AMERICAN INDIAN PAINTERS

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If a native culture has both depth and breadth, (i.e. deep roots and vast numbers), as deeply embedded as in Mexico, it will defy the conqueror. It will, in the fullness of time, speak again, although not in the same idiom or pattern. But in the United States, where the few bedeviled and confused natives have been shunted into restricted pockets by a shouting, jostling, cursing, laughing mob of a hundred million foreigners, the situation is quite different.

The total Indian population in 1949 is not larger than the population of Tulsa and Oklahoma City. It is not likely that the renaissance of Indian art about which this volume deals, would have been probable, or possible, without the enthusiasm and practical encouragement of a few understanding and sympathetic white men and women, mostly artists and poets of the Southwest. They are the ones who are responsible for the amazing upsurge of this artistic creative activity among our Indians of nearly all tribes. They are responsible, though perhaps indirectly, for giving the Indians to America.
INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting artistic phenomena in America today is the vigorous renaissance of Indian arts.

Time was, not so very long ago, when almost everything Indian was looked upon with some contempt as crude and ugly. Even educated Indians were apt to feel apologetic about tribal customs and beliefs. And no wonder! The pressure was so great from all sides, government, administration, and church included, to make Indians over into replicas of whites, to impose upon them in toto the standards of the white world. It is easier to destroy than to build. How many Indians found to their tragedy that they had been weaned by their education from all contacts with the Indian world without having been rendered capable of entering the white world on an even basis.

Fortunately, through the centuries, the Indians, with admirable tenacity, cherished the sacred lore and knowledge of the ancestors. In these they found a refuge and a hope in the days of despair; also the courage to go on even though the road was heart-breaking. In these they recovered the self-respect that was almost killed in them by the callousness and misunderstanding of the whites.

Art is perhaps more intimately tied to the life of the Indians than to that of any other people. It expresses and mirrors their intensely spiritual nature and their overwhelming need of beauty. Indian art is very old, as old as the Indians, no doubt; it was related to everything they did, wore, used. Every act of the Indians, from the smallest and what we would call most inconsequential gesture, to their stately dances, is in a way a prayer. It had to performed in beauty of line and color, gesture and word.

The Indian greeted the sun. He thanked the Great Spirit with harvest dance, corn dance, etc., colorful and exactly conceived rituals. In his game and hunting dances — buffalo, antelope, deer — he begged the spirit of the animal involved to forgive the necessity of killing it in order to live. He asked the snakes to intercede with the gods of rain that his crops mature. In lonely vigil and fasting he sought the Great Spirit's will for the direction of his life, then be expressed the will in beauty.

To make his pleas to the gods effective and to express his emotions, fears, and desires, he evolved a sort of encyclopedia of symbols which he used to word his prayers, to determine his motions and gestures, especially to decorate his person, his costume, his dwelling, his altars. He also painted these symbols on his pottery, he wove them in his baskets and blankets; he used them to cure illness and to ward off evil spirits.

Unfortunately, the mode of life of most Indians did not make for lengthy preservation, and the materials used were fairly susceptible to decay. That's why so little remains that is truly ancient, although archeologists have unearthed pottery of considerable age; and, in the dry climate of the Southwest, even fragile objects like textiles, baskets, etc., have managed to endure from long ago. Some rock surfaces still bear ancient paintings and drawings, and, on the walls of kivas, the finding of many superimposed layers of paintings is pushing back the history of Indian art by centuries.

Much still remains to be learned. Although such sacred things as the Navajo sand paintings, so jealously guarded for so long, have been allowed — in part — to be seen and reproduced, the secrecy with which most Indian tribes surround their objects of art and worship is by no means completely overcome. Shy and fearful of paleface contempt and ridicule, the Indians were also afraid that those people who had brought them so much tragedy and chaos, might, by their evil influence, destroy the things of the spirit, nullify the power of their symbols, take away from them their fortress of life, their very soul.

Some advanced Indians would be willing to make public the ancient lore and rites before the total assimilation of their race into the pressing modern world of the whites, but the elders, the medicine men, those who hold in trust the occult knowledge are usually conservative. They exercise great influence, and, even in recent times, they have sometimes ostracized and otherwise severely punished those whom they suspected of having betrayed tribal secrets and beliefs.

Indian painting, while it has come to the attention of the white world only during the last three decades, is then not a
new art. The fact that so many Indians excel in it to such a high degree and show such astounding facility in it, is proof enough that it has a long history, and a great continuity. Artists are now springing up in almost all tribes and nations; but the renaissance has been more prompt and spectacular in the South-west of the United States where it was fostered and helped by the encouragement given by white artists.

These discriminating palefaces encouraged the Indians to follow their own art tradition instead of trying to imitate that of the whites. They fought the policy of the Indian administration bent on making imitation whites out of the Indians, until that policy was completely reversed under Mr. John Collier, and Indian culture was recognized, allowed and encouraged to develop. The freedom obtained by the Indians and the sense of self-respect resulting from this gave a tremendous impetus to their creative talents. At first with colored crayons and watercolors, they produced the beautiful works that, acclaimed in the beginning by a few white artists, eventually won the recognition of the general public. With astounding ease, they passed on to oils and frescoes of great size with which they have decorated many public and some private buildings in various parts of the country.

What may well be the oldest example of Indian art on the North American continent is a linear representation of a mammoth scratched on a bone found in a cave in Missouri. Archeologists are not agreed on the age of this relic, but it is certainly very ancient, and it shows definite maturity in the artist's conception and handling of his subject.

Pictographs abound all over the United States. Great arguments have taken place over their age; some are believed to be comparatively recent. However, the first European explorers have mentioned many in their notes and reports; and it is probable that some at least were already very old then.

It is considered probable that most tribes used pictographs at first to record tribal knowledge and events, and that they were made by priests and preserved with care. It is also believed that, after the coming of the whites, to keep these sacred records from the eyes of the newcomers, the priests discontinued the use of exposed rock surfaces and made their chiselling and painting in caves or in enclosed sacred buildings like kivas. The best preserved rock pictures are found in the dry Southwest. Rock paintings are often more literature than art, historical and geographical signboards, indicating the location of springs, mountains, etc., or recording the exploits of a war or hunting party.

In Barrier Canyon, in Utah, some petroglyphs that may date from very early in the Christian era show tall and strikingly square-shouldered figures.

In Nine Mile Canyon, near Price, Utah, are some believed to date from about 900 A.D. which would make them contemporaneous with the early stages of Indian civilization. The Kuaua murals were discovered in 1935 and are considered to be among the oldest murals existing in the world. They are located in a cave known as the Kuaua Ruin, which is believed to have been a ceremonial center for the Anasazi people who lived in the area from about 600 to 1300 A.D.

On the walls of the Canyon de Chelly and Canyon del Muerto are rock pictures especially interesting because they are perhaps the first representations by North American Indians of the early Spanish explorers. One picture shows three horsemen in armor followed by several mounted soldiers. Another horseman, sketched with evident care, is undoubtedly a Spanish padre. He wears a robe and a broad monk's hat. The artist has also drawn with accuracy the guns and pipes carried and used by the Europeans. The Nuñez who so vividly portrayed this scene, may have recorded the coming of Fray Marcos de Niza to the northern lands in 1540, on the search for the fabled cities of Cibola.

Other glyphs show ceremonials, depict battles, hunting. Some appear to be records of tribal myths, and some are believed to be an attempt by Indians to tell stories or to convey thoughts by means of a sort of hieroglyphs.

Long before America valued the work of her aboriginal potters, European museums and collectors put the Indian ware side by side with that of the Greeks of old, where it held its own by virtue of the beautiful simplicity of its lines and painted decorations. Recognition finally came at home; there are now in America many public and private collections lovingly preserving the art of the Indian potters, both the ancient and the modern.

Using the simplest of tools, the potters (in most tribes they were women) drew with an unerring hand the traditional designs of their respective communities, exquisitely synthesized animals, insects and plants, and the magic forms that represent the terraces of the sky, the clouds bringing beneficent rain, the sacred directions, etc.

Although pottery painting is usually stylized and decorative, there are a few cases in which it is more truly pictorial. For instance, some ancient Mimbres pottery shows scenes of the daily life of the people, like women nursing birds, men playing gambling games. They also illustrate the legends: a man is shown shooting the lightning; two men emerge from the underground world; a man representing the plumed serpent is cutting the head of a sacrificial victim. Some strange creatures, part man, part animal, are painted; a fish supports two strange birds; a crane appears to talk to a lizard, etc.

Painting among the house dwelling Pueblos took the form of frescoes, mostly used in the kivas, where we find layer upon layer of a combination of reds and greens. The Kuaua murals were discovered in 1935 and excavated in 1938 by a party from the Peabody Museum of Cambridge. A replica of it was made by Hopi artists.

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The Kuaua murals were discovered in 1935 and excavated by the Museum of New Mexico and the New Mexico State University. The top of the kiva wall had collapsed in some places; as a result the upper part of some of the frescoes is missing. The Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe now has some of these murals and reproductions in full size; they are most interesting. We see in them figures wearing ceremonial skirts. One of these figures swings a sort of censer from which a spray of vapors emerges. A black pot, flanked by arrows, appears to hold a liquid boiling out of it on both sides. Evidently a ritual of importance is depicted. These murals were perhaps old when Coronado wintered near there in 1540-41, but all knowledge of them was jealously guarded from him and his soldiers.
Half a century later, however, the Spaniards became acquainted with the sacred Pueblo art. Don Juan de Onate reached the Trenaque pueblo, at the present site of San Marcial. His troops were lodged in a building decorated with murals. To quote Villagra, "On the walls of the rooms where we were quartered were many paintings of the demons they worship as gods. Fierce and terrible were their features. It was easy to understand the meaning of these, for the god of water was near the water, the god of the mountains was near the mountains, and in a like manner, all those deities they adore, their gods of the hunt, crops, and other things they have done."

"(From Historia de la Nueva Mexico, del Capitan Gaspar de Villagra. Ano 1610)"

The terrible features of the native deities or Katchinas, probably referred to the masks which these sacred personages were represented as wearing.

The Navajos who have no real church buildings and who live in trail hogan evolved a strange and magnificent art. Their sand paintings were created for the purpose of curing physical or spiritual ills. The painters were medicine men who jealously guarded the secret of the symbols and the rigidly traditional depiction of the subjects. Their only tools were their clever fingers, and their medicine the variously colored sands that they used with consummate artistry. The artists who make these sand paintings must work very fast and without hesitation, as well as without models, for the painting must be finished before the healing ceremony can begin, and, before the sun goes down, the sands that were used have to be carried into the desert to be scattered to the winds.

The artist smooths a space on the ground and sprinkles neutral colored sand all over it to serve as background. From the colored sands that have been laboriously pulverized he takes a pinch and lets it run gently between his thumb and forefinger, in a very thin stream, to draw outlines; a larger stream fills in the enclosed spaces. It takes a steady and well trained hand to produce a smooth result and lines that are straight and sharp.

There can be no erasing, no retouching. The artist must put color that he must carry in his memory, all the complicated elements that possess the magic power he needs for his healing.

Until a few decades ago only a very few specially trusted white persons who were pledged to secrecy were allowed to witness the ritual of the "Night Chant" and to see the sand paintings used in this ritual. The first reproductions of sand paintings published by whites, although they had been made possible by some liberal-minded medicine men, caused consternation and resentment among the Navajos.

When the House of Navajo Worship was established in Santa Fe, a Navajo medicine man, Etsey-Tso (Louis Big Man), agreed to make for this building a set of sand paintings, because he realized all the things Indian minds were doomed to disappear unless they were preserved in this manner.

However, even this forward looking man feared the wrath of the spirit world. During all the time he worked, he prayed and used magic formulas to keep at bay the powers arrayed against him.

Except for pictograph "calendars", the Indians of the East coast do not appear to have done much in the way of painting. No artists have appeared among them. They have nothing to show of that kind and, if they had any early tradition to that effect, the early travellers and settlers have been strangely silent on the subject. Their talents apparently ran into another form of art; their pottery is sculptural and strongly resemble the famous Maya potteries even to their grotesque characteristics.

They, the Iroquois especially, also made masks in which they incorporated their grotesque characteristics. The famous Maya potteries even to their grotesque characteristics. The early travellers and settlers have been strangely silent on the subject. Their talents apparently ran into another form of art; their pottery is sculptural and strongly resemble the famous Maya potteries even to their grotesque characteristics.

In the calendars, also originally painted on hides, the progression of the years is usually shown in the form of a spiral. Conventional symbols distinguish the two seasons recognized in the calendars. In the calendars and the robes one feels that the Indians were edging very close to a system of writing, as many of the designs had been reduced to their simplest elements and were getting almost in the class of hieroglyphs.

Distortion in the portrayal of humans and animals, while it often results in a grotesque effect, at least to the white onlooker, has no such object in view. It comes from using stylized tribal designs. Here we might remark that, until the present, the Indian artist was not an individualist. By breeding, tradition, and environment, he was part of the collectivity of his milieu; he accepted that collectivity and was quite content to make use of the collective styles, designs, and traditions, and to remain anonymous. As a result, he did not concern himself with being a good artist in our meaning of the term. To him, the only thing that mattered was whether his art was right or wrong, that is whether it carried the true beliefs and the correct magic symbols. Perhaps because he so unquestioningly accepted what we would consider as hindrances, his personality managed to shine through them.

One form of distortion, most common in the Pacific Northwest, is the portrayal of an animal as a sort of double. The artist knew that an animal has two sides and he meant to show these two sides. Since he never worked from a model but only from memory, his painting or drawing was the expression of his knowledge; his audience understood him perfectly and felt that he had perfectly rendered his subject.

In the paintings on hides the colors used were at first limited in number, but very beautiful and soft, as natural pigments are. Black came easily from charcoal or from some earths. White was found in clay. Ochres, ferruginous clays alone or in combination, gave various tints of yellow and brown. The reds were derived from berries and minerals; some ingenious and venturesome souls had also developed a technique of making them by treating yellow chrome with heat. A purplish tint, probably derived from plants, was used, although infrequently. A cloudy blue, made from a bluish earth, and a green, extracted with great difficulty from dried water plants, were so difficult.
to make that they were early replaced by verdigris and blue bought from traders. Later other pigments also gave way to chemical dyes; what they gained in brightness they lost in beauty.

The pigments were mixed with animal fat and applied with a rudimentary brush, a stoke of willow or cottonwood chewed to a sort of fiber. Late in the nineteenth century, tufts of antelope hair fastened to a stick came into use. The leg bone of the buffalo, well sharpened, was used to draw and paint fine lines; its broad flat side could spread the color rapidly and evenly over large areas. A whitish gelatinous substance obtained by boiling scraps of hides and beaver tails served as a sort of sizing and to outline the design; also, sometimes, as ground on unpainted surfaces. As they became available through the traders, crayons, pencils, and manufactured paints were adopted by the Indian artists to simplify and speed their work; skins gave way to wood, cardboard, and, eventually, to paper and canvas.

Indian painting has always been closest to the Asiatic tradition in which chiaroscuro is non-existent and modeling hardly ever attempted. In this the Indian artist shows the strength of a long atavistic past and of his Asiatic origin. Until recent times, his human and animal figures were usually shown in profile, there were no backgrounds; in very few cases was terrain indicated; the plants were also few and usually stylized. These principles still hold to a great extent and account for the decorative effects obtained.

In the hide paintings the subjects were man and his exploits; the horse, so closely associated with life on the plains, was also present; other animals, buffalo, deer, bear, etc., were adjuncts only.

As could be surmised, colors were favored by the Indians to possess magic qualities. While the symbolism of colors varies somewhat from tribe to tribe, certain virtues are generally associated with certain colors. Red was the most sacred, being the color of blood and sacrifice; it had a strong religious value in all rituals and in all designs. It was the color of manhood and of courage. It was reserved for chiefs and warriors.

Its opposite was blue, or rather green, between which, formerly, the Indians made little distinction. They still often call grass blue. It meant vegetation, nature, woman, motherhood. Yellow was the West, the setting sun, fire, and strangely, often water. It was accomplishment, rest, and the hereafter. Black meant the wind, the North, the storm. It was the color of war and the warriors painted their faces black when they went on the warpath.

The oldest hide painting still in existence in North America was secured by the Lewis and Clark expedition, so it dates from 1804 or somewhat earlier. This painted buffalo robe is now in the Peabody Museum of Harvard; it came from the Mandan tribe and was painted by an unknown artist. It shows a battle fought in 1797 between the Minnetaree and their allies the Sioux, and the Mandans and the Arikaras.

However, the Frenchman, Pierre de la Verendrye, who is generally believed to be the first white man who saw the Rockies, and who was the first white man to have dealings with the Mandans, around 1738, reported that they had many painted buffalo robes. And in 1803, another Frenchman, Laroque, reported the same thing concerning the Sioux of the Teton country. The Long expedition of 1819-20 to the Rockies found painted robes in use by the Pawnee, Otoes, and others.

By Catlin's time, a definite design was emerging. The typical composition involved a central space, often enclosed, for the medicine symbols; the warrior's deeds, the scenes of war and hunting, were arranged around this central space. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City owns a robe given to Catlin by the Mandan chief Mah-to-toh-pa (Four Bears) on which he had painted the battles in which he had taken part. Mah-to-toh-pa gave a similar robe to Prince Maximilian; it is now in the Bern Museum.

Among the early Plains Indian painters of the historic period are Chief Pretty Hawk, a Yankton Sioux, who painted around 1860. The Peabody Museum has some of his work. The great Shoshone Chief, Washakie, born around 1800, died 1899, was not only a skilful artist, but a famous warrior. During his later years, Washakie made a series of paintings on elk skins to portray his battles, his hunts, and other incidents of his life. Chief Washakie's son, Charles, was also a chief and a painter of note. His subjects were usually religious rituals, especially that of the Sun Dance.

The Oglala Sioux, Megpa Kte (Wife Eagle Deer) has left some painted episodes of the Crow-Sioux wars and some dance scenes. He lived between 1869 and 1927. The Sioux, Amos Bad Heart Buffalo, 1860-1915, son and nephew of famous warriors, was seven at the time of the battle of Little Big Horn where Custer and his troops were annihilated. From the stories he heard his father and his uncle tell, he later filled three army ledgers (of which only one is now known to exist) with paintings and drawings, showing various phases of the battle.

The University of Oklahoma owns a painted calf buffalo robe showing the personal combats of American Horse (Sioux), and dating from the decade 1870-80. This work is variously attributed to American Horse and his nephew. (Pl. 2)

Chief Medicine Crow was very gifted. He had gone to Washington, D.C. Back on the reservation, he painted, from memory and with surprising accuracy, practically all the mounted animals he had seen in a Museum of Natural History. Chief Plenty Coups was born a Nez Perce, but he had been stolen by the Crows when a baby and grew to be one of them. He was wealthy and had even a valet. Painting was for him a practical tool rather than an art. He owned a store and was a shrewd merchant, but he couldn't cipher very far; so he devised a unique bookkeeping system of his own. On a sheet of wrapping paper he drew a picture of a customer, or a picture of the customer's name, like Short Bear, Yellow Jacket, Big Nose, etc., and pictures of the customer's purchases. Naiche, an Apache head chief who was at Fort Sill in 1899 had the reputation of being the finest artist of his period. His subjects were animals and plants, and he painted them in colors on deer skins.

Later, we come to two Kiowa painters, to mention only the most outstanding. The Kiowa artists have consistently shown a marked religious and mystic feeling. Haw-gone was considered the equal of Naiche. Haun-goo-ah (Silver Horn) was born in 1861 and died in 1941. So he spans the generations to the present. Some of his works have been in the National Museum at Washington. He painted religious ceremonies and tribal myths. One of his most famous works is a Sun Dance where the tips are arranged in a circle, each adorned with an accurate coat-of-arms or family symbol.

The calendars were used not merely to record but to teach the history of their people to the young generations. When they became old an worn, they were copied anew; many of the later copies were made on paper instead of skins. The most famous of the calendars from East of the Mississippi is the "Wallam Olum" or "Red Score" of the Delawares. It was discovered in 1820, but was published only in 1885. It presents in pictographs, not only the history of the tribe to about 1610 or the coming of the whites, but it also portrays the Delaware creation and migration myths, and was probably meant to preserve in picture form the sacred chants describing these myths.

West of the Mississippi, a calendar called the Dakota calendar or "Lone Dog winter count", was found in 1884. It covers the period 1800 to 1880.

General Scott had found among the Kiowas the Dohasan calendar, drawn in colored pencils on heavy Manila paper by Dohasan (Little Blue). This, the oldest record, now in the Kiowas, covers their mythical period. The Kiowas had three other calendars discovered in 1893-95 by James Mooney, who
published an account of them in the 17th Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. The best Kiowa calendar was the yearly Set-an calendar made by Set-an (Little Bear). It retells the history of the Kiowas from 1853 to 1893.

It was just before the turn of the century. Dr. J. Walter Fewkes of the Bureau of American Ethnology persuaded a Hopi, Kutcah Onaou (White Bear), to make for him drawings representing the Hopi gods and explaining the symbolism of the dance rituals. The result is a volume showing more than one hundred eighty Katchinas on some fifty colored plates, published in 1903 under the title "Codex Hopienensis."

In 1917, Mr. DeHuff, supervisor of Indian schools, found on one of his tours some very interesting drawings done by Hopi children with the colored crayons that had been supplied them for the purpose of drawing maps. Mrs. DeHuff was charmed by the specimens. She realized the latent talent possessed by so many Indians and their need to express their sense of beauty. So she asked some pupils at the Santa Fe Indian School to make drawings for her. Some of these were crude, but many showed a talent that has since matured. Mrs. DeHuff has in her possession some very rare early drawings of fecundity rites, for even the younger Indians have learned by now that these subjects are taboo among the white people.

It was also in 1917 that Crescencio Martinez, then janitor at the San Ildefonso day school, secured some broken school crayons to draw with. Crescencio Martinez (Ts is, Home of the Elk) had been one of the most faithful workers on the Pajarito plateau excavations. He had taken a keen interest in the ancient objects that were recovered, finding to his delight that he "recognized" them, that the ancestors had made the same things, had dressed and adorned themselves and worshipped much as his own day Pueblos did. Inspired, he had tried with the materials at hand to depict the figures of the rituals he knew. Crescencio's artistic career lasted less than two years. He died in 1918, having nearly completed a series of dance figures now in the Museum in Santa Fe. His example and the incentive provided by the excavations made his village of San Ildefonso the center of Pueblo art.

The truly modern phase of Indian art began with the Kiowas, who are Plains Indians. They were the first to be able to develop their art without losing the essential elements of their tradition. They enriched it with a personal expression; they breathed life into the rigid and impassive figures of the past. They possess an extraordinary natural flair for color and for composition. They have been imitated by nearly all Indians, for even the younger Indians have learned by now that these subjects are taboo among the white people.

In 1923, I saw definite promise in the work of five young Kiowas; I determined to help them and arranged for Miss Edith Mahier, professor of art at the University of Oklahoma, to give them instruction and criticism. This she did most sympathetically and successfully. I also devised ways and means to finance them until they had a market for their paintings. The work of these Kiowas caused a sensation and was acclaimed as the most interesting part of the American entry at the International Art Exhibit held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1928. A volume containing thirty-two masterfully done reproductions of the Kiowas' work in full size and colors was published in France some time later, "Kiowa Art" Editions d'Art, C. Szwedzicki, Nice.

At that time I arranged exhibitions of their work in many of the most distinguished museums in the United States and Hawaii. They made many sales and received a great deal of publicity in America and even in Europe. The original Kiowa artists were Monroe Tsia-to-kc, Spencer Asah, Steve Mopope, Jack Hokeah, and Bou-ge-tah Smoky.

Seizing the work they loved to do was getting recognition and also bringing a measure — not too great — of material reward, other Indians developed latent talents; a wonderful renaissance began.

During the dark days of the depression some friends of the Indians fought to have a portion of the PWPA funds allocated to the Indian artists to enable them to weather the storm. Most of the works financed by this project went to murals to decorate many public buildings. The Indian artists, even those who had until then done only small scale watercolors, showed extraordinary adaptability and splendid results in the new medium and the enlarged scale.

Almost always, especially in the beginning, the Indian artist had to be weaned from trying to imitate the art of the white man. For so long he had been directed, pushed, forced toward that end that he couldn't, at first, believe that any white person would see anything of value or interest in anything purely Indian. Now a few Indian artists have been able to master the white manner; fewer can manage a successful blend of the white manner with their own. In times to come, this will probably be more frequent, for the Indian world is changing faster now than ever before. But at present, for the majority of Indians, the most natural flowering comes within the racial tradition whose roots are strong and deep enough to give them vigour and spontaneity and a well rounded expression.

The racial tradition is, first of all, deeply religious; the subjects are, in overwhelming proportion so far, the dances and all sacred rituals, because these are still the most important and glorious events in the otherwise drab life of a people who were defeated, deprived of their means of subsistence, and either herded in reservations, or bound by strangling regulations. The rituals also embody the ceremonial part of the ceremonial, the recorded folklore literature which is in some cases very beautiful.

The Indian artists are always careful when painting religious subjects to have the details accurate and true, for the symbol is for them a most exact science. It is quite likely, however, that some change is often made in some minor part of the painting so that the "unbeliever" into whose hands the painting may turn up will not have possession of anything having magic value. It is also impossible to tell how much of the sacred lore is still too sacred as subject matter for paintings for sale.

Besides painting rituals, several Indian artists have done some historical painting, and there is a growing body of purely lay painting showing the life of the people. Since traditional Indian costume is often used for this, it does not look very different to the uninstructed from the ritual painting. The artist uses Indian costume partly because it is more colorful and more beautiful than the nondescript every day dress of Indians, partly because there is a better market for costume paintings than for others. The Indian artists, however, want to launch out too and represent their own world of today.

It is in the Southwest, among the Navajos, the Pueblos, and the Hopis, and in Oklahoma, especially among the Plains tribes, that the art renaissance is particularly vigorous. But it is fairly extensive. We have had contact with over one hundred artists representing some fifty tribes, many of whom have written asking for advice and criticism and help. Practically nothing has come from the East; what comes from the North is seldom of a quality comparable to what the Southwest produces. Is there less talent up there? What seems more likely is that the Northern tribes have been more spiritually depressed than those of the Southwest and that the awakening has not yet really begun for them.

At first glance there appears to be great similarity between the works of all Indians. This surface sameness is due to the general use of a characteristic subject, Indian figures in Indian dress, with Indian accessories, instruments, weapons, etc., and Indian decorative designs. This sameness is furthered by the Indian technique, a decidedly Asiatic manner, which does not use horizon or background, chiaroscuro, nor perspective, but treats its subjects in a purely decorative, flat, two-dimensional way. As a matter of fact, there are great differences between the different painters, even within the same tribe, and those who have studied the subject can readily recognize the work of an individual artist even when this work is not signed.
Still it is possible to classify Indian painting into four main groups by certain characteristics that persist even when the artists of one group borrow something from another group. Broadly we have the Pueblo manner, the Navajo manner, the Plains manner, and the Woodland manner.

The Pueblos who have a long history of fresco work bring something of this into their watercolors and their modern murals. They wash their colors well in and usually obtain a particularly flat, velvety texture reminiscent of walls softly finished in earth pigments. When they use oil paint they thin the paint with a great deal of turpentine in order to produce the same, soft, well washed effect and they consciously endeavour to eliminate all brush marks.

The Kiowas and their neighbours of the Plains and the Woodland use their pigments much more thickly, so that, even in the large washes, the texture, although flat, has brilliancy. For details like beading, embroideries, jewels, the paint is often applied thickly enough to form a little relief, and the result is a very rich and gem-like texture.

What stands out in the Navajo work is the line and something very difficult to define or describe in their use of proportions, that is startling and satisfying in the extreme. It gives their work the air of a very old and very refined culture hardly to be expected of these children of the desert. Some things they have done have the chic and sophisticated elegance one associates with Paris or with the art of the ancient Moghuls. With this subtle proportioning and the no less subtle composition they use, the Navajo artists transpose their work into the realm of dream not merely fantasy. It forms a perfectly balanced counterpart to that most magnificent and profound of all North American myths, the Navajo story of Creation.

Indian artists have this in common, that they use no model. Their keen sense of observation, developed for survival through the centuries, seems to have enabled them to carry in their minds clear cut pictures of what they see and to set it down at will. I have seen an Indian paint a portrait with the unmistakable resemblance of a man whom I knew to be sixty miles away at the time.

This keen sense of observation and keen memory spares them the laborious task of studying anatomy and composition. Some artists start by painting, completely finishing, some detail, a horse’s hoof or tail, a man’s hand; from this the picture grows, being usually well composed and well balanced on the paper or canvas, as it must have been in the mind that conceived it. It is when the Indian tries to imitate the white artist by blocking and spacing his work beforehand that he is apt to fumble.

This great inborn sense of observation has another advantage. It lets the Indian artist retain of what he sees only the essential elements, so that the baffling business of elimination, which often worries the white artists, is not a problem to him. That is why his work is usually so direct and to the point. That same wisdom, that is his heritage, has also given him the elusive secret of motion. His flat paintings are alive with movement and rhythm. In them the dancers dance, the deer leap, the herds roar thunderously by. His sense of color is unerring; while it is brilliant it could rarely be called gaudy when he is in his own element. His color harmonies are often not only beautiful but truly subtle.

The chief characteristics of his paintings are taste, delicacy, and refinement. It is hoped that he will not sacrifice strength for elegance. No one can foretell what the future holds for the Indian artist and his art. Responding gloriously to a little appreciation and sympathetic understanding, he has, in a few years, made a significant contribution to American culture.
THE ARTISTS

THE WOODLAND TRIBES

ACEE BLUE EAGLE
(Pawnee-Creek, Laughing Boy)

FRED BEAVER
(Ko-lo-ne, Brown Head)

SOLOMON McCOMBS
(Wolf Warrior)

CECIL DICK
(Do-go-dah-go, Standing alone)

FRANKLIN GRITTS
(Che-boa-ju-sah, They have returned)

CECIL MURDOCK
(Ko-ka, Turning Bear)

EARLE POODY
(Qwe-ni-pe-a, Fish in water)

CHIEF T. SAUL
(Tobaksi, Glowing Embers)

THE PLAINS TRIBES

AMERICAN HORSE
(Sioux, Little Boy)

SPENCER ASAHI
(Kiowa, Little Boy)

JAMES AUCHIAH
(looking into Lodge)

ARCHIE BLACKOWL
(Mis'ta moo to va, Flying Hawk)

WOODY BIGHOW
(Tse-ko-yate, Big Bow)

BLACKBEAR BOSIN
(So-Fe-Kan-giah)

ALLAN BUSHYHEAD
(No-ka-whoa-do-ni-ul-zi, Bear Feathers)

JESSE DAVIS
(Asawaya, Running Wolf)

PAUL GOODBEAR
(Ashe ha te, Flying Eagle)

JACK HOKEAH
(Kiowa, Standing alone)

OSCAR HOWE
(Sioux, Trader Boy)

GEORGE C. KEAHBONE
(Kiowa, A-sau-ta)

ALFRED KODASEET
(Kiowa)

CALVIN LARVIE
(Siouxs)

STEPHEN MOPAPE
(Qued-foo, Painted Robe)

VICTOR PEPION
(Double Shields)

LEONARD RIDDLES
(Comanche)

LARRY SAUPITY
(Comanche)

LOIS SMOKY
(Kiowa, Bou-ge-toh, Coming of the Dawn)

CARL SWEZY
(Comanche, Black)

MARIAN TERASAZ
(Comanche, Aukah)

HERMAN TOPPAH
(Kiowa, Hunting Horse)

W. RICHARD WEST
(Kiowa, Wah-pah-nah-yah, Lightfoot)

LOIS SMOKY
(Comanche, Black)

MARIAN TERASAZ
(Comanche, Aukah)

HERMAN TOPPAH
(Kiowa, Hunting Horse)

W. RICHARD WEST
(Kiowa, Wah-pah-nah-yah, Lightfoot)
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1. ANCIENT PICTOGRAPHS, BATTLESNAKE CANYON, TEXAS.

Detail of wall painting in Battlesnake Canyon, Babbs' Ranch near Langtry, Texas. The pictograph is seventy-five feet in length with some of the figures fifteen feet in height. It represents one of the oldest prehistoric wall paintings in Texas and is an outstanding example of early Indian abstract art. Painting copied by Forrest Kirkland Courtesy of Southwest Review Magazine.

AMERICAN HORSE
SIoux

2. “AMERICAN HORSE BATTLES WITH THE CROWS” (Collection O.B.J.)

American Horse was a famous Oglala warrior who fought with Sitting Bull in the Sioux wars, from 1866 until he was killed at Slim Buttes, South Dakota, in 1875. Nothing much is known about this elder American Horse. There was a son or nephew by the same name who became a well known Oglala chief.

It is impossible to determine if this painting was done by the elder or the younger American Horse, as both of them are known to have painted. The piecistic style seems to indicate that it was the work of the older warrior.

NAVAJO SAND PAINTING

3. “MAIL AND WATER CHANT” (Courtesy of the Navajo House of Ceremonial Art)

There are hundreds of Navajo medicine men who today practice the art of healing by means of the ancient ritual, part of which is the painting of symbolic pictures in colored sand, often of great charm and beauty.

For more detailed information, we refer the reader to the introduction.

ACEE BLUE EAGLE
Cheyene, Ariz (Collection O.B.J.)

4. “THE PROPHET”

5. “INDIAN MAIDEN” (Collection O.B.J.)

The University of Oklahoma is host to a gathering of distinguished scholars from all parts of the United States. The scene is the Banquet Hall in the Union Building, the occasion, a formal dinner for the delegates at the conference. Some of the savants from the east have expressed a wish to see Indians. At the honor table, one sits in the manner of the old frontier figure, like a bird of paradise and penguins. There are raised eyebrows everywhere. The distinguished scholar on his left is polite. He addresses the aborigine slowly, in English. It is impossible to determine if this painting was done by the elder or the younger American Horse, as both of them are known to have painted. The piecistic style seems to indicate that it was the work of the older warrior.

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Ace Blue Eagle is a Creek artist. His work has been exhibited in museums throughout the United States and Europe. He is known for his realistic depictions of Creek Indian life and culture.

FRED BEAVER
(Ka-lo-ne, Brown Head)

6. “THE SEMINOLE FAMILY” (Courtesy of the Artist)

A young Indian whose work has been seen and admired in recent exhibitions is Fred Beaver, a Creek fullblood from eastern Oklahoma who was born in 1911. He went to Haskell Institute, graduating in 1935 in business. He does not seem to have received any art instruction either in Haskell or in high school.

He saw action for two and a half years in Africa, Sicily, Italy and Corsica with the 12th Air Force. At the present time, he is an employee in the Indian Service at Ardmore, Oklahoma. The painting that he has done so far was produced during spare moments.

The Seminoles of the Florida Everglades have designed an amazing costume built up of patches of cloth of many colors. It is a colorful and comfortahle outfit. Their grass huts are likewise adapted to the climate and living conditions in the swamp lands, to which a remnant of the tribes, under Osceola, retreated, unconquered, at the time of the Seminole War of 1835, and where they still live.

It is these people that Beaver prefers as subjects. In “The Seminole Family” he introduced a stylized form of jungle background of intense green that tends to dominate the interest. In spite of this, the painting has a dramatic quality.

SOLOMON McCOMBS
(Wolf Warrior)
Creek-Cherokee

7. “CREEK INDIANS GOING TO MEETING” (Collection University of Oklahoma)

The eastern half of Oklahoma was the old Indian Territory. It is a beautiful country of wooded hills and valleys, sparkling streams and bubbling springs. To this land, eastern and southern tribes like the Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Seminoles, Kickapoos, Shawnees, Delawores and Creeks were forcibly moved in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was to be their permanent abode. There they were to be permitted to remain undisturbed. There they formed their civil governments, built their capitals, organized their schools and churches, and published books and newspapers. Indian Territory had a printing press before Minnesnow. There they established independent Indian nations, recognized by Washington; but white infiltration could not be prevented. The two races have intermarried and the Indian nations have become citizens of the United States. Many of our families belong to these great tribes. From them have come United States senators, educators, novelists, industrialists, and people distinguished in many fields. Solomon McCombs is Creek, Cherokee, and Irish, consequently a typical eastern Oklahoman. A few years ago it was my pleasure to dedicate the Art Building at Bacone College. It is named McCombs Hall in honor of his grandfather.

Solomon was born in 1913 and grew up on a ranch in eastern Oklahoma. He went to Bacone College and had art instruction with Ace Blue Eagle. Solomon did much painting at Bacone College and shortly after leaving school. His work was widely exhibited. His “Creek Indian Ceremonial Dance” was selected as a travelling exhibit sponsored by the American Association of University Women, and “The Creek Warrior’s Parade” was another travelling exhibition under the patronage of the WPAs WPA Program, Washington. His mural designs were on exhibition at the Canadian Artists’ Conference at Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada, in 1940. He has some murals to his credit. The best known is perhaps the one at Eufaula Post Office.

Solomon is especially interested in the Creeks. He has done considerable research on their history and most of his paintings are of this tribe. “Creek Indians Going to Meeting” portrays the Creeks in the dress they wore at the time when they were forcibly moved into Oklahoma, over one hundred years ago. The eastern Indians did not then wear the “typical” dress of buckskin and feathers.
CECIL DICK
(Do-goh-dah-go, Standing Alone)
CHEROKEE

8. "A CHEROKEE DOCTOR"
(Collection O.B.J.)

Dear Mr. Jacobson:

I have been an orphan since I was twelve years old, so I was not reared anywhere, but I also grew up somewhere. I am anxious to do a large mural depicting the removal of my people to Oklahoma. I would like to have an opportunity to give a truthful portrayal of the "Trail of Tears.".....

About the painting you purchased. It is a painting of a Cherokee man. The Cherokees were famous pipe makers. The reason for the sculptured pipe is that he is a doctor. The plants near him are tobacco plants. Tobacco is given special powers by the Cherokees. By being one place and blowing a prepared smoke in the direction of some disease, this disease is driven away.

Sincerely, 

Cecil Dick.

In spite of his unprivileged childhood and privations, through native ability, character, and hard work, Cecil found the opportunity to point many murals. He was one of three artists who designed exhibits for the John Wanamaker Store at the International Sports Show in New York in 1936. His smaller watercolors have been widely exhibited. He won a prize at the All-Indian exhibit at Philbrook Art Museum at Tulsa in 1946. Many of his paintings have found their way into private collections. He executed a panel for the Sequoyah Weavers for their exhibition in New York in 1946. His favorite subjects are Indian life and animals. In simplicity and honesty, he pictures a common people and their way of living, and he does it in a most sympathetic manner. Cecil is a very modest and diffident young man who "hopes that he may be permitted to contribute to Indian culture."

He is a Cherokee of pure blood, born in 1915, and was brought up in an Indian orphanage and a public high school. He attended Bacon College for a short time and later studied art under the great teacher, Dorothy Dunn at the Indian School in Santa Fe. In 1939 Cecil received an appointment as art teacher at Okloca Indian School where he remained until 1942. He resigned to enter war work in an aircraft plant. His job was to illustrate manufacturing processes to help speed production. He is a member of the Wolf Clan of his tribe and used to participate in the Annual Stomp Dance. He is able to read the Cherokee language invented by the remarkable Sequoyah about a hundred years ago.

FRANKLIN GRITTS
(Oau-nah-ju-sah, They Have Returned)
CHEROKEE

9. "STOMP DANCE"
(Collection University of Oklahoma)

It was in 1936 that Franklin first appeared in our School of Art as a scholarship student from the U.S. Indian Service. He was a nice-looking youth with a very light complexion for a full blood Indian. His features were delicate and refined and his expression one of contemplative, almost religious, tenderness. He had the deep warm eyes of a St. Francis of Assisi.

Franklin, who was born in 1914, is Cherokee. It was from his father and a cousin that he received his first lessons in art. He attended Bacon College where he received his elementary art instruction from Acee Blue Eagle. Then came three years of regular art work at our University, and he received his B.F.A.

Knowing that he spoke, read, and wrote the Cherokee language, we encouraged him to examine his national heritage. He did so. But at that time, to all practical purposes, he belonged to the White man's world. Later he was to become interested in anthropology when he attended a summer session at the University of New Mexico, learning about Indians.

In 1940, Franklin went to Haskell Indian Institute to help prepare a large series of exhibits for the Indian Service, that were to be used at the Progressive Educational Convention in Chicago, where he installed them. At the same time, he exhibited a number of his watercolors. Later, he was to accept the position of Art Instructor at Haskell, on ideal choice. There he painted several murals in oil, secco, and gouache. In 1938 he received second prize for his paintings at the Inter-tribal Indian Ceremonial at Gallup, New Mexico. The seeds we had planted were bearing fruit. Franklin was rediscovering the treasures of his own people.

In 1943 he became a sailor in Uncle Sam's Navy. After intensive training in the 8th Fleet Air Wing, he was assigned to the ill-fated but glorious U.S.S. Franklin. The rest is military history. The Franklin was hit by aerial bombs March 19, 1945, some fifty miles off Japan, and the young artist was seriously wounded. He spent two years in the hospital.

The Cherokees and other tribes living in eastern Oklahoma have been "civilized" according to white man's standards for two hundred years. They live, dress, and act very much like their rural white neighbours. But they still keep their sacred fire and yearly get-together for the stomp dance.

"The Stomp Dance" included here represents such a Cherokee social affair. Franklin usually seems to prefer to picture his people and their neighbours in their present everyday white men's clothing, which he manages to render into a thing of beauty.

CECIL MURDOCK
(Ko-Ke, Turning Bear)
KICKAPOO

10. "THE OLD TELLER OF TALES"
(Collection University of Oklahoma)

We were beginning to wonder if Cecil Murdock was one of the many Indians who did not return from the war, when he dropped in on us one day. He looked in perfect health, but he is not. He is living on part disability funds. Cecil caught jungle fever in the swamps of New Guinea, and he was severely injured while he was serving as an enlisted man in the 5th Air Force. Even before he went into the service, he was troubled by disease. This disease is not participated in the exciting upsurge of artistic activity. It is not a disease confined to the peoples living west of the Mississippi and in the southwest. The Indian culture has not been obliterated. However, among some of the young men belonging to the eastern tribes, like the Cherokees and Shinnecos, now living in Oklahoma, the blood is stirring. The Kickapoos are not tipi dwelling people, and the dress and hairdo of the narrator belong to the Plains tribes.

The paradoxical part of the story of the Red Man is that many college bred Indians are now on the return journey toward Indianization. They have had a taste of the civilization of the white race and want to refurbish in the culture that was abandoned, though unwillingly, by their great grandparents. In some of them, one senses some deep feeling of disillusionment. The "Old Teller of Tales" was painted before the Great War. The Kickapoos are not tipi dwelling people, and the dress and hairdo of the narrator belong to the Plains tribes.

C. EARLE POODRY
(Que-zi-eh-a, Fish in Water)
SENECA, SAUK-FOX

11. "THREE YOUNG WARRIORS"
(Collection University of Oklahoma)

The remnants of Indian tribes living in the eastern states have not participated in the exciting upsurge of artistic activity. It is confined to the peoples living west of the Mississippi and in the wonderland of the Southwest. The Indian culture has not been obliterated. However, among some of the young men belonging to the eastern tribes, like the Cherokees and Shinnecos, now living in Oklahoma, the blood is stirring. Earle Poodry is the grandson of the last chief or Sachem of the Senecas. He is mixed Seneca and Sauk-Fox with a dash of French blood, contributed, perhaps, by an adventurous courser de bois. He was born in Akron, New York, in 1915. However, he spent his childhood in eastern Oklahoma. He attended Bacon College where he came under the influence of Indian artists trained in the University of Oklahoma. It was while there that this picture was painted.

It is a well-organized composition of three western warriors on horseback, apparently a scouting party. The colors are well controlled to harmonize with the sandy paper, producing a harmony of tans, buffs, browns, burnt umber, sienna and white, spiced with a touch of green. The drawing of the horses and men is expertly done. Most Indians have the ability of securing the illusion of foreshortening in a one-dimensional form. The style, however, belongs to the western Plains tribes and not to his own people.
The Senecas and other Iroquois were great carvers of grotesque and frightening masks. Belonging to this tribe, Poodry takes naturally to wood carving and cartooning. Little of his work has appeared during the last few years.

CHIEF T. SAUL
(Tobaski, Glowing Embers)
CHOTCOW-CHICKASAW

12. "CHOCTAW BALL GAME"
(Collection University of Oklahoma)

An Oklahoma artist of the younger generation that is coming to the front, Chief Saul was born in 1921. He first gave evidence of creative ability at Bacone College. After service with the 45th division in Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, Belgium, Germany and Austria, he returned to Oklahoma and, like so many veterans, enrolled as a student at the University of Oklahoma School of Art. He took the prescribed courses leading to a B.F.A. degree and received his M.F.A. in 1948. In addition to this, he prepared sketches of Indian life which were submitted for suggestion and criticism. These paintings are done in a personal style which is an adaptation of the manner of the Plains Indians. The subjects of these paintings, however, are the traditional Choctaw and Chickasaw customs and legends that he knows.

In 1947 two of his works were exhibited in the Second Annual Exhibition of Indian art at Philbrook Art Museum, Tulsa, where he won a prize. He was singled out for special honor by the magazine "Art Digest" with a reproduction of his "Choctaw Ball Game".

Chief is a talented and industrious artist. It is too early in his art career to make predictions about his future or point the direction in which his art will develop, Red or White. He appears to be intrigued by modernism in its varied manifestations.

SPENCER ASAH
(Lallo, Little Boy)
KIOWA

13. "WARRIOR ON PINTO"
(Collection O.B.I.)

Spencer Asah is fat and round as a sack of grain. His eyes are large and soft as a doe's; his mouth is always smiling-well, nearly always. His Indian name "Lallo" which means "Little Boy" fits him perfectly, far, far better than that of a dark cherub. He is good natured and kind, so good natured that he overcame his natural indolence and became an artist originally to please the Field Matron. Being jolly and easy going, he was often on the receiving end of horseplay and practical jokes by his colleagues when they were younger.

Spencer Asah was born in 1905. He is a pure blood Kiowa, scion of distinguished medicine men. He in turn is now custodian of one of the famous "medicine bundles" of the Kiowas, a responsibility that makes him a little uncomfortable, I believe. Once he showed me a cherished possession, a pictorial calendar of his tribe covering seventy years of Kiowa history.

Asah spent his childhood in the usual Indian manner. He attended Saint Patrick's Indian School and showed on early interest in art as well as in dancing. Considering his bulk, he is an unusually good dancer and was an excellent baseball player. He was one of the five original Kiowa art students to come under the influence of the art teachers at the University of Oklahoma. He spent two winters in Norman, but as soon as spring approached, he became restless and disappeared into the unknown.

Since none of the original Kiowas had the necessary entrance requirements for University study, they were given instruction rather informally, or, shall we say, "illegally". At no time did they attend the art classes. They received criticism and encouragement individually. The aim was to prevent their being "contaminated" with the white man's art.

When we finally succeeded in getting the project for the murals at the Federal Building at Anadarko, Asah did part of the panels. He also worked on murals in the Historical Building in Oklahoma City. He taught art for a few years.

Asah spent always remained closer to the early tribal tradition than most of the other artists of his tribe. His work has few details and is somewhat angular. It has a decided primitive flavor. The painting "Warrior on Pinto" is an excellent example of his work at the height of his career.

All the original modern Kiowa artists worked on colored paper, using the paper as an integral part of their color scheme. Thus the uncompromising black and white of the Indian pony and the warbonnet, and the deep brown of the Indian's body, against a background of sage green, produces a delightful harmony. The "pinto" is archaic and the rider hardly at ease. No matter, the result is entirely satisfying and very Indian.

JAMES AUCHIAH
(looking into Lodge)
KIOWA

14. "Muskogee Post Office"
(collection O.B.I.)

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JAMES AUCHIAH
(Looking Into Lodge)
KIOWA

James Auchiah's ancestors were interesting lot. His grandfather was the famous chief, Satanta, who gave the United States government a merry chase. He was considered one of the most daring warriors in the old Kiowa tribe. Another was Red Tipi, famous as a medicine man and an artist. His father was known as an athlete and soldier of the Seventh U.S. Cavalry. Auchiah is extraordinarily proud of his ancestors. He once courageously informed us "that it is no doubt this hereditary strain which made it possible for me to reach the top in the art world." But then, Auchiah is an Indian of the last Plains!

Auchiah was born in 1906. He early joined the first Kiowa artists under our supervision and attended informally the University of Oklahoma as a special student. Later, he received some instruction in fresco painting. During the early 30's, his work was widely exhibited in the United States. His paintings have found homes in many private collections and his murals are in the Federal Building at Anadarko, Muskogee Post Office, the Department of the Interior Building in Washington, D.C., etc.

During the war he was in the Coast Guard, stationed in Florida. He created a sensation in the local press by unravelling some mysterious inscriptions on the walls of the ancient Castello (fort) where his grandfather, Satanta, had been imprisoned for a while during the Indian wars of 1860-70. Auchiah deciphered his grandfather's pictographs on the walls. They proved to be nostalgic records of ceremonial and tribal life.

In his work one often notices a certain element of sarcastic humor. It is subtle and refined, never blatant and vulgar. Sometimes he pictures more tender sentiments, even grief.

"The Newyearseat" is in Auchiah's usual manner when in a jolly mood. The smug, slightly selfish demeanor of the bride and the open adoration, mixed with awe and pride of possession, of the swain are self-evident.

ARCHIE BLACKOWL
(Mis’ta moo to va, Flying Hawk)
CHEYENNE

15. "PRAYER FOR THE MOTHER"
(Collection O.B.I.)

During the last fifteen or twenty years, many Indian artists have come to my office or home for advice and encouragement, some probably for the chance of selling one of their paintings. So I was not particularly astonished when, a few years ago, a handsome young warrior suddenly appeared with a bundle of paintings. He introduced himself as Blackowl, and would he be permitted to show me his work? We went over his things carefully and bought a few. His work showed promise, but was not especially exciting. Many Oklahoma Indians were at that time producing work more interesting; yet there was a quality in evidence that proclaimed that Blackowl would be heard from if the artist had the courage and stamina to carry on.

Archie Blackowl has carried on in spite of ill health, discouragement, and domestic cares.

Blackowl was born in 1911 and spent his childhood on an average Indian farm. His formal education was interrupted very early. He married a charming Comanche girl and has three sons and a daughter for whom to provide. It is economically not so easy to raise a family and be an artist, red or white. It was not until 1938 that he began to point, at first for pastime only, and it was not long before his name began to appear in the catalogues of exhibitions in Oklahoma, San Francisco, New York, Washington D.C., and elsewhere. The Department of Indian Affairs arranged an exhibition of Blackowl’s works and also bought a number of his paintings for Indian schools. He has several murals in public buildings to his credit. The best known are at the Indian School and at the Kiowa Hospital in Lawton, the officers’ club at Fort Sill, Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, etc. He won first prize in 1947, for Plains tribe art in the All-Indian competitive exhibition in Tulsa.

Many of his watercolors have found a permanent home in private collections. Blackowl’s work has a genuine Indian flavor, and is founded on firsthand knowledge of the lore and tribal life.

His "Prayer for the Mother" gives one an idea of the delicacy, refinement, and tenderness of an Indian artist at his best when handling this most sacred of subjects, the funeral of a mother. In harmony of color and line, it can be compared with the work of Early Italian Masters.
Behind the scenes, they carried a red and yellow "Thunderbird", another sacred emblem among the Indian tribes of the Southwest. It was

The portrait was, of course, harsh and amateurish, but considering it was his first introduction to oil, it was not bad. He has painted sets for several western movie films.

"The Conference" is a very recent painting. It is concerned with delegates from the Apaches, Kiowas, and Comanches, evidently discussing matters of importance. In a general way, its style conforms to the Kiowa tradition in painting, brilliant in color, incisive in outline, slightly archaic in composition.

In Oklahoma it is still possible to be born in an Indian tipi if one should so desire. In 1913, as a child, he played the usual Indian and cowboy games, but, being an excellent rider, he was usually assigned the role of the cowboy fighting the Indians.

"TWO HORSEMEN"  
(So-Fe-Kon-Giah)  
COMANCHE-KIOWA

"COMANCHE SCOUTS"  
(Asawoya, Running Wolf)  
COMANCHE-CREEK

Paul Goodbear is a pure blood Northern Cheyenne with a distinguished pedigree, born on the Cheyenne Reservation in Montana, in 1913. He is a prince of the blood, a grandson of Chief Turkey Legs, great-grandson of Chief Starr, and great-grandson of Chief Whirlwind. All historians agree that the Cheyennes were among the most magnificient of the Plains tribes, and Paul carries the weight of a lot of inherited dignity on his shoulders. His record to date is not without distinction. Although born in Montana, he spent his childhood in Oklahoma, where he went to public school. Later he attended Wichita University and the University of New Mexico. He even studied at the Chicago Art Institute for a while. It is doubtful whether the last school was very sympathetic to his Indian art heritage. For an Indian aristocrat, Goodbear has had a varied career. He has danced, sung, painted, taught school, clerked in a department store in Washington, D.C., and has even been a professional boxer, at some time or another, as he gently puts it. He also has seen war service in Okinawa and elsewhere.

He is interested in the Indian. As Edwin Abbey became fascinated by the romance of England in the days of King Arthur and
Queen Elizabeth, so Goodbear prefers to chose scenes and incidents from Cheyenne and other Indian life long since past. Many of his paintings show the conflict between Whites and Indians, attacks on immigrants' trains, incidents from the frontier wars, the migrations of tribes along buffalo trails, settling down for the winter in more or less permanent camps, sports and pastimes. He portrays the time when his ancestors were the lords of the vast expanse of territory east of the Rockies, and when they dressed in handsome raiment of buckskin and feathers. Already he has received much recognition for his work and has exhibited widely. His paintings have been acquired by a publishing firm to illustrate school books. He executed several murals, the best of which are at the Coronado Monument at Bernallillo, New Mexico; Hotel Alcapulco, the Ranch Bar, Chicago; Oceola Bar in Miami, Florida; and some theatres.

The painting here reproduced is an excellent example of his watercolors and his large scale composition. The Sun dance, found only among the Plains Indians, was probably their most sacred ceremonial. They believed that its first performance, under the direction of the gods, had caused the buffalo to appear on the earth, insuring them a means of subsistence. Its aim seems to have been to overcome some dangerous or evil elements. It may have been a prayer, as well as an attempt to control nature. The dance did not necessarily coincide with the solstice; among some tribes, it could even take place in the fall instead of the summer.

JACK HOKEAH  
KIOWA

21. “KIOWA MOTHER AND CHILD”  
(Collection O.B.J.)

Hokeah is a straightforward character of the old school and owns the most magnificent pair of shoulders in Oklahoma. And how he can dance! Like the god of the fauns — or an inspired stallion. He now produces very little.

The Kiowa paintings in existence and they are, as a consequence, already rare. He has also done some interesting wood carving.

OSCAR HOWE  
(Nazua Hokahina, Trader Boy)  
SIOUX

22. “SIOUX BATTLE”  
(Courtesy of the Artist)

Oscar Howe is a member of the great Sioux people, who paints horses based on the ancient tradition. He was born in western South Dakota in 1916, and grew up on the reservation. He attended the Indian school in Santa Fe. It was in New Mexico that his latent artistic talent was brought to the surface. While in the Southwest he finished the mural, “The Sioux Skin Painter” for the Art Building at Gallup. Later, he completed many others. Among the important works of Howe should be mentioned the illustrations he did for the book “The Bringer of the Mystery Dog”, by Ann Clark, in the Sioux language.

When America entered the war, this son of warriors volunteered. He saw the campaigns of Africa and Europe. In 1948 he was employed by the Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, to paint fifty plates in color, illustrating the evolution of the American Indian costumes from 1500 to the present. In 1947 he had won the Grand Purchase Prize for his “Dakota Duck Hunt” at Philbrook Art Museum, Tulsa, in competition with the artists of all the United States. It is a beautifully rendered painting of two young hunters hiding behind the reeds and watching the flight of ducks over an inland lake.

The old Dakotas were noted for their paintings of horses and bottles on deer and buffalo skins. Oscar follows in the old tradition, or shall we say, he presents us with his version of the old style and technique. He has also done some interesting wood carving.

“Sioux Battle” is a very recent painting and may be considered as one of his outstanding works. It is a duel between two warriors on horseback. In color, it is warmer than Howe usually paints. The violence of the circular movement of horses and horses is well controlled and the color harmony adequate. The painting suffers somewhat by too much interest in the rough ground, which tends to divert the attention from the main theme.

GEORGE CAMPBELL KEAHBONE  
(A-Sou-Ta)  
KIOWA

23. “BUFFALO HUNTERS”  
(Collection University of Oklahoma)

Dear Mr. Jacobson:

...As a lad my ever desire was, someday, to become an artist...
...I never tired of drawing, even during my school years at Bacon. I'd bury my head in a tablet, drawing all kinds of pictures every spare time I got. I love to draw animals, especially horses, with lots of action, Indians on horses, on the war path, etc.

In the fall of 1934 I entered the Santa Fe Indian School as a special art student, and, under the direction of Miss Dorothy Dunn, developed my art. I graduated in 1936, married a Toa Pueblo girl and now am living in Taos, New Mexico.

Sincerely,
G. C. Keahbone

Keahbone is still painting pictures, that is, sometimes. Other duties occupy most of his time as he has a family to support. Often he works at cabinet making. He managed to attend some art courses under the G. I. Bill, having seen action in Okinawa and China as a member of the famous Navy Groap 13 Outfit. He generally chooses for his subjects the Plains Indians instead of the Pueblos among whom he now lives. His personal style is very much akin to that of the older Keahbone from Oklahoma, where he was born in 1915.

The colors of the paintings of the Kiowas are much richer and more brilliant than those of the Pueblos or the Navajos. They (the Kiowas) delight in dozens of blues, yellows, reds, and purples; memories, perhaps, of their grandmothers' beadwork. Keahbone's paintings have been seen in many of the larger museums in the United States, and the Trocadero in Paris.

“Buffalo Hunters” represents his earlier manner. There is an atmosphere of caution, mixed with anticipation, about the three nude hunters. The feeling of the wide open spaces of the buffalo country is conveyed by three lines of different width and tone. In color, this picture is more restrained than in most later works.

ALFRED CALISAY KODASEET  
KIOWA

24. “THE LANCE DANCE”  
(Collection O.B.J.)

Alfred Calisay Kodaseet is another talented Kiowa who came to the University of Oklahoma from the Kiowa Indian country, via Bacon College. He attended the campaigns of Africa and Europe one year, after which he disappeared artistically from view. He was born in 1919. The young man early showed a strong inclination towards art, but, after some years of study, decided that there was a safer economic future in other fields.

His “Lance Dance” follows closely in the modern Kiowa tradition — splendid drawing and a love for luscious color.
C A L V I N   L A R V I E
SIoux

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Sioux Indians had a great many painters on buckskin, especially painters of horses and warriors in full battle array. At the present time there are only four or five Sioux artists. Calvin Larvie is one of the two best known. Calvin was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota; he went to the Indian School there. Drawing and painting occupied the greater part of his time. He early acquired a certain local reputation, which was later rewarded by the golden opportunities in South Dakota in 1938. He was assigned by the government to paint a large mural in the Plains Indians Room at the San Francisco World's Fair. There he secured an audience from all America.

The war came and Calvin became a warrior. He was in the invasion of France with the 90th Infantry Division and was wounded in the Rhineland campaign. Now he has returned to his people on the Rosebud Reservation, and is gradually readjusting himself to civilian life. He continues to portray with his art but apparently finds little encouragement in South Dakota, so he recently went west.

In his paintings, Calvin seems to prefer spiritual, or shall we say allusive, themes, with a decided religious or metaphysical flavor. Is it possible that there remains in his heritage something of the same revivifying spirit that produced the leaders of the Ghost Dance uprising in 1890? It is possible that he mulls over the meaning of the destiny of his people? Looking at the painting here reproduced one is tempted to so believe. "The Vision" is a private religious experience of an adolescent in preparation for "Bravehood".

S T E P H E N   M O P O P E
(Qued-koi, Painted Robe)
KIOWA

26. "MEDICINE DANCE"
(Collection O.B.J.)

There is a tradition that, in the days of long ago, when the restless and mortal Kiowas made periodic raids to the south, a handsome Spanish girl who grew up in the tribe and later married one of the warriors, becoming the ancestress of Steve Mopope. At any rate, Mopope's ancestry is distinguished, harking back to Appiatan, one of the greatest Kiowas. He was a philosopher and had an understanding of the problems of his people in a difficult time of change.

Mopope's childhood was spent with his grandmother, in the purest artistic bent of all American Indian artists. When his uncles, Hakok and Silver Horn, discovered that the untutored young fellow had been drawing designs in the sand, they took him in hand and taught him how to paint, in the old Kiowa tradition, on tanned skins with earth pigments. It was therefore natural that Steve should be one of the original group of Kiowa boys who were launched on their career in 1923. His Indian name, Painted Robe, was prophetic. He was chosen to do another big mural job in the lobby of the Northern Plains Indians Museum at Browning, Montana. He did this job so satisfactorily that it placed him in line for a teaching position at an Indian boarding school. There he performed almost too successfully. Steve was an enthusiastic teacher and young Indians flocked to his classes in such numbers that some of the other teachers became so happy. However, this pleasant state of affairs was suddenly terminated. Uncle Sam needed men to do some work. So Steve entered the Army Air Forces. He was in the invasion of France. In 1945 he was back in England, as a student in the army university at Shrewsbury, where he studied oil, watercolors, and sculpture. In November, 1945, he enrolled in the University of Oklahoma, School of Art. In 1946-47 he studied anthropology and art in the University of New Mexico.

Naturally, with such a varied artistic training, Pepion's work is based more on the orthodox white tradition with all its complicated formulas than the simple and direct art of the Indian. The small egg tempera here reproduced represents Victor's latest experiments in this medium. The subject reveals his interest in contemporary Indian life.

L E O N A R D   R I D D L E S
COMANCHE

28. "BUFFALO DANCER"
(Collection University of Oklahoma)

Leonard is another of the younger set of Oklahoma Indians who showed great promise in drawing and painting, but he did not continue as a professional artist. The painting included in this work shows remarkable skill as well as good taste.

The buffalo dance is a popular subject with Indian artists. This dance is performed by many Plains Indians every day. For the Plains Indians the buffalo was the most important and valuable product of nature; its practical annihilation was a death blow to their culture and their mode of life and pauperised them.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, hunting expeditions were organized for the delight of wealthy Americans and Europeans. Innumerable buffaloes were killed and left to rot on the plains. The Indians were amazed and disgusted by this wanton waste, and despaired of the Indian future. They killed only from necessity and used absolutely every particle of the buffalo. Its flesh was their main source of food; they had devised an unexcelled means of preserving it by "jerking" and pounding it into pemmican, which made it easy to store and to carry. The nutritious marrow and fat were well prepared for keeping stored in the animal. With the warm weather they were eaten at the time of the hunt. The skin provided robes, saddles, parfleches, tents, lariats, ropes, belts and ornaments. The horns were fashioned into spoons and drinking cups. The snow served as thread. The bones were made into objects of use and adornment. Even the droppings of the animal (buffalo chips) had their value: dried they served as fuel. They provided comfort and saved the life of many Whites as well as Indians on the treeless Plains.

Naturally such an animal was cherished by the people whose existence depended on it. To them, it became the symbol of long life and abundance, also of leadership and might. Many folk tales having the buffalo as hero gave entertainment; they were also used to teach the young moral principles. Songs celebrated the fabulous beast who also had a place in the totems. Important ceremonies honored the buffalo and illustrated the legends that had grown around it.

The buffalo dance was basically a prayer to the spirit of the animal, begging forgiveness for the necessity in which the Indians were placed to hunt and kill it. It also asked the benevolent spirit to see the needs of men and to provide them with enough game to subsist. It was held regularly before the annual summer hunt and also at various times, when game was scarce. The participants wore buffalo masks and went through motions suggesting the life cycle of the buffalo, and the pantomime of the hunt.

L A R R Y   S A U P I T Y
COMANCHE

29. "DECORATING A WARRIOR"
(Collection University of Oklahoma)

Larry Saupity is a Comanche. He was born in 1924. Like so many Indians in Oklahoma, he drew and painted ever since he could remember. His work showed great promise but the war came to our
INDIANS, also. He saw much action in France and Germany with the 4th Infantry Signal Corps and was very seriously wounded at the taking of St. Lo. He came back and, in 1947, enrolled in the Art School in the University of Oklahoma. But he had to withdraw, not being completely recovered.

He believes that his future art career lies in the white man's world. In this, he may be entirely correct. Larry is a quiet, studious boy, industrious and intelligent. He has not been with us very long but his teachers think very highly of his talent. In fact, one of them believes that he is the most talented Indian we have ever had in our art school. It will be interesting to watch and guide his development.

The painting here reproduced represents his finest work. The "Kiowa Mother" with her papoose carrier strapped to her shoulders, stands very erect. She is evidently participating in some public celebration. The figure has the archaic angularity of the old historical Kiowa painting; at the same time it is very modern. Lois' few paintings in existence are mostly of mothers and children. All have feminine delicacy and charm. They are also instinctively sentimental towards motherhood and childhood. Most of them are harmonious arrangements of blue and yellow; the blue of the sky and the yellow of the grass of the great plains.

For a year her watercolors were exhibited widely in the United States with the first Kiowa group. Her art career was brief but happy and reached its high point with the reproduction in color of one of her works in the volume, "Kiowa Art"; and with a feature story in one of the great Chicago newspapers. But it was soon over. She married and devoted herself to her young family, as is the case so often with talented girls who abandon their career for domestic life.

MARIAN TERASAZ

32. "COMANCHE GIRL"

Among the Indians, the pictorial art has by tradition been a man's art. Women rarely participated in war, the hunt, tribal history, personal biography, and religious ceremony, all male activities. The feminine arts were decorative design, the crafts, and costumes. Even during this late lusus of artists activity of the last twenty-five years or so, very few Indian girls have done outstanding work. There are three or four among the Pueblo who have received considerable notice in the art world, and two among the Plains tribes. These latter are no longer producing, being occupied with motherhood and domestic affairs.

Marian Terasaz is a pure blood Comanche girl who was born in 1916. She is included in this work because she is talented and painted some splendid watercolors of Indian women and children while she was a student at Bacone College, and because her paintings are rare. The Indian girl in buckskin, here reproduced, is a typical example of her work. She did not attempt any complicated arrangements of color. Few Indian paintings of today are heavy or robust, but Marian's work possesses a delicacy, grace, and charm that could be described by no other term but feminine.

HERMAN TOPPAH

33. "YOUNG KIOWA DANCER"

Herman is a newcomer in the Indian art world. His work first appeared at the Indian Fair at Anadarko in 1947. "The Young Kiowa Dancer" is an excellent example of his style, a style that, in a general way, conforms to the modern Kiowa mode, but nevertheless possesses a certain personal flavor. His color is different from the bold and glowing effect of Tsa-To-Ke and others. The modeling of his figures, though reserved, is more emphatic than the two dimensional quality of the older artists.

Toppah is still young and his style may yet undergo several changes before reaching maturity. At the present time there is a certain tendency towards the pretty calendar art that he will no doubt overcome with more experience and study. Toppah was born in western Oklahoma in 1923. He was in the armed forces for a short time in the late conflict.

MONE ROE TSA-TO-KE

1904-1987

(Hunting Horse)

KIOWA

34. "KIOWA AND CHEYENNE SMOKING PEACE PIPE"

35. "THREE FRIENDS"

37. "THE PEYOTE BIRD"

(Drawing B.O.J.)

Dressed in his Indian finery, with his war paint on, Tso-To-Ke looked formidable enough to send icy chills down the spine of Pale Faces. His lean frame, piercing eyes, and aesthetic nose were complemented by the majesty of the war bonnet. Still, as is often the case with Indians, the fierce exterior concealed a gentle nature. Tso-
To-Ke could not find it in his heart to even mildly reprove his little daughter, Peggy, when the child coup with his watercolors. For Martha, his wife, Peggy, painting and music gave meaning to his life. Music especially was the core of his being; it animated his paintings with a subtle sense of rhythm and harmony. Tsa-To-Ke loved to sing. For many years he was chief singer at Kiowa dances. He knew all the old songs of the tribe. No one else could bring out their color, their fire, their mystic qualities, their pathos, or their roughness as he. The world is the loser because his renderings of martial hymns, lullabies, and ballads have not been recorded. He collected the songs of other tribes also, and found great fun in them.

Tsa-To-Ke, a Kiowa, was born in Oklahoma near Saddle Mountain, where he is buried. There was a proud and aristocratic tradition in his family. Tsa-To-Ke had attended Bacone College for a short time. He was married and made an attempt at farming when his chance came to do the thing he especially enjoyed doing: paint.

He worked hard at his art, responding with all his spirit to the sympathy he found in his teachers. There was a sense of ecstasy in his creations. He took the keenest delight in his work. He painted the things he knew at first hand, the rituals, the games of his people. Then, he wanted to bring back the almost forgotten past and he began a study of the history of all Indian peoples in order to acquire authentic documentation. Tsa-To-Ke painted a mural for the auditorium of the University of Oklahoma. He was the principal artist for the Indian mural in the Historical Building at Oklahoma City, and he prepared sketches for the Federal Building in Anadarko. His watercolors are in many private and public collections. He exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad. He was well represented in the volume, "Kiowa Art".

There was always something in him detached and profoundly spiritual. It was as if obscurely knowing that his days here were numbered, he boldly walked in the company of the gods and heard the music of the spheres. This quality is felt in all his work and he ranks as one of the greatest Indian artists. The paintings of Tsa-To-Ke included in this volume are representative of his art at the height of his career.

The Kiowas and Cheyennes were not permanent enemies. Occasionally there was between them a pow-wow. This friendly get-together around the peace pipe (see "Kiowas and Cheyennes Smoking Peace Pipe") represents Tsa-To-Ke's bold attack of a problem and his ability to reduce it to its bare essentials without fussing with minor details. It is an arrangement of a few lines and colors of blankets, feathers, and faces. The net effect is an air of calm mystery or secrecy contained within the group. Part of this painting was adopted as a calavogue by the University of Oklahoma Press.

The "Three Friends" is in a somewhat lighter vein, although humor rarely appeared in his paintings. The three Kiowa matrons appear in modern Indian garb. Again Manzan's skill in eliminating unnecessary detail is apparent, and also his dramatic sense of color value.

While bravely but vainly fighting tuberculosis, Tsa-To-Ke joined the Peyote cult. He painted some of the visions he experienced, luminous, ethereal pictures, already out of this world. "The Peyote Bird" is one of these paintings. (PI. 77).

WALTER RICHARD WEST, B.F.A.
(Wah-pah-nah-yah, Light Foot)
CHEYENNE

36. "DICK DANCING"
(Courtesy of the Artist)

We can easily imagine Dick in his naval officer's uniform as chief of the shore patrol in San Francisco, or on duty on a battleship in the Pacific.

Dick, born in 1912, is a member of the fighting Cheyennes. He stands six feet four inches in his stocking feet. He was captain of the football team at Haskell and Bacone, and he was for two or three summers a scout master in a boys' camp in the East. He was also president of the Student Council at Haskell as well as the president of the Leather Necks and a member of the Sequoyah Club. Naturally he is an expert horseman and enjoys hunting. And he paints pictures, both in oil and watercolor. He does lithographs, woodblock printing, models in clay and sculptures in stone. He can play the drum and give a war dance with the best of the old warriors of the Plains.

He attended the Art School of the University of Oklahoma and graduated in 1941 as Bachelor of Fine Arts, the first full-blood Indian to receive this degree. He is well versed in general history of art. He is now studying for his Master's degree.

His pictures of Indian subjects have been exhibited in many of the large cities of our country and he has done at least two murals in Oklahoma—one at Bacone and the other in the Post Office at Okemah. The design for this project by an eastern artist had been rejected by the citizens of Okemah as unsuitable if not absurd. In their dilemma the officials of Washington asked advice. Since Okemah is the site of an old Indian capital, I suggested that a competition be staged among Oklahoma Indians for this mural. Dick won first place and received the commission. He chose as his subject "A Grand Conference of the Creeks, 1924." He did considerable research to secure historical accuracy. In 1949 he won the Grand Prize at the Indian art exhibition at Philbrook. He is Art teacher at Bacone College. Already a leader in the American art world, he is undoubtedly destined to play an even greater role in the education for Indian youth.

Looking and walking like a huge panther, Dick is the kindest and most considerate young man I have ever known. At school he was the favorite of everybody, including the ladies.

"Dick Dancing" was painted recently. It is a boldly rendered figure of a Northern Cheyenne Indian doing dance steps, while blowing a shrill whistle. It is thoroughly Indian in technique and execution, but his mastery of anatomy and movement reveals years of artistic training. In color it is daring but harmonious. The warrior's face looks like a self-portrait.