George Catlin: A Selected Bibliography
Alice M. Cornell

Catlin, George 1796-1872.

*Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians: Written During Eight Years’ Travel (1832-1839) Amongst the Wildest Tribes of Indians in North America.*


Catlin is readable and informative, if a bit dramatic and overblown for today's taste. Nevertheless, his writings and opinions reflect his age and are themselves interesting. This is a facsimile reprint of one of the early editions of Catlin's *Letters and Notes*. The engravings of his published work are replaced in this edition with black and white reproductions of the original art. This work is in print and available in many bookstores.

Catlin, George, 1796-1872

*George Catlin: Letters and Notes on the North American Indians.*

Mooney, Michael Macdonald, 1930-, Editor.


This is an edited version of Catlin's *Letters and Notes*. Text has been rearranged in some cases to appeal to the general reader and overcome Catlin's appalling lack of chronology. This edition is copiously illustrated with reproductions (mostly black and white) of Catlin's original art and published illustrations. The book opens with a detailed biography of Catlin and includes a bibliography. This is a recent and widely available reprint of a work first published in 1975.

Dippie, Brian W. 1943-

*Catlin and His Contemporaries: The Politics of Patronage.*


This is a lengthy and scholarly study which focuses on the question of why Catlin was unsuccessful in selling his collections to the United States government when other contemporary artists, notably Seth Eastman and John Mix Stanley, were able to secure government support. It does provide a wealth of information on Catlin and his work and, in addition, provides an description of the artistic, political and social context of the time. This book is in print and available in libraries and through special order in bookstores.

Ewers, John C.(John Canfield), 1909-1997

"George Catlin, Painter of Indians of the West."


Dr. Ewers was the foremost authority on the Native Americans of the Great Plains. This work provides an excellent summary and assessment of Catlin's work as well as providing the first catalog of the collection of original oils now in the National Museum of American Art. It also includes a useful bibliography. Dr. Ewers extensive bibliography of writings is an invaluable resource and his scholarly writing is well-organized, clear, informative, and blessedly entertaining. Unfortunately this work is not readily available since it forms a part of the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution. It can generally be found in academic libraries.
Ewers, John C. (John Canfield), 1909- 1997
Indian Life on the Upper Missouri.

A collection of Ewer's papers on aspects of Native American history and life in the Upper Missouri River Valley. This work is readily available in bookstores.

Goetzmann, William H., 1930- and Goetzmann, William N.
The West of the Imagination.

This is a brilliant, eminently readable and well-illustrated history of art of the American West. It is the companion volume to the PBS television series of the same title. For those who wish to dig further, it is heavily (but unobtrusively) footnoted and contains an extensive bibliography. It is widely available in bookstores.

Haberly, Loyd, 1896-
Pursuit of the Horizon: A Life of George Catlin, Painter & Recorder of the American Indian

Haberly's work is the first popular biography of Catlin. It is readable and informative, but not readily available.

McCracken, Harold, 1894-
George Catlin and the Old Frontier.

McCracken's work is a excellent, readable, and well-illustrated biography of Catlin. It also includes the most complete bibliography of Catlin works to date. This bibliography and, in fact the entire publication history of Catlin's works has been researched by the New Haven bookman William Reese. The results of his researches are expected to appear in publications of the North American Print Conference and the Smithsonian Institution. This book is out of print but available in libraries.


Holdings include most of Catlin's cartoon collection, Catlin’s later versions of his original paintings, created after the first set passed into the hands of Joseph Harrison in 1852 in the settlement of Catlin’s debts. Most of Catlin’s original paintings are in the collection of the National Museum of American Art. Other major collections of Catlin materials are located at The Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art (Tulsa, Oklahoma) and the Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago, Illinois).


Includes many scans of Catlin’s original paintings, most of which are in the collections of the NMAA. Most of the cartoon collection is in the collection of the National Gallery of Art (Mellon), also in Washington, D.C. Other major collections of Catlin materials are located at The Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art (Tulsa, Oklahoma) and the Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago, Illinois).

Roehm, Marjorie Catlin.
The Letters of George Catlin and His Family: A Chronicle of the American West. Berkeley: University

This is a well done edition of the Catlin Family Letters, readable and informative. This work is out of print, but available in libraries.

Troccoli, Joan Carpenter.


This is an catalog of an exhibition of the Gilcrease Catlin Collection which consists of oils and watercolors, along with manuscripts and other works produced by Catlin primarily after 1836. This collection was recently exhibited at the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis. This is the major collection of Catlin's work outside the Smithsonian and the watercolors are particularly worthy of attention. The work includes an opening essay on Catlin and his work. Catalog entries are extensively and informatively annotated. There is an excellent bibliography. This work is widely available in bookstores.

Truettner, William H.


This is the principal catalog of the collection of Catlin's Indian Gallery of Paintings. It also includes chapters dealing with Catlin's biography, the artistic milieu in which he painted, and an assessment of his work. There is an extensive bibliography. This is a critical work for the study and appreciation of Catlin and his work. It is, unfortunately out of print, but available in many libraries. Dr. Truettner is on the staff of the National Museum of American Art. We are informed that Dr. Nancy K. Anderson of the National Gallery of Art is engaged in preparation of a major work on Catlin which should expand on this publication.