POINTS WEST

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Cover: John James Audubon (1785-1851), J. T. Bowen, lithographer, *Eastern Grey Squirrel*, 1842. Hand-colored lithograph, 26 3/8 x 22 7/16 in. William E. Weiss Purchase Fund.

POINTS WEST

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The Buffalo Bill Historical Center is a private, non-profit educational institution dedicated to preserving and interpreting the cultural history of the American West. Founded in 1917, the Historical Center is home to the Buffalo Bill Museum, Cody Firearms Museum, Plains Indian Museum, Whitney Gallery of Western Art and McCracken Research Library.

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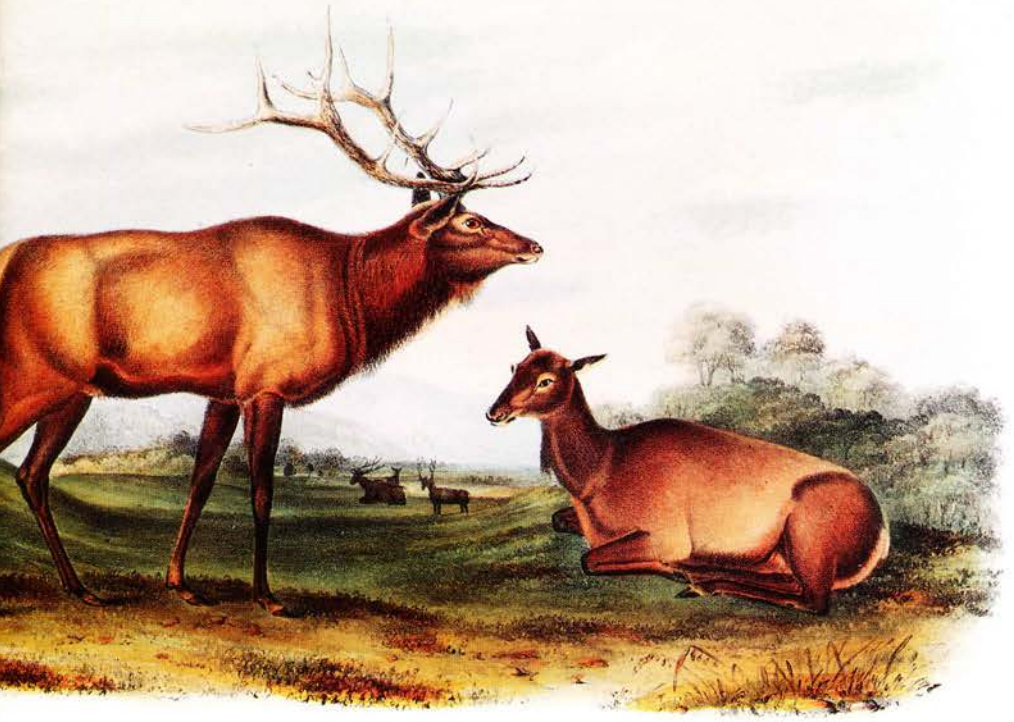
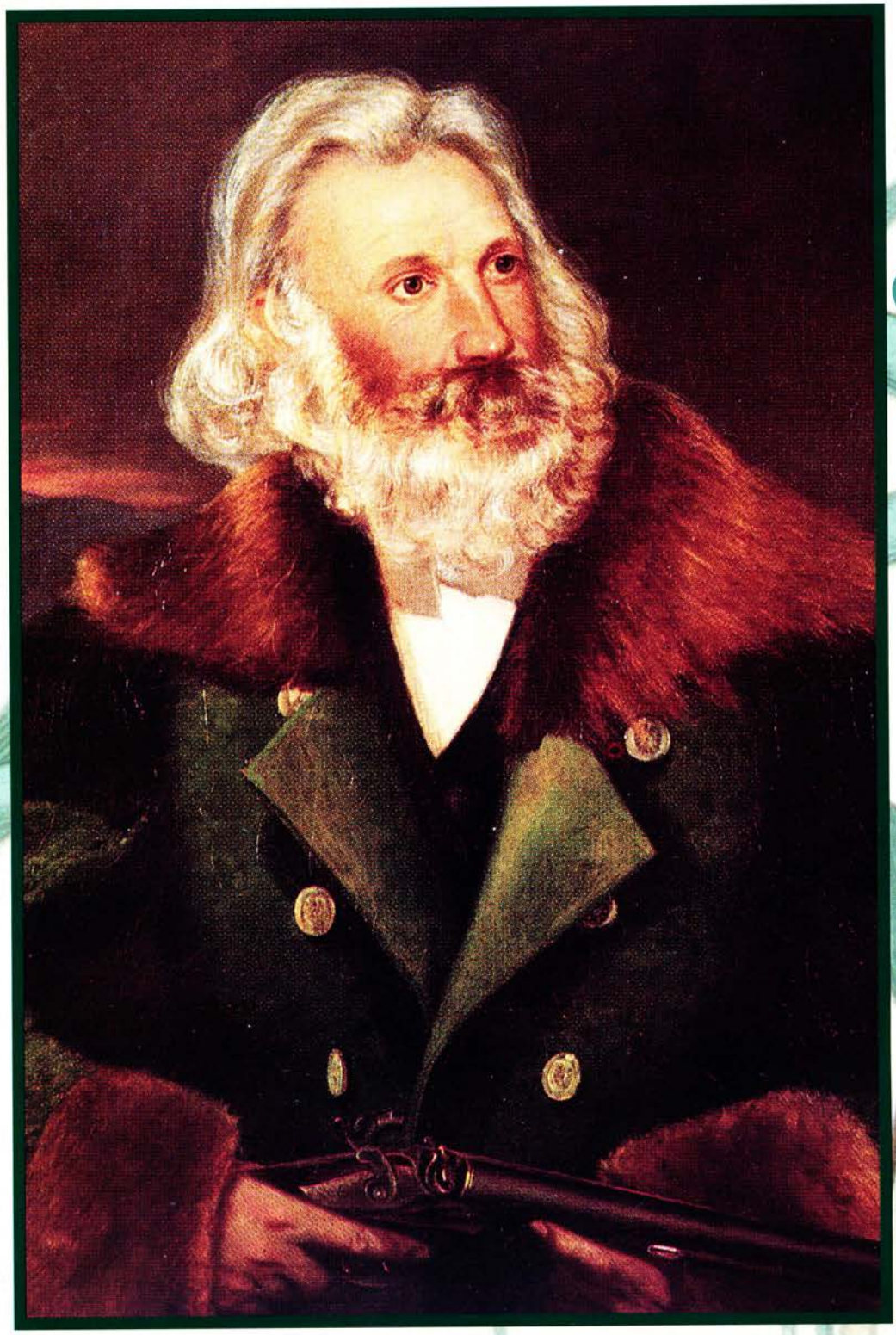


John James Audubon, drawn on stone by William E. Hitchcock. Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *American Elk-Wapiti Deer,* Plate LXII. Handcolored lithograph, 6 3/4 x 10 1/8 in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

CALENDAR

OF UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 7–9	COWBOY SONGS & RANGE BALLADS
MAY 7	ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE
JUNE 5–16	LAROM SUMMER INSTITUTE—SESSION I TWILIGHT TALKS, JUNE 8, 15, 22, 29
JUNE 17	PLAINS INDIAN MUSEUM RE-OPENS
JUNE 17–18	19TH ANNUAL PLAINS INDIAN MUSEUM POWWOW
JUNE 19–30	LAROM SUMMER INSTITUTE—SESSION II
JUNE 23	AUDUBON EXHIBITION—*John James Audubon In the West: The Last Expedition: Mammals of North America* opens
JUNE 24	"John James Audubon in the West—Exploring for the Quadrupeds," a talk by Robert McCracken Peck, 7 p.m.
JULY 2	AUDUBON EXHIBITION—*John James Audubon In the West: The Last Expedition: Mammals of North America* celebratory opening



John Woodhouse Audubon, *John James Audubon*, ca.1843. Oil on canvas, 35 x 27 1/2 in. Courtesy, Department of Library Sciences, American Museum of Natural History, New York.

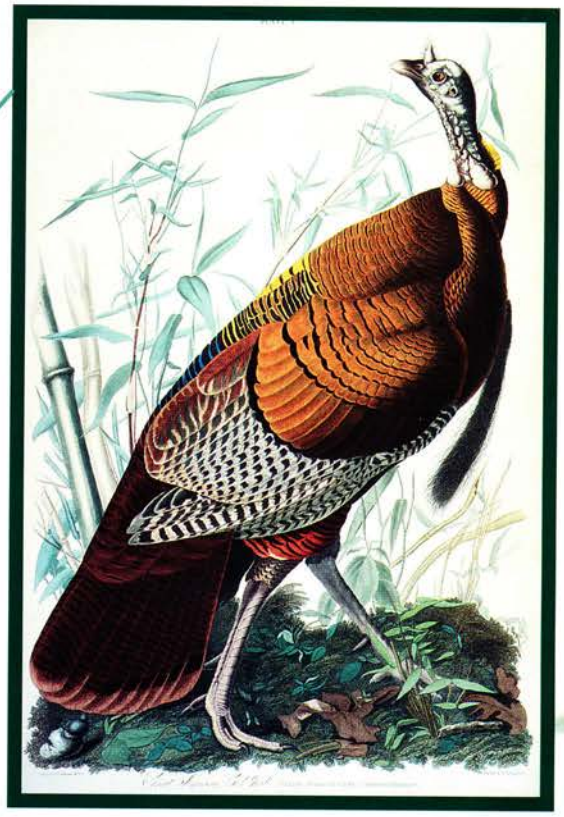
John Woodhouse Audubon painted this portrait of his father after John James Audubon returned from his trip up the Missouri River.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON
FEATHERS TO FUR

SARAH E. BOEHME, PH.D.
WHITNEY GALLERY CURATOR

The name of John James Audubon (1785-1851) resonates with associations with artistic images of birds, with conservation issues, and with geographic locations of the Deep South. Audubon does not always immediately spring to mind in listing the pantheon of the major artists of the American West, such as George Catlin, Thomas Moran, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell. Yet Audubon in 1843 made an important trip to the West, traveling up the Missouri River as far as the trading post Fort Union. He saw many of the same sites as Catlin and the Swiss artist Karl Bodmer who also portrayed the region in the early nineteenth century. Just as important as the actual trip to the West are the characteristics of Audubon's career. What propelled him westward on that trip was an approach to art that would be echoed in the careers of later artists of the West. An examination of Audubon's life and career reveals both the importance of his own accomplishments and sets the stage for understanding the elements that are important in analyzing western art.

The artistic career of John James Audubon provides the profile of a frontier artist. In the very early years of the nineteenth century, Audubon set out to discover the unknown. He wanted to catalogue and document comprehensively the wildlife in America. It was important that he encounter his subjects personally whenever possible and in their natural habitat. That goal meant that he spent many hours in the outdoors, away from the distractions of civilization, directly studying nature. He believed it was important to know his subjects well and to represent them accurately, yet he also approached his subjects with a romantic sensibility.



John James Audubon (1785-1851), *Great American Cock, Male*, 1825-1826, engraving, hand-colored, 39 5/8 x 26 1/4 in. Bequest of Robert D. Coe.

This the first print in Audubon's *The Birds of America*. This engraving was done by Audubon's first printer, William Lizars.

John James Audubon (1785-1851), artist; Robert Havell, engraver, *Barred Owl*, engraving, hand-colored, 37 1/2 x 24 3/4 in. Bequest of Robert D. Coe.

This engraving from *The Birds of America* features a squirrel in the composition with the owl. Audubon would later use the squirrel in his publication of *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America.*

As an artist, Audubon was essentially self-taught like many of the American artists who are associated with the West. For many years, America lacked the academies that nurtured European artists, so in the early years of America's history, artists either learned on their own or traveled to Europe. Although Audubon spent his formative years in France, he sketched and drew on his own, rather than having been a formal student in an academy. He seems to have promulgated the rumor that he studied under the great French neoclassical painter, Jacques Louis David, but that was one of several false stories that for many years were part of his biography.

"As an artist, Audubon was essentially self-taught like many of the American artists who are associated with the West."

Another story concerned his birth; a story circulated that he was part of the French royal family, the lost Dauphin. In reality, he was born Jean Rabine, the illegitimate son of Jean Audubon, a French sea captain, and Jeanne Rabine, a French servant girl who died a few months after the birth. He was born in the "New World" on April 26, 1785, in present-day Haiti. When he was four years old, his father took him to France, and he then lived in the family home in Nantes with his father's legal wife, Anne Moynet Audubon. He had an idyllic youth, spending much time in the countryside, devoting himself to his interests by sketching, especially birds. He studied briefly at a naval academy but was not a distinguished student.

Young Jean Jacques Audubon pursued art as an avocation, and it would only become his life's work after he unsuccessfully tried other businesses. He returned to the New World in 1803 primarily to avoid conscription into Napoleon's armies. Audubon's father had property in Pennsylvania and sent his son to manage a farm, Mill Grove, outside Philadelphia. He spent his time hunting and drawing birds in the countryside rather than running the farm. His tenure there was, however, very important because he met his future wife, Lucy Bakewell, whose family lived at a neighboring farm.

In 1807 Audubon, with a partner, opened a general store in Louisville, Kentucky. The following year he brought his new bride to Kentucky, and in 1809 their first son, Victor Gifford Audubon, was born. While in shopkeeping in Louisville, Audubon had an encounter that planted the idea for his future work. He met artist-naturalist Alexander Wilson, who came to Kentucky seeking subscribers for his publication, *American Ornithology,* an illustrated compendium of American birds. Although Audubon was still an amateur in drawing, seeing examples of Wilson's work introduced him to the idea that a publication of bird drawings was possible and it inspired his ambition. In 1810 the Audubon family moved to Henderson, Kentucky, which was a base for Audubon as he pursued business in commodities and eventually opened a mill with his brother-in-law, Thomas Bakewell, as partner. A second son, John Woodhouse Audubon, was born in 1812.

John Woodhouse Audubon (1785-1851). Drawn on stone by William E. Hitchcock. Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *American Black or Silver Fox*, Plate CXVI. Hand-colored lithograph, 6 3/4 x 10 1/8 in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

All during this time, Audubon actively followed his growing passion for studying birds by sketching, and he began to be successful in representing their physical characteristics. During these years in Kentucky, other sorrows occurred as two daughters born to the Audubons died in their early childhood years. When the mill failed, Audubon was forced to declare bankruptcy and spend time in prison due to his debts.

Audubon's business failures caused him to turn to his art as a way to support himself and his family. He moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, and took a position at the newly opened Western Museum, gathering animal specimens and doing taxidermy. He also taught art and supplemented his income by doing commissioned portraiture. He resolved to put his talents for drawing and his knowledge of bird life to use by embarking on a project to draw every species of American bird and to publish the results. Wilson's publication stood as the standard, but Audubon believed he could surpass Wilson's work both by cataloguing more birds, correcting errors and, most importantly, by presenting the birds in more lifelike poses. To do this, it was necessary for him to travel to observe many species. Securing a young companion, George Mason, to accompany him and paint backgrounds, Audubon journeyed to Louisiana in 1820 and spent the next years avidly pursuing his intention to draw birds, while doing some teaching and portrait work.

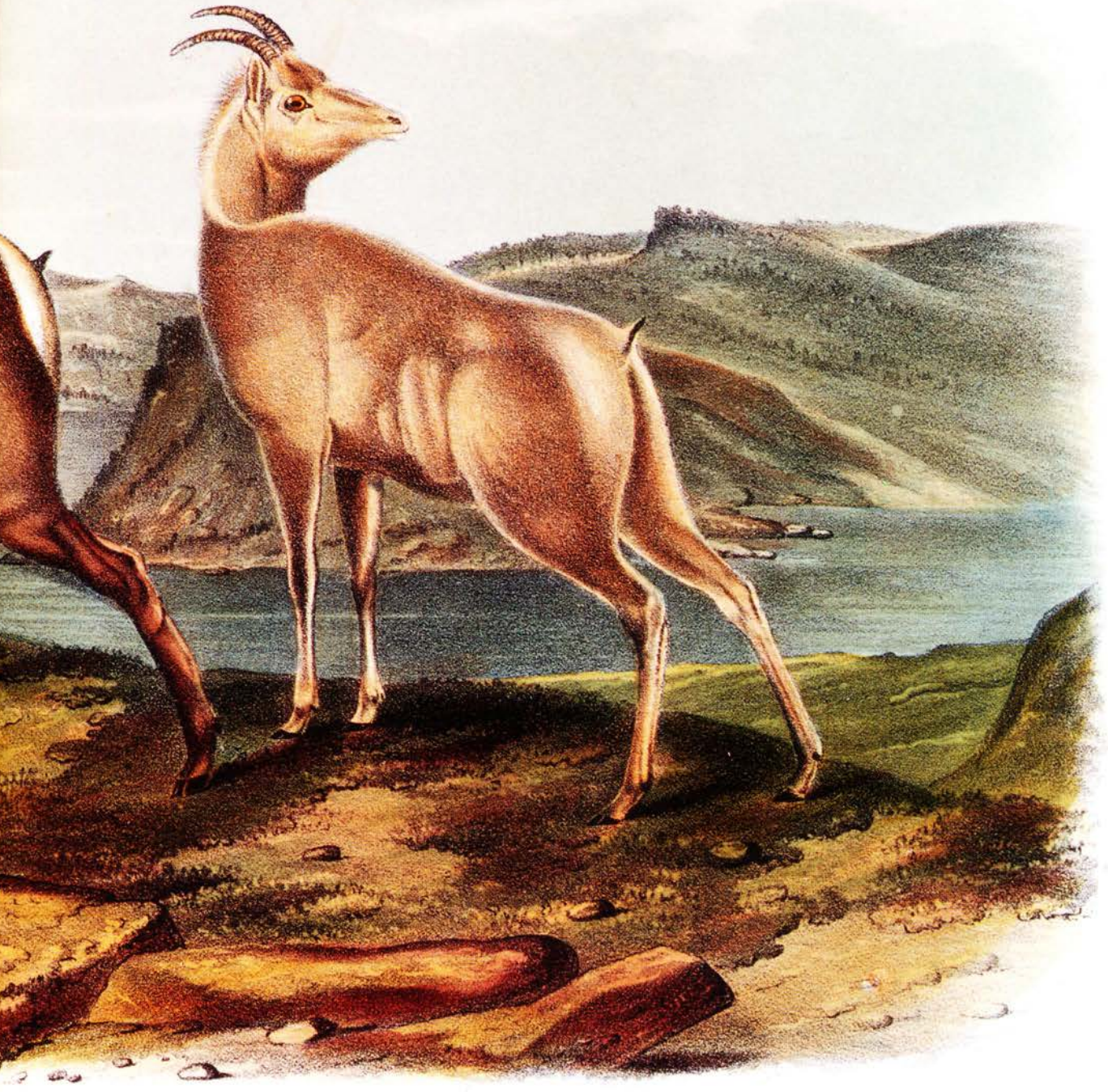
By 1824 Audubon had a sufficient body of work and sought a publisher in Philadelphia. Unsuccessful there, he looked back to the Old World and journeyed to the British Isles where he showed his bird drawings with some success. He first worked with engraver William Lizars, but production problems caused him to seek another printer. He then teamed with Robert Havell, whose printmaking studio made an important contribution to the success of Audubon's publishing project. In the years between 1827 and 1838, they produced *The Birds of America,* a publication of 435 etchings with hand-coloring. Known as the double elephant folio because of the size of the paper, the publication featured sheets measuring 29 1/2 x 39 1/2 inches, which allowed Audubon to represent the birds in life size. Audubon followed this extraordinary publication with text volumes, the *Ornithological Biography* and then an octavo-sized edition of *The Birds of America*. That publication would be produced in the United States by the lithographic firm of J.T. Bowen, in Philadelphia, where Audubon had first looked for a publisher. The collaboration with Bowen would be continued in Audubon's next great project, *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*, a catalogue of mammals, that would compel Audubon to make that 1843 trek to the Far West to see first-hand the wildlife he wanted to portray. The story of this publication will be told in the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's special exhibition, *John James Audubon in the West: The Last Expedition: Mammals of North America*, which opens June 24.

Overleaf, p.10–11: John Woodhouse Audubon, Drawn on stone by William E. Hitchcock. Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *Rocky Mountain Sheep.* Plate LXXIII. Hand-colored lithograph, 6 3/6 x 10 1/8 in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

On Stone by W

Drawn from Nature by J. W. Audubon

Rocky Mo



Hitchcock

Lith. Printed & Col.d by J.T. Bowen, Phil.

ntain Sheep.

John James Audubon. Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *American Beaver,* Plate XLVI. Hand-colored lithograph, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{8}$ in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

John James Audubon. Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *American Badger,* Plate XLVIi. Hand-colored lithograph, 6 3/4 x 10 1/8 in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

Here, gone,

John Woodhouse Audubon, *Black-Footed Ferret*, 1846. Oil on canvas, 22 x 27 1/8 in. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Gift of E. J. L. Hallstron.

Right: Photograph by LuRay Parker, courtesy of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET
(MUSTELA NIGRIPES)

"It is with great pleasure that we introduce this handsome new species."

AUDUBON AND BACHMAN, 1851

and back again.

DEBORAH DEIBLER STEEL
CURATORIAL ASSISTANT DRAPER
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

John James Audubon and John Bachman published the first scientific description of the black-footed ferret in 1851 in *Quadrupeds of North America*. Although Audubon's 1843 expedition collected 23 species of mammals, none were new to science and none were ferrets. Audubon and Bachman based their description and illustration of the black-footed ferret on a skin forwarded to them by fur trader Alexander Culbertson from the "lower waters of the Platte River" near Fort Laramie, Wyoming.

Apparently Audubon's specimen was lost or destroyed, because other naturalists questioned whether the animal actually existed. This tarnished Audubon's reputation. According to Elliott Coues, "Doubt has been cast upon the existence of such an animal, and the describer has even been suspected of inventing it to embellish his work." Coues vindicated Audubon when he published his 1877 confirmation of the species based on several well-documented specimens.

Audubon did not have the opportunity to observe living black-footed ferrets. He assumed they behaved like European ferrets: "It feeds on birds, small reptiles and animals, eggs, and various insects and is a bold and cunning foe to the rabbits, hares, grouse, and other game of our western regions." Audubon was wrong and the illustration in *Quadrupeds* reflects this error, showing a black-footed ferret above ground, raiding a nest of eggs (seen at left). In reality, black-footed ferrets are extremely specialized predators who live in prairie dog burrows and eat almost nothing but prairie dogs.

The black-footed ferret is a member of the weasel family (Mustelidae), which includes the skunk, badger, fisher, marten, otter, mink, wolverine and weasel. Black-footed ferrets have a long thin body, short legs and a very flexible spine, allowing them to run through small tunnels and turn in tight spaces. These adaptations allow them to live underground in prairie dog colonies where the temperature is more uniform than on the surface, it is easier to conserve water and they are protected from surface predators with a taste for ferrets. Potential predators include badgers, coyotes, bobcats, golden eagles, great-horned owls, ferruginous hawks and domestic dogs. Black-footed ferrets are strong and limber, allowing them to catch and kill prey larger than themselves. Adults are 18 to 22 inches long, and weigh between one and two-and-a-half pounds. Ferrets live alone except during breeding season. The kits are born in May or June, usually in litters of three or four.

Black-footed ferrets are the only ferrets native to North America. They have lived in North America for at least 30,000 years and have lived everywhere that prairie dogs have lived. At one time black-footed ferrets and prairie dogs ranged throughout the Great Plains and intermountain basins of the Rockies, from Canada to Mexico. When Audubon traveled west in 1843, there were as many as five billion prairie dogs in colonies covering millions of acres of grassland. This vast area of prairie dog colonies provided habitat for 500,000 to 1,000,000 ferrets (Anderson, 1986).

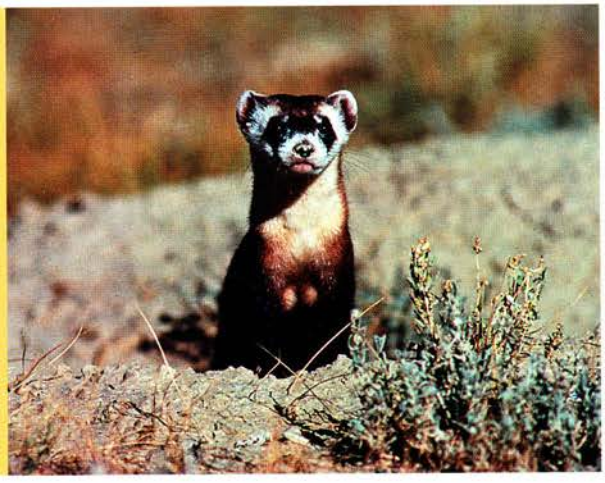
Although Audubon and Bachman were the first to describe black-footed ferrets for science,

the ferrets were known to others long before 1851. Black-footed ferret bones have been found in Paleo-Indian archeological sites dating back 10,000 years. Plains Indians used black-footed ferret skins for medicine pouches, headdresses and sacred objects. Juan de Oñate reported seeing ferrets in what is now the southwestern U. S. in 1599. The American Fur Company listed 86 black-footed ferret pelts in their records from 1835-39 (Anderson, et al.,1986).

THE MOVE TO EXTINCTION

As settlers moved west, large areas of the Great Plains were converted to farm- and ranchland. Prairie dogs were (and often still are) viewed as pests competing with livestock for forage. In 1902, the director of the U.S. Biological Survey, C. H. Merriam, estimated that prairie dogs reduce the productivity of land by 50-75%. Unfortunately, he did not base his estimate on scientific data. Although forage is shorter on prairie dog colonies, current research shows the nutrients, digestibility and productivity are enhanced (Miller, et al., 1996).

Beginning in the late 1800's, individual landowners poisoned prairie dogs with strychnine and other agents. Between 1915 and 1939, the U. S. Biological Survey poisoned millions of prairie dogs. The Animal Damage Control Act of 1931 authorized eradication programs still in place. These prairie dog eradication programs, diseases, recreational shooting, habitat fragmentation and habitat destruction due to development have drastically reduced their population. They now inhabit only about 1% of their previous range (Anderson, et al.,1986, and Miller, et al., 1996). In 1998, conservation organizations began pressuring the federal government to list the black-tailed prairie dog, one of five species of prairie dog, as an endangered species.



The lives of black-footed ferrets and prairie dogs are so closely intertwined that threats to prairie dogs affect black-footed ferrets. As populations of their prey dropped, so did the population of black-footed ferrets. Other animals dependent on prairie dogs, including burrowing owls, mountain plover, ferruginous hawks, swift foxes, and rattlesnakes, also declined across much of their range.

Black-footed ferrets now have the distinction of being one of the rarest animals in North America. By 1964 the federal government was ready to declare the black-footed ferret extinct, but a small population was discovered in South Dakota. When the Endangered Species Act passed in 1966, the black-footed ferret was one of the first animals listed as endangered. Only eleven litters of kits were produced during the ten years that biologists studied the South Dakota ferrets. Finally, the few survivors were captured for an unsuccessful breeding program. When the last captive South Dakota ferret died in 1979, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service again considered declaring black-footed ferrets extinct.

ON THE WAY BACK

Then in September 1981, a Wyoming ranch dog killed a ferret near Meeteetse! Federal authorities were notified and black-footed ferrets had another chance for survival of the species. Biologists studied ferrets in the field until 1985, when distemper killed most of the wild ferrets. Six ferrets were captured in the fall of 1985. The last survivors were captured in 1987, bringing the captive population to 18 black-footed ferrets. Those 18 animals were all that remained

between black-footed ferrets and extinction.

The ferrets were taken to the Sybille Wildlife Research and Conservation Education Center near Wheatland, Wyoming. Although there has been some contention between wildlife biologists and various government agencies about how to manage black-footed ferrets, the captive population reproduced successfully. As the population grew, the ferrets were distributed to zoos in the United States and Canada. By 1991, the breeding program had been successful enough to begin releasing ferrets into the wild in Shirley Basin, Wyoming. Between 1991 and 1994 almost 230 ferrets were released in Shirley Basin. Releases stopped in 1995 when sylvatic plague decimated the prairie dog population. Against the odds, the feisty ferrets survived in Shirley Basin and a few were sighted again in late 1996. Additional populations of ferrets have been established in Montana's Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (about 50 surviving animals) and Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, South Dakota's Badlands National Park (about 200 ferrets), and in Aubrey Valley, Arizona (a few).

Since Audubon's description in 1851, black-footed ferrets have been reduced from a population of hundreds of thousands to a remnant teetering on the brink of extinction. Their survival depends on preservation of habitat that ferrets, prairie dogs and an entire prairie ecosystem depend upon. Preservation of that habitat depends on human choices and public policy decisions.

Photographs by LuRay Parker. Courtesy of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Overleaf, p. 18–19: John James Audubon, Drawn on stone by William E. Hitchcock. Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *Prairie Dog–Prairie Marmot Squirrel*, Plate XCIX. Hand-colored lithograph, $6^{3}/_{4}$ x $10^{1}/_{8}$ in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

Anderson, Elaine, S. C. Forrest, T. W. Clark and L. Richardson. 1986. Paleobiology, biogeography, and systematics of the black-footed ferret, Mustela nigripes (Audubon and Bachman), 1851: in *The Black-Footed Ferret, Great Basin Naturalist Memoirs* #8, 11-62.

Audubon, J.J. and J. Bachman. 1851-1854. *Quadrupeds of North America*: 3 vols., V.G. Audubon, New York.

Coues, Elliott. 1877. *Fur-Bearing Animals: A Monograph of North American Mustelidae*: Government Printing Office, Washington, DC.

Miller, Brian, R. P. Reading, S. Forrest. 1996. *Prairie Night: Black-Footed Ferrets and the Recovery of Endangered Species*: Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC, p. 254.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 1997. *Black-Footed Ferret: Wild Times*, v. 13, n. 8.; http://gf.state.wy.us/HTML/wildtimes/ferret.htm

N° 20

On Stone by

Drawn from Nature by J.J. Audubon, F.R.S.F.L.S

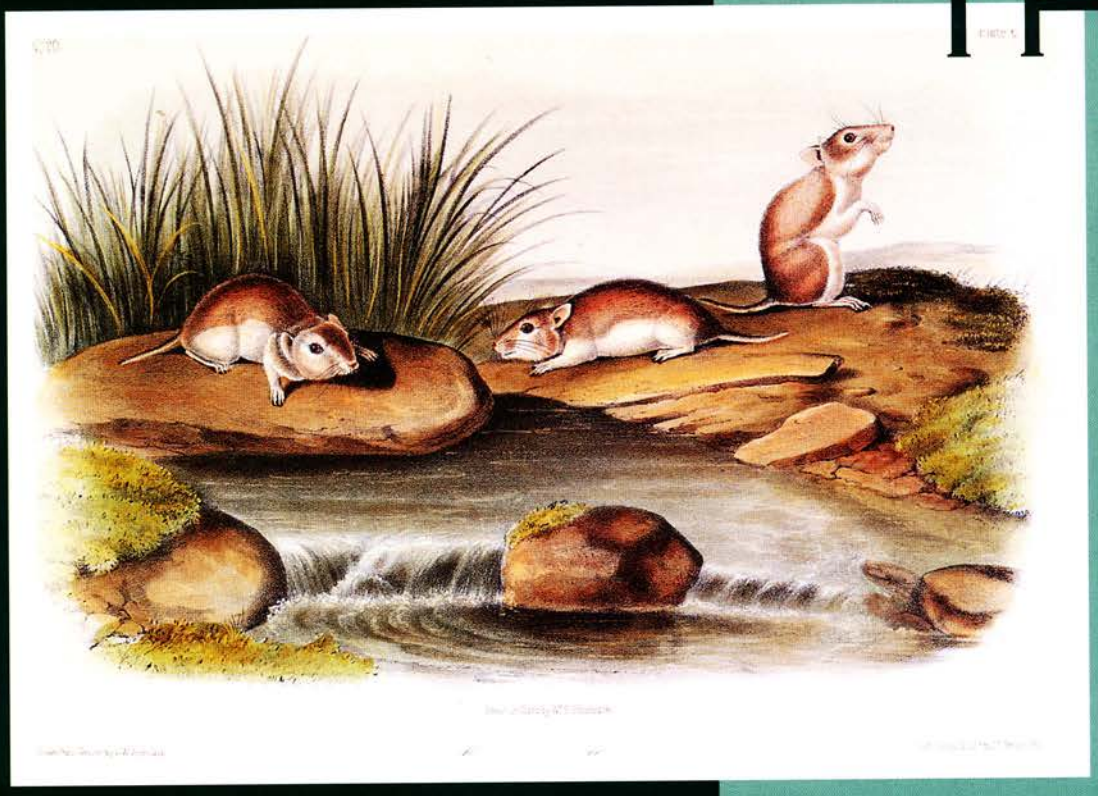
Prairie Dog

E.Hitchcock

rie Marmot Squirrel.

Lith. Printed & Col.d by J.T. Bowen, Phil.

"THOU



John Woodhouse Audubon, drawn on stone by William E. Hitchcock, Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *Missouri Mouse*, Plate C. Hand-colored lithograph, 6 3/4 x 10 1/8 in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

LIKE THE STEPMOTHER WHO RAISED HIM, LUCY'S GREATEST GIFT TO AUDUBON WAS ALLOWING HIM TO BE WHO HE WAS AND PURSUE THE ARTISTIC VISION THAT HAD PROPELLED HIM SINCE CHILDHOOD.

Friends, lovers and

ART MY FRIEND"

THE WOMEN IN AUDUBON'S LIFE

BARBARA FOOTE-COLVERT

Two similar women eminently shaped the life and career of John James Audubon: his stepmother and his wife.

Audubon was born in Santo Domingo on April 26, 1785, the illegitimate son of a sea captain and a chambermaid. His mother, Jeanne Rabin, died when he was barely seven months old. His father, Captain Jean Audubon, put his 3-year-old son on a ship bound for Nantes, France to be raised by his middle-aged wife. A year later, a half-sister, Rosa, followed.

Fourteen years her husband's senior, Anne Moynet Audubon found herself at age 58 with two small children to raise and a husband who spent most of his time at sea or in ports of call. But this woman was not to be an aloof stepmother. She embraced the two young children as her own and showered them with a life of rich experience and educational opportunity.

Young Audubon was offered a broad education that included lessons in drawing, music, dancing and fencing, and the traditional academic disciplines of geography, mathematics and mechanical drawing, which his father believed were fundamental for him to make his way in the world. The great blessing of his childhood, however, was his stepmother's unqualified encouragement, especially for his wanderings into the countryside, and his fascination with all of nature. The boy often skipped school, especially when his father was away, and would venture into the woods where he gathered all manner of treasures—birds, bugs, lichens, feathers and rocks—and observed the abundant wildlife. He was especially fascinated by birds, climbing trees to collect their nests and eggs and to observe them in flight. If his meanderings caused him to be late for a meal, there would be no rebuke from his stepmother, only supper waiting to be warmed and set before him. Throughout his life, Audubon remembered his stepmother with great affection and wrote that as a child he had been "received by the Best of Women, raised and cherished by her to the utmost of her Means." [1]

"She certainly spoiled me, hid my faults, boasted to everyone of my youthful merits and, worst of all, said frequently in my presence that I was the handsomest boy in France,"[2] he would write later in life. It is no surprise that he would select as a lifetime partner a woman who was a match for his stepmother's unqualified love and generosity of spirit.

Lucy Bakewell was raised in England in a life of middle class privilege and opportunity and moved with her family in her late teens to Fatland Ford Farm outside of Philadelphia. The Bakewell property adjoined Mill Grove Farm where

Lucy

Lucy Bakewell Audubon, courtesy of the Mill Grove Museum Collection, Mill Grove Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary, Audubon, PA.

Captain Audubon had sent his only son to escape the draft into Napoleon's army and to make his way in a potential mining operation. The mining enterprise would eventually fail but the attraction that began between 17-year-old Lucy and the striking Frenchman, then 20, was immediate and led to an extended courtship that foretold a rich and challenging life.

Four years later the couple was married on April 5, 1808. The bride left the security of her upbringing and headed west with her groom for what was then the edge of the frontier: Louisville, Kentucky. The Audubons welcomed their first child, Victor Clifford, on June 12th of the following year. The young family then moved to Henderson, Kentucky, where Lucy's gifts as an educated countrywoman put her in good stead: she tended a large family garden and began to teach.

"Thou art my friend,"[3] Audubon said of his wife, and she was all of that and more. The family suffered the loss of two infant daughters, business failures, bankruptcy, and the scorn of family and friends. At the of age 32, Lucy Bakewell Audubon, to defray the family's debts, had lost her home and all the antiques and furnishings bestowed by her mother's estate. On a summer morning in 1819, she stood with her young sons, aged ten and seven, and watched her husband disappear into the woods wondering when she would ever see him again.[4] The 35-year-old Audubon wrote in his journal, "Without any money, my talents are to be my support and my enthusiasm will be my guide in my difficulties."[5] Audubon was bound for Louisville with the only prized possessions he had left to him: his gun and his portfolio of bird pictures.

Lucy persevered and proved more than capable of meeting the challenges they faced. She worked as a teacher and governess, boarded herself and her children with families where she taught their children and the neighbors' children with her own. When an engraver and publisher for "Birds of America" could not be found in this country, Lucy worked for six years to raise enough money for her husband to seek publishing opportunities in England. For months, sometimes years at a time, she was the sole support for herself and her sons. Yet through the family's darkest and most challenging years, Lucy Bakewell Audubon held a steadfast belief in her husband's talent as an artist and in the vision of his work as a naturalist, and staunchly defended him against his critics.

"On more than one occasion his genius for discovery was used against him," she said.[6]

Like the stepmother who raised him, Lucy's greatest gift to Audubon was allowing him to be who he was and to pursue the artistic vision that had propelled him since childhood. Had Lucy not been an independent woman with nerve and an imagination of her own, Audubon would, in all likelihood, have abandoned his life's work along the way, and his genius would have been lost to the world.

Friends, lovers, and helpmates, the Audubons were full partners throughout the ebb and flow of their life together. "With her, was I not always rich?" John said of his Lucy,[7] Together, they delivered to the world an artistic legacy such as it had never seen before or since. Their grown sons worked into the family publishing enterprise —Victor Gifford overseeing the publication of many of his father's works and John Woodhouse as an artist in their production.

An intriguing footnote to the Audubon story occurred after his death in 1851 and serves to underline the importance of Lucy's role in his life. Picking up the profession that had served her well, she started a school for children who lived near the Audubon home. One of her students, George Grinnell, became a lover of birds and eventually founded the Audubon Society.[8] Audubon's legacy would continue to impact the world, and his beloved birds would be revered and protected.

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[1] Strehinsky, Shirley. *Audubon, Life and Art in the American Wilderness*. New York, Random House, 1993, p. 13.

[2] Ibid., p. 16.

[3] Rourke, Constance. *Audubon*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936, p. 31.

[4] Op.cit., Strehinsky, p. 99.

[5] Op.cit., Rourke, p. 135.

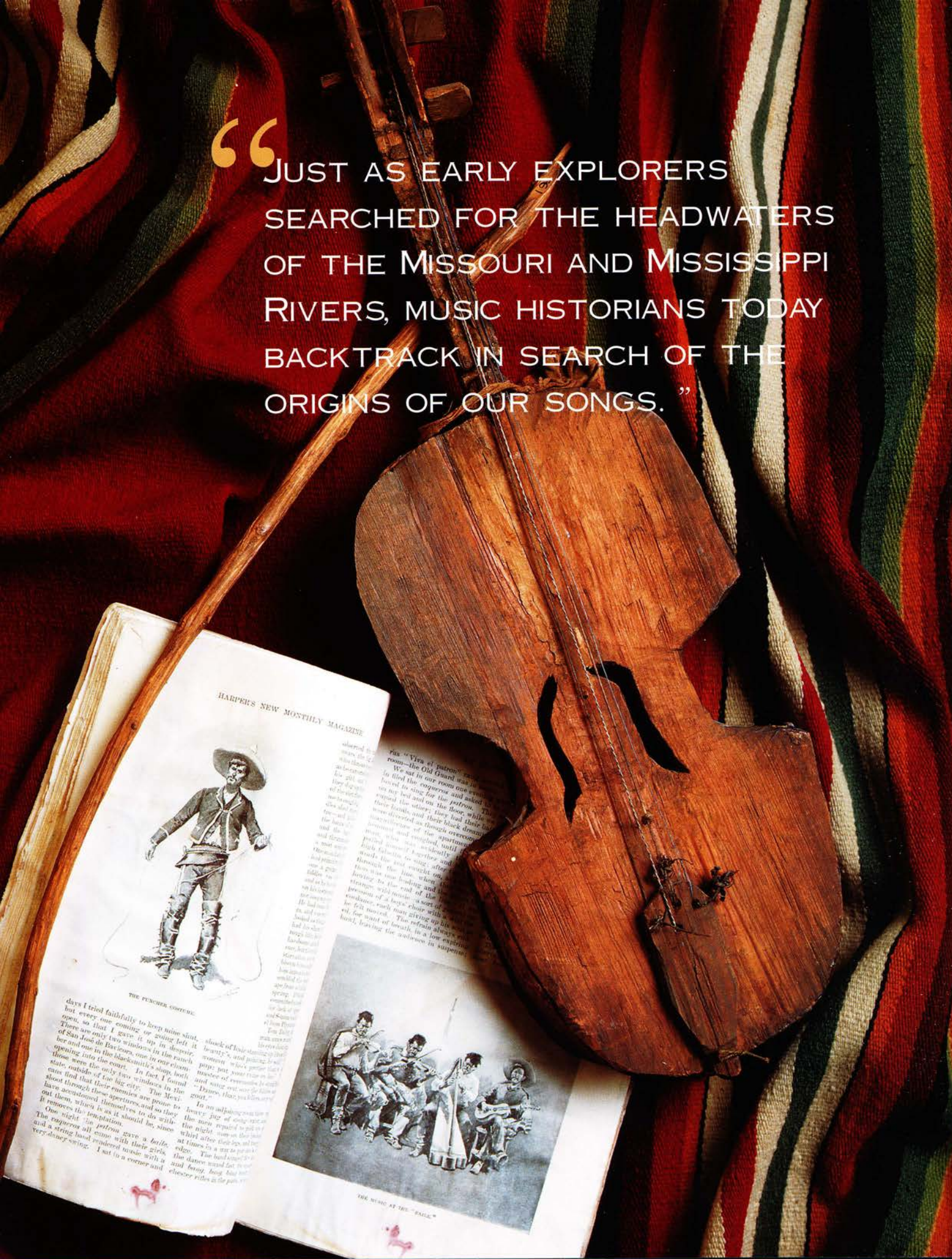
[6] Ibid., Rourke, p. 144.

[7] Kendall, Martha. *John James Audubon*. Brookfield, Connecticut: The Millbrook Press, 1993, p. 33.

[8] Op.cit., p. 41.

John James Audubon, drawn on stone by William E. Hitchcock, Lithographed, printed and colored by J. T. Bowen. *Swift Fox*, Plate LII, Hand-colored lithograph, 6 3/6 x 10 1/8 in. Gift of Deborah B. Chastain.

“Just as early explorers searched for the headwaters of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, music historians today backtrack in search of the origins of our songs.”



FIDDLE IN THE CAMP

LILLIAN TURNER
PUBLIC PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

There they lay beside the trail—Aunt Martha's spinning wheel, Father's anvil, Mother's little trunk filled with the family's heirlooms—testimony to the difficulty of the road ahead and the need to spare the team any unnecessary weight. This was the fate of many a family's prized possessions on the trail west.

But there was one family treasure that was never left behind for it took up no space nor added any weight. That was the family's "songbag," well-worn from use by generations of their kinfolk, some songbags still bearing traces of their European and African origins.

Wherever Americans went, their music traveled with them. Explorers, mountain men, homesteaders, cowboys, loggers, riverboat pilots, teamsters, sailors—music was an integral part of their culture and traveled the rivers, mountain passes, desert crossings, and prairies with them as they sought new land and new adventures.

Songs were born of those adventures and did not always reflect the difficulties of the trek but rather the humor often necessary to cope with the experience. Who doesn't remember sweet Betsey from Pike who headed west with her lover Ike and their two yoke of oxen, a large "yaller" dog, a tall shanghai rooster and one spotted hog? Their misadventures enlivened evening campfires and inspired others to tell about

... a pretty little girl in the outfit ahead,
Whoa! Ha! Buck and Jerry boy.
I wish she was by my side instead,
Whoa! Ha! Buck and Jerry boy.
Look at her now with a pout on her lips
As daintily with her finger tips
She picks for the fire some buffalo chips.
Whoa! Ha! Buck and Jerry boy.

WHEREVER AMERICANS WENT, THEIR MUSIC TRAVELED WITH THEM.

But long before covered wagons began their journeys across the plains, music headed west with earlier adventurers. The official baggage list for the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804 included a tambourine and a half dozen jaw harps. But packed away in the gear of the Corps of Discovery were two fiddles belonging to Pvts. George Gibson and Pierre (Peter) Cruzatte. On June 9, 1805, they camped on the Missouri River in present-day Montana: "In the evening Cruzatte gave us some music on the violin and the men danced, sang, and were extremely cheerful." The Corps celebrated the 4th of July: "Our work being completed, we had a drink of spirits—the last of our stock—save a little reserved for sickness. The fiddle was played by Cruzatte, and the men danced until 9 p.m. Festive jokes and songs prevailed, and the men were merry until late at night."

George Caleb Bingham, American (1811-1879), *Jolly Flatboatmen in Port*, 1857, Dusseldorf, Germany. Oil on canvas, 47 1/16 x 69 5/8 x 5 in. Courtesy of the Saint Louis Art Museum.

By mid-October on the Columbia River, there was an exchange of musical cultures: "We halted on a point at the junction of the Snake and Columbia rivers. There were Indians here and we smoked with them. About two hundred came from their camp, singing and dancing as they came . . . [Three days later] We landed, and were joined by many natives who brought us some firewood—which was very acceptable, for none is to be found about. Cruzatte and George Gibson played the violins which delighted them greatly."

Another adventurer was artist George Catlin whose trip to the Pipe Stone Quarry in 1836 was accompanied by music—"the thrilling notes of Mr. Wood's guitar, and 'chansons pour rire'" from the boatmen. Catlin's traveling companion, Mr. Robert Serril Wood, was an Englishman "with fund inexhaustible for amusement and entertainment." Monsieur La Fromboise, in the employ of the American Fur Company, guided them to their destination.

Catlin recalled: "La Fromboise . . .has a great relish for songs and stories, of which he gives us many, and much pleasure; and furnishes us one of the most amusing and gentlemanly companions that could possibly be found. My friend Wood sings delightfully, also, and as I cannot sing, but can tell, now and then, a story, with tolerable effect, we manage to pass away our evenings, in our humble bivouack [sic], over our buffalo meat and prairie hens, with much fun and amusement."

The explorers, artists, and writers who told of their experiences in the West provided an added incentive to those individuals already contemplating a move.

Many Americans were seeking change—in occupation, social status, wealth. The West would change their lives, but just as it affected the lives of the people, it also brought changes to their music. But this process had begun long before the music started across the prairies.

Although "Oh! Susanna," the song most often associated with the forty-niners and pioneers, was written by a known composer—Stephen Foster, most songs that came west were of unknown origin. There was a sense of the familiar about these songs for many had their roots in Scottish, English, Irish, and Welsh tunes that had been passed on for generations. This is evident as we follow the trail of an English song to the American Southwest.

Just as early explorers searched for the headwaters of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, music historians today backtrack in search of the origins of our songs. Jim Bob Tinsley is one such historian and one of the best at tracing a song along an often-circuitous trail eastward from a version he finds in the West. The following account resulted from his tracking a favorite song of cowboys in the Southwest, "The Hills of Mexico," a tale of cattle, storms, stampedes, Indians, and murder. The first and last stanzas set the stage and hint at the outcome:

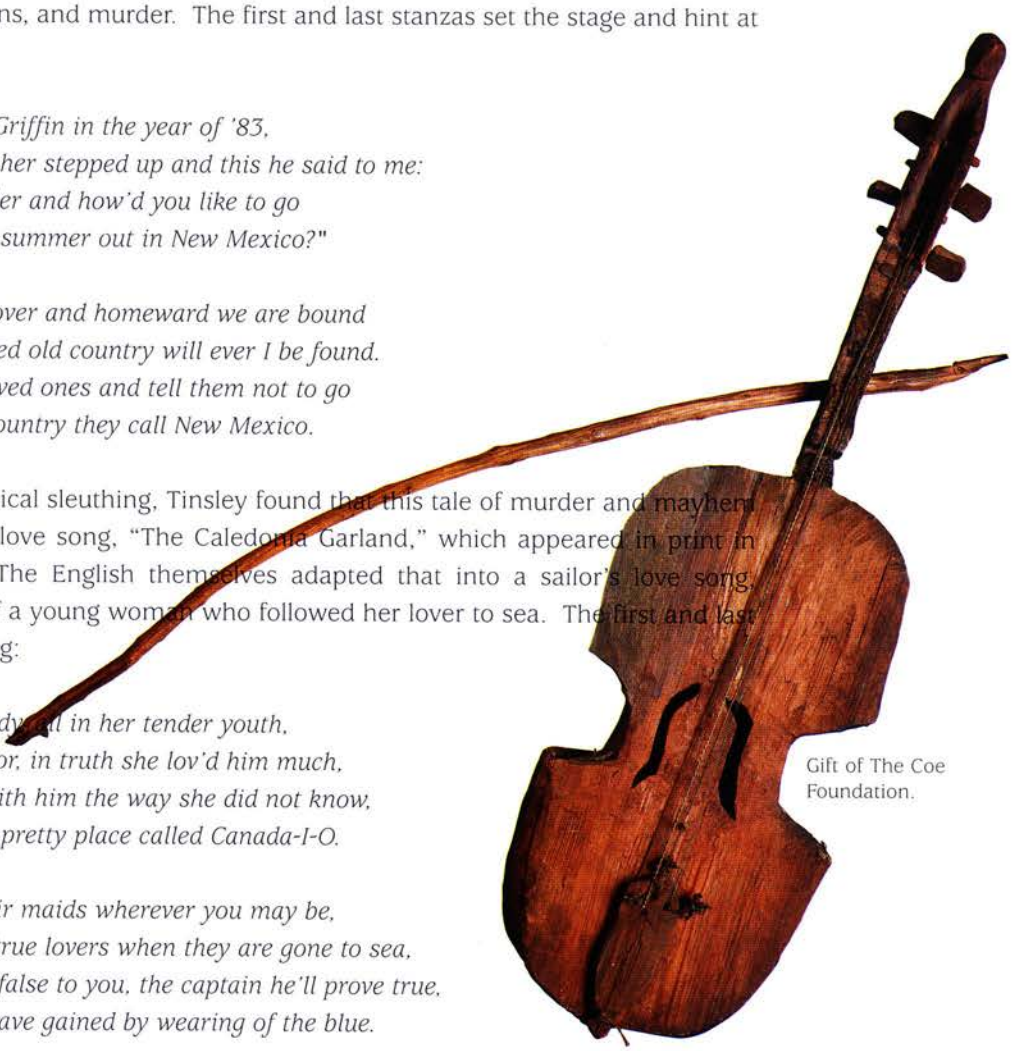
It was in the town of Griffin in the year of '83,
When an old cowpuncher stepped up and this he said to me:
"Howdy do, young feller and how'd you like to go
And spend a pleasant summer out in New Mexico?"

And now the drive is over and homeward we are bound
No more in this damned old country will ever I be found.
Back to friends and loved ones and tell them not to go
To the God-forsaken country they call New Mexico.

At the end of his musical sleuthing, Tinsley found that this tale of murder and mayhem began as an old English love song, "The Caledonia Garland," which appeared in print in America before 1800. The English themselves adapted that into a sailor's love song, "Canada-I-O," the story of a young woman who followed her lover to sea. The first and last stanzas provide the setting:

There was a gallant lady all in her tender youth,
She dearly lov'd a sailor, in truth she lov'd him much,
And for to go to sea with him the way she did not know,
She longed to see that pretty place called Canada-I-O.

Come all you pretty fair maids wherever you may be,
You must follow your true lovers when they are gone to sea,
And if the mate prove false to you, the captain he'll prove true,
You see the honour I have gained by wearing of the blue.



Gift of The Coe Foundation.

A New England lumberjack encountered this song after having just spent a winter in a Canadian lumber camp. Having found it anything but "that pretty place," he produced his own version of the song, introducing the first change in tone.

It happened late one season in the fall of '53,
A preacher of the gospel one morning came to me.*
Said he, "My jolly fellow, how would you like to go
To spend one pleasant winter up in Canaday-I-O?"

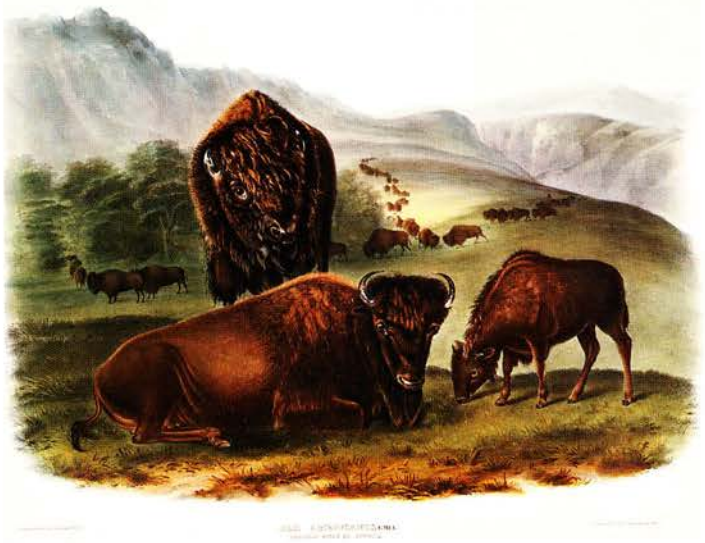
To describe what we have suffered is past the art of man,
But to give a fair description, I will do the best I can;
Our food the dogs would snarl at, our beds were on the snow;
We suffered worse than murderers up in Canaday-I-O.

[*a hiring agent]

As lumbermen moved west, variants of Ephraim Braley's song, by now called "Michigan-I-O," appeared in lumber camps in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota.

By 1873 the song had moved across country to the plains of Texas and had been adopted by buffalo skinners who added the final twist to the story, the mysterious death of the boss who refused to pay his crew at the end of the season.

It happened in Jacksboro in the year of seventy-three,
A man by the name of Crego came stepping up to me,
Saying, "How do you do, young fellow, and how would you like to go
And spend one summer pleasantly on the range of the buffalo?"



John James Audubon (1785–1851), printed by J. T. Bowen (1801–1856), *Bos Americanus*, 1845–1848, Plate LVII. Hand-colored lithograph on paper, 21 3/16 x 27 1/4 in.

The skinners "left old Crego's bones to bleach" and told others not to go "for God's forsaken the buffalo range and the damned old buffalo." By 1883, the New Mexico cowboys had dealt a similar fate—in song—to their foreman in the hills of Mexico.

The changes in America's folk music keep it a vital part of our culture. This is evident at the numerous music gatherings across the country each year. Old songs still inspire new ones. This occurred at the Historical Center's annual Cowboy Songs and Range Ballads program. Listening to "The Leaving of Liverpool," one of the sea songs at the roots of cowboy music, Ed Stabler—musician, singer, songwriter—wrote a cowboy's version, "The Leavin' of Texas":

"And it's fare thee well my own true love.
We'll meet another day, another time.
It's not the leavin' of Texas that's grievin' me,
But my darlin' who's bound to stay behind."

And the music goes on, growing, adapting, and enriching our culture.

The LEGACY *of* SONG

What is the legacy of a song? It is a non-tangible connection to our past. The lullaby you sang to your child was the same one your great-grandmother sang sitting in an old green rocker on your grandparents' porch in North Carolina. You were not aware of it, but that song had slipped into the baggage you brought west with you to be shared with your children and grandchildren. Tangible heirlooms can only be passed from one person to another. Songs can be given to all members of each generation.

Each family that came west brought with them a family songbag, their collective memory of songs handed down to them from their kinfolk. As generation followed generation, songs slipped from the bag and were lost until today only a handful remain of those which entertained family gatherings a century and more ago.

The West's rich musical tradition that remains is as varied as the people who settled here: cowboys, miners, railroaders, lumberjacks, dance hall girls, homesteaders, schoolmarms, storekeepers, preachers.

At the Historical Center, we recognize the importance of preserving our past. Artifacts, paintings, manuscripts, photographs are at the heart of a museum's collections. But it is just as important to preserve the music and stories that were as much a part of a family's daily life as the artifacts displayed in the galleries.

Recognition of the significance of at least one aspect of the West's music tradition led to the creation of the Historical Center's Cowboy Songs and Range Ballads program in 1982 to preserve traditional cowboy music at the grassroots level and to encourage those people still singing the songs. It is the celebration of a living culture, seeking to preserve that culture's contributions to our musical heritage.

> "The Buffalo Bill Historical Center's stellar dedication to the preservation and perpetuation of occupational songs is one of the best things about the museum, signifying a well-seasoned, well-rounded approach to generating, maintaining, and disseminating public interest in a precious, perishable legacy. To incorporate songs and stories at such a high level into the galaxy of other aesthetic, historical, anthropological, and sectional activities of the museum does noble service to our American heritage. As the greatest museum of the American West, you are in a position to do it right. And you do."
>
> Stuart M. Frank, Director
> Kendall Whaling Museum
> Founder of the Mystic Seaport Sea Music Festival and Symposium

It is in the sharing of these songs at each year's gathering that discoveries are made. Songs thought lost have been found. A song which might have slipped from one family's recollection is found tucked away in the memory of another. At the end of the Cowboy Songs weekend, the performers leave with songbags stuffed with new songs learned or another variation of an old favorite.

COWBOY SONGS &

Aware of the importance of preserving this musical exchange, each Cowboy Songs program has been recorded, resulting in the acquisition of hundreds of hours of tapes. These have become the core of the Center's Cowboy Songs Archive. This repository of tapes, records, sheet music, songbooks, field notes, and musical instruments is a growing collection of enormous value to folklorists, music historians, performers, songwriters, and those interested in the history and culture of the West.

The Historical Center's Cowboy Songs Archive was founded in 1992 at the encouragement of Alan Lomax, keynote speaker during the 1988 Cowboy Songs program. Alan Lomax, son of pioneer folklorist John Lomax, has an international reputation as a folklorist and collector of traditional music. He accompanied his father on collecting trips across the United States, served as assistant archivist of the folk music section of The Library of Congress, spent two years with CBS Radio and two years with the BBC producing survey programs of folk music. A recipient of the President's Medal of Honor for the Arts, he has devoted much of his life to researching folk music around the world.

Charles J. Belden,(1887-1966), *Cowboys Around the Chuckwagon at Night*. Glass Plate Negative, 5 1/2 x 7 3/8 in. Charles Belden Collection.

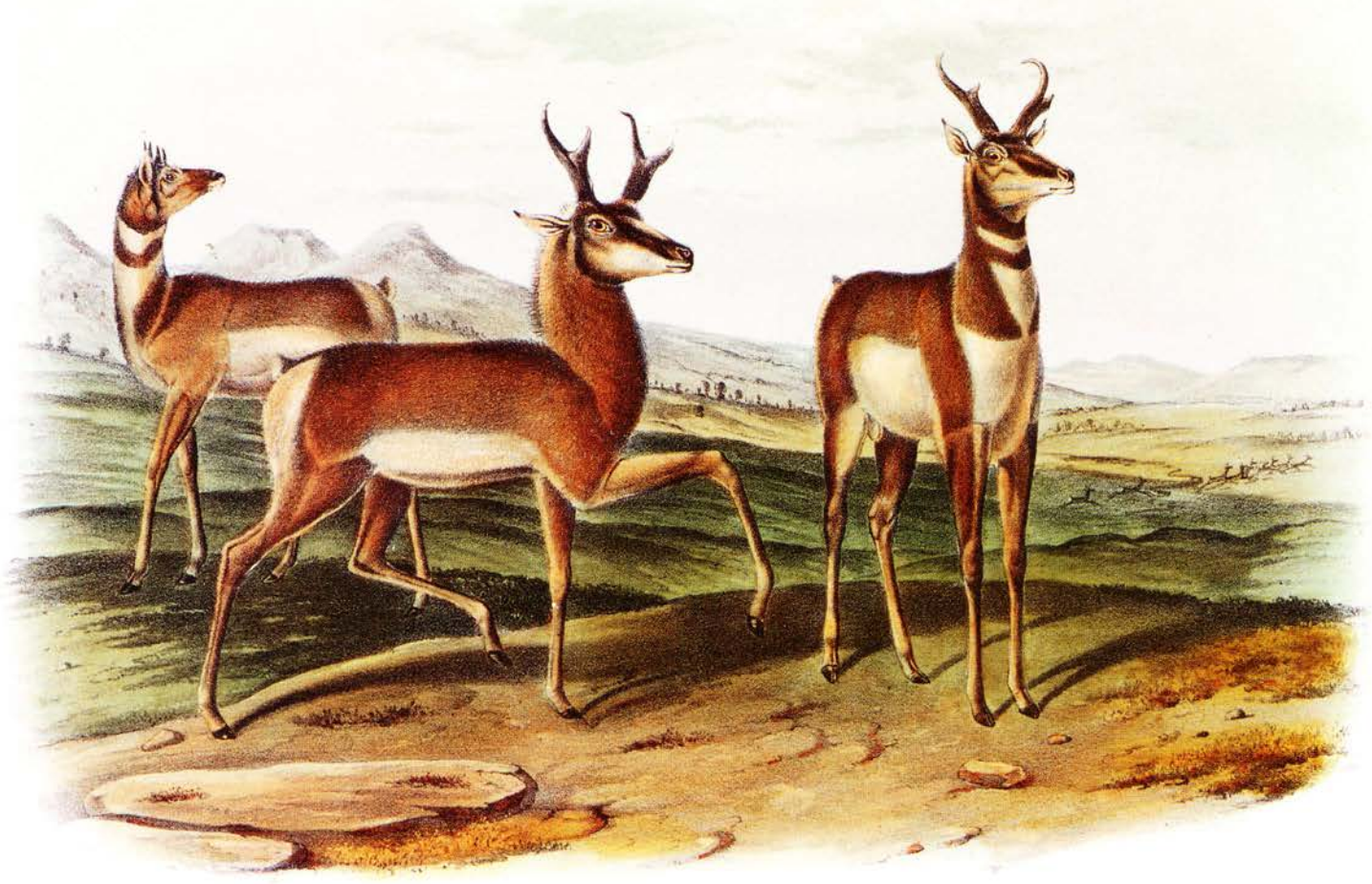
Right: Charles J. Belden, (1887-1966), *The Fiddler, Bill Borron Playing the Fiddle*. Charles Belden Collection.

But the Cowboy Songs Archive needs to grow to represent a more complete record of the musical history of the West. The intangible songs can find a place in the collection through the contribution of songbooks, sheet music, records, musical instruments, even home-recordings of your family's version of a song from the past.

However, as folklorist David Brose stated: "Simply put, the mere collection of cowboy song and poetry will not guarantee its preservation. However, when a genre is placed before a large segment of the populace and the populace accepts it with great enthusiasm, then a revival of interest may take place which strengthens the genre and may ensure its long-term use and appreciation. Thus, the annual Cowboy Songs and Range Ballads program of Cody, Wyoming may create an environment over a period of years which will help to foster the endurance of the cowboy songs tradition."

Because it is in the singing of these songs that interest is renewed and songs are preserved that the 18th annual Cowboy Songs and Range Ballads program will be held April 7-9, 2000. *Fiddle in the Cow Camp* is the theme of the 2000 Cowboy Songs Symposium. .Although many songs were sung without accompaniment, fiddles, banjos, guitars, and a variety of other instruments were an important part of western music. Talented musicians, knowledgeable about the history of those instruments, will trace their musical histories from Texas to Montana, the Appalachians to California.

RANGE BALLADS



Prong-Horned Antelope

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