GILCREASE

MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND ART



The
Museum
of
Discovery

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the beginning, for Gilcrease Museum, was the Gilcrease collection. The art and artifacts of the collection, which now seem to have been here always, did not, of course, form themselves spontaneously. The collection was created by Thomas Gilcrease over an approximately 25 year period from the late 1930s until the early 1960s. But from that date, an additional 25 years ago, the collection has existed as an entity as solid as any other — magisterial, huge, instructive, various yet unified.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

FRED A. MYERS



Now its housing for the first time approaches the capaciousness and quality of what it houses. The expanded museum more than doubles the amount of the collection on display. The bounding size and scope of the collection are apparent to even the most casual visitor.

The renovation of the old gallery space lends high ceilings, oak floors, and stucco walls to all parts of the museum. The sheer quality of the surroundings for the first time is consonant with the beauty of the collection.

Unseen by the visitor but crucially important nonetheless are improvements throughout the museum in the security and atmospheric control systems. The collection's new home, for its better protection, is a vault to which people have access.

It also goes without saying, although it is preeminently the time to say it, that all this enlarging and improving of the building and systems is occurring in one of the most beautiful settings enjoyed by any museum in the country. The three new overlook rooms furnish additional visual proof of the fellowship between the Gilcrease art and the American vista. And the planned theme gardens, when they are completed, will imaginatively reinforce connections between the land and the art.

Connections between art and the American land — land in the sense of the story of man's life on the land — are

is all about. First there was the land, the American land in all its breadth and variety; then there were the first men on the American land, the Indians; then the Europeans; the establishment of the federated government; the growth of enterprises that used and used up the land; and the movement westward — all resulting in the America we know today, documented in the Gilcrease collection.

In view of the drama of the American story, it is surprising that Americans have only recently achieved a sense of their own history, a sense of its continuity and antiquity. Best evidence of this new sense of American history is the public pride in the nation's two hundredth birthday, the Bicentennial; the refurbishing of the Statue of Liberty; the current focus on the Constitution.

From one point of view — it might be called the view from the Osage Hills — the collection has just been there waiting patiently for the people to catch up or catch on. Fortunately, collections of things made of paint and bronze, clay and stone can be patient. They endure. They have almost all the time in the world. People are now more ready than they have ever been since Mr. Gilcrease began to collect 50 years ago to enjoy his collection's beauty and to learn from it. Having acquired a stronger sense of history it is now the season to deepen our understanding of the American experience, to fill in gaps in our knowledge, to develop subtlety and

his great enterprise of appreciation, especially in the field of western art, is opening in simultaneous fashion with man on the street and the intellectual in the ivory tower. Western has gained a huge new audience in the last 15 years including several thousands of scholars who are burying the art of the American West just as gently as they are accustomed to bury the art of Florence or the Netherlands. There is so much juicy primary historical material for the specialist in the field of western art, material like the reports of government sponsored expeditions, the railroad surveys, and the illustrated press. Studying this material and interpreting its relationship to art history will, for the first time, bring western art into the mainstream.

As our culture has matured to an appreciation of history and art a new museum age has dawned. The expansion of the Gilcrease Museum building is ensuring as more and more people are turning to museums for enjoyment and learning. Museums do not have curricula, course requirements with prerequisites and assigned reading, yet they are without doubt educational institutions. In our time of lifelong learning, of self-actualization, there is something peculiarly appropriate in the begin-where-you-will, go-at-your-own-pace aspect of museum learning.

The new Gilcrease — the official

Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art — has improved facilities for learning. The library reading room is greatly expanded and furnished with the best amenities. Scholars and those who are simply curious will have a new exposure to the material available there in book form and in the rare archival items. There is now a special room for examining works of art on paper open by appointment. Always on view will be the visible artifact storage. As its name implies, this is a specially designed area, on the second level, where curators have access to the artifact collection but where the public can see the rows and rows of moccasins, baskets, pots, and etcetra that make up the fascinating Gilcrease Indian material culture collection.

The overarching fact of the new building, however, is simply that so much more of the collection is on display. It is now possible to gain an informed opinion of the hidden treasures of Gilcrease revealed for the first time for all to see.

Museums have been defined as institutions that collect, preserve, study and display original objects. In all aspects of the formula, except perhaps in new collecting, the new building has moved Gilcrease forward in quantum leaps. Collecting to fill in the few gaps of this definitive museum will be the challenge of the future.

By Fred A. Myers

Detail, John Vanderlyn,
"Washington and Lafayette at the
Battle of Brandywine,"
(After 1815) 36 inches by
50 inches,
oil on canvas.

**Gilcrease Museum was founded
in 1949 as a private museum by
collector and oil company
president Thomas Gilcrease.
The collection was deeded to
the City of Tulsa in 1955.**



he story of this museum is impossible to separate from the story — and the personality — of its founder. For what is a building, with its furnishings and contents, more than a material manifestation of the personality and character of its creator? The museum in its early stage reflected most poignantly the personality of its founder and in its recent stages reflects the amalgamation of that personality with that of the community — the City of Tulsa — which has perpetuated and nurtured that which Thomas Gilcrease created. In the life of Thomas Gilcrease lies the reason for the creation of the museum and for its existence today as an institution which justifies even the most fanatic claims of importance in the field of American history and art.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GILCREASE MUSEUM

BY PAUL H. JOHNSON



Thomas Gilcrease was born on February 8, 1890, at Robeline, Louisiana, the first of 14 children. His father was Scotch-Irish, English and French, and his mother was one-quarter Creek, and a touch of Spanish. Thomas Gilcrease was brought to Eufaula, Indian Territory, in what is now the State of Oklahoma, when he was only a few weeks old.

He enjoyed a rigorous boyhood which combined the play of the typical Indian boy with the hard work necessitated by his father's need for help in feeding a very large family. He fished in the streams, made bows and arrows and used them for hunting game on the prairies. His youth was essentially spent outdoors where he learned to love the beauty of nature. He helped farm and care for livestock, and at an early age has experienced in ranching.

As a consequence of his early experiences, Thomas Gilcrease never strayed far from his love of the land. He found pleasure in adult life in big game hunting and fishing and, undoubtedly, the communion with nature in his youth played a leading role in the forces which influenced his life's dedication to the collection of the beautiful aspects of outdoor life, and particularly the Indians' life.

In 1899 the Creek Indian Tribal rolls were opened for registration

of all who carried a certain percentage of Indian blood. As a result of this registration, Thomas Gilcrease received an allotment of 160 acres of land filed by his father in Muskogee at the Creek Nation's tribal center. At this time the family lived near Twin Mounds, where his father had built and was operating a small grocery store.

Young Tom's land appeared to be nothing more than prairie farm land. Who could have dreamed that it centered on the fabulous Glenn Pool oil field which was to be discovered in 1906? Glenn Pool was the first large oil pool opened in the territory, a fact which was to make the young Indian lad wealthy, and eventually made possible the creation of one of the greatest cultural institutions in America.

All this happened before Oklahoma became a state, and it happened to a youth who had picked cotton for fifty cents for one hundred pounds and worked as a gin worker and helper to his father in his general merchandising business and Post Office before he finished his teens. Once to the direct question, "How did you get your money?" Thomas Gilcrease answered, "I didn't get it; it came to me." This statement revealed the true character of the man — his modesty and sincerity. It also revealed something of the sense of obligation which Gilcrease held

which made possible the realization of his life's dream first came to him as a gift out of the heart of his homeland. He felt deeply the impulse to return to that homeland a gift in kind — a wealth of beauty, knowledge, inspiration and permanent value such as his collection represents.

In 1908 Thomas Gilcrease moved to Tulsa where he established and maintained a home until the time of his death. He put his roots down deep on a hilltop northwest of the growing city in Black Dog Township of the one-time Osage Indian reservation, a short distance from the common boundary of the lands of the Creek, Cherokee and Osage tribes.

While he pursued a varied career as a banker, businessman, rancher and sportsman, he concentrated the natural outlet for his business acumen on the oil business. White men had operated his original allotment in Glenn Pool for a number of years prior to his reaching maturity, but when Thomas Gilcrease was 21 years old, he went into the oil business for himself. It is in this field of business that his ultimate economic success came. He bought, sold and traded oil leases, drilling for other operators as well as for himself.

In 1922 he formed the Gilcrease Oil Company in Tulsa. In 1937, following the oil development southward, the Gilcrease Oil Company established an office in

Paul Johnson is a past president of the Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association and is one of the museum's best links with Thomas Gilcrease's

operated in the East Texas Field, south to the Rio Grande River, west to New Mexico, as well as in North Texas, Southern Oklahoma, and Kansas.

The collection which forms today Gilcrease Museum actually began in 1922 when Mr. Gilcrease purchased his first oil painting. In 1925 Mr. Gilcrease began to spend much time in Europe — living there many months at a time for 15 years. It was not until the beginning of the Second World War that he returned permanently to America. While in Europe he continued collecting art, books and the other material which became the heart of his collection.

During the early years of the Gilcrease Oil Company the headquarters were in Tulsa, with an office for part of the time in Paris. Since much of his oil holdings were in Texas, in 1937 Mr. Gilcrease moved the Gilcrease Oil Company to San Antonio. He bought a six story building in San Antonio which gave him an opportunity for the first time to display his collection accumulated during the preceding 20 years.

The genesis of Gilcrease Museum was the sixth floor of the Gilcrease Building in San Antonio. The entire floor was converted into a museum and the Thomas Gilcrease collection was first formally opened to the public on March 18, 1943. At the time of the formal opening, the museum published its first magazine or

American Indian” and the collection was described as “an exhibition of paintings, drawings, books, manuscripts, and sculptures.”

The first Gilcrease Museum, located as it was on the sixth floor of an office building in which the Gilcrease Oil Company had its office on the fifth floor, was not a rousing success. The museum attracted only apathy from the San Antonio people. Discussing the first Gilcrease Museum David Milsten, in his *Biography of Thomas Gilcrease*, stated that, “Regardless of reason, the experiment — and it was little else — did not function as anticipated. In two years after the formal opening there was a most informal closing.” Later, in 1949, the *San Antonio Evening News* expressed, in an editorial, the great loss to San Antonio of the Gilcrease collection. But the loss proved to be the great gain of the City of Tulsa.

Mr. Gilcrease moved back to his beloved city of Tulsa, reoccupied the home he owned on the hill overlooking the city and started construction of a museum adjacent to his home. The original buildings of the present Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art were built on the present site of the museum, primarily using stone quarried on the hill and employing Indian labor. The museum building was officially opened to the public on

beginning of the museum as we know it today. The building at the time of opening contained 22 rooms including 13 exhibition galleries, a library and a reading room, library stacks, offices, reception rooms, and storage and maintenance quarters.

Not long after the formal opening of Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, international events began to affect the financial aspects of Mr. Gilcrease’s oil interests. He continued to acquire pieces of art and historical material which he deemed to be critical to the collection. Mr. Gilcrease became indebted for large amounts of art which he had taken on approval, and in 1954 he found himself saddled with a debt of \$2,250,000 for art which he had purchased, but which had not been paid for. The original owners of the art would happily have taken the pieces back and forgiven the debt, but Mr. Gilcrease, with the single-mindedness of purpose which dominated his life and which set him apart from the average human being, refused to permit any portion of the collection which he had assembled to be disunited from the balance. He steadfastly refused to break up the collection, even a small portion of it, to extinguish the \$2,250,000 debt.

Mr. Gilcrease found himself in a serious and perplexing position. He faced two great challenges. First, was his overriding goal of keeping all the collection as a unit.

collection in his town — Tulsa. He approached unavailingly many sources of help, including the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the University of Oklahoma, the Will Rogers Memorial Group at Claremore, the Governor of Oklahoma, and others, in an effort to try to find some way to raise the \$2,250,000 necessary to maintain the collection intact. Keep in the mind that the entire collection at that time, 40 years ago, was conservatively valued at \$2,000,000 dollars, so the needed \$2,250,000 represented only a fraction of the collection, but Mr. Gilcrease was determined that that fraction would not be separated from the rest.

So determined was Mr. Gilcrease to keep the collection together, that he resolved that he would be willing to see the collection leave the city and leave his sacred Osage hills if it would result in maintaining the concentration of the collection as a single entity. He approached an old-time friend and colleague, Mr. Robert Lee Humber of Greenville, North Carolina, to ask Mr. Humber to raise the money necessary to keep the collection intact and agreed that he would be willing to move the collection to North Carolina if the \$2,250,000 could be raised. At this point Mr. Gilcrease had despaired of keeping the collection in Tulsa.

Onto this scene came a great and beloved citizen, Mr. Alfred

plight of Mr. Gilcrease and his plans to reluctantly move the collection to North Carolina. Mr. Aaronson conceived the idea of the City of Tulsa voting a bond issue to raise the money required to keep the collection. He approached Mr. Gilcrease with the idea and Mr. Gilcrease reluctantly agreed to postpone accepting the financial arrangement which would move the collection to North Carolina. A committee was formed including Mr. Aaronson, E. Fred Johnson, Otha Grimes, George Bowen, Morton Harrison, and David Milsten, who worked on the plan to keep the collection in Tulsa.

The mayor and city commissioners were approached and they reluctantly agreed that if the committee would raise the money that it cost to hold a bond election, they would submit it to the voters. This was done and the election was held and bond issue passed. The money was raised, Mr. Gilcrease paid off his debt, the collection was kept together, and it was kept in Tulsa. In retrospect, the appearance on the scene of Mr. Aaronson and the group of outstanding citizens who joined him, of which only Mr. David Milsten is still alive at the present time, is reminiscent of our forefathers who gathered to write the Declaration of Independence and later our Constitution.

Providence seems to provide men for the times, and fortunately for

vision rose to the demands, and the great Gilcrease Museum was maintained for the City of Tulsa.

It should be emphasized that Gilcrease Museum, that is, the art, artifacts, the original building and the original land were all a *gift* to the City of Tulsa. It has sometimes been stated that the city “bought” the collection from Thomas Gilcrease. Nothing is further from the truth. The \$2,250,000 voted in the bond election, which was needed to keep all of the collection intact, represented only a fraction of the value of the collection. So, when the city received the Deed of Gift and Conveyance dated August 6, 1954, conveying to the city the personal property constituting the bulk of the collection, such was not an exchange of money equal to the value of the collection. In addition, to repay the citizens of the City of Tulsa, Mr. Gilcrease pledged to the city oil runs from his oil property totaling \$2,250,000. For a number of years the City of Tulsa collected monthly a royalty check until the sum of the royalties received by the city equaled the promised amount. Thus, the City of Tulsa received the Gilcrease collection at absolutely no cost.

After the successful bond election, Thomas Gilcrease wanted to find a way to say “thanks” to the people who had made it possible. Eudotia Teenor, Mr. Gilcrease’s private secretary for

decided on a barbeque to be held on the museum grounds. It was set for October 30, 1955. He sent a letter of invitation to approximately 1,000 people all over the nation. The invitation included the following paragraph:

“Since I have been fairly successful on wild game hunts in the past, I thought perhaps AN OLD FASHION BARBECUE of wild game on the museum grounds would be one way of showing my appreciation. I took off to the tall timber of the great northwest several weeks ago and to date can report elk, deer, and antelope, with other ‘items’ yet to be obtained. Just got word a friend of mine has a ‘bar’ stacked out — so this, with what we already have, with trimmings — should make a delightful feast and happy gathering.”

Tom arranged for a group to take care of the preparations and told them he wanted it of the old fashion pit-type barbecue where you “turn ‘em with a pitchfork.” Over 500 people showed up to receive Tom Gilcrease’s personal thanks for keeping the museum in Tulsa.

When the bond issue was approved in 1954, the only assets conveyed to the city were the personal property making up the basic collection, that is, the art, historical documents, artifacts, statuary, etc. The city had no facility to house the collection. The Gilcrease Foundation owned

the land on which the museum was situated and the museum building. The Gilcrease Foundation leased the building and land to the city at no cost.

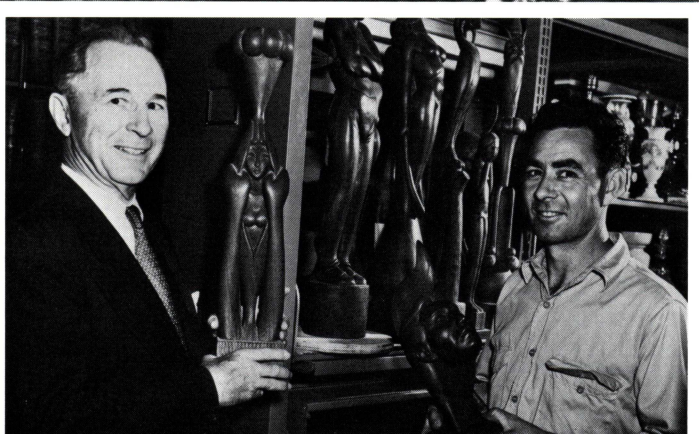
Four years after the collection was deeded to the City of Tulsa, in 1958, the Gilcrease Foundation deeded the then existing buildings and the beautiful landscaped grounds to the City of Tulsa. This deed to the city, an absolute gift of the Gilcrease Foundation, included approximately twelve-and-a-half acres including the original building built by Mr. Gilcrease to house the museum in Tulsa after his return from San Antonio and all of the land on which the present museum sits.

For six years after it became the property of the City of Tulsa the collection was opened to the public in the original museum building constructed by Mr. Gilcrease in 1948. It became apparent that the collection deserved more space and a more aesthetic environment. In 1961 the citizens of Tulsa responded by voting more than a half million dollars in bonds to expand the facility. Although the bond issue involved a relatively small amount of money according to today’s standards, the first addition to the museum made by the City of Tulsa, which was completed in 1963, added the Vista Room, plus the large galleries then known as the Russell Gallery and the Remington Gallery. The addition

was dedicated on October 27, 1963. Unfortunatley, Mr. Gilcrease did not live to see this first addition to the museum completed — he died suddenly in 1962. At the dedication Mr. Thomas Gilcrease, Jr., Mrs. Des Cygne Gilcrease Denney and Mr. Barton Gilcrease (Mr. Gilcrease’s three children), as trustees of the Gilcrease Foundation, presented the city with an additional \$5,000,000 worth of art, archeology and land. The land included a little over nine acres completing the hilltop on which the museum is located. The bond election in 1962 was the last bond money spent on Gilcrease Museum. Thus, the total bond funds spent on Gilcrease Museum have been only \$2,750,000 and of that \$2,250,000 was repaid to the city from Mr. Gilcrease’s oil runs.

Mr. Gilcrease’s only daughter died in an automobile accident in 1968. Thereafter, the Vista Room was named in her honor and has since been known as the Des Cygne Gilcrease Denney Vista Room. Perhaps the best picture in the museum is the Osage Hills as viewed from the Vista Room.

From 1963, 13 years passed during which the museum continued to grow in international stature, but without an expansion of space for facilities. It became apparent that an auditorium was needed to utilize fully the resources of the collection. In 1975, through a joint effort of the



Gilcrease Museum Trustees, that is, the Park and Recreation Board of the City of Tulsa, the Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association, the mayor and board of commissioners, funds were accumulated to begin the construction of an addition to include an auditorium, educational offices and a Special Events Gallery at a cost of slightly over \$500,000. This addition, which was completed and dedicated in 1976, significantly enlarged the exposure of the museum to the people of Tulsa by making available a place where films can be shown and other events can be held in the auditorium. The auditorium was named in honor of Mr. Gilcrease's oldest son, Thomas Gilcrease, Jr., who died in 1967.

As the years roll by, the importance of the gift shop to the museum became clear. Mr. Bill Fisher, a merchandising genius, chaired the Gift Shop Committee and at his urging a new addition to the museum was made in 1979. Approximately \$175,000 was used and with the shop a new entrance was also added. The expanded Museum Shop has become an important feature of the museum.

A third addition from the combined effort of the Gilcrease Association and the Board of Trustees was completed in 1982. This added a feature to the museum which has become one of its most enjoyable aspects, that is,

the gallery which was named in the memory of Gena Gilcrease. This gallery has been used for rotating art on special exhibits, primarily that on loan from other museums, and housing the art and bronzes of the annual Rendezvous exhibition.

This brings us to the point where the museum existed at the time the present addition was undertaken. Since the present addition will be fully described in other places in this publication, it can only be said that it is another, and by far the greatest in the sequence of steps which have been taken to bring Gilcrease Museum toward the stature it deserves.

As Alfred Aaronson came forth in 1954 to save the museum for Tulsa, Charlie Thornton came forth in 1984 to save the great addition of the museum now being completed. With help from Fred Myers, Bob Parker, the Helmerichs and a host of others, the museum space will be more than doubled.

The City of Tulsa, through the Board of Trustees, the mayor and city commissioners, and with the loving care of the Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association, has never broken faith with the trust placed in the city by Thomas Gilcrease. We believe that Tom Gilcrease, observing the continuous growth of the museum from his resting place on the museum grounds, must be content

with the faithfulness with which the museum has been nurtured by the people of Tulsa.

As the Museum building has grown, the land surrounding the museum has grown in proportion. Under the leadership of Gordon Hicks, 38 acres were added to the museum grounds in the 60s. With the help of the Gilcrease Foundation, including particularly the help of Barton Gilcrease, Gracie Gilcrease, Barta Busby (Barton's daughter), and the other members of the Gilcrease family, additional land was made available. Through the aggressive effort of the Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association, the museum is now surrounded by approximately 115 acres of beautiful and historic Osage Hills. Few, if any, museums in the world have the luxury of having available for posterity so much beautiful and serene land. As a tribute to him, this land surrounding the museum has been perpetually dedicated as the Barton Gilcrease Nature Preserve.

The history of Gilcrease Museum, begun with the genius of Thomas Gilcrease and his dream, has been aggressively and steadily moved forward by the City of Tulsa with which he entrusted his life's work. The city has been faithful to its cause and we can only believe that the full glory of the Gilcrease Museum still lies in the future. ◻



Welcome to the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, and our tour of some of its many treasures. Our tour will begin with samples of the Gilcrease artifact collection. This gallery is a survey of highlights of the Meso-american collection. The seated figure in the first case is representative of the Olmec culture of Central America. It is made of clay and is hollow. We here at the museum often refer to it as the "Olmec Baby," perhaps because of its childlike smile and its small size. This baby is actually nearly three thousand years old. The Olmec culture that it represents is the mother culture of New World civilization because so much of what came in subsequent centuries begins with the innovations of the Olmecs.

DISCOVER THE TREASURES

Enjoy a tour of the art galleries of Gilcrease Museum with Fred A. Myers, who has been director since 1978, as your guide. This text is excerpted from the new Audio Tour.



Detail, Ernest L. Blumensche
"Moon, Morning Star a
Evening Star" (192
50 inches by 40 inch
oil on canv



If you will now walk behind the room partition you will have a chance to look at the pre-Columbian gold that forms part of the Gilcrease collection. These pieces were made as body adornment by Indians who lived in Central America before Columbus discovered the New World for Europe. We therefore call them pre-Columbian. The gold has been shaped by various methods. Some of the pieces are simply pounded into shape, some are cast from small molds, and others of the more elaborate are done in the technique of embossing called repoussé. These are the only artifacts you will see on our tour today so you may wish to spend some time in this room and get a better feel for the Gilcrease Museum artifact collection which includes more than 200,000 individual items.

When you are finished here, if you will go back to the main corridor and walk down the stairs and then enter the room to the left, we will look at a sampling of the Gilcrease Archives Collection.

In this gallery are several of the great treasures which are preserved at Gilcrease Museum. This is the Freedom/Discovery gallery. Here you will find that you first come to a letter that was written in 1512. It was dictated and signed by Diego

Columbus, the son of Christopher Columbus, just 20 years after the first European trip to the new world. We believe that it is the oldest letter written from the new world which survives to the present time. Continuing, you will see what we call the Cortez Decree of 1521. This was an order issued by Hernando Cortez after the fall of the Aztec capitol Tenochtitlan and it consists of directions to arrest and search all natives for any gold, silver or precious jewels in their possession. Its perhaps the oldest surviving military order issued in America.

And now we come to some documents that are facinating in terms of the history of the United States. First is a short message authorizing Paul Revere as an agent of the Committees of Correspondence presumably issued just after his famous midnight ride. The authorization is signed by General Joseph Warren, the first American general of the Revolutionary War who was killed in battle.

Next you will see copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation, made on the order of Benjamin Franklin for presentation to Frederick the Great of Prussia. Franklin in his role as a diplomat for the young United States used copies of this sort of document

Detail, Winslow Homer
"Watching the Break"
(1891), 30 inches by 40 inches
oil on canvas

Thomas Gilcrease's stature is secured as one of the greatest collectors this country has ever produced. No other museum or private holdings of western art can rival the breadth, quality, or variety of the



to inform European rulers about our country and to elicit their aid. It is Franklin's signature that certifies the accuracy of these documents. Although a number of copies of the Declaration of Independence were made, we believe this to be the only certified copy that survives to the present time. Just to the left is the letter that was used to transmit these documents to Frederick's representative, Baron de Schulenberg. One of the most intriguing manuscripts of the entire collection is this letter which was written by Thomas Jefferson. It is dated July 1 and 2, 1776. The importance of the letter rests on the fact that in it Jefferson states that his country will soon have his political creed through the medium of, and I quote, "a declaration I was lately directed to draw." Other parts of the letter explain why his friend has not heard much from him recently; you see, he explains, he was busy writing the Declaration of Independence.

Through the corridor past Helmerich Hall to the far left is the Catlin gallery displaying a number of portraits in watercolor and several paintings in oil made by George Catlin. Catlin was the first American artist who set himself the task of trying to record traditional Indian life. He had a strong feeling that

exposure to European culture would change Indian ways forever, and indeed he was right. His paintings remain an important record of the way Indians lived 150 years ago. They are also intriguing as works of art. If you will look at the two vertical paintings in the middle of the wall you will see that they are portraits of Cler-mont, Chief of the Osage, and his wife and child. George Catlin was experienced as a portrait painter and you will notice that it is the faces in these paintings to which he devotes the greatest attention. Each portrait that Catlin made characterizes an individual personality. Catlin also pays close attention to the way the Indians are dressed. In this case, for instance, the roach Chief Cler-mont is wearing in his hair is particularly well-described as are the arm band, the peace medal, and the club.

If you'll turn your attention to the larger paintings on the right wall, you will see some vivid scenes of buffalo hunts in the middle of the wall. Many people find that Catlin's method of painting is too childlike for their appreciation. He did paint fast. He sometimes obscures details but I think he always tells a very vivid story. These paintings are presented like the most colorful feature writing in the Sunday newspaper. They have great verve

In less than 25 years Thomas Gilcrease amassed more than 10,000 artworks, 50,000 native American artifacts, and 90,000 rare books and documents.



and liveliness.

After his arduous trips to the West and after the time that Catlin had painted and accumulated a number of paintings on Indian subjects, he put together an exhibition of his works and he called it his Indian Gallery. He took that display to London and hired a place in which to show it, charging admission to visitors. For some years it was a success. He tried to increase the appeal of the display by bringing Indian objects, and indeed Indians themselves, to London as part of the display. The venture, however, ended in bankruptcy, and Catlin was forced to sell many of his works as part of bankruptcy proceedings. It is an intriguing fact that Mr. Gilcrease was able to buy many of the more than 400 Catlin paintings in the collection in London from descendants of the original purchaser.

Just north is the Miller/Stanley gallery. George Catlin traveled up to Missouri River as far as present-day Montana in 1832. The main wall here shows you paintings by Alfred Jacob Miller whose only trip to the West occurred several years after Catlin's first trip. Alfred Jacob Miller traveled in the company of William Drummond Stewart as far as the Rocky Mountains to experience the Rendezvous between the Indians, the

trappers, and the merchants who traded for fur pelts. The large painting in the middle depicts Stewart (he's the one in the yellow jacket) being greeted by Indians who shoot off their rifles in a sign of friendly greeting. Stewart was a Scotsman who came to this country essentially as a big game hunter bringing with him as many of the amenities of civilization as he could and, in this one instance, taking an artist with him to record his exploits and the scenery. Unlike Catlin, Miller had been to Europe and seen the art in public collections there before he went west, so his paintings have a degree of academic style that Catlin's lack. Miller integrates the landscape with the figures in a way that's new in American art. His view of the West is of a bucolic paradise where life is free and good.

The painting of Ft. William on the right carries an intriguing historical meaning, in that Ft. William, which became Ft. Laramie, was at the time that Miller saw it a wooden palisade fort. Ft. Laramie was reconstructed in adobe a short time later and it was in that form that it became a familiar way-stop to so many of the 49ers and other Americans who ventured across the country in covered wagons in the middle part of the nineteenth century.

The wall to the left displays

Detail, Thomas Moran
"Grand Canyon" (1911)
30 inches by 40 inches
oil on canvas

American artists represented in the Gilcrease collection include
Albert Bierstadt (31 works),
George Catlin (435 works),
Thomas Moran (1,065 works),
W. R. Leigh (1,063 works),
Alfred Jacob Miller (139 works),
Frederic Remington (55 works),
and Charles M. Russell



paintings by John Mix Stanley, another of the early artist explorers. Stanley, too, shares a view of the West as a friendly and beautiful place. In the painting “Indians Crossing the Milk River, Minnesota Territory” (now Montana) he depicts a peaceful scene of an Indian band crossing the river — the women and children in bull boats made of buffalo hides, the older boys and men powering the boats across the river by swimming and pulling lead lines held in their teeth. The far shore presents no obstacle, no snakes, no hostiles. Stanley also depicts the West as paradise.

Stanley attempted to make a financial success with his body of western work by offering it for sale to the Federal Government. The work was never purchased by Washington and indeed Stanley has become a relatively rare artist in that a disastrous fire at the Smithsonian Institution destroyed many of his works on deposit there waiting hopeful purchase. Stanley, however, was hired by several government expeditions as their topographical artist, and indeed, sometimes was commissioned to paint portraits for the government. Such are the two portraits that you see are on the left wall. They depict members of the Ross family, a family that was extremely important here in eastern

Oklahoma because John Ross, for all the middle years of the nineteenth century, was the Principal Chief of the Cherokee. Our storage collection of archives includes many, many of John Ross’s handwritten letters interpreting the position of the tribe to the government in Washington.

While the great strength of the Gilcrease collection is material about the American West, the collection also includes many distinguished items that relate to the earlier history of America and form a survey of American Art. This room and the next that we’ll visit display some of the works that comprise the general American collection.

John Singleton Copley was the first native-born American artist to achieve real mastery of his craft. He was basically a self-taught artist — in the final analysis, of course, all artists are self-taught — whose inspiration came from black and white prints. Using the European artistic conventions revealed in the prints, Copley learned to simulate in paint the textures of the real world. In the “Portrait of Hannah Greenleaf” we can sense the delight of the artist in depicting the gleam of the pearls in the necklace, the sheen of the fabric, the warm flesh of the face. By accruing such fidelities to nature, Copley presents us with a clearly

Detail, George Catlin
“Group of Mandan Warriors
Showing the Costumes and Modes
of Wearing the Hair” (1832)
11¼ inches by 14½ inches
oil on canvas

**Together, the paintings,
sculpture, artifacts and
documents in the Gilcrease
collection serve as a chronicle of
man in America from ancient
times to the present.**



Detail, Frank Tenney Johnson,
"The Pony Express" (1924),
42 inches by 56 inches,
oil on canvas.

focused view of the world, a straightforward American domestication of European pomp.

One of the great treasures of the Gilcrease collection is the portrait of James Madison painted by Charles Willson Peale. The likeness of Madison is so real it often seems to me that he is about to speak, perhaps about his memories of the constitutional convention. Presented rather informally, without wearing a wig, the head of our fourth president glows with intelligence and spirit. Peale, the artist, was something of an early American renaissance man — a naturalist, a collector, a museum person, and individualistic artist. His portrait of James Madison is Americana at its best.

The great bulk of early American art is comprised of portraiture. While "Washington and Lafayette at the Battle of Brandywine" includes effective portraits of the two principal subjects, the likenesses are just a part of what the artist is trying to achieve in this painting. John Vanderlyn, the artist, brings to America with a painting such as this the European vogue for history painting. This is a brave effort for an American artist to make in the early part of the nineteenth century. Despite its sanitized depiction of war as a gentlemen's game, Vanderlyn's painting, it seems to me, presents

history with great charm. The image of a young Washington, and an even younger Lafayette, dressed by the best tailors and riding horses of impeccable breed, is one that sticks in the mind of the viewer for a long time — one of the real tests of good art.

John James Audubon was in equal portions a naturalist and an artist. His "Birds of America," a serially issued publication with pictures and text, was one of the great achievements of the nineteenth century. "The Wild Turkey" was his choice from among all of the birds as the frontispiece of his publication. In fact, Audubon, along with Franklin, felt that the native turkey, rather than the eagle, was the most appropriate bird to symbolize America. The Gilcrease work was made late in Audubon's life. It is a painting in oil, and, as such, is a very rare object since there are few oil paintings from the hand of Audubon.

In the American Art since the Mid-nineteenth Century gallery, you see on the left of the main long wall a painting by the American expatriot artist James McNeill Whistler.

Whistler was born in this country and went to West Point for a time. He spent most of his artistic life, however, in London and Paris. The painting of boats is typical of

**The new Gilcrease Museum
totals 127,786 square feet, with
new galleries, library, and an
innovative visible storage display
system for native American**



Whistler's mature work. In this sort of painting Whistler narrows his means of artistic expression to give the impression of water and sky as seen through mist. His style was a radical simplification of the artistic methods of his time and just precedes what has come to be known as Impressionism.

The next painting on the right is an interesting example of John Singer Sargent, another American artist who spent most of his life in Europe. He made his living by doing portraits of the rich and powerful. This small painting, made towards the end of his career, is not typical in subject. It represents American troops involved in World War I — the fresh troops marching to battle on the left, the weary and torn troops returning on the right. Faces are not important to Sargent here. In this case he uses his bravura technique of fast painting to contrast energy and weariness through carefully observed gestures and body movement.

Moving to the right, the painting of two women standing on a rocky sea coast is by Winslow Homer. As with so many nineteenth century American artists, Homer began his career by making illustrations for newspapers and magazines but graduated to this kind of painting which was made to be sold to a patron for decorating a wall. After he

achieved some measure of success as an easel painter Homer built a house and studio on a promontory on the coast of Maine. The paintings he produced there deal mainly with the power of the ocean as it crashes against the rocky coast. The two women he depicts suggest to me the spirit of humankind when confronted with the difficulties and dangers of world. These are heroic women.

To the right in the largest painting in the gallery you are confronted by one of the major works of American artist Thomas Eakins. The painting is of Frank Hamilton Cushing who worked for the Smithsonian Institution, and, in that capacity, visited Zuni Pueblo. His visit extended to four-and-one-half years and his written observations on Zuni life form one of the earliest ethnographic treatises. Cushing has designed for himself a costume that is different from what the Zunis themselves wore, but which he thought expressed traditional pueblo culture. Thomas Eakins, the painter, exemplifies a naturalistic approach to art. He tries to give the facts directly as he sees them, depicting with fidelity all the Indian-made objects that you can find in the painting and concentrating on the ravaged face of his subject Cushing.

The largest painting in the middle

Ten American artists are represented in galleries devoted to their work: George Catlin, Alfred Jacob Miller/John Mix Stanley, Thomas Moran. Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Remington, Charles Schreyvogel, Charles M. Russell, Olaf Seltzer, and



of the wall to your right is an example of the Hudson River School. It was painted by Jasper Cropsey. The scene is actually Lake Champlain, a part of the Hudson River system, and, as with so many of Cropsey's subjects, it is painted when the colors of autumn tint the foliage. Hudson River artists such as Cropsey chose as their subjects the more remote and wilder areas of the eastern United States. They depicted it in specific yet dramatic terms. These are landscapes that suggest the power and beauty of the natural world.

We would not want to leave this gallery without seeing one of the recent additions to the Gilcrease collection. That is the painting by Andrew Wyeth, called "Windfield's Porch." It is the brown and white painting on the far wall. Most of Andrew Wyeth's paintings depict subjects in the states of Maine and Pennsylvania, and "Windfield's Porch" is typical of his Pennsylvania subjects. Wyeth uses a very small range of color, but a large range of black and white values to depict this scene of winter chill. As with most Wyeth paintings, although no human figure is there, you get the feeling of a haunting human presence.

On the other side of the corridor is the Albert Bierstadt gallery. Bierstadt was the first American artist who extended interest in the wild areas of the East to include the most spectacular areas of the American West. The largest painting, "Sierra Nevada Morning," is a typical example of the kind of painting Bierstadt made for showing in large, competitive exhibitions and hopefully for sale to the rising middle class of merchants. Sometimes Bierstadt's paintings depict a specific location. "Sierra Nevada Morning," as the title suggests, is a scene in that chain of the Rocky Mountains, but it is unlikely that all of the elements of the painting comprise an actual view. It is, rather, an heroic fantasy. This kind of painting features detail evenly spread across the surface. People in Bierstadt's time often used opera glasses to isolate certain areas of a painting, and you might try something similar by cupping your hands in front of your eyes to concentrate on the distant waterfall or the blasted trees or the reflections on the water. "Sierra Nevada Morning" is Bierstadt at his operatic best.

Other small paintings in the room depict Bierstadt in a more informal

Detail, Frederic Remington
"Bell Mare" (1903)
34 3/4 inches by 26 3/4 inches
oil on canvas

Objectives of the expansion were important: to display 30 percent of the permanent collection, to host major loan exhibitions, to house an expanded library, to improve access to the artifacts and archival material.



mood and indeed for him were simply studies. Bierstadt would have painted "Sierra Nevada Morning" in his studio, using studies such as these small paintings to jog his memory on things he had seen. This procedure was typical of artists of his time. They would visit the place they wanted to depict, make many studies, and then return home to paint large paintings in the leisure of the studio.

Works by Thomas Moran fill the walls of the next gallery on the right. The Gilcrease collection includes more than 2,000 works by Thomas Moran and this gallery gives you a sampling of his oils and watercolors. Moran, like Bierstadt, made a career as a painter by depicting some of the most spectacular areas of the American West. He follows Bierstadt by just a few years and yet his style is quite different in that he gives much less detail. He is more interested in the general impression. The largest painting depicts "Shoshone Falls on the Snake River" and is an excellent example of Moran's techniques.

The paintings to the right portray one of Moran's signature subjects, the Yellowstone area. In fact, Moran began the success of his painting career with depictions of the Yellowstone. He traveled with the expedition of Ferdinand Hayden to

the Yellowstone area in 1871 and, along with a photographer, recorded what the expedition saw there. The Yellowstone was one of the last areas to be explored by the United States Government and pictures were needed to verify the vivid stories of geysers and bubbling mud pots. Moran's paintings were actually used in Washington to convince Congress that this area needed to be preserved for future generations and indeed Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872, the first national park in the history of the world. The wall on the left displays paintings of Mexican subjects that Moran found intriguing.

On the right wall in the corridor are several paintings done in black, white and gray. Frederic Remington made these for illustrations in books and magazines. You can see some of the books in the cases on the wall. Remington was very successful as an illustrator, able to distill the printed word into forceful visual images. To the left are many of the great glories of the Gilcrease collection, the bronzes of Frederic Remington. This display includes 19 of the 22 bronze subjects made by Remington and all of the western subjects he made for display indoors. "Coming Thru the Rye," the sculpture of four hard-riding cowboys, is perhaps his

Detail, Alfred Jacob Miller, "S
William Drummond Stewar
Meeting Indian Chief
33 inches by 42½ inches
oil on canvas

**A newly remodeled and
expanded Museum Shop, a 250
seat auditorium and the
Rendezvous restaurant add to
the enjoyment of visitors to
Gilcrease Museum.**



signature piece. It depicts cowboys shooting off their pistols presumably in a Saturday night celebration in town. Remington was interested in the action of such a subject and particularly in the correct depiction of the gaits of the galloping horses. Remington made a study of horse movements aided by some of the first stop-action photography.

One of the distinctive things about bronzes is that more than one bronze can be made and each is considered an original. Remington took advantage of the skilled workmen he was able to find in New York to help him make very detailed bronzes through the lost wax process. From the moment Remington brought out his first bronze in 1895, his bronzes were a great success and many were sold. A number of sculptures in this room, however, are quite rare. The small bronze at the end of the room that depicts a cold cowboy and his horse withstanding the rigors of winter winds on the Plains is called appropriately "The Norther." Only three of these bronzes were made. "The Norther" is a wonderful example of the potential of the lost wax casting process to give fineness of detail and convincing contrast of surfaces. To the right "The Horse Thief," the Indian galloping free in a horse raid and covering his escape by a flying buffalo skin, is also a rare

Remington subject. Only four of these sculptures are known to exist. The horse thief is again a convincing representation by Remington of the drama of motion and an interesting example of Remington's care for the kinds of horses that are appropriate for his various subjects. This short-legged, thick-bodied, big-headed horse is without doubt an Indian pony and not a cavalry mount. Just to the right of the "Horse Thief" is the night painting "The Hungry Moon." While Remington continued throughout his short career to depict myriad detail in his bronzes, his late paintings tend to be impressionistic and "The Hungry Moon" is a good example of a painting in which he conveys the general idea and its mood without painting a great deal of detail.

Continuing to the next gallery, you will see on the main wall a very dramatic painting called "Breaking thru the Lines." It was made by an artist named Charles Schreyvogel who lived at the same time as Remington and who was a very conscious rival of Remington's in his subject matter and his descriptive style of painting. The sweat and danger of battle appealed to Schreyvogel, and his paintings often convey battle scenes with a high degree of drama.

Detail of an elk hide painted by
an unknown Indian artist.

**The new Gilcrease galleries
showcase the art and artifacts
against a background of white
linen walls and natural red oak
floors, highlighted by a state-of-
the-art lighting system.**



Perhaps the quietest painting in the Charles Schreyvogel gallery is the large one of a group of gesturing horsemen. It is called "Custer's Demand," and in it you can see General George Custer (he is the one wearing the red neckerchief), presenting his demand that these Indians return to the reservation. This painting was the cause of a public controversy between Remington and Schreyvogel. The story is that Remington took Schreyvogel to task about the accuracy of some of the painting's details in a letter that he wrote to a New York newspaper. Schreyvogel supporters responded and there was a public exchange about the historical accuracy of this painting.

Just around the corner is a gallery full of paintings by the most famous of the cowboy artists, Charlie Russell. The largest painting on the short wall — the one of the buffalo hunt — holds an interesting story for Gilcrease Museum. It was the first painting in the collection of Dr. Phillip Cole, a man who was born in Montana, but lived in New York for business reasons. After Cole's death in the early 1940s, Mr. Gilcrease was able to purchase the entire collection which included more than 600 paintings and sculptures of the American West. It is the Cole

collection that forms the bulk of the cowboy art at Gilcrease Museum. This large painting of the buffalo hunt is typical Charlie Russell — an accurate depiction of animals, accurate depiction of landscape and the way life is lived on the open range.

The blue painting to your right is a wonderful example of something that Charlie Russell does better than any other western artist: the use of humor in his paintings. The title of this painting is "Meat's Not Meat Til It's In the Pan" and the title simply underlines the dilemma of the story that Russell depicts. Charlie Russell's paintings nearly always tell a story and they often tell a humorous story with an overcast of nostalgia. Russell loved the cowboy life but knew that the day of the open range was ending and that the way of life he depicted was in most cases coming to an end.

In the middle of the wall across the gallery is yet another depiction of a buffalo hunt by Charlie Russell. Charlie seldom researched and depicted historic events but this painting shows a buffalo hunt that was staged for the entertainment of Grand Duke Alexis of Russia when he visited the United States in the 1860s. The Grand Duke is in the middle ground and you can identify

Detail, after Theodor DeBry,
"Columbus on First Landing in
India Is Received by the
Inhabitants with Many Presents,"
73½ inches by 55½ inches,
oil on panel.

The Gilcrease collection of artifacts span 15,000 years of native American cultures and is especially rich in representative pieces from the different Plains Indian tribes, from the Sioux, Crow, and Cheyenne tribes of the upper Plains regions to the Cherokee, Choctaw and Osage tribes most closely associated with the Indian Territory of Oklahoma.



him by his distinctive Russian hat. The military man next to him is General Phillip Sheridan, the Indian is Spotted Tail, and the cowboy is none other than Buffalo Bill Cody. After enjoying this buffalo hunt on the plains of Nebraska, the Grand Duke proceeded to Mardi Gras in New Orleans and some of the customs still rehearsed there each year are related to the Grand Duke's visit more than a hundred years ago. Russell's bronzes, and you see examples of them in the middle of this room, are usually smaller in scale than those of Remington and they always display a more impressionistic technique. Russell seems most interested in conveying the verve of the actual moment and less interested than Remington in painstaking depiction of the accoutrements of the scene.

Across the corridor is a gallery full of small paintings by an artist named Olaf Seltzer. Seltzer lived in Great Falls, Montana, which was Charlie Russell's town. He was greatly influenced by Russell in his subject matter and style of painting. Seltzer worked almost exclusively for Phillip Cole, the early western collector. He was commissioned to tell the story of

the West in painting. The small paintings on the right, miniature in impulse, depict events and situations that were typical of Montana history. The somewhat larger paintings to the left depict the great variety of occupations of the Old West and together form an encyclopedia of western lore.

While this room gives a good survey of Olaf Seltzer's paintings, the Gilcrease storage collection includes more than 400 works by this artist.

This is the end of the tour. If you'll proceed back towards the entrance, you'll come to the high-ceiling room called Helmerich Hall and to the left of Helmerich Hall is a whole series of galleries that depict the history of America. We call these our Theme Galleries and they are organized differently from the ones we just toured. Rather than each room being devoted to the work of just one artist, each room is devoted to some important concept in the founding and westward expansion of our country. We hope that you have time to tour these galleries as well because it is in the illustration of the breadth of American culture that the Gilcrease collection achieves its greatest significance. ◡

Detail, Albert Bierstadt,
"Mounted Trapper,"
12½ inches by 9 inches,
oil on paper.

Also included in the Gilcrease collection are historical accounts of life in the Americas, spanning the earliest European documentation of the New World, Native American cultures, traditions of the early settlers, the birth of the nation and westward expansion.



The new Gilcrease Museum, for in truth the museum is new even to the most experienced Gilcrease visitor, is a tribute to Thomas Gilcrease from the citizens of Tulsa. In a larger sense, it is also a tribute to them, to the foresight, acumen and understanding of those who pledged their resources to better preserve, protect and display the great national treasure that is the Gilcrease collection. The museum building is now an appropriate treasury. The beauty of the new and remodeled galleries, the new library, the visible artifact display system, the wonderful flow of space, together serve as an elegant and appropriate frame for the American art and history. Even the overlook areas provide natural reminders of the westering spirit of America and of the Gilcrease collection.

THE MUSEUM OF DISCOVERY

BY LOUISA BARRY COLLETT

Louisa Collett is director of public relations for Gilcrease Museum and has been writing about the museum and its founder since 1982.

Detail of architect's rendering of the new front entrance to Gilcrease Museum.



The museum building is more impressive now with its natural red oak floors, high ceilings, white linen walls and state-of-the-art lighting. The details add to the overall look: white pedestals for the sculptures, new green marble and heavy glass signs for the galleries, new cases for the important documents, new furniture for the library and public areas.

Perhaps the most exciting of the innovations is the visible artifact display storage on the second level just outside the reading room of the library. Here many of the 52,801 artifacts in the Gilcrease collection are displayed in floor-to-ceiling glass cases where visitors can study them from one side and curators work with them on the other. On display in this area are objects representing 15,000 years of native cultures representing every aspect of life.

The paintings and sculptures on display in the museum are best described in Fred Myers' tour of the art galleries in this issue; however, a few facts about the galleries themselves are especially noteworthy. For example, the new Gilcrease offers twice the gallery space of the old and all are designed with systems designed to protect the art: from light, changes of temperature and humidity, and fire.

The Master Plan for the museum

was designed by John Hilberry and Associates of Detroit, museum planning specialists, and Murray Jones Murray of Tulsa designed the expansion and remodeling.

Funds for the \$12,250,000 expansion and renovation of Gilcrease were raised from a combination of public and private sources under the direction of Charles E. Thornton, former president of the Thomas Gilcrease Museum Association. William F. Fisher, president-elect of the Association, has directed the construction as building committee chairman.

All in all, all of the 127,786 square feet of the new Gilcrease Museum beautifully serve to meet the objectives of this expansion program: to present more of the permanent collection, now estimated to include at least 30 percent on display; to provide space to host major loan exhibitions; to provide a new graphic arts center and an expanded library; and to improve access to artifacts and archival material.

The new Gilcrease Museum is truly a museum of discovery which offers every visitor exciting opportunities to discover the worlds of American history and art in the Gilcrease collection. ◡

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COVERS: Spotlighted are two figures from the Gilcrease collection of artifacts. On the front is a Mayan figurine, and on the back cover is a pre-Columbian gold bird.

ILLUSTRATIONS: All art and artifacts shown in this issue are from the collection of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art.

Additional copies of this special issue of the *Gilcrease Magazine* commemorating the dedication of the expanded and remodeled Gilcrease Museum may be purchased in the Gilcrease Museum Shop at \$6.00 each. Copies with the stone blue commemorative cover are \$7.50 each. To order by mail, please send a check (add \$1.00 for postage and handling) to the Gilcrease Museum Shop, 1400 Gilcrease Museum Road, Tulsa, OK 74127.

Augustus Saint-Gaudens,
"The Puritan" (1887),
32¾ inches by 19¾
inches, bronze.



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