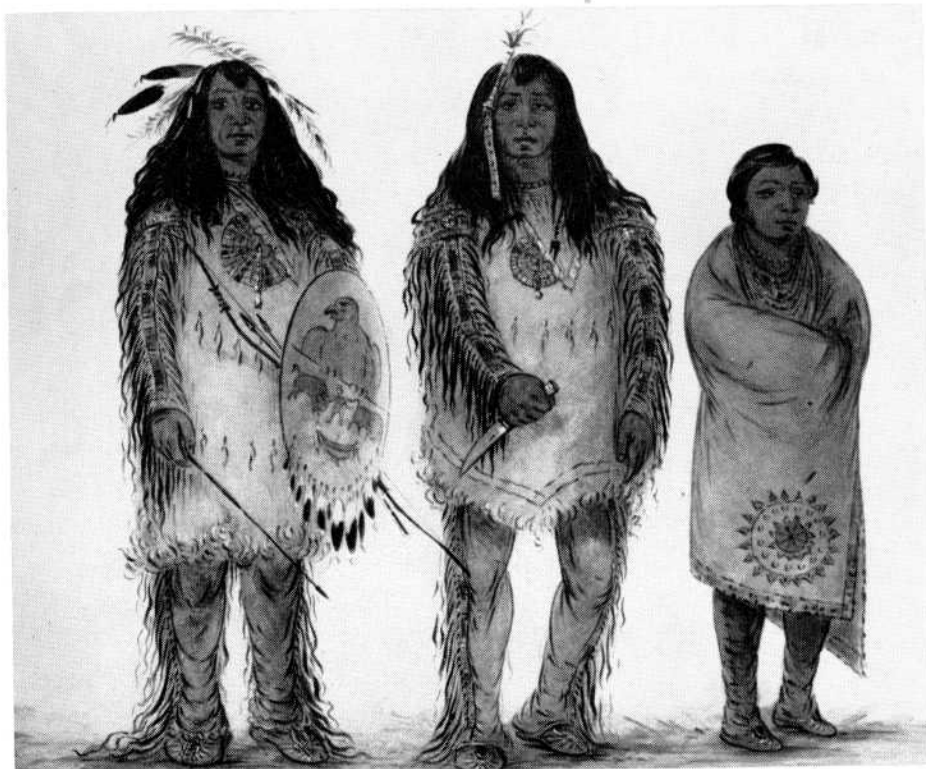


NEW BOOKS:

FROM SOONERS
AND THE O.U. PRESS

Reviewer—Carol J. Robinson

Catlin Indian paintings from his West Coast and South American travels are published for the first time in Oklahoma University Press' *George Catlin: Episodes from Life Among the Indians and Last Rambles with 151 Scenes and Portraits by the Artist.*



George Catlin: Episodes from Life Among the Indians and Last Rambles, with 151 Scenes and Portraits by the Artist, edited by Marvin C. Ross, University of Oklahoma Press. *George Caleb Bingham: River Portraitist* by John Francis McDermott, University of Oklahoma Press.

THE presses of a major publishing house must turn out a yearly supply of volumes of all shapes and sizes with a dozen different purposes in mind. Some of the books are good, some are not so good. Some are interesting, even absorbing; others are dull. Some are published because they will make money; a few see print because they deserve to be printed, money-makers or not. It must be a frustrating business.

Then a book comes along which makes up for the disappointments, a book to which any publisher would be proud to put his name. Two such books came along in the space of a month at the University of Oklahoma Press.

Strangely enough, both books concern American artists of roughly the same period, the middle 1800s; both books follow the same format, half text, half reproductions.

Of the two artists, George Catlin is probably the better known, especially to Oklahomans, who first encountered him in junior high state history books as the lawyer-turned artist tagging along with the army expeditions into the Indian lands. Catlin's

travel diary and the paintings he did of the Plains Indians have long been recognized as an outstanding contribution, not only to art, but also to knowledge of the life of the Indian frontier.

Now Marvin C. Ross, chief curator of art at the Los Angeles County Museum and formerly a member of the staff of the Walters Art Gallery, has gathered 152 scenes and portraits from Catlin's later, less publicized travels in South America and on the western coast of North America.

The stage for the presentation of Catlin's paintings is set with excerpts from his travel records, *Life Among the Indians and Last Rambles*.

George Caleb Bingham, on the other hand, left very little in the way of information about himself and his activities. Consequently conflicting stories of his early life have been passed down in legend fashion, legends which Author McDermott of Washington University in St. Louis now attempts to correct.

The fame of this artistically untutored Missourian from the river community of Franklin rests chiefly with his massive canvases and the countless portraits he did. But even more interesting are the sketches of the river people also reproduced in McDermott's book. Bingham knew the river and its people and remained devoted to recording the life that existed on this frontier trade route.

RECOMMENDED: Superb material superbly handled.



Bingham's portraits brought him recognition during his lifetime, but his genre drawings gave him a special place in American art. Reproduced from University of Oklahoma Press' *George Caleb Bingham: River Portraitist*.