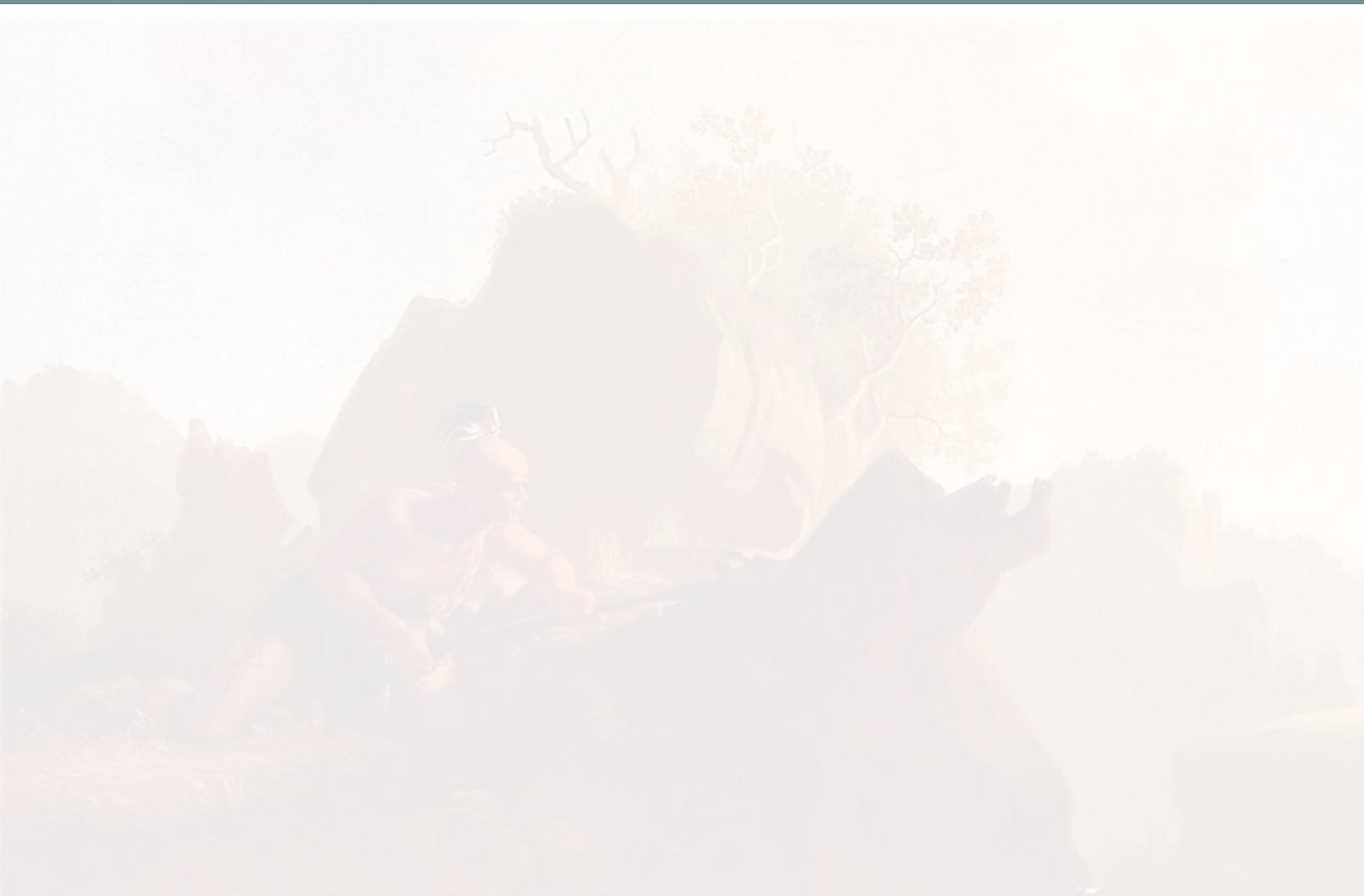


Manifesting Anti-Expansionist Anxiety at New York's American Art-Union:

A Sociopolitical Interpretation of
George Caleb Bingham's 1845 Paintings,
The Concealed Enemy and *Fur Traders
Descending the Missouri*

BY JOAN STACK





George Caleb Bingham, *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, 1845. (Image: Metropolitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org)

On December, 8, 1845, Missouri painter George Caleb Bingham sold *The Concealed Enemy* and *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (originally titled *French Trader and Half-breed Son*) to the American Art-Union in New York. Both pictures represented native peoples in the contested space of the American West. Thousands viewed these paintings at the Art-Union's free gallery during their brief exhibition period in New York, which ended on December 19, 1845. On that day, the paintings were distributed by lottery to AA-U members during a gala event.¹

Scholars have traditionally interpreted these pictures as nostalgic, idealized visions of Missouri's bygone wilderness and/or pendant images contrasting doomed native savagery with the civilizing force of Euro-American settlement. By extension, proponents of the second interpretation often associate the paintings with Manifest Destiny and President James K. Polk's ambitious expansion of U.S. territory in the 1840s.² I propose an alternate reading that, by contrast, connects the pictures with wariness of Polk's expansionist policies. An anti-expansionist reading better applies to the temporal circumstances of the paintings' earliest exhibition and more accurately reflects the attitudes of both Bingham and many members of his New York audience.

The Concealed Enemy and *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* were exhibited for only a few days in 1845.

After the Art-Union's lottery, both disappeared into private hands for almost a century.³ Since there are no records of AA-U visitor responses to the images, any understanding of their short-lived public reception at the Art-Union depends upon a study of culturally constructed habits of interpretation. Art historian Michael Baxandall called such inquiries the study of the "Period Eye."⁴ My examination of the forces that shaped the 1845 "Period Eye" borrows freely from spectatorship theory, traditional Panofskian iconography, and Barthesian semiotics to explore politically charged associations viewers might have made between Bingham's paintings and popular rhetoric, canonical artworks, and political cartoons. Since such associations are related to reception rather than creation, this study of potential audience responses is not necessarily tied to the artist's intentions.⁵

This reception-based approach aligns with popular nineteenth-century "associativist" theories of taste. Archibald Alison and others argued that aesthetic pleasure came from creative mental "associations" that artworks inspired in viewers. Most believed in a hierarchy of taste whereby cultivated associations (with classical antiquity, for example) were superior to "casual" connections related to personal experience or current events. The theoretical writings of associativists were very popular in the U.S. in the 1840s. For many Art-Union visitors, creative engagement was itself a "habit of interpretation."⁶

Left—George Caleb Bingham, *The Concealed Enemy*, 1845. (Image: Stark Museum, Orange, Texas)

Tensions Mount: The Anxious Political Context of December 1845

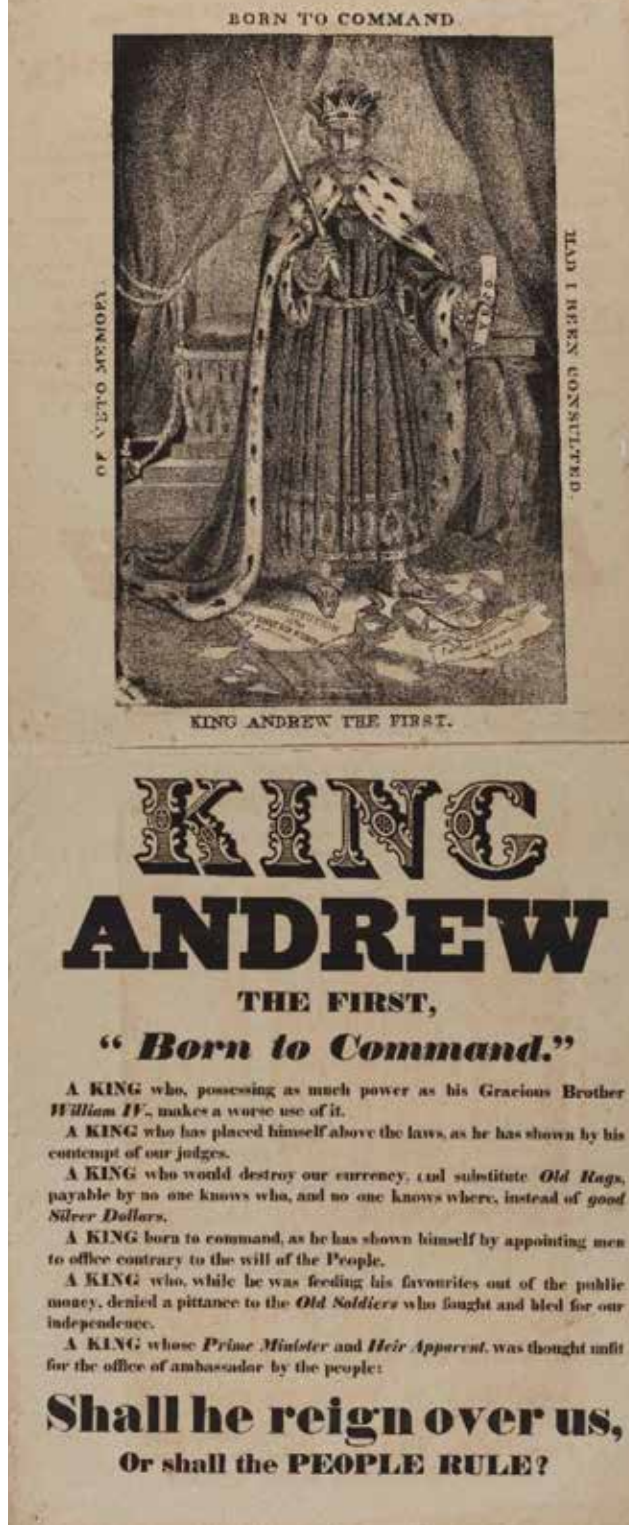
In 1845 the geopolitical fate of the United States was in doubt. That spring the newly installed Democratic President, James K. Polk, had made good on his campaign promise to push forward legislation annexing the Republic of Texas into the United States. Mexico, however, had never recognized Texas's independence. The Mexican government believed that the annexation of Texas constituted an act of war.

Polk's expansionist designs extended beyond Texas. The president hoped to usurp adjacent southwestern land controlled by Mexico, as well as northwestern territory occupied by Britain. During his March 4, 1845, inaugural address, Polk reiterated his campaign promise to fight for a 54° 40' border in the northwest, maintaining that Britain had no rights to the Oregon Territory despite earlier agreements allowing joint occupancy. Diplomatic negotiations throughout 1845 faltered, and Polk made particularly militant claims regarding Oregon in his first address to Congress on December 2, 1845. When Bingham's paintings were on display in New York, U.S. citizens were bracing themselves for war on two fronts.⁷

Polk's supporters justified territorial wars by arguing that Euro-Americans were a divinely chosen people destined to control the North American continent. In their view, Americans not only had the right to territory claimed by Great Britain and Mexico, but they were also entitled to land occupied by native peoples. This idea, often referred to as "Manifest Destiny," was popularly attached to Polk's expansionist agenda by Democratic journalist John O'Sullivan.⁸ In February 1845, O'Sullivan described Polkian expansion as "the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty."⁹

O'Sullivan's rhetoric influenced many apologists for Polk's aggressive expansionist agenda, but it was not generally embraced by the opposition Whig Party. Indeed, the New York Whig journal, *The American Review*, mocked the concept, sarcastically describing Polk's attitude as follows: "As soon as [Polk] was fairly settled in his seat his policy was fixed. . . . We were Anglo Saxon Americans; it was our 'destiny' to possess and to rule this continent—we were bound to do it! . . . [*The American Review*] would pray the Administration, for humanity's sake to make peace with Mexico . . . peace without conquest or the wanton desire of spoiling the enemy of his goods, his possessions and his heritage"¹⁰

An ardent Whig, Bingham likely shared *The American Review's* suspicion of Polkian policy; Whigs largely supported expansion and development in existing American territories, but not the addition of new domains. In 1849, while serving in the Missouri House of Representatives, the artist condemned an amendment to a



Opponents to Andrew Jackson's re-election in 1832 used this broadside to lambast him over his veto of the renewal of the Second Bank of the United States, orchestrated by his opponent, Henry Clay. (Image: Library of Congress)

bill asserting that the expansionist Mexican War had been "just and necessary."¹¹ Whigs generally balked at the idea that wars with Mexico and/or Oregon benefited the United States. Henry Clay, Polk's Whig opponent in the 1844 election, had argued against annexation and expansion for a variety of reasons, including concerns about sectional

crisis and the extension of slavery. In his widely reprinted “Raleigh Letter” (first published in the Washington, D.C., *National Intelligencer* on April 27, 1844), Clay explained his position, declaring, “I think it far more wise and important to compose and harmonize the present Confederacy, as it now exists, than to introduce a new element of discord and distraction into it.”¹²

Clay lost the 1844 election by a popular vote margin of less than 1.5 percent, and resistance to Polk’s expansionist plans remained intense throughout 1845.¹³ Despite this opposition, Congress passed a Texas annexation bill in July of that year. For the next five months a divided America waited for Texas to agree to the terms (after Texas’s acceptance, Polk signed the bill into law on December 29, 1845). In the meantime, relations with Great Britain over the Oregon question remained tense. War seemed inevitable as the public prepared for “the other shoe to drop.”

The Concealed Enemy and *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* were displayed within this anxious cultural context. For many Americans, these visions of the West on the walls of the Art-Union’s galleries may have been reminders of the still uncertain political, military, and social ramifications of Polk’s western policies.¹⁴

Whig Artists and the Jacksonian Legacy

To understand the particular politicized lens through which some viewers may have seen Bingham’s paintings in 1845, one must understand the polarization of political parties in the Jacksonian era. Throughout his eight years as president, Democrat Andrew Jackson worked to expand citizen suffrage, abolish the national bank, limit federal involvement in the economic affairs of states, and expand American influence and control over native tribal lands. To further this agenda, Jackson increased executive power and weakened the power of Congress and the courts.¹⁵

In 1832, Kentucky Congressman Henry Clay founded the anti-Jacksonian Whig Party. Whigs argued for federal legislation to regulate and protect the national economy with tariffs, internal improvements, and a national bank.¹⁶ Clay and his cohorts feared Jackson had weakened Congress and the courts so much that he had become an “imperial” president whose authoritarian impulses and territorial ambitions more closely reflected the attitudes of European monarchs than those of the Founding Fathers. The anti-Jackson cartoon *King Andrew, Born to Command* (ca. 1832) reflects Whig distrust of Jackson, asking readers, “Shall he reign over us, or shall the people rule?”¹⁷

In the 1830s certain artists may have reflected Whig fears of Jackson’s imperialistic tendencies in their pictures. Art historian Angela Miller and others have argued that the most famous American painter of the period, Thomas Cole, imbedded anti-Jacksonian political messages into his landscape series, *The Course of Empire*, now in the galleries of the New-York Historical Society. This five-canvas series begins with the painting *The Savage State*



Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire*, 1836. The five paintings are *The Savage State*, *The Arcadian or Pastoral State*, *The Consummation of Empire*, *Destruction*, and *Desolation*. (Image: The New-York Historical Society)

in which “savages” live in structures that resemble Native American teepees, and the rugged scenery recalls that of the American wilderness. The later pictures in the series contain architecture and statuary that recall that of the doomed ancient civilizations of Greece and Imperial Rome; *The Arcadian or Pastoral State* represents a pre-urban society in which humans coexist with nature; *The Consummation of Empire* depicts an impressive urban center overseen by an emperor; *Destruction* pictures storms and invaders destroying the city; and *Desolation* represents the ruined and abandoned metropolis reverting to a natural state. The imagery suggests that imperial arrogance and ambition inevitably doom governments. The resemblance of the landscape in *The Savage State* to that



Thomas Cole, *The Savage State* from *The Course of Empire*. (Image: New-York Historical Society)

of America implies that the U.S. might also succumb to imperialism and its attendant fate.

The Course of Empire was exhibited in the fall of 1836 in the semipublic New York picture gallery of Cole's Whig patron, Luman Reed. The exhibition took place on the eve of a presidential election that Whigs feared might lead to a victory for Jackson's vice president and protégé, Martin Van Buren. Miller argues that the display of *The Course of Empire* may have functioned as a pre-election Whig warning of the dangers of a Van Buren "Imperial" presidency.¹⁸

To the Whigs' dismay, Martin Van Buren won the 1836 election, and during his first year in office, the American economy collapsed with the financial Panic of 1837. Many blamed the failure of local and state banks on decentralized Jacksonian monetary policies. Once again Whigs hoped voter remorse would lead to a change of leadership in the 1838 midterm elections and the upcoming 1840 presidential election.¹⁹ Whig patrons continued to commission politicized imagery promoting their cause. As art historian Elizabeth Johns has shown, Whig commissions like William Sydney Mount's *Catching Rabbits* (1837) and *Cider Making* (1840) can be read simultaneously as genre scenes and political allegories. Whigs associated trapping game with attracting voters, and cider was a common Whig symbol in the 1840 campaign.²⁰

George Caleb Bingham was familiar with such popular political imagery. The artist campaigned for the Whigs and painted banners in support of the party in 1840 and 1844.²¹ As Nancy Rash has shown, newspaper reports indicate that Bingham based much of his banner imagery on popular Whig propaganda, which in 1840 transformed the sophisticated William Henry Harrison into an emblem of the western middle class by associating the candidate with log cabins and hard cider.²²

Harrison won the election, but the Whig dream was short-lived. Harrison died soon after his inauguration, and in 1841 Vice President John Tyler ascended to office. Tyler, a former Democrat, refused to work with the Whigs to promote Henry Clay's banking reform bills, tariffs, and plans for internal improvements. The new president eventually was expelled from the party, and toward the end of his term further alienated many Whigs by proposing the annexation of Texas.²³

By 1844 Whig leader Henry Clay was the leading candidate to replace Tyler. Bingham was an enthusiastic Clay supporter, campaigning and painting banners in support of the candidate.²⁴ After Clay's nomination, the Democrats surprised many Americans by rejecting the moderate anti-annexation ex-president, Martin Van Buren, and nominating the relatively unknown Tennessee congressman James K. Polk. Polk campaigned on an aggressive agenda of expansion in Texas and Oregon, and the Democrats' popularity grew in the spring and summer of 1844. Clay supporters began to fear that Polk might become president and take the country to war.

New Yorker Philip Hone, a former Whig mayor of the city, expressed these fears in a May 14 entry in his diary: "The Southern States desire the annexation of Texas to

strengthen their position geographically and politically by the prospective addition of four or five slaveholding states. . . . We of the North and East say we have already more territory than we know what to do with, and more slavery within our borders than we choose to be answerable for before God and man."²⁵

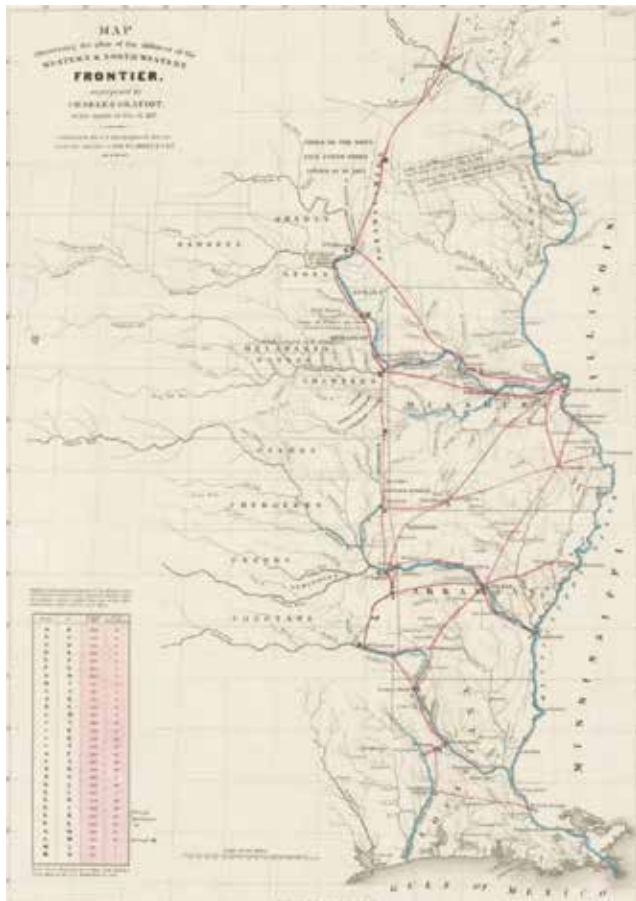
Despite such objections, the Democrats prevailed in the 1844 election. Nicknamed "Young Hickory," Polk ran as the successor to Andrew Jackson, and his expansionist agenda was marketed as patriotic. The Tennessean was promoted as a tough, no-nonsense Democrat willing to take on foreign governments and expand America's international influence. Clay, a slave owner against the expansion of slavery, was branded a Machiavellian hypocrite. The Whigs lost votes to both Polk and the antislavery Liberty Party's candidate, James G. Birney.²⁶

The Specter of War after the Presidential Election of 1844

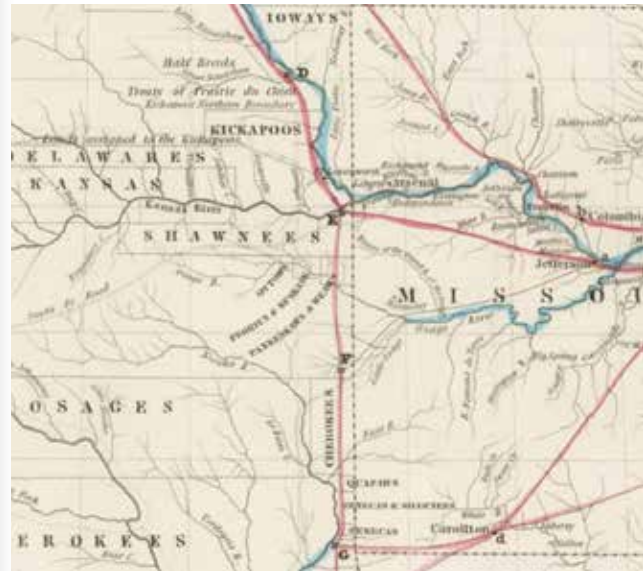
After the 1844 election, many of the 51 percent of the electorate who voted against Polk (48.5 percent for Clay and 2.5 percent for James Birney) continued to oppose expansionist policies.²⁷ Anti-annexation feeling was particularly strong in New York, where even Democrats were ambivalent on the subject. The newly elected Democratic governor of New York, Silas Wright, was a Van Buren man who had voted against the annexation of Texas as a senator in 1844.²⁸

Phillip Hone likely reflected the sentiments of many New Yorkers when he wrote in his diary that he feared Polk's supporters in Congress would "plunge this country into a disastrous war." Hone was a wealthy banker, friend of Thomas Cole, and a founding member of the Apollo Association, which later became the American Art-Union. Hone likely visited the AA-U gallery in 1845, and as a politically astute art lover, he would have been predisposed to see political concepts embodied in Art-Union pictures.²⁹ Indeed, Hone's aesthetic sensibilities led him to use a landscape metaphor in his diary to describe his fear of upcoming expansionist wars. On January 1, 1846, he wrote: "The bright star of hope would shine on the future if the madness of the people did not interpose this pestiferous cloud of war to interrupt its rays."³⁰

Hone's private responses to the threat of expansionist wars undoubtedly reflected those of other New York Whigs. The powerful Whig paper, *The New-York Daily Tribune*, edited by Horace Greeley, published numerous antiwar and anti-annexation articles throughout 1845. Some warned of both Mexican and Native American resistance to annexation. On February 12, 1845, for example, the *Tribune* reported, "Nearly or quite all this portion of Texas belongs to the Camanche [*sic*] and other warlike tribes of Indians, who not merely have a clear right to it, but are abundantly able to maintain it. Every male Camanche [*sic*] is an expert horseman and trained warrior



Charles Gratiot, *Map Illustrating the plan of the defences of the Western & North-Western Frontier, as proposed by Charles Gratiot, in his report of Oct. 31, 1837, Senate doc 65, 25th Cong., 2nd Session.* (Image: Courtesy of the Author)



from early youth. . . . These ‘savages’ will not be cheated out of their lands or driven from them very easily.”³¹

Congressional Whigs also spoke of such dangers. Representative Charles Hudson of Massachusetts declared on January 20, 1845:

[W]hen we consider that this mighty Republic expended some 30 or 40 millions of dollars, wasted some four years, and sacrificed many valuable lives in an ineffectual attempt to subdue a few straggling savages in the swamps of Florida, I think a war with Mexico in that sickly region would prove something more than a pastime. Besides such a war might let loose upon our Southwestern frontier those injured tribes of Indians which our cupidity has driven from the graves of their fathers almost to the confines of Mexico itself. . . .³²

Missourians like Bingham would have been particularly sensitive to the idea that Indian aggression might attend wars with Mexico and Great Britain. Situated on the western frontier and bordered by Indian nations, Missouri was an important player in America’s relations with indigenous tribes. An 1837 map compiled by the War Department to advance legislation authorizing the occupation of Oregon shows Missouri’s role in early plans for defending the nation from both foreign and native aggressors.³³ The map focuses on the border region,

representing the territory of various Indian tribes as well U.S. military posts in many Missouri towns where Bingham had patrons, including the town of Liberty, where the U.S. established an arsenal.

Bingham also knew Santa Fé traders in Arrow Rock and Independence who regularly traveled through Indian lands and established economic and diplomatic relationships with native people. During the 1840s these traders were generally at peace with western Indians. Once the Mexican War commenced, however, several traders were killed in the Taos revolt of 1847 in which an alliance of New Mexicans and Pueblo Indians murdered American soldiers and merchants.³⁴

On May 21, 1845, Bingham’s local paper published an article that asked a foreboding question about the human and financial costs of Indian resistance that might accompany annexation: “The Florida war, with only a few miserable Seminoles, unfed, unclothed, without any friendly Power to aid them, held out some seven years, and cost us upwards of \$40,000,000. Texas has been at war eight years with Mexico, and a good part of the time with the Camanche [*sic*] and other Indian tribes; do you suppose it has not cost her five or ten times as much money as the Seminoles have cost us?”³⁵ Such reports circulated throughout the nation in 1844 and 1845, creating a climate of anxiety and apprehension in relation to expansion. *The Concealed Enemy and Fur Traders*

Descending the Missouri were created, displayed, and distributed within this cultural context.

Bingham's Anxious Indian

Visitors seeing Bingham's *The Concealed Enemy* on the walls of the AA-U gallery were confronted with the profile of a bare-chested American Indian positioned behind rocks in the left foreground. The Indian's bronze skin harmonizes with the tawny colors of the topography as he kneels in a tense and active pose. Looking forward into the open landscape with a furrowed brow, he clutches a rifle in both hands.

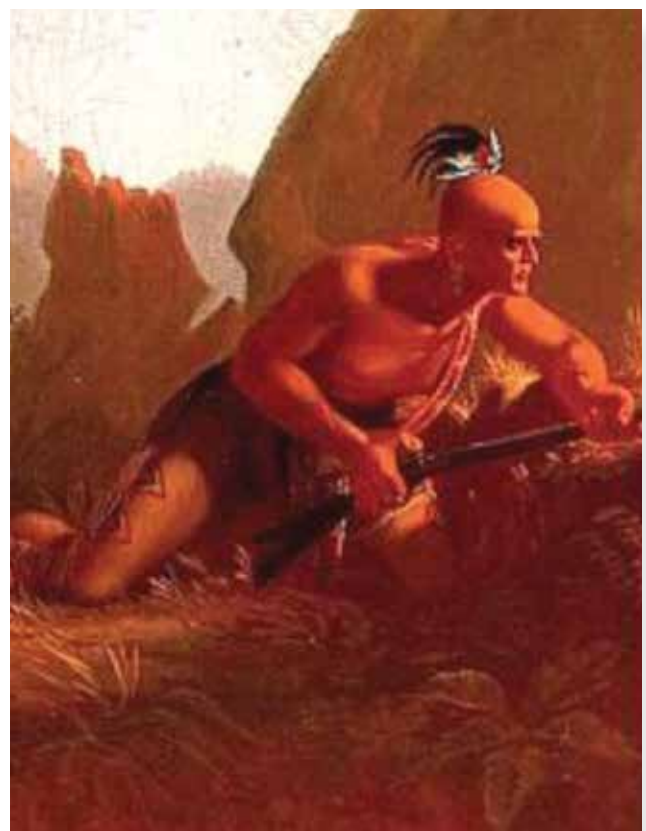
As in many Bingham paintings, the landscape competes with the figure for attention. The sky occupies roughly half the picture plane, presenting subtle gradations of color, from pale gray to rosy peach and dark purple. A mixture of cloud types suggests uncertain weather. A few patches of blue appear behind violet and purple strato-cumulous formations layered over flat sheets of light gray stratus clouds. Below this ambiguous firmament, weeds and shrubs cover the rocky foreground bluff where the Indian waits. Bushes and immature trees sprout from an earth-laden central boulder, their uppermost green and orange leaves translucent against the sky. In the background more tree-covered bluffs loom over the landscape, the space between them infused with atmospheric haze. In the lower-right distance, a tiny, indistinct strip of silvery gray may represent a river flowing through a far-away valley below.

Bingham's Indian figure is generally identified as a remembered vision of a mid-Missouri Osage (Wa-zha-zhe-I-e). Because the Osage were officially removed from the state in the 1830s, scholars have traditionally (and I think wrongly) assumed that the picture should be read as a nostalgic representation of Missouri as it existed during Bingham's boyhood.³⁶ While this may or may not be the case, it is a mistake to overestimate how aware or interested a nineteenth-century audience would be in an artist's personal history. *The Concealed Enemy* is unsigned, and even if it had a signature, virtually no New Yorkers knew Bingham's name in 1845. Authorial intentions were thus almost completely alienated from the "meaning" of the painting within the context of the Art-Union exhibition. To use Roland Barthes' analogy, the artist/author was "dead" to most AA-U visitors.

New York viewers had every reason to associate *The Concealed Enemy* with the present. Throughout the 1840s, contemporary literature and newspaper reports described the Osage as a powerful and important nation in Indian Territory and beyond.³⁷ Conceivably, Bingham may have even based his image on sketches made during an encounter with the Osage in 1844. In April of that year, a delegation of Boonville, Missouri, Whigs traveled to the national Whig Convention held in Baltimore with a party of Osage Indians and a small herd of buffalo. Significantly, a Fayette, Missouri, newspaper report suggested that mid-Missourians were accustomed to such sights, stating, "The



After George Catlin, *Three Osage Braves*, engraved illustration in *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841). (Image: Courtesy of the Author)





David H. Burr, "Map of the United States of North America with Parts of the Adjacent Countries," in *The American Atlas* (London: John Arrowsmith, 1839). (Image: Courtesy of the Author)

... Indians were no curiosity *here*, but doubtless will be in the section where they are going" (emphasis original).³⁸ By the end of the month, the troupe had arrived in Baltimore. A report in the *Rutland Herald* described the scene:

On Wednesday last a deputation of nine Osage Indian chiefs from Missouri and [a] half-breed Mexican, accompanied by Judge Dade and a number of western gentlemen, arrived in the cars from Cumberland. The Indians are said to be of the noblest specimens of their tribe, some of them being over six feet in height. Twelve buffaloes [*sic*] from Missouri were brought on by the party and will be driven into Baltimore in a few days for exhibition. It is designed by the proprietors to get up a "buffalo hunt" during the Convention times.³⁹

Bingham (a former Boonville resident) was living in Washington, D.C., at this time. His close friend, James S. Rollins, was a Missouri delegate at the Baltimore convention. It is hard to imagine that the artist would not have traveled the short distance from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore to see Rollins and witness this great Whig meeting that led to the nomination of Henry Clay for president.⁴⁰

While it is possible that Bingham made drawings of Indians at the Baltimore convention, he may have also based his figure on secondary sources. The bare-chested brave with his scalp-lock ornamented with feathers resembles figures of Osage Indians pictured in George Catlin's popular *Letters and Notes on the Manners*,

Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians, published in New York in 1841.⁴¹

Both Catlin's illustrations and the use of Osage Indians as political "emblems" reflect popular interest in Native Americans in 1840s culture. Indeed, the rhetoric discussed in the previous section evinces nineteenth-century awareness of their role in the cultural politics of "east" and "west." Such awareness likely informed period readings of *The Concealed Enemy*. The Indian occupies the geographic "west" side of the painting, warily watching something in the "east." This cartographic analogy links the composition to period maps, which often represented the political frontiers and boundaries of the United States on the right, juxtaposed with "unorganized territory" on the left. In the 1830s and 40s, the U.S., Mexico, Great Britain, France, and Russia claimed portions of the North American continent, and maps recognized these claims. Yet many cartographers (such as the authors of the aforementioned War Department map of 1837 and the David H. Burr map of the United States published in 1839) labeled large swatches of the "unorganized" territory with the names of the Indian nations that inhabited the regions.⁴² These labels reflected Euro-American "double think" that simultaneously understood the land as both occupied and empty. In Bingham's painting, one can interpret the Indian as the visual embodiment of this concept.

If one accepts this cartographic interpretation of space in

The Concealed Enemy, the sunshine illuminating the figure from the right depicts morning rather than evening light. Past scholars have suggested that the scene takes place at sunset, thus metaphorically picturing the decline of Indian power. If, on the other hand, one interprets the picture as a morning scene, it may represent a metaphorical dawn, visualizing "a new element of discord and distraction" (to use Henry Clay's words) introduced into the U.S. by the policies of James K. Polk.

On a figural level, Bingham's painting manifests the contradictory cultural messages of the aforementioned maps of Indian Territory. Some white viewers might view the wild, untamed landscape as uninhabited, yet the Indian is explicitly present. Entrepreneurial viewers might see the trees and rocks as "timber" and "minerals" ripe for exploitation, yet the figure interrupts imperialistic fantasies of easy and morally justified conquest. The Indian's body visually "melds" with the giant boulder behind him, and the background bluffs echo his form like stony sentinels anticipating invasion from the "east."⁴³ A serpentine root attached to a shadowy stump in the foreground hints at the ancient origins of the Indian's attachment to the land, while the stump itself may prefigure his future removal. One can see further environmental metaphors in the dark clouds amidst clear skies overhead, perhaps foreshadowing of a Philip Hone-esque "pestiferous cloud of war" that threatens to change the shape of the American landscape.⁴⁴

H. Bucholzer, *Matty Meeting the Texas Question*, lithographed by James S. Baillie, 1844. (Image: Library of Congress)



The ambiguity of Bingham's title, *The Concealed Enemy*, might also have inspired audiences to contemplate the concept of expansionist wars.⁴⁵ Some viewers might connect the title with contemporary politics, the armed Indian reminding spectators that wars with Mexico and in Oregon could spark confrontations with other "hidden" enemies within the nation's indigenous communities. Moreover, while viewers would probably initially see the Indian as the "enemy," he is not identified as such. Nineteenth-century associativists might be prompted to meditate on the image, asking themselves, "Who is the 'concealed enemy?' Is he the Indian, or the expansionist who intrudes upon native lands? From whom is this 'enemy' concealed? From the Native American? From the object of his gaze?—or from the viewer?" Such questions encourage reflection on the complexities of colonialism, Indian relations, and the subjectivity of the term "enemy."

Additionally, Art-Union visitors might have associated *The Concealed Enemy* with images in the popular culture that linked Native American resistance with potential expansionist conflicts, such as H. Bucholzer's 1844 anti-Polk cartoon *Matty Meeting the Texas Question*. This cartoon depicts unsuccessful Democratic candidate Martin Van Buren (who opposed annexation) recoiling as Democratic senators carry a frightening, dark-skinned woman identified as "Texas" toward him. Behind the figure, Polk and his running mate, George Dallas, agree that "Texas" may not be pretty, but she brings with her the salary of the President of the United States.⁴⁶

The decision to personify Texas as a dark-skinned, seminude woman inserts a racial element into the cartoon. The figure carries the manacles of slavery, yet her physiognomy is not African American. Instead, her face recalls contemporary images of Native Americans, such as the portrait of a Winnebago squaw in James Otto Lewis's 1835–1836 *North American Aboriginal Port-Folio*.⁴⁷

In the nineteenth century, popular images such as Bucholzer's cartoon recalled other artworks that fueled fear and prejudice against Indians. Works such as John Vanderlyn's 1804 *Death of Jane McCrae* depicted violent Indian attacks, and several commissions for the U.S. Capitol in Washington encouraged European viewers to see Indians as menacing enemies. Although it was not yet on view in 1845, the Democratic Congress of 1837 had commissioned Horatio Greenough to create *The Rescue* for the steps of the east façade of the Capitol. This sculpture, installed in 1850, depicted a heroic frontiersman overcoming a bellicose Indian warrior while a pioneer mother and child cower beside them.⁴⁸ A similar message was articulated in Enrico Causici's 1827 relief, *Conflict of Daniel Boone and the Indians*, which decorated the interior rotunda of the Capitol. Causici's stylized bas relief pictures Boone fighting one Indian, while another lays dead at his feet. Bingham and many members of his audience were doubtless familiar with this sculpture, which was engraved as the frontispiece of Uncle Philip's *The Adventures of Daniel Boone, the Kentucky Rifleman* in 1844.⁴⁹

Bingham's painting participates in the Causici tradition, but with a twist. The native warrior in *The Concealed*

Enemy is not engaged in an aggressive act. Instead, Bingham's armed Indian is alone in a quiet moment of anticipation. The viewer is left to determine whether he is a vigilant defender of his homeland or an aggressive predator intent on killing whites. Nineteenth-century Indian-haters would be predisposed to view the figure as the latter but, as the rhetoric quoted earlier evinces, not all Euro-Americans viewed Native Americans as evil beings with no land rights. The tendency of modern scholars to see Bingham's figure as unsympathetic may reflect both a propensity to view 1840s politics as monolithic and a lack of up-close familiarity with the picture. The relatively remote modern location of the painting in the Stark Museum in Orange, Texas, has doubtless led many academics to base their understanding of it on reproductions alone.

When viewed in person, *The Concealed Enemy* reveals itself to be a very complex image. Close inspection of the Indian's expression and pose suggests that he is experiencing feelings of anxiety rather than sadistic aggression, encouraging spectators to "read" his face and body language sympathetically. Viewers are apt to assume an attitude akin to the "third person-limited" viewpoint in literature. In other words, the audience is aware of the

James Otto Lewis, *A Winnebago Squaw / Wife of O'-Check-Ka or Four Legs*, lithographed by Lehman and Duval, c. 1835, *The North American Aboriginal Port-Folio* (Philadelphia: J.O. Lewis, 1835–1836. (Image: The State Historical Society of Missouri)





John Vanderlyn, *Death of Jane McCrea*, 1804. (Image: Wadsworth Atheneum)

psychological state of only one character (the Indian) in the pictorial narrative and thus is encouraged to connect with that character. The emphasis on the Indian's anxious visage subverts the tendency to objectify or dehumanize him and encourages identification.⁵⁰

Nineteenth-century viewers may have associated the worried expression of Bingham's Indian with similar countenances depicted in published diplomatic portraits of Native Americans made by James Otto Lewis in the 1820s and 1830s. These images were created at councils in which the U.S. negotiated for the removal of Indians from their native lands in the Midwest. The portraits were published a few years later as a collection of hand-colored lithographs

in the *North American Aboriginal Port-Folio*. Unlike Catlin's generally stoic portraits, many of Lewis' figures look directly at their audiences with furrowed brows and anxious, uncomfortable stares. Their expressive visages may reflect the tensions between the Indians and white Americans in diplomatic colonial contexts. AA-U viewers who were aware of such portraits as *Shing-gaa-ba-w'osin* or *Ash-e-taa-na-quet* (both Chippewa chiefs) might have connected their expressions with Bingham's Indian figure, making *The Concealed Enemy* seem more "real" and poignant.

The anxious and determined stare of Bingham's figure also calls to mind the intense gaze and furrowed brow of

the canonical Florentine Renaissance sculpture *David* by Michelangelo. Many Art-Union visitors would be familiar with this celebrated artwork of the Italian Renaissance reproduced in casts and/or engravings (a profile view of *David* appeared, for example, in an internationally distributed 1704 engraving by Domenico Rossi). Like *David*, Bingham's Indian is a young warrior preparing to combat a formidable foe. Sophisticated viewers who made associativist iconographic connections between *David* and *The Concealed Enemy* might wonder if the Goliath-like United States underestimated the capabilities of the nation's Davidesque Indians.⁵¹

An ancient Roman allusion in the pose of Bingham's Indian might also have conveyed a similar message. The figure assumes a reverse variant of the pose of the third-century Hellenistic/ Roman statue *The Dying Gaul*.⁵²

In Bingham's picture, the thighs are elevated into a kneeling pose, and the head is erect, but the Indian exhibits an analogous contrapposto relationship of the limbs and a similar torsion of his body. In 1845, historically minded Whigs may have linked Democratic policies to ancient Roman imperialism, just as Angela Miller suggests they did in 1836. Most Americans believed the United States government would ultimately subjugate Native

Americans, but in 1845, Indians were still resisting that fate. Just as native European peoples rebelled against Roman domination, American Indians fought back against their oppressors. Associativist-minded viewers who saw a classical allusion to Roman imperialism in *The Concealed Enemy* might have been encouraged to see the Indian as a foe who rivaled the Gauls in his pathos and tenacity.

Bingham's Fur Traders and the Oregon Question: River Networks at Risk

Like *The Concealed Enemy*, Bingham's *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* can be connected with Polk's expansionist policies and the uncertainty that surrounded them in 1845. The picture represents a French fur trader and his half-Indian son transporting western goods to the eastern market in a dug-out canoe. The boat creates a strong horizontal element in the painting, which implies narrative action. Three vertical figures punctuate and balance the composition: a pointy-eared beast, a half-Indian youth, and an elderly man. Western viewers tend to

Enrico Causici, *Conflict of Daniel Boone and the Indians*, 1773, Sandstone Relief, 1826–1827, Capitol Rotunda, United States Capitol, Washington, D.C. (Image: *Architect of the Capitol*)





Daniel Boon, From the Basso-Relievo in the Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, engraved frontispiece in Uncle Philip, The Adventures of Daniel Boone, The Kentucky Rifleman (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1844). (Image: State Historical Society of Missouri)

read paintings from left to right, but such a reading goes against the downstream “flow” of the current in Bingham’s painting. This is one of many contradictory elements in the painting that adds to its ambiguity. The water seems placid, yet snags reflect danger. The boy smiles while the old man scowls.

The landscape is also ambiguous. A light-infused haze hangs over the scene, blurring the contours that distinguish one form from the next. Bingham articulates the transient qualities of crepuscular, light-infused humid air with oil glazes of pink and peach that overlay complementary tones of olive and gray (these tonal subtleties are impossible to

capture in photomechanical reproductions). It is sometimes difficult to identify the colors and shapes in Bingham’s mist-covered environment. Reflections of land, bodies, and sky on the surface of the river confuse distinctions between earth, water, living beings, and air.

The most famously ambiguous element in the picture is the enigmatic animal that casts its shadowy reflection in the water (more about this later). Like the haze, the creature and its reflection act as symbols of the illusory nature of perception and reality. The viewer is not quite sure what she is seeing.

The contemporary political implications of *Fur Traders*



James Otto Lewis, *Shing-gaa-ba-w'osin or the Figure'd Stone, a Chippewa Chief*, hand-colored lithograph, copied onto stone by Lehman and Duval, c. 1835, *The North American Aboriginal Port-Folio* (Philadelphia: J.O. Lewis, 1835–1836). (Image: State Historical Society of Missouri)



James Otto Lewis, *Ash-e-taa-na-quet, A celebrated Chippewa Chief*, hand-colored lithograph, copied onto stone by Lehman and Duval, c. 1835, *The North American Aboriginal Port-Folio* (Philadelphia: J.O. Lewis, 1835–1836). (Image: State Historical Society of Missouri)

Descending the Missouri have often been overlooked because scholars have habitually accepted the traditional assertion that the picture represents a scene from the 1810s or 1820s. This idea depends on the decades-old scholarship of Bingham expert E. Maurice Bloch, who argued that the painting represented a nostalgic vision of Missouri's past based on literary accounts and/or memories from the artist's boyhood.⁵³ However, primary source material from the 1840s calls this assumption into question. In addition, as already mentioned, AA-U visitors were completely unaware of Bingham's personal history, and there is no reason to think that New Yorkers would have connected *Fur Traders* with the artist's childhood.

The fur trade was in slow decline in the 1840s. However, to imagine that 1845 New Yorkers would already see Bingham's painting as nostalgic reflects a lack of awareness of the media and consumer culture of the period.⁵⁴ The clothing and character of Bingham's figures are consistent with imagery circulating in the culture that represented the West of the 1840s, and some New York

viewers would have seen similar figures in artworks by western "explorer" artists such as Alfred Jacob Miller, Charles Deas, and John Mix Stanley. The striped red and blue "trade shirts" worn by Bingham's figures, for example, resemble shirts in John Mix Stanley's 1843 painting, *International Indian Council (Held at Tallequah, Indian Territory, in 1843)*, and similar shirts also appear in the paintings of Charles Deas.⁵⁵

Indeed, Charles Collins has suggested that an inspiration for the *Fur Traders* may have been Deas' very similar painting, *The Voyageurs* (Boston Museum of Fine Art), which is unquestionably derived from studies made during Deas' travels in the 1840s.⁵⁶ While the mood of Deas' pictures differs from that of the *Fur Traders*, Collins convincingly calls attention to similarities between the subject matter, form, and general composition in the two paintings (even the interest in the illusionary reflections of the figures in the water is analogous). Although Collins' work is often cited in the literature, few Bingham scholars have taken the logical step of recognizing that viewers



Plaster cast of original statue *David*, by Michelangelo, Florence, Italy, 1501–1504. Cast by unknown maker, Florence, Italy, about 1857. (Image: Museum no. REPRO.1857-161, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London and Albert Museum, London)



Domenico de' Rossi, *Statue of David by Michelangelo Buonarroti*, engraving from Paulo Alessandro Maffei, *Raccolta di statue antiche e modern. . . nella stampa a di Domenico de Rossi* (Rome: Domenico de Rossi: 1704), pl. XLIV. (Image: Courtesy of the Author)



who saw Deas' pictures as contemporary were likely to view Bingham's image in the same way.⁵⁷

In the spring of 1845, Deas and Bingham had studios within walking distance from each other on Chestnut Street in St. Louis. In 1846, both would display paintings at George Wooll's framing shop. The mid-Missouri artist was doubtless aware of the positive reception Deas' western pictures were receiving in the press. The latter artist had impressed numerous New York journalists with *Long Jakes*, a dramatic painting of a western mountain man displayed at the Art-Union in 1844. This awareness, together with visits to Deas' studio, may have inspired a competitive impulse in Bingham that prompted him to create and submit his own western painting to the American Art-Union in 1845.⁵⁸

New Yorkers who viewed Bingham's submission had access to numerous journalistic accounts that discussed the vibrancy of the American fur trade in the 1840s. A widely republished report from the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, for example, listed the fur trade as one of the city's most lucrative enterprises in 1841, estimating its overall yearly value at around a half a million dollars. Likewise, a St. Louis directory of 1845 declared that the trade guaranteed the city "dimensions of prosperity and ultimate wealth," listing six major businesses connected to it.⁵⁹

French *voyageurs* and "half-breeds" were likewise still found in St. Louis during this period. The young English writer George Frederick Ruxton described seeing such "western types" in a city tavern in 1846: "Here over fiery 'monaghahela' Jean-Batiste, the sallow half-breed voyageur from the 'North West' (the Hudson's Bay Company)—has come down the Mississippi from



Reversed-mirror image of *Dying Gaul (Dying Gladiator)*, first century BCE Roman marble copy of late third-century BCE Hellenistic bronze original. (Image: Capitoline Museums, Rome; original photo: Jean-Pol Grandmont)

the Falls to try the sweets and liberty of free trapping—hobnobs with a stalwart leather-clad ‘boy,’ just returned from trapping the waters of Grand River, on the western side mountains, who interlards his mountain jargon with Spanish words picked up in Taos and California.”⁶⁰ Ruxton observed an intermingling of cultures in these characters that exemplified the evolving fur trade of the mid-1840s.

Significantly, Bingham identified his figures as “traders,” not trappers, reflecting changes in the industry during a period when buffalo skins were replacing pelts as the trade’s primary commodity and enterprising individuals were trading not only at forts in the Northwest, but also in the Southwest. Many traders relied primarily on Native American hunters and their Indian families to obtain pelts and hides. French *voyageurs* with Indian wives and their mixed-blood descendants were particularly adept at negotiating between the worlds of the British Hudson’s Bay Company, Indian nations, and U.S. fur companies.⁶¹ Some recent art historians have suggested that the Art-Union’s decision to change the title of Bingham’s *French Trader and Half-breed Son* to *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* disconnected the image from racial and ethnic politics.⁶² Yet AA-U viewers would likely have been far more sensitive than today’s audiences to the ethnic and racial messages communicated by the nineteenth-century

language of clothing and physical attributes. Spectators didn’t need a title to recognize the young trader’s black hair, dark complexion, fringed leather leggings, Métis sash, and beaded bag as attributes of a “half-breed.” Likewise, the elder man’s *tuque* or knit hat associated him with French *voyageurs* and *habitants*.⁶³ In other words, the new title could not remove these signs of ethnic diversity, but it could focus attention on the economic importance of the fur trade and the Missouri River.

Many members of Bingham’s AA-U audience had direct experience with products associated with the fur trade. As art historians Claire Perry and Angela Miller have observed, New York viewers were likely to connect *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* with contemporary consumer culture.⁶⁴ Some Art-Union visitors wore beaver-skin hats or owned muffs, collars, blankets, and coats made from the hides and pelts of American fur-bearing mammals. *Fur Traders* thus served as a reminder of the complex *mélange* of cultural forces that produced the raw materials in lucrative national and international economic relationships.

President Polk’s expansionist politics affected these relationships. Twenty-first-century viewers may not initially connect the interests of the upper Missouri fur trade with the disputed Oregon and Texas territories, but nineteenth-century spectators would have been aware of

the intricate web of commercial networks that existed between native, European, Mexican, and U.S. traders throughout the northwest and Missouri River corridor.

Control of the fur trade was a factor in America's desire to possess new territories. As already mentioned, in December 1845, many Americans believed a military confrontation with Great Britain over the Oregon Territory was a real possibility. The issue would eventually be resolved diplomatically, but as the year drew to a close, war seemed likely. On December 2, Polk surprised many Americans by indicating a willingness to compromise on the Oregon boundary line, but the president also reiterated his commitment to defend U. S. claims in the region militarily. In addition, Polk reasserted the imperialistic and economic aspects of his Oregon policies by calling attention to the Northwestern fur trade and the need for the U.S. to regulate and control commercial relations with Native Americans in the region.⁶⁵

On December 9, an editorial in the *New-York Daily Tribune* reflected Whig apprehensions about the implications of Polk's policies: "This Oregon question is complicated and its settlement dangerously protracted to subserve the purposes of gambling demagogues, who would sacrifice a hundred thousand lives to secure themselves three moves forward on the political chess board. . . . There is nothing to go to war about but pride, obstinacy, party intrigue, and criminal ambition."⁶⁶

On December 20, the *Tribune* reported rumors that Democrats in the Senate were working toward appropriating large sums to "meet the expenses of the war with Oregon."⁶⁷ It is not unreasonable to suppose that Whig-leaning visitors to the Art-Union might associate *Fur Traders* with the important social, political, and economic developments taking place in the northwest during the exhibition.

In 1983, art historian Henry Adams linked *Fur*

Charles Deas, *The Voyageurs*. (Image: American Museum of Western Art–The Anschutz Collection, Denver; photo Courtesy of the Author)





George Catlin, *Bear Dance*, hand-colored lithograph copied onto stone by John McGahey in *George Catlin's North American Indian Port-Folio. Hunting Scenes and Amusements of the Rocky Mountains and Prairies of America* (London: G. Catlin, 1844), plate 18. (Image: State Historical Society of Missouri)





Comparison of the creature in Bingham's *Fur Traders* with the figure facing the viewer in Catlin's *Bear Dance*. (Images: State Historical Society of Missouri)

Traders with expansionist politics by suggesting that *The Concealed Enemy* and *Fur Traders* originally formed a dialectical pair. Adams interpreted the Indian painting as a representation of America's native past and *Fur Traders* as a depiction of the civilizing force of European-Americans in the West.⁶⁸ Adams related this idea to a political banner for Boone County Whigs that Bingham proposed in 1844. This banner visualized Boone County's past with an image of Daniel Boone fighting an Indian on one side (probably envisioned as an eponymous reference to the county's name based on the Causici relief), and a domesticated landscape with cattle on the reverse. It is worth noting that, contrary to the assertions of Adams and others, Bingham never executed this banner.⁶⁹ Perhaps the artist decided that the simplistic dualism he initially proposed did not accord with his more nuanced understanding of colonialism in the American West.

Adams's pendant theory is widely accepted as a "key" to understanding *Fur Traders* and *The Concealed Enemy*. Indeed the similarity between the sizes of the pictures and the analogous poses of the Indian and "half-breed" encourages audiences to see relationships between the artworks. I contend, however, that although some AA-U viewers might have made such informal connections, the Art-Union did not encourage them to do so. The nonsequential lot numbers of the two paintings (93 and 95) indicate that they probably were not hung next to one another, a factor that would frustrate attempts to read them as a pair. Moreover, the canvases were not among sixteen pictures identified as pairs in the 1845 exhibition. Some 123 paintings were distributed in 115 lots during the AA-U's 1845 lottery. Eight lots consisted of paired paintings, including James G. Clonney's *Temperance* and *Intemperance* (lot no. 13), which presented images connected to each other by an oppositional relationship similar to that proposed by Adams for Bingham's pictures.⁷⁰ Since *The Concealed Enemy* and *Fur Traders* were not paired when distributed, the supposition that most New York viewers would have understood them as pendants is questionable.

Nevertheless, Adams made an important contribution to Bingham scholarship by recognizing the sociopolitical content of the paintings. My study has its roots in this scholarship, although I posit that the contextual relationship between the two pictures comes from their similarly anxious mood rather than from oppositional content. Significantly, the two paintings employ different narrative modes to communicate. While the Indian in *The Concealed Enemy* seems unaware of an audience, the fur traders make visual contact with the spectator. The Frenchman, the *Métis* boy, and the animal look directly at the viewer, their gazes breaking the picture plane to interrupt the pictorial unity of time, space, and action. Social convention dictates that such gazes should elicit a response from the viewer, so this illusion of forced interaction encourages spectator engagement in the "now."

If *The Concealed Enemy* presents a third-person-limited viewpoint to the spectator, the characters in *Fur Traders* might be said to address the audience in the second person. In other words, the outward gazes of each of the three figures imply that the viewer is a character in the narrative. Spectators are invited to acknowledge the fictive figures' presence.

In 1846, a writer for the *American Review* explicitly complained about this disconcerting narrative mode in Art-Union pictures. His diatribe, "Hints for Art-Union Critics," does not mention Bingham specifically, but it nevertheless reflects the potentially radical nature of the "second-person" viewpoint, which the author felt fictively interacted with viewers in inappropriate ways:

The Flemish artist [as opposed to the American painter] remembers that it is not a pleasure to be irreverently blinked at by three impudent fellows, or that if there is any satisfaction to be felt in such an accident, it is of a kind which even a coxcomb would take care to conceal. . . . The Flemish artist would make a scene of his picture as a good actor makes a scene of the play, disconnecting it from the spectator who should seem to look at it from without as one looks out upon a prospect; affected by it, but not affecting it. For the instant we begin to influence a scene by our presence and perceive this effect or seem to perceive it, the scenical pleasure which it is the business of true art to produce is replaced by one of a very different kind.⁷¹

While the writer for the *American Review* found the narrative modes of certain Art-Union paintings disconcerting, his criticism reflects their power. By directly engaging the audience, pictures such as *Fur Traders* and *Descending the Missouri* became more relevant, and the likelihood that viewers might associate their content with the contemporary world increased.

The *Fur Traders* presents mixed messages through its varied confrontational gazes. The "half-breed son" occupies the center of the composition, his smile and affable expression seemingly "greeting" viewers and establishing a friendly rapport with them. The stare of the scowling French trader, on the other hand, creates a

less comfortable dynamic. He addresses viewers with a defensive, almost confrontational gaze. In December of 1845, his expression of anxious apprehension might have been linked to anticipation of radical social, economic, and political change that Polk's policies threatened to bring to the West.

Like the French trader and his mixed-race son, the black creature at the end of the boat looks directly at the viewer. The animal has been variously identified as a cat, a bear, a dog, and a black fox. Past and present doubt over its nature suggests a correlation between its ambiguous form and nineteenth-century confusion over the nature and future of the West. For some, the tension created by this mystery may have added to the image's poignancy and power.⁷²

If one accepts the consensus that the creature is a black bear cub, it becomes a commodity, captured to be consumed for its body, hide, and/or meat.⁷³ Mercantile forces have overpowered it, and it becomes a synecdoche for the exploitation of Native American assets (human, animal, and environmental), displaced, trapped, and consumed by the forces of economic and political imperialism.

The creature's presence, however, may also reflect the volatility of forces that might "fight back" against such imperialistic exploitation. This creature could wreak havoc on its captors if it matures.⁷⁴ Its dark tethered form might encourage viewers to connect it with dark-skinned peoples enslaved and dominated by mercantile forces. While such associations with enslaved African Americans were certainly possible, and even likely, viewers recognizing the creature as a native American black bear might be more apt to connect it with the continent's native people.

A heretofore-unnoticed visual source for Bingham's creature brings with it interesting sociopolitical connotations in relation to Native American resistance and the geopolitical situation of 1845. A Sioux chief in George Catlin's *Bear Dance* (published as a print in 1841 and 1844) wears an ursine mask with a catlike profile

that bears an uncanny resemblance to Bingham's beast. (Figs. 21, 22, and 23) Like the animal in *Fur Traders*, the masked Indian looks directly at the spectator.⁷⁵ The two figures share a silhouette, and both present a mysterious, discomfiting, and slightly ominous presence.

A viewer familiar with Catlin's *Bear Dance* may have made conscious or unconscious connections between Bingham's creature and the mysterious costumed chief. This relationship might encourage audiences to view the enigmatic animal as a visual metaphor for Indian resistance. Momentarily tethered, the creature embodies a fragile equilibrium between native and colonial forces. This exotic being reminds viewers that the western wilderness should be handled with caution and care.

In conclusion, *The Concealed Enemy* and *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* have meant many things to many audiences. This paper provides new insight into both Bingham and his earliest audiences by considering the transient political and social circumstances of the only major public exhibition of the artworks in the nineteenth century. I have argued that neither Bingham nor his viewers likely viewed *The Concealed Enemy* or *Fur Traders* as objective *reportage* or as celebrations of Manifest Destiny in 1845. Instead, they likely saw them as emblematic representations of the evolving multicultural constituencies of the West poised in quiet moments of apprehension. The Indian embodies the nation's aboriginal inhabitants ready to defend their native lands; the Frenchman personifies early colonial forces whose legitimacy was jeopardized by Polkian expansion. The mixed-race boy manifests the intermingling of bodies and cultures within the mollified but dangerous region; and the tethered beast embodies the potential for violence and resistance that attended Polk's quest to control the natural and human resources of the North American West.

- ¹ George Caleb Bingham had submitted both *The Concealed Enemy* (now in the Stark Museum, Orange, Texas) and *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) to the American Art-Union in New York by June of 1845. The Art-Union purchased the first for \$40 and the second for \$75 on December 8, 1845. The AA-U also bought two other Bingham paintings that year, *Cottage Scenery* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) and *Landscape* (probably *Rural Scenery*, now in a private collection). It is unclear when the AA-U gallery put the paintings on display. The lottery numbers, 93 and 95 (out of 115), may indicate that Bingham's pictures were late additions to the 1845 exhibition, perhaps only going on display after their purchase in December. See American Art-Union, *Transactions of the American Art-Union 1845* (1846): 26–29, and “Minutes,” Art-Union meeting, December 8, 1845, American Art-Union Papers, coll. New-York Historical Society, cited in E. Maurice Bloch, *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 172 (hereafter cited as Bloch, *Paintings*). The American Art-Union, founded in 1839, advocated the creation of a “national” art for the United States and each year guaranteed its membership (more than 3,000 in 1845 and more than 18,000 in 1849) an engraving representing a picture purchased by the Art-Union during that year. The five-dollar yearly dues also allowed members to participate in an annual lottery to win one of the many artworks purchased by the organization every year. The works available in each year's lottery were displayed at the AA-U's free New York gallery, a fashionable destination for tourists and city dwellers. By 1849 the organization reported an annual attendance of 750,000 visitors. See Rachel N. Klein, “Art and Authority in Antebellum New York City: The Rise and Fall of the American Art-Union,” *Journal of American History* 81 (March 1995): 1534–62; Amanda Lett, Patricia Hills, Peter John Brownlee, Randy Ramer, and Duane H. King, *Perfectly American: The Art-Union & Its Artists*, exh. cat. (Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, 2011); John Francis McDermott, “George Caleb Bingham and the American Art-Union,” *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 42 (January 1958): 60–69; and *Transactions of the American Art-Union 1845* (1846): 10; *Transactions of the American Art-Union 1849* (1850): 166.
- ² See Patricia Hills, “The American Art-Union as a Patron on Expansionist Ideology in the 1840s,” in *Art in Bourgeois Society, 1790 to 1850*, edited by Andrew Hemmingway and William Vaughn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 314–39. While I support Hills's primary argument, I question her assertions that Bingham was among the artists whose pictures were “encoded with expansionist ethos” (327). For particularly strident assertions that *The Concealed Enemy* and *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* reflect Manifest Destiny philosophies of the 1840s, see Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Counterrevolution, 1815–1848* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 548, and Timothy W. Luke, *Shows of Force: Power, Politics, and Ideology in Art Exhibitions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 9–27. Luke goes so far as to argue that *The Concealed Enemy* and *Fur Traders* became “visual manifestos of the new sense of space and place forming with the ideology of Manifest Destiny.” For discussions of these pictures as nostalgic images related to literary tropes, see for example E. Maurice Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of an Artist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 79–83 and 110–11 (hereafter cited as Bloch, *Evolution*). Henry Adams introduced the reading of the images as pendants representing a doomed Indian contrasted with a more civilized “half-breed” in “A New Interpretation of George Caleb Bingham's *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*,” *Art Bulletin* 65 (1983): 675–80. Adams voiced support of the reading of the images as nostalgic in a follow-up letter, “Bingham and his Sources,” *Art Bulletin* 66 (Sept. 1984): 515. See also Barbara Groseclose, *The “Missouri Artist” as Historian*, in *George Caleb Bingham*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 57–58. For further bibliography and discussion of standard interpretations of the paintings, see also Bloch, *Paintings*, 172; Nancy Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 49–54 (hereafter cited as Rash, *Painting and Politics*); and, most recently, Nanette Luarda-Shoaf, Claire Barry, Nancy Heugh, Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, Dorothy Mahon, Andrew Walker, and Janeen Turk, *Navigating the West: George Caleb Bingham & the River*, exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 15–16, 20, 52–53, 93, 102–9, 134–56, 170, and 173, (hereafter cited as *Navigating the West*).
- ³ *Fur Traders* was awarded to Robert S. Bunker of Mobile, Alabama, and remained in his family until it was sold to a New York dealer in 1933 (who in turn sold it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in that year). *The Concealed Enemy* was distributed to James A. Hutchison of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and remained in private hands until 1946, when it was given to the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, which sold it through a dealer to the Stark Museum in Orange, Texas, in 1985. See *Transactions of the American Art-Union 1845* (1846): 29; Bloch, *Paintings*, 172–73; and Harry B. Wehle, “An American Frontier Scene by George Caleb Bingham,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 28 (July 1933): 120–22.
- ⁴ For the concept of the “Period Eye,” see Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 29–40.

- See also Clifford Geertz, "Art as a Cultural System," *Modern Language Notes* 91 (December 1976): 1473–99.
- ⁵ For an overview of the concept of spectatorship and its application to art history, see Norman Bryson, "Intersubjectivity," in Mieke Bal, ed., *Looking In, the Art of Viewing* (Amsterdam: G & B Arts International, 2001), 1–40. For Erwin Panofsky's study of cultural signs, iconology, and iconography, see the following titles by the author: *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939); *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955); *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972). For Barthes's adaptation of semiotics to cultural studies, see Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972).
- ⁶ For Archibald Alison's seminal essay on associativist aesthetic theory, see Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (Edinburgh: Bell and Brafue, 1790). This book was revised and reprinted throughout the nineteenth century. Art historian Helene Roberts cites five editions or reprints published in the United States between 1812 and 1854, including a New York edition published in 1844. For the prevalence and influence of associativism in nineteenth-century writings about art, see Helene Roberts, "'Trains of Fascinating and of Endless Imagery': Associationist Art Criticism before 1850," *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* 10, no. 3 (September 1977): 91–105. See also Steven A. Jauss, "Associativism and Taste Theory in Archibald Alison's Essays," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64, no. 4 (Fall 2006): 415–26. For the importance of associativism in the study of nineteenth-century American art, see Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825–1875* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 72–82 (hereafter cited as Miller, *Empire of the Eye*).
- ⁷ For Polk's inaugural address on March 4, 1845, see James K. Polk: "Inaugural Address," March 4, 1845, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25814>. For Polk's address to Congress, December 2, 1845, see James K. Polk, "First Annual Message," December 2, 1845, online by Peters and Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29486>. For discussion and bibliography related to Texas' Annexation, see Gene M. Brack, *Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 1821–1846: An Essay on the Origins of the Mexican War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975) and David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973). For the election of 1844, see Ford Worthington Chauncey, "The Campaign of 1844," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 20, no. 1 (October 1909): 106–26, and George Harris, *Polk's Campaign Biography* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).
- ⁸ For history and bibliography related to the philosophical, social, and political development of American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny, see Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). As Hietala explains, the philosophy of American exceptionalism originated in the eighteenth century, and leaders of all political persuasions generally accepted some aspect of it. The rapacious nature of expansion justified as Manifest Destiny under Polk, however, was more extreme and controversial than earlier expression of the doctrines. For a study of reflections of this philosophy in art, see Matthew Baigell, "Territory, Race, Religion: Images of Manifest Destiny," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 4, nos. 3–4 (Summer–Autumn, 1990): 3–21.
- ⁹ John O' Sullivan, *New York Morning News*, February 27, 1845, cited by Paul Kens in "The Promise of Expansion," *The Louisiana Purchase and American Expansion, 1803–1898* (New York: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 139 and 160 n. 1. O'Sullivan first used the term "manifest destiny" in a less widely read article entitled "Annexation," *Democratic Review* 17, no. 1 (July–August 1845): 5–10.
- ¹⁰ D.D.B., "Our Relations with Texas," *The American Review: A Whig Journal* (July 1846): 14–15. Matthew Baigell cites a portion of this article out of context to support his assertion that virtually all Americans shared a "manifest destiny" attitude. In his notes, however, the author acknowledges the sarcasm of *The American Review* writer, but he neglects to recognize the sarcasm as a rejection of Polkian concepts of Manifest Destiny. See Baigell, "Territory, Race, Religion," 8.
- ¹¹ Cassius, "The Missouri Legislature," *Glasgow Weekly Times*, February 8, 1849, cols. 3 and 4. Reportedly, Bingham offered a defense of "the great Whig Senator from Ohio," almost certainly Whig senator Thomas Corwin, who was known for his anti-Mexican War positions. For the bill and debate, see the *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Missouri, Fifteenth General Assembly, First Session, 1848–1849* (Jefferson City: James Lusk, State Printer, 1849): 172–74. The House journal records Bingham's opposition to the amendment, but it does not reproduce the comments mentioned in the Glasgow paper.
- ¹² For the quote, see Henry Clay, "Raleigh Letter," in Melba P. Hay, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay. Vol. 10, 1844–52* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 41–46. The letter was first published in the Washington, D.C., *National Intelligencer* as "Mr. Clay on the Texas Question," April 27, 1844, p. 3, cols. 1–3. The letter appeared a few weeks later in Bingham's local Missouri paper, the *Fayette Boonslick Times*, May 18, 1844, p. 2, cols. 1–3.
- ¹³ For the 1844 election results, see U.S Election Atlas, "1844 Presidential Election Results," uselectionatlas.org/USPRESIDENT/GENERAL/pe1844.html. A few days after the election, the nationally circulated Whig

- newspaper, *New-York Daily Tribune*, declared, “Call it what specious names we may, the lust for Power, the lust for Dominion, the lust of Avarice, the lust of holding our fellow men in bondage are the real incitements for all this zeal for annexation.” For the quote, see “Annexation and its Consequences,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, 3 March, 1845, p. 2, col. 1.
- ¹⁴ The American Art-Union displayed and distributed 123 paintings in 1845 (eight of the 115 lots consisted of paired paintings). Of these, only three paintings, *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, *The Concealed Enemy* (nos. 93 and 95), and Charles Deas, *The Indian Guide, One of the Shawnee Tribe* (no. 19), can be confidently identified as subjects connected with American territory west of the Mississippi. Deas, like Bingham, was from Missouri, and the Art-Union was clearly proud of its trans-Mississippi artists and artworks. On December 19, 1845, AA-U President William Cullen Bryant announced in an address before the organization, “We have painters beyond the Mississippi; some of their works which any of us might be glad to possess, will be distributed this evening.” For Bryant’s remarks, see “Proceedings at the Annual Meeting,” *Transactions of the American Art-Union 1845* (New York: American Art-Union, 1846), 4. For the list of paintings displayed and distributed, see pp. 26–29.
- ¹⁵ The bibliography on Andrew Jackson and his presidency is extensive. The standard modern biography is still Robert V. Remini’s three-volume work, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767–1821* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822–1832* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), and *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1832–1845* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984). Important recent studies include Mark E. Cheatham, *Andrew Jackson, Southerner* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013) and Matthew S. Warshauer, *Andrew Jackson and the Politics of Martial Law* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006). For a recent summary of scholarly literature on Jackson, see Mark Renfred, *Andrew Jackson and the Rise of the Democrats: A Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2015).
- ¹⁶ Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially 19–33.
- ¹⁷ For a reproduction, discussion, and bibliography related to the cartoon, see *King Andrew the First*, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalogue (hereafter abbreviated LOC, PPOC), *King Andrew the First*, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661753/>. The Library of Congress’s copy depicts the image only. A version with image and text sold at auction in 2010. See Christies.com, sale 2328, lot 13, <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/books-manuscripts/jackson-andrew-broadside-attributed-to-clay-5331691-details.aspx>.
- ¹⁸ See Angela Miller, *Empire of the Eye*, 21–64, and “Thomas Cole and Jacksonian America: *The Course of Empire* as Political Allegory,” *Prospects* 14 (October 1989): 65–92.
- ¹⁹ For discussion and bibliography related to Martin Van Buren and the Panic of 1837, see Alasdair Roberts, *America’s First Great Depression: Economic Crisis and Political Disorder after the Panic of 1837* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012). Bingham documented his own reaction to the panic in an 1837 letter blaming Democratic monetary policy for the collapse: “All this is attributed to the interference of the government with the established currency of the country, and to the Treasury circular.” Bingham to James Rollins from Naches, Mississippi, May 6, 1837, in George Caleb Bingham, *But I Forget that I am a Painter and Not a Politician: The Letters of George Caleb Bingham*, edited by Lynn Gentzler, introduction by Joan Stack (Columbia: The State Historical Society of Missouri Press and Friends of Arrow Rock, Inc., 2011), 43 (hereafter cited as Bingham, *Letters*).
- ²⁰ See Elizabeth Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 46–57 and 92–98.
- ²¹ William Henry Harrison’s “Log Cabin Campaign” has been called the first modern campaign. Imagery, slogans, and merchandise “packaged” the candidate and effectively marketed his political message. Harrison, an aristocratic and sophisticated man, was marketed as a “man of the people” who drank cider, plowed his own land, and lived in a log cabin. See Robert G. Gunderson, *The Log Cabin Campaign* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1957) and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *The Packaging of the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaigns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8–12.
- ²² The details of Bingham’s four-sided processional banner supporting Harrison’s candidacy are documented in several newspaper accounts. Two pairs of men carried the banner at a campaign rally of more than 2,000 Whigs in Rocheport, Missouri, in June 1840. The banner’s imagery encouraged viewers to associate landscape and genre scenes with political concepts. One panel showed Harrison standing before archetypal landscapes that celebrated American agriculture and nautical commerce. Another upheld Harrison as a “man of the people,” depicting the rustic log cabin that had become the ubiquitous “logo” of the Whig nominee’s campaign. Yet another panel promoted the candidate as a champion of “the West,” presenting a view of a canoe on a western river inscribed with the words “Our Country.” Rash, *Painting and Politics*, 15–17; “Rocheport Convention,” *St. Louis Daily Commercial Bulletin*, June 22, 1840, p. 2, col. 1; “The Festival at Rocheport,” *Fayette Boon’s Lick Times*, July 4, 1840, p. 2, col. 4. While Rash suggests that the canoe in the “Our Country” banner might relate to that in *Fur Traders*, in the context of the Harrison campaign, the banner’s canoe was more likely a reference to Harrison’s famed “Battle of Tippecanoe.”

Canoes appear as a symbol of Harrison (known as Ol' Tippecanoe) symbol in campaign ephemera of the era; see for example the canoe in the background of John Taylor French's 1840 campaign lithograph, *This log cabin was the first building erected on the North Bend* . . . See LOC, PPOC, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661360/>.

²³ For Whig politics during this era, see Oscar D. Lambert, *Presidential Politics in the United States, 1841–1844* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1936). For a recent biography of Tyler, which includes an updated bibliography and a critical review of the literature, see Edward P. Crapol, *John Tyler, the Accidental President* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

²⁴ Bingham painted three two-sided banners for the Missouri Whig Convention held in Boonville on October 10, 1844: the *Boonville Juvenile Clay Club Banner*, the *Howard County Banner*, and the *Cooper County Ashland Club Banner*. For descriptions, see “The Convention,” *Boonville Observer*, October 15, 1844, p. 2, cols. 2 and 3. One panel of the two-sided *Juvenile Clay Club Banner*, *The Mill Boy*, survives in a private collection. Bloch, *Paintings*, 59, 166, and Rash, *Painting and Politics*, 24–26. Bloch reports that Curtis Rollins stated in a personal interview that the Howard County and Cooper County banners were displayed in the Alsop store in New Franklin, Missouri, where they burned in a fire sometime around 1920. Bloch, *Paintings*, 166–67. The *Boonville Juvenile Clay Club Banner* or *The Mill Boy* reflects the Whigs' attempt to repeat the successful tactics of the 1840 Harrison campaign and appeal to the middle class by showing the young Henry Clay as a humble “mill boy.” Clay's biographers claimed that the young Clay became known as “the mill boy of the slashes” because as a boy he regularly brought grain to the mill for his widowed mother in Virginia. Re-enactments of these boyhood activities were a regular part of Whig rallies in 1844. See Calvin Colton, *The Works of Henry Clay* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Burr, 1857), 19.

²⁵ Philip Hone, *The Diary of Philip Hone* (Carlisle, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 1989), vol. 2, entry for May 14, 1844, p. 222. The manuscript of Hone's diary is held by the New-York Historical Society and was first published as *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828 to 1851*, edited and with an introduction by Bayard Tuckerman, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1889). Hone repeatedly served on the Committee of Management for the American Art-Union, and at his death he was eulogized in the organization's 1851 bulletin with the following words, “[T]he American Art-Union has lost one of its best and most devoted friends, and the Committee of Management a valued and distinguished member in the death of Mr. Hone.” See “Philip Hone, Esq.,” *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* (June 1, 1851): 51. For Hone and his social importance, see Edward Pessen, “Philip Hone's Set: The Social World of the New York City Elite in the Age of Egalitarianism,” *New-York Historical Society*

Quarterly 56 (1972), 285–300. Hone's association of the annexation of Texas with “the addition of four or five slave-holding states” may reflect early proposals to divide the annexed republic into several states. For a contemporary published discussion of this fear, see Waddy Thompson, Jr., “On Annexation,” *Niles Weekly Register* 66, no. 1711, (July 13, 1844): 319.

²⁶ For Polk's 1844 campaign, see Eugene I. McCormac, *James K. Polk; A Political Biography* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965; originally published by Berkeley: University of California Press, 1922); and George Harris, *Polk's Campaign Biography* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990). For Polk's campaign in New York, see George W. Roach, “The Presidential Campaign of 1844 in New York State,” *New York History* 19, no. 2 (1938): 153–72.

²⁷ The nation's leading Whig paper, *The New-York Daily Tribune*, encouraged Clay supporters to continue their support of Whig principles. In a November editorial titled “Honor the True,” the paper encouraged Clay supporters not to accept Polk's victory as reflective of the true will of the people: “Mr. Clay is defeated—not the Principles of Mr. Clay, nor even the man fairly.” For the quote, see “Honor the True,” *New-York Daily Tribune* (November 9, 1846), p. 2, col. 2.

²⁸ New York governor Silas Wright had been a supporter of former Democratic president Martin Van Buren, who lost his bid for the Democratic nomination in part because of his opposition to the annexation of Texas. For Silas Wright, see Ransom Hooker Gillet, *The Life and Times of Silas Wright*, vol. 2 (Albany, N.Y.: Argus Co., 1874), 1860–63. Gillet publishes an extract transcription of a Silas Wright speech on annexation made during his 1844 campaign for governor. The *Fayette Boonslick Times* reported on New York Democrats' ambivalence on the Texas question in the January 25, 1845, article, “Polk's Election: What Did It Decide?” The paper asked, “But, what say the democracy [Democrats] of New York, and the north and east generally? They tell us that in voting for Polk, they did not consider they were voting for the annexation of Texas now, or ever! In New York, they say if they had not brought out and run an anti-annexation candidate for Governor, Polk would have lost the State, and, consequently, his election. . . .” See *Fayette Boon's Lick Times*, January 25, 1845, p. 2, col. 6.

²⁹ Philip Hone served on the Committee of Management at the first meeting of the Apollo Association for the Promotion of Fine Arts in December 1839. See *Transactions of the Apollo Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in the United States* (1939), 2. Hone's membership in the organization lapsed between 1840 and 1847, but one can assume he continued to frequent the Art-Union's free gallery throughout this period. Unfortunately, he did not record such visits in his diary. Hone was named to the Committee of Management for the Art-Union in 1848, serving as chair of the committee in 1849 and as a member until his death in 1851. See *Transactions of the American Art-Union* (1848), 2;

- Bulletin of the American Art-Union* 2, no. 9 (Dec. 1849), 2; and “Organization of the Committee of Management for the Year 1850,” *Bulletin of the American Art-Union*, no. 1 (April 1850), 2
- ³⁰ Philip Hone, *The Diary of Philip Hone*, vol. 2, first quote, December 12, 1845, p. 266, and second quote, January 1, 1846, p. 268.
- ³¹ See “Farther Notes on Texas,” *New-York Tribune*, February 12, 1845, p. 2, col. 3. The article discusses information obtained from Edward Stiff’s book, *Texas Emigrant* (Cincinnati: G. Conclin, 1840). See also “Foreign News,” *New-York Daily Tribune*, May 21, 1845, p. 2, col. 4, which states, “The venerable Thomas Clarkson . . . thinks it likely that the Indians near Texas will oppose [annexation] with arms; that Mexico will oppose by war; [and] that the powers of Europe will oppose it. . . .” For Comanche history, see Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), especially 141–218. For the national influence of the *New-York Daily Tribune*, see Adam-Max Tuchinsky, *Horace Greeley’s “New-York Tribune”: Civil War–Era Socialism and the Crisis of Free Labor* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1–17.
- ³² *Speech of Mr. Charles Hudson of Mass. on the Annexation of Texas Delivered in the House of Representatives, U.S., Jan. 20, 1845* (Washington, D.C.: J. and G. S. Gideon), 9–10.
- ³³ See Washington Hood, Charles Gratiot, and John James Abert, *Map Illustrating the plan of the defences of the Western & North Western Frontier, as proposed by Charles Gratiot, in his report of Oct. 31, 1837* (Bowen and Co., 1837). The map was created in association with a bill to authorize President Martin Van Buren to occupy the Oregon Territory (in the upper right it is identified as 2nd session, 25th Congress, S. No. 1. Document 65). The map shows the territory occupied by Native Americans, as well as existing and proposed military forts and arsenals. A table shows distances and days’ marches between forts. For this map, see “A Collection of Digitized Kansas Maps, Wichita State University Libraries, Department of Special Collections,” call no. 1837-0002, specialcollections.wichita.edu/collections/maps/detailsframes.asp?userinput=&radiobutton=and&submitform=Submit&searchdes=&offset=18&var=1837-0002.
- ³⁴ Bingham mentions the Taos revolt in a letter to James Rollins dated March 10, 1847: “Miller, an acquaintance of mine has just returned from Santafee [Santa Fé], and brings news that the Mexicans are rising and sending to the devil our governmental functionaries there. They have killed Bent, Turley, and all the American traders at Tous [Taos]—and he apprehends that Donophan if he is not very careful will be surprised and cut to pieces. We can but hope for the best.” See Bingham, *Letters*, 65. Bingham may have had a special interest in Texas after his brother, Matthias Amend Bingham, emigrated there in 1835. Matthias served in the revolutionary army with Sam Houston and was living in the Republic of Texas in 1845. For Matthias Amend Bingham, see James Rollins Bingham, “The Bingham Family,” ca. 1905, published as “Appendix A” in Bloch, *Evolution*, 311.
- ³⁵ See “The Texas Debt,” *Fayette Boonslick Times*, May 21, 1845, p. 2, col. 6 (originally published in the *Raleigh Register*).
- ³⁶ For the widely held opinion that Bingham’s Osage represents a remembered vision from Bingham’s home region of Arrow Rock, see, for example, Henry Adams, “Bingham and his Sources,” 515; Nancy Rash, *Painting and Politics*, 47; and *Navigating the West*, exh. cat., 52, 142–43.
- ³⁷ In his seminal essay “The *Death of the Author*,” translated by Stephen Heath, in *Image / Music / Text*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142–47, Roland Barthes argues that modern scholars and critics habitually overemphasize authorial intentions as “keys,” to unlocking the inherent meaning of texts. Using semiotic methods, Barthes argues that audiences recreate texts as they read or experience them. For 1840s accounts describing the Osage consistent with Bingham’s image, see, for example, Victor Trixier’s *Voyage aux prairies osages, Louisiane et Missouri, 1839–40, par Victor Tixier* (Clermont-Ferrand: Perol, 1844), translated in John Francis McDermott, *Tixier’s Travels on the Osage Prairies* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940). For contemporary newspaper references to the Osage, see, for example, an account of an 1843 encounter between John C. Fremont’s expedition and a party of Osage “with gay red blankets and heads shaved to the scalp lock,” described in the article “Fremont’s Expedition,” *Washington, D.C., Daily Union*, August 29, 1845, p. 2, col. 3.
- ³⁸ “Indian Dance,” *Fayette Boonslick Times*, April 27, 1844, p. 2, col. 5: “Messrs. J. and B. Garnett, of Boonville, passed through this place with a number of *Buffaloes*, twelve *Warriors* and two *Squaws* of the Osage Tribe which they design exhibiting through the Western and Southern States throughout the summer and winter.”
- ³⁹ “Buffaloes and Indians,” *Rutland Herald*, May 2, 1844, p. 3, col. 3. The expedition of “Missouri” buffalo and Osage Indians had been covered earlier in the national press. On March 23, 1844, Washington, D.C.’s *The Whig Standard* published an extract from a letter from Boonville (first published in the *Baltimore Patriot*) describing plans for the upcoming exhibit. The writer announced that Judge John Dade would “leave here for Baltimore in some short time with some ten or a dozen fine fat buffalos, attended by some Osage Indians, wending their way to the convention.” See “Prospects in Missouri—The Buffaloes Are Coming!” p. 2, col. 4.
- ⁴⁰ For James Rollins’s role as a delegate at the 1844 Whig Convention in Baltimore, see C.R. Barns, Alban Jasper Conant, William F. Switzler, G.C. Swallow, R.A. Campbell, and William Torrey Harris, *The Commonwealth of Missouri: A Centennial Record* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co, 1877), 829. For Bingham’s residence in Washington, D.C., during this period, see the unpublished letter of Bingham’s wife dated

- March 3, 1844, in which she states that her husband is “wedded [*sic*] to this city.” Letters of Sarah E. Bingham, Bingham Family Papers, 1814–1930, Folder 12, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. See also the May 23 and May 27, 1844, entries in the diary of John Quincy Adams reporting that the former president posed for portraits by Bingham and John Cranch on those days. See Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams Comprising His Diary from 1795 to 1848*, vol. 12 (J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), 32, 35–36.
- ⁴¹ For Catlin’s engraved illustration of three Osage braves who resemble the figure in Bingham’s *Concealed Enemy*, see George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841), vol. 2, fig. 95 following p. 44. Catlin describes the illustration as follows: “In plates 154, 155, 156, I have represented three braves, *Ko-ha-tunk-a*, the big crow, *Nah-com-e-shee*, the man of the bed, and *Mun-ne-pus-kee*, he who is not afraid. These portraits set forth fairly the modes of dress and ornaments of the young men of the tribe, from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. The only dress they wear in warm weather is the breech cloth leggings and moccasins of dressed skins and garters worn immediately below the knee, ornamented profusely with beads and wampum” (44). Catlin painted these Indians from life in 1834 at Fort Gibson in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), but Bingham would probably only have known the 1841 published engravings. For Catlin’s original painting, see Smithsonian Museum of American Art, *Campfire Stories with George Catlin: An Encounter with Two Cultures*, online exhibition, http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/online/catlinclassroom/catlin_browse.cfm?ID=70.
- ⁴² See David H. Burr, “Map of the United States of North America with Parts of the Adjacent Countries,” in *The American Atlas* (London: John Arrowsmith, 1839).
- ⁴³ A recent infrared reflectogram reveals that Bingham originally planned to paint a second Indian figure in the painting. This second figure was also holding a gun. He too was visually connected with the landscape, positioned in front of a small rock behind the legs of the primary figure. Like the extant figure, the contours of the expunged Indian’s body echoed those of the rock behind him. See Claire Barry and Nancy Heugh, “‘Navigating the Path of the Brush’: Exploring the Role of Drawing and Preparatory Layers in the Creation of the River Paintings,” in *Navigating the West: George Caleb Bingham & the River*; exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 108–9, and in the same volume, Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser and Dorothy Mahon, “Technical Brilliance Revealed,” 142–43.
- ⁴⁴ Consumers of nineteenth-century art and literature were frequently confronted with allegorical storms linked to violent social upheaval and political change; see Eleanor Jones Harvey, “The Coming Storm: American Landscape Painting and the Civil War,” *The Magazine*

- Antiques* 179, no. 6 (November–December 2012): 80–89. Bingham himself used a storm as a rhetorical metaphor for war in a speech before the Missouri legislature in 1847, describing the War of 1812 as a “storm which beat with such relentless fury upon our land.” The artist returned to the metaphor in a letter written to James Rollins in 1854 expressing pessimism about the repercussions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Bingham wrote, “a storm is now brewing in the north, which will sweep onward with a fury which no human force can withstand.” See Bingham, *Letters*, 80 and 142.
- ⁴⁵ The Art-Union minutes recording the purchase of *The Concealed Enemy* identify the painting with the title “Concealed Enemy-Indian Figure.” This may or may not be the title submitted by the artist. The addition of the term “Indian Figure” may reflect the secretary’s attempt to identify the ambiguously titled picture more clearly for exhibit organizers. See “Minutes,” Art-Union meeting, December 8, 1845, American Art Union Papers, coll. New York Historical Society, cited in Bloch, *Paintings*, 172.
- ⁴⁶ *Matty Meeting the Texas Question* was designed by H. Bucholzer and published by New York lithographer James S. Baillie in 1844. For discussion and bibliography related to the cartoon, see *Matty Meeting the Texas Question*, LOC, PPOC, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661437/>.
- ⁴⁷ See James Otto Lewis, *A Winnebago Squaw / Wife of O’-Check-Ka or Four Legs*, lithographed by Lehman and Duval, ca. 1835, *The North American Aboriginal Port-Folio* (Philadelphia: J.O. Lewis, 1835–1836). Bucholzer’s image of “Texas” in *Matty Meeting the Texas Question* also recalls Renaissance and Baroque personifications of Envy, as well as traditional images of witches (see, for example, Zacharias Dolendo’s engraving after Jacques de Gheyn II, *Envy*, 1596–97, and Albrecht Dürer’s *Witch Riding Backward on a Broom* engraving of 1500). For a discussion of the gendered nature of American expansionism, see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- ⁴⁸ For the sociopolitical implications of *The Rescue*, see Vivien Green Fryd, “Two Sculptures for the Capitol: Horatio Greenough’s ‘Rescue’ and Luigi Persico’s ‘Discovery of America,’” *American Art Journal* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1987), 16–39, and Boime, *Art in an Age of Counterrevolution*, 527.
- ⁴⁹ For discussion and biography related to John Vanderlyn’s *Death of Jane McCrea*, see Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., “The Murder of Jane McCrea: The Tragedy of an American ‘Tableau d’Histoire,’” *The Art Bulletin* 47 (December 1965): 481–92, and David M. Lubin, “Ariadne and the Indians: Vanderlyn’s Neoclassical Princess, Racial Seduction and the Melodrama of Abandonment,” *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 3–21. Causici’s *Conflict of Daniel Boone and the Indians* was described in detail in Jonathan Elliot’s guidebook for Washington,

D.C., *Historical Sketches of the Ten Miles Square Forming the District of Columbia: With a Picture of Washington, Describing Objects of General Interest or Curiosity at the Metropolis of the Union* (Washington, D.C.: Printed by J. Elliot, 1830), 117–18. See the reproduction of Causici's composition in Uncle Philip, *The Adventures of Daniel Boone, The Kentucky Rifleman* (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1844). For analysis of the political and cultural messages conveyed by the sculpture, see Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 135–36, and Tricia Cusack, *Riverscapes and National Identities* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), 45.

⁵⁰ For a concise discussion of the third person-limited narrative mode, see Suzanne Keen, *Narrative Form: Revised and Expanded Second Edition* (Basingstoke, GB: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 39–41. For the application of the study of narrative modes to art history, see Norman Bryson, "Intersubjectivity," in Bal, *Looking In*, and Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), esp. 165–208.

⁵¹ Images and reproductions of Michelangelo's *David* were widely available in the nineteenth century. Profile views appear, for example, in Richard Duppa, *The Life and Literary Works of Michel Angelo Buonarroti* (London: Evans, 1806), appendix, unpaginated, plate III, and Paulo Alessandro Maffei, *Raccolta di statue antiche e modern . . . nella stampa a di Domenico de Rossi* (Rome: Domenico de Rossi: 1704), plate XLIV.

⁵² While the similarity of pose between Bingham's figure and *The Dying Gaul* has not been heretofore observed in the scholarly literature, art historians have noted visual references to *The Dying Gaul* in other nineteenth-century artworks representing Native Americans. See, for example, Thomas Cole's 1843 drawing for the never-executed painting, *The Fountain*, which represents a wounded Indian in a landscape whose pose is a direct allusion to *The Dying Gaul*. See Thomas Cole, *The Fountain, No. 1: The Wounded Indian Slaking His Death Thirst, 1843*, in Kevin J. Avery, *American Drawings and Watercolors in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 163–64. See also the sculpture by Ferdinand Pettrich, *Dying Tecumseh* (modeled 1837–1846, carved 1857, now in the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.) and Peter Stephenson's *Wounded Indian*, marble, 1848–1850, in the Chrysler Museum of Art. For illustration, information, and bibliography related to these sculptures, see the entry in the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., Online Catalogue, <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=19670>, and Chrysler Museum of Art Online Catalogue, [http://collection.chrysler.org/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/People\\$00406058/0/](http://collection.chrysler.org/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/People$00406058/0/).

⁵³ See Bloch, *Evolution*, 79–83 and 110–11. While literary works like Washington Irving's *Astoria* would surely

have affected some viewers' reception of *Fur Traders* (as Bloch suggests), my research indicates that such connections would not have precluded most AA-U visitors from seeing *Fur Traders* as an image from the 1840s.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the scholarly "misreading" of Bingham's paintings as nostalgic, see Nancy Rash, *Painting and Politics*, 67 and 243, n. 9. Though Rash's studies provided much of the inspiration for my own, she questions only the nostalgic readings of Bingham's boatmen pictures. She follows earlier scholars in interpreting *The Concealed Enemy* and *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* as nostalgic (see pp. 45–54).

⁵⁵ For John Mix Stanley's *International Indian Council Held at Tallequah, Indian Territory, in 1843* (now in the Smithsonian Museum of American Art), see the Smithsonian Museum of American Art's Online Catalogue, "John Mix Stanley, International Indian Council . . ." acc. no., 1985.66.248,934b, <http://americanart.si.edu/luce/object.cfm?key=338&artistmiedia=0&subkey=1084>. For discussion of the painting's historical importance and political implications, see Tim Allen Garrison, "Pan-Nationalism as a Crisis of Management Strategy: John Ross and the Tahlequah Conference of 1843," in *Between Indigenous and Settler Governance*, edited by Lisa Ford and John Rouse (New York: Routledge, 2013), 48. Colorful striped trade shirts appear in Deas's 1842 painting *Winnebagos Playing Checkers*, his 1843 watercolor *Winnebagos* (private collection), his 1845 painting *Group of Sioux* in the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, and in *The Voyageurs* (also 1845) in the American Museum of Western Art-The Anschutz Collection, Denver. For these paintings, see Carol Clark, *Charles Deas and 1840s America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 32–33, 105–13, 116–20, 184–85, 197–98, 202.

⁵⁶ For Charles Deas's *The Voyageurs* as a source for Bingham's 1845 *Fur Traders*, see Charles D. Collins, "A Source for Bingham's *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*," *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984): 668–78. Collins identifies a watercolor study, *The Trapper and His Family*, in the Boston Museum of Fine Art as the potential source, but the oil painting in the American Museum of Western Art-The Anschutz Collection, Denver, is a more likely prototype.

⁵⁷ Further support for Collins's argument comes in recent infrared reflectograms of the *Fur Traders* that suggest that the picture may have originally resembled Deas's *The Voyageurs* more closely than it does today. Bingham initially filled his landscape with wild, Deas-like vegetation, snags, and debris, which were later painted out. For the infrared photos, see Claire Barry and Nancy Heugh, "'Navigating the Path of the Brush,'" 107–8 and 144. Aside from the extra debris and vegetation, the underdrawings for *Fur Traders* also include a small animal on the cargo mound that the Metropolitan Museum of Art has identified as a tiny bear cub. I posit that formal and thematic connections between *Fur Traders* and Deas's *The Voyageurs*

suggest that the creature in this sketch might be more convincingly associated with an Indian puppy. In Deas's *The Voyageurs*, a tawny, pointy-eared Indian dog sits in the canoe. Similar small Indian dogs appear in the Deas paintings *Winnebagoes* (1843), *Figure Group of Sioux* (1845), and a second *Voyageurs* (1846). For these paintings, see Clark, *Charles Deas and 1840s America*, 32–33, 105–13, 185, 197–98, 202. The identification of the never-painted creature is made more interesting by the fact that an infrared photo of Bingham's 1850 variation on *Fur Traders*, *The Trappers Return*, includes an overpainted sketch of a dog peering over the side of the canoe in a position almost identical to that of Indian dogs in Deas' 1845 *Voyageurs*. Since Bingham no longer had access to *Fur Traders* in 1845, the composition of *The Trappers Return* must be based on a now-lost compositional drawing for the 1845 painting. The lost drawing feasibly could have contained a Deas-inspired dog traveling with the traders. For descriptions and illustrations of Indian dogs, see Glover Morrill Allen, *Dogs of the American Aborigines: Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology* 63, no. 9 (March 1920). Allen's book discusses several kinds of Indian dogs, most of which are now extinct, including the short-legged dog (464–68), the small Indian dog (481–84), and the Hare Indian dog (491–93). See also "The Wonders of Nature: The Hare Indian Dog and the Dingo or Dog of New South Wales," *The Guide to Knowledge* 1, no. 24 (November 1832), 191–92; John James Audubon, *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*, vol. 3 (New-York: V.G. Audubon, 1849), 153–55; and J.H. Walsh, *The Dog in Health and Disease* (London: Longman, 1872), 39–40.

⁵⁸ By June 18, 1845, Bingham had moved to an upper floor studio in the Platte building on Chestnut St. in St. Louis. See Bloch, *Paintings*, 272, and McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham, River Portraitist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 49 n. 1. Charles Deas is listed as a portrait painter with a studio located on Chestnut St. at no. 97 in *Green's St. Louis Directory 1845* (Saint Louis: James Green, 1845), 47. Both Bingham and Deas evidently entertained visitors in their studios. A newspaper report on June 4, 1845, in the *Missouri Republican* describes a reporter's visit to Bingham's earlier St. Louis studio (above Forbes Mirror and Picture Frame Shop at no. 14 Main St), and the writer Charles Lanman mentions seeing the Deas paintings in the artist's St. Louis studio during 1846. See Charles Lanman, *A Summer in the Wilderness Embracing a Canoe Voyage Up the Mississippi and Around Lake Superior* (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1847), 15–17. A journalist also mentioned visiting Deas's studio and viewing "bold and original works" in "Notices of New Works," *The Southern and Western Literary Messenger and Review Devoted to Every Department of Literature and the Fine Arts* 12, no. 17 (March 1846): 192. *The St. Louis Weekly Reveille* mentioned exhibitions of paintings by Bingham at Wooll's shop in March of 1846, and by Deas in August of the same year. See "Very

Fine Paintings," *St. Louis Weekly Reveille*, March 23, 1846, p. 798, and "A New Picture by Deas," *St. Louis Weekly Reveille*, August 31, 1846, p. 980, cited in Clark, *Charles Deas and 1840s America*, 33 and 50 n. 74.

⁵⁹ The fur-trade statistics cited above were widely published; see, for example, two articles published in New York: "The Progress of the West," *American Railroad Journal* 17 (June 15, 1842): 378, and James H. Landon, "Commerce of the Mississippi," *Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review* 9, no. 2 (August 1843): 158. For the listing of St. Louis businesses dealing in the fur trade, see *Green's St. Louis Directory*, no.1 (1845) xxi, 11, 66, 78, 126, 143, 150. The text of the directory states that the largest of these businesses, The American Fur Company, "employ a capitol of over half a million of [*sic*] dollars, and give employment to several hundred persons" (p. xviii).

⁶⁰ George Frederick Ruxton, *Life in the Far West* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1849), 71. The text was first serialized in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, June to November, 1848. The book contains observations from Ruxton's travels from St. Louis into the mountain regions of the Northwest in 1846. Though Ruxton gave characters fictional names and imposed a love story onto the narrative, the general tenor of the book is that of a nineteenth-century travel account, complete with Romantic embellishments and dramatizations. Today's scholars value Ruxton's book as an important (though romanticized) record of the language, habits and culture of fur traders during the mid-1840s. See Claude Hubbard, "The Language of Ruxton's Mountain Men," *American Speech* 43, no. 3 (October 1968): 216–21.

⁶¹ See "Fur Trade," in *The Popular Encyclopedia; Being a General Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, Biography, History, and Political Economy vol. 3* (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1841), 339–40. This article contains a relevant description of children of mixed French and Indian blood working in the fur trade: "The male offspring of these alliances are commonly employed as interpreters, engages &c. They are handsome, athletic men. Mixing the blood seems to improve the races" (339). For a twenty-first century overview and bibliography related to the economic and political workings of the American fur trade, see Eric Jay Dolan, *Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010). The classic early study of the fur trade is Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West: A History of the Pioneer Trading Posts and Early Fur Companies of the Missouri Valley and the Rocky Mountains and of the Overland Commerce with Santa Fé* (New York: F.P. Harper, 1902). For a discussion of the political, commercial, and familial mixing of cultures in this era, see Anne Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West* (paperback, New York: HarperCollins, 2012), 351–407. Hyde discussed the impact of both the Oregon crisis and the annexation of Texas on these networks.

- ⁶² See, for example, Bruce Robertson in “Stories for the Public: 1830 to 1860,” *American Stories: Paintings of Everyday Life, 1765–1915*, edited by Helene Barbara Weinberg, Carrie Reborá Barratt, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009), 52. Robertson claims the title change “transformed the traders into generic types.”
- ⁶³ For discussion of the *tuque* as a clothing item associated with the French in voyageur culture, see Christopher Adams, Ian Peach, and Gregg Dahl, *Métis in Canada History: Identity, Law and Politics* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2013), 42–48. For discussion and images of the *tuque* among Canadian *habitants* in this period, see David-Thiery Ruddel, “The Domestic Textile Industry in the Region and City of Quebec, 1792–1835,” *The Material Culture Review* 17 (Spring/Printemps 1983): 104, 107, 122. Charles Van Ravenswaay discussed the *tuque* as a clothing item associated with creole culture in Missouri: “In the woods the creole man wore a fringed leather shirt and in the winter a brightly colored, tasseled stocking cap, still called a “tuque” in the French districts of Missouri.” See Charles Van Ravenswaay, *St. Louis: An Informal History of the City and Its People, 1764–1865* (St. Louis: Missouri History Museum, 1991), 68–69.
- ⁶⁴ For the mercantile implications of Bingham’s painting to a New York audience, see Claire Perry. *Young America: Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Art and Culture*, exh. cat., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 165–68, and Angela Miller, “The Mechanisms of the Market and the Invention of Western Regionalism: The Example of George Caleb Bingham,” *Oxford Art Journal* 15, no. 1 (1992): 5–10.
- ⁶⁵ Polk had campaigned on the idea that the northern boundary of U.S. territory in the Oregon country should be at the 54° 40’ parallel. The president reinforced that position in his inaugural address on March 4, 1845. See James K. Polk, Inaugural Address, “Chronology of Swearing-In Events: Fifteenth Inaugural Ceremonies,” <http://www.inaugural.senate.gov/swearing-in/address/address-by-james-k-polk-1845>. In his first address to Congress, December 2, 1845, Polk stated: “It is deemed important that our laws regulating trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes east of the Rocky Mountains should be extended to such tribes as dwell beyond them. The increasing emigration to Oregon and the care and protection which is due from the Government to its citizens in that distant region make it our duty, as it is our interest, to cultivate amicable relations with the Indian tribes of that Territory.” See James K. Polk, “First Annual Message,” December 2, 1845, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29486>. For a recent overview and bibliography related to Polk’s Oregon policy, see Thomas M. Leonard, *James K. Polk: A Clear and Unquestionable Destiny* (Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 2001), 87–115.
- ⁶⁶ *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 9, 1845, p.2, col. 2.
- ⁶⁷ *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 20, 1845, p. 2, col. 6.
- ⁶⁸ See Henry Adams, “A New Interpretation of George Caleb Bingham’s *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*,” 675–80. Adams himself is less insistent that the pictures are true pendants than scholars following his lead. See Adams, “Bingham and his Sources,” 515. For scholars that accept Adams’s theory as an established fact, see, for example, David Lubin, *Picturing a Nation: Art and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America*, 70, and Barbara Groseclose, *The “Missouri Artist” as Historian*, in *George Caleb Bingham*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 57–58, and Ron Tyler, “George Caleb Bingham: The Native Talent,” in *American Frontier Life: Early Western Painting and Prints* (New York: Cross River Press, 1987), 27. Adams supports his supposition with important and relevant observations that indicate a relationship between the pictures, though not necessarily a formal pairing. These include the similarity between the pose of the Indian in *The Concealed Enemy* and the boy in *Fur Traders*. The paintings are also almost exactly the same size (approximately 29” x 36”), but so are Bingham’s other two Art-Union pictures of 1845 (*Cottage Scenery* and *Landscape: Rural Scenery*), a circumstance that may indicate that this was a standard working size for the artist in 1845. The fact that Bingham did not sign either *The Concealed Enemy* or *The Fur Trader* would also have hindered the likelihood that viewers would see the two paintings as a pair.
- ⁶⁹ Adams was mistaken in stating that Bingham’s proposed Boone County banner showing Boone fighting an Indian was executed. The Boone County banner that appeared in the Whig procession at Boonville depicted “a large fat coon, rolling a ball over a cluster poke stalks” on the recto and on the verso “a wagon, driven by Polk, containing three individuals . . . and drawn by a poor old horse . . . over which is inscribed, ‘Bound for Texas.’” *The Boonville Observer* October 15, 1844, p. 2, col. 1, cited in Bloch, *Evolution*, 76–77. It is possible that Bingham painted this banner, but Bloch thinks it unlikely since the *Boonville Observer* did not credit Bingham as the artist. For Bingham’s letter discussing the Boone County banner, see Bingham, *Letters*, 65: “I would suggest for the design as peculiarly applicable to your County, old Daniel Boone himself engaged in one of his death struggles with an Indian, painted as large as life, it would make a picture that would take with the multitude, and also be in accordance with historical truth. It might be emblematical also of the early state of the west, while on the other side I might paint a landscape with ‘peaceful fields and lowing herds’ indicative of [her] present advancement in civilization.”
- ⁷⁰ Aside from the Clonney paintings, six Italian scenes by T.B. Ashton were paired (nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11), as were two still-lives by T. Cummings, Jr. (no. 112). See American Art-Union, *Transactions of the American Art-Union 1845* (New York: American Art-Union, 1846), 27 and 29. Although Bingham wrote that his proposed Boone banner would reflect “historical truth,” the fame of the Causici composition might have made it the most

effective way to create a picture that the “the multitude” would immediately associate with Daniel Boone.

⁷¹ See “Hints to Art Union Critics,” *The American Review: A Whig Journal* 4, no. 6 (December 1945): 600. In a phenomenological analysis of *Fur Traders*, Patricia Trutty-Coohill discussed the unusual participatory action in the painting: “By reducing activity to the zero point they dwell on what is most basic—existence and existence in the world. They share their experience of what is most real as they float by us—we who give them pause. We are the cause of their awareness. And their awareness will be the cause of ours. Thus Bingham has involved us absolutely in the ‘action’ of the work. Without us, the fur traders would not have paused.” See Patricia Trutty-Coohill, “Visualizing Tymieniecka’s *Poetica Nova*,” in *Phenomenology of Life and the Human Creative Condition 1*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998), 304.

⁷² The idea that tension and ambiguity are major subtexts of the painting has been advanced by several scholars, including Zesse Papanikolas, who sees the painting as emblematic of the “unpaintable west.” See Papanikolas, *American Silence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 2, 13–15. John Demos also suggested that Bingham may have intentionally left the identity of the creature ambiguous in “George Caleb Bingham: The Artist as Social Historian,” *American Quarterly* 17 (1965): 228. Demos writes that the ambiguity of the creature dramatizes “the feelings of wonder, of puzzlement, of both envy and suspicion with which Missouri townfolk would regard these fur-traders.”

⁷³ For the idea that the bear cub might be consumed for its meat, see Christopher Kent Wilson, “Bingham’s Bear Cub,” *The Art Bulletin* 67, no. 1 (March 1985): 154.

⁷⁴ Susan Prendergast Schoelwer has also seen an allusion to Native American power in Bingham’s creature, although she specifically connects the beast with native women. Schoelwer writes, “[The creature] may be seen as encoding, in dreamlike fashion, the inescapable Absent Other—the wilderness bride who cannot be wholly forgotten even when her role is forcibly repressed.” See Schoelwer, “The Absent Other: Women in the Land and Art of Mountain Men,” in *Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts: Transforming Visions of the American West*, edited by Jules David Brown, et.al. (New Haven: Yale University Press), 135–66 (quote, p. 161).

⁷⁵ The original painting for these two prints was based on sketches in Sioux territory near Fort Pierre, in present-day South Dakota. The painting *Bear Dance, Preparing for the Bear Hunt* (oil on canvas, 1832–1837), is now housed in the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. See Smithsonian American Art Museum Online Catalogue, “George Catlin, *Bear Dance*. . .,” acc. no. 1985.66.447. <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=3898>. A simple line engraving reproducing this composition appeared in 1841 as plate 102 in *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians*.

Catlin described the illustration as follows: “All the world have heard of the bear dance, though I doubt whether more than a very small proportion have ever seen it; here it is (plate 102). . . . For this grotesque and amusing scene, one of the chief medicine-men, placed over his body the entire skin of a bear, with a war-eagle’s quill on his head, taking the lead in the dance, and looking through the skin which formed a masque that hung over his face.” Catlin, *Letters and Notes* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841), vol. 1, pp. 244–45. For the lithograph, see *Catlin’s North American Indian Portfolio. Hunting Scenes and Amusements of the Rocky Mountains and Prairies of America* (London: G. Catlin, 1844), plate 18. The lithograph reproduces the painting mentioned above and was drawn on the stone by McGahey under Catlin’s supervision and printed by Day & Hague in London. Like all the lithographs in the *Portfolio*, it was issued in three formats in three different editions: an edition with text and two-stone coloring (no hand-coloring); an edition with text and hand-colored plates; and an edition without text containing deluxe hand-colored plates with trimmed margins mounted on heavier boards.