

PANORAMA

International Panorama Council Journal, Volume 4
Selected Proceedings from the 29th IPC Conference

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Remote Viewing: Panorama Narrative, Landscape Experience and Heritage

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Abstract

This paper opens an investigation into the relationships between the panorama narratives of colonial America and the subsequent development of American landscape narratives and tourism. In guide books, maps, and settler diaries of the 1840s and 1850s, numerous landscape features are described alongside narratives of encounters with “Plains Indians.” A number of locations appear to receive greater attention than others, and two sites in particular along the Platte River stand out: a group of Pawnee earth lodges and a Sioux funeral site. These locations are featured prominently in James Wilkins’s 1849 drawings and travel journal, and evidence suggests that they appear to have been included in his panorama narrative too. *The Immense Moving Mirror of the Land Route To California* has perished, but in Wilkins’s diary his accounts are vivid. Amongst other sources the same locations are prominent too: both places are noted on maps from before and after that time and are reflected also in many journal accounts. The representation of pre-colonial life on the plains appears to have been anticipated by audiences as part of panorama presentations, building towards narratives of manifest destiny. The mythology and experience of westward travel and the overland panoramas have played their part in securing an American sense of landscape and heritage.

Keywords

Panorama, Cultural Landscape, James Wilkins, Storytelling, Folk Performance, Heritage, Great Plains, North America.

Remote Viewing

In guidebooks, maps, and settler diaries of the 1840s and 1850s, numerous landscape features are described. A number of locations appear to receive greater attention than others, and two such places along the Platte River stand out: first, a group of Pawnee earth lodges and the second, a Sioux funeral site. These locations are featured prominently also in the 1849 landscape studies made by James Wilkins in preparation for his panorama, *The Immense Moving Mirror of the Land Route to California*. While the panorama itself no longer exists, the evidence of archival materials that do survive suggests that Wilkins’s intention to feature both places in his panorama narrative was clear.

Wilkins’s writing states clearly that one of his aims in making a panorama was to “represent faithfully that hitherto unknown portion of our vast continent, to combine instruction with amusement to the present as well as to the rising generation.” [1] In defining his work as being a combination of instruction and amusement, Wilkins’s aspirations are revealed as being broadly in touch with the mood of his time and very much connected to the foundational aims that are evident in the major encyclopedic museums of the nineteenth century. At a time when new continental spaces all over the world were opening up to western colonial interests, it seems of little surprise that panoramas and dioramas became a suitable format for capturing and representing these previously unknown and unimaginable landscapes. In his essay “Intimate Immensity,” Gaston Bachelard demonstrates that the comprehension of immensity is situated in the imagination “within ourselves” as dream-space. [2] To be living and working in the Midwest in the mid-nineteenth century was to be very much on the edge of the immense continental interior, and on the vanguard of a developing nation. The western border of Missouri in 1849 was the frontier; crossing the Missouri River meant leaving the United States, to pass into a largely unknown and wild new territory.

Aside from their portability and entertainment value, to a large degree the scroll panoramas gained their immense popularity because they satisfied a certain hunger for news, bringing forth details of the frontier and the vast landscapes that lay further west. Driven by a sense of discovery but also by an entrepreneurial spirit, the presentation of landscape exhibitions proved to be a very lucrative prospect for a number of artists. While James Wilkins had aspirations and some moderate successes as a studio artist, it is largely on the presentation of his panorama that his reputation stands today. [3]

Having arrived in the United States via New Orleans in 1837, Wilkins moved first to Peoria, Illinois and then to St. Louis where early in 1845 he was reported to be taking commissions for miniature portraits from a studio that he

shared with the renowned landscape artist Henry Lewis. Lewis himself is now known both for his career as a landscape painter and as a panorama maker and presenter. By the time Wilkins and Lewis met, Lewis had already conducted painting trips along the Mississippi River upon which his reputation is made. This may well have been an inspiration to Wilkins. Of the number of panorama impresarios in St Louis at that time, Lewis and another contemporary, John Banvard, were well known for the integrity of their work. Although Lewis laid claims to being the originator of this journey-based approach in North America, both men contributed significantly to the panorama as a popular entertainment. Each having created and toured their own versions of Panoramas of the Mississippi, their contributions to the development of popular knowledge of the Mississippi, the frontier, and the landscapes further west is indisputable. [4] The only surviving example of one such panorama is by another artist called John Egan: *The Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley* (c. 1850), which is on permanent display at the Saint Louis Art Museum.

Epic narratives

The undoubted appeal and popularity for depictions of travel and landscape as narrated scroll performance didn't simply arrive out of the blue, fully formed, as if from the forehead of Zeus. As an artform, the panorama has a longstanding precedence in ancient epic story telling traditions. The epic narrative qualities and drama of scroll panorama presentations appear to have been well suited, and even ripe for rediscovery, at that particular time in North American popular culture. [5]

There is a strong resemblance to many nineteenth century landscape panoramas both in their content and their form. Traditional scroll storytelling and traditional shadow puppet show performances recall stories of battles, journeys, and epic struggle, and these are propelled through a series of episodes. The narrative is fixed in a linear format, arriving at a dramatic conclusion that favors the protagonists—as a linear narrative constitutes the conceptual formation of a line in space, and as a line on a map resonates significantly with the experiences of emigration in the nineteenth century. The journey was something to be endured: crossing the ocean from Europe and then committing to the cross-continental land journey, both of which came with acknowledged hardships. The particularity of landscapes of the American continent and especially the concept of the pioneer landscape is well acknowledged in this respect as epic. In thinking again about the land and landscape in poetic terms, as spaces that become enlarged through imagination to exceed their epic proportions and that contain minute detail, again might be conceptually described as panoramic: the panorama is an array of images

that is contained by an image of its own immensity. Narratives of journeys across the Great Plains equally have been likened to crossing a vast ocean. When speaking to the idea that concepts of landscape are as much informed by imagination, the literary scholar John Milton offers this citation from Paul Klee: “The landscape grows beyond its appearance through our knowledge of its inner being, through the knowledge [that the landscape] is more than its outward aspect suggests.” [6] The reputations of the wilderness west of Missouri was very much preceded by descriptions of its vastness. In support of this reputation, again Milton points out that: “The spaciousness of the plains landscape leads to certain kinds of reactions that may be less common in other landscapes ... we expect the plains to be described in terms of the sea.” [7]

In Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick* just such a comparison is activated to create an emotional link between the prairie and the ocean: “Go visit the Prairies in June, when for scores on scores of miles you wade knee-deep among tiger-lilies—what is the one charm wanting?—Water—there is not a drop of water there! ... It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all.” [8] *Moby Dick* was published in 1851, at precisely the same time that the unbroken expanse of the prairies and the great plains was entering the wider popular imagination. The experience of crossing the Atlantic Ocean for all recently arrived immigrants retained a certain cultural currency as much as it still holds a place in the foundational narratives of American nationalism in the arrival of the pilgrim fathers.

The scroll panorama then as a storytelling medium appears particularly suited to hyperbolic representations of vastness. Up to the task, as it were, of handling the emergence of such a new image of the epic. By producing something analogous to the journey itself, the enormity of the space being conflated with the enormity of the task of traveling across it. [9] The nineteenth century moving panoramas built their reputations on depicting both the perils and the grandeur of wild nature. Representations were sometimes as much idealized as they were aspirational. Wilkins acknowledges how the perceived needs of audiences for sensational and vivid storytelling might be tempered with accurate representation, based on first hand observations. Even so, as he writes his journal, Wilkins is evidently conscious of what would make a good subject with a dramatic narrative, interesting enough to parade before an audience.

From the surviving details of scroll panoramas of the mid-nineteenth century, a series of narrative tropes and phrases present themselves. Wilkins's narrative and those of the Mississippi Panoramas all appear to relate in this respect. Perhaps the most common of these tropes revolves around the representation of pre-colonial life on the plains.

The landscapes to the West are initially depicted from the safety of a pastoral parkland on “this side” of “the river.” For Wilkins the Missouri River is featured, whereas for Lewis and Banvard, it is the Mississippi. Views of modest “American” settlements are shown in detail along the river banks. On the far banks, the threshold to the wilderness, there are occasional glimpses of wild animals and indigenous people in colorful garments. There is frequently the feeling that “we,” the viewer, are overlooking the scene from a high bluff. A slightly separated upper vantage point is suggested, giving the figures a diminutive and even distant quality. On the far horizon the hint of a mountain range can often be seen, emphasizing the promise of grandeur up ahead.

An episodic spectacle of the wild and the savage

A detail in John Egan’s *Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley*, created in the early 1850s, depicts just such a view of “Spring Creek Texas.” [10] In the foreground, on “our” side of the river, a male and female deer are seen in a state of pastoral repose.



Fig. 1. A detail of John Egan’s *Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley*, c.1850, Saint Louis Art Museum.

On the other side of the river, in the wilderness, on the planes outside the United States, we see a disorderly array of buffalo who appear to be charging about wildly. There are representational echoes between this and an image on the title page of Joseph Ware’s *The Emigrants’ Guide to*

California, published in 1848. Once across the threshold of the nation, the landscape is demonstrated as a place peppered with oddity, curiosities, unique landmarks, and brimming with potential.

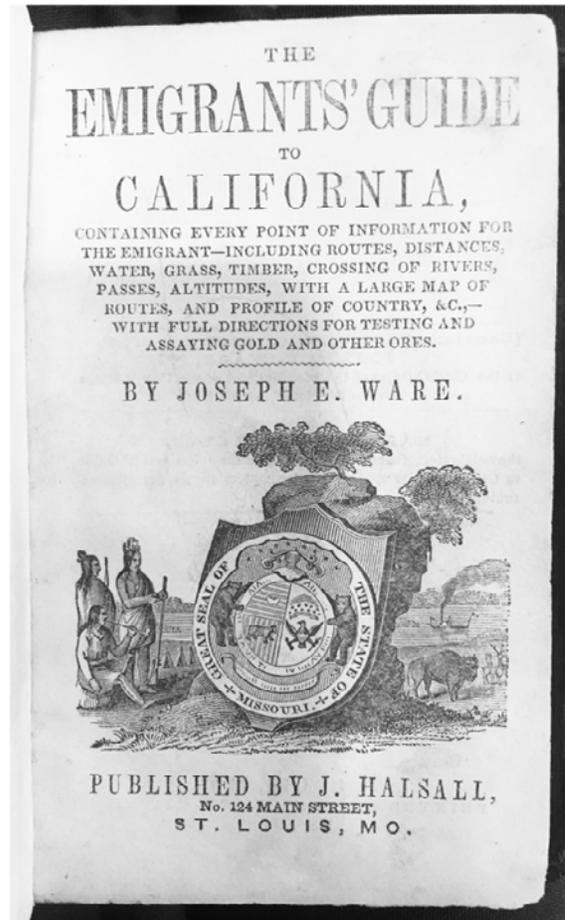


Fig. 2. Detail of the title page to Joseph Ware’s *Guide*, 1848, Newberry Library, Chicago.

An 1848 playbill from London announcing Banvard’s “Grand Moving Painting of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers” describes the features on display in a hierarchy, always placing the grand or most refined in counterpoint with the most basic, simple or primitive. For example, “The endless variety of watercraft...” from “...the majestic steamer...” to “...the light canoe.” Or “The various kind of animals including, “...the rugged bear, the graceful deer, the snowy swan, and the gaudy paroquet [sic]- in fact, all the diversified scenery and objects that change of latitude would produce on this ‘Inland Sea.’” [11] And here again is an allusion to the place depicted as if it were an expanse of water.

The narrative of a scroll panorama is functionally episodic. Each scene is rolled into view and an expository narrative is presented as an interpretation of it. Stories are

told to create an impelling sense of progression through each of the views. A range of events is featured, from the spectacle of natural land formations, to encounters with wild beasts and with indigenous people. It is informative also to reflect on how guidebooks of the time were also organized through a series of locational and episodic descriptions. Travelers were guided along their way by following a litany of creek crossings, descriptions of vegetation, grass types and trees, descriptions of soil and underfoot conditions, or the turn of a ridge, the shape of a hillside or a line of rocks. There are notes to assist travelers in finding places that would be suited well to camping, where good grazing for haulage animals might be found or where to source wood from which to build a fire for cooking. Corresponding reflections on the journey are presented when reading any number of the travel journals, offering a related and likewise punctuated narrative flow. These notes perhaps again confirm the applicability of the scroll panorama through its episodic scene by scene reflections, as an ideal form for vicarious encounters with the wild. Panoramas were promoted for their ability to offer access to the experiences without the dangers that were associated with the journey. In his journal Wilkins likens watching his exhibition to “witnessing” emigrants’ “distresses” as if viewed remotely from “an air balloon,” emphasizing the “comfort” a viewer might find in this entertainment. In her essay on John Stevens’s *Sioux War Panoramas*, Bertha L. Heilbron draws the comparison further as an anticipation of twentieth century mass entertainment. “Like modern movies, panoramas provided for the hoards who saw them as vicarious experiences of travel and adventure.” [12]

John Stevens produced successive versions of his *Panorama of the Indians Massacre of 1862 and the Black Hills*, which proved to be massively popular well into the 1870s. The deeply charged subject standing in sharp contrast to the optimism and wonder that is expressed by Egan, Wilkins, Banvard, and Lewis nonetheless captured the mood of its time. The panorama represents the events that led up to the execution of thirty-eight Dakota men following a series of violent exchanges with American settlers. When exploring the details of this performance, the puppeteer and historian of popular performance John Bell eloquently unpicked the depictions of this tragedy. He explains how the “power of this mythic history depended on its reception as a compelling national narrative, as, manifest destiny.” [13] The message is clear. When the wild beasts are all either tamed or destroyed the land will be yours to use for the growth and productivity of a higher born and advanced version of human existence, for the foundation of a great new nation. The epic qualities of the Sioux Massacre are arguably recognizable in landscape interpretations up to the present time, that as “a version of ‘landscape violence,’ [are] an extension of the tendency towards violence that

pervades American society.” [14] Between the guidebooks, which for many were their first point of contact with the landscape, and then the plethora of corresponding published journals, alongside the performance of the panoramas themselves, the habits and general tone of North American landscape interpretations appear to have been very much set in stone in this mid-century period.

A precedence for depicting the dominion of culture over nature cannot be ignored in the many iterations of Edward Hicks’s painting, *The Peaceable Kingdom*. In the foreground Hicks’s composition consistently shows a group of wild beasts that are pacified to the degree that small children are safe in their company. On a distant river bank in the background we see a crowd of human figures. A number of them are dark skinned partially clothed figures. They appear to be in conversation with paler skinned figures in Euro-American dress. Hicks’s allegory foretells a future when children are safer in the company of wild beasts than they might be with indigenous people. In all events, and through many versions of landscape representation in North America, from the 1820s the animals and the people are always wild and savage, but the people in particular are “savages.” Stories of the endurance of the good natured emigrants is always predicated on their superiority over savage nature. Native people, like animals, possess an inherent naïveté supported by their proximity to nature – nature is innocent, amoral and simple, whereas culture is learned, moralistic and sophisticated. These ideas are backed up by the swift deployment of evidence of higher brain function symbolized by appropriate clothing and up to minute technology. In the Sioux War panoramas this was demonstrated in the fire power of more advanced weaponry and in this and other panoramas by a moral authority that is itself ordained from a higher force.

The mythology and experience of westward travel and the overland panoramas have, as John Bell argues, played their part in securing an American sensibility of mythic history. In exploring these ideas in relation to James Wilkins’s work, his depictions of pre-settler life on the Great Plains take on a very different complexion.

Two Prominent Locations

In the extant fifty drawings by James Wilkins, as previously suggested there are two images that demand attention. Both depictions are in close proximity to the emigrant route as it passes along the Platte River, and both places are situated in present day Nebraska. The first is a group of earth lodges; the second is a funeral site. Both places are noted on maps of the region from the early 1840s and in a number of the guidebooks of the early 1850s. There are corroborating details in journal accounts from the 1840s and ’50s too. Both places are noted by Wilkins in his journal and so both encounters can be precisely dated. The narrative text

of the performance, if there was one, and the panorama itself have perished, but in the final pages of the journal, Wilkins outlines a narrative flow of the journey and this confirms that both of these elements were included in the panorama. One such passage is reproduced almost word for word on the playbill. In this text he mentions the earth lodges but not the funeral site (though in a preceding journal paragraph a string of places and events are listed, and while very much in note form, both sites are included).

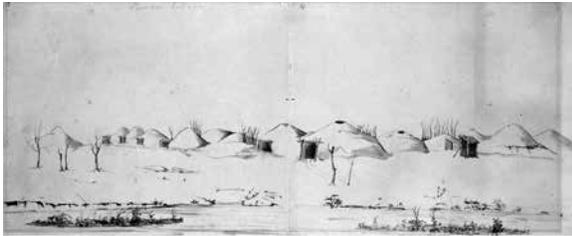


Fig. 3. Wisconsin Historical Society, James Wilkins, Wilkins 11: Pawnee Village, Image, IM1842, 1849. Viewed online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM1842>

An analysis of elements included in both drawings can be read consistently with the power dynamics and constructions of mythic history outlined above. Wilkins has added a handwritten title to most of his drawings, and in the center at the top of the first drawing he wrote, “Pawnee Village.” The use of the word “village” appears at first to be a fair description of what is depicted. Though in his journal and on the playbill, the addition of the word “deserted” suggests a more diminished sense of place that is additionally emphasized by the presence of animal bones. Images of skulls and bones are widely understood as emblematic of death, and in relation to interpretations of the West and the frontier, the steers skull is a longstanding visual trope.

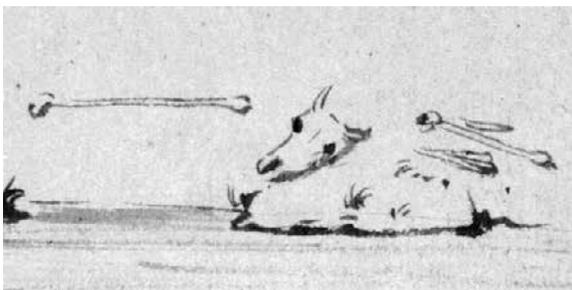


Fig. 4. Detail - Wisconsin Historical Society, James Wilkins, Wilkins 11: Pawnee Village, Image, IM1842, 1849. Viewed online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM1842>

A drawing by Joseph Goldsborough Bruff (dated June 12, 1849) appears to depict the same location in a greater state of deterioration. Made just a few days after Wilkins was there Bruff portrays the dishevelment of this habitation in much more detail, and indeed he repeats the presence of animal bones.

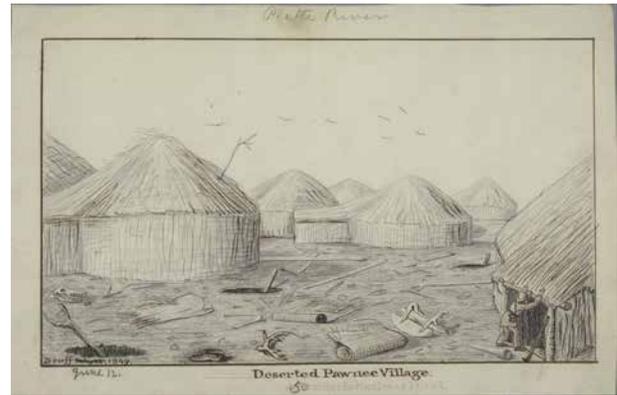


Fig. 5. Deserted Pawnee Village, June 12, 1849, Joseph Goldsborough Bruff, Journal and drawings of J. Goldsborough Bruff, 1849-1853, [mssHM 8044 (10)] The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

In my own research into this location and of Pawnee cultural activities, I was guided through a reading of Wilkins's images by Roger Echo-Hawk, a scholar whose expertise concerns Pawnee architecture and storytelling traditions. He revealed to me how his own family history directly connects him to the above images. The earth lodges along the Platte River, Roger explained, are part of an extended network of places that were understood by Pawnee inhabitants to be a metropolitan center. This place is a city known as Marsh Town. Our conversation leads me to scrutinize every application of scale as a value in interpretation of this material. Roger offered a response to Wilkins's drawing that represents a very different context. “My great-grandfather's mother dwelt there. Her name was Kaasariwa, Things Lying Nicely Inside, and she and her two siblings were born at Marsh Town, and she must have been about age twelve in 1849.” He continued: “Marsh Town was a rambling metropolitan center built by the Chau Pawnees. Nearby dwelt the Real Kitkahahki and the Little Kitkahahki. In those days the only city of comparable size for hundreds of miles around was another Pawnee

metropolis, Pahaku, at the far eastern edge of Pawneeland. And earlier that month, in May 1849, the Pawnees left Marsh Town to build a new multi-band metropolitan center farther down the Flat River, closer to Pahaku; and that year in Pawneeland people starved; cholera struck; and just a couple months after the Pawnees left Marsh Town, a large Sioux / Cheyenne military expedition rode into the ruins of Marsh Town and they set fire to everything, destroying everything that had happened in that Pawnee city." [15]

In Andrew Child's 1862 guidebook, the location is again referred to using the same diminutive language. In this and other guidebooks, the route is described through a long list of locational descriptions, literally an itinerary of places. It is easy to imagine travelers checking off one place after the next. Given the slow progress and monotony of travel, the encounter with this and other kinds of landmark must have offered some relief. These punctuations read like the beginnings of tourist destinations, echoing with road trip guidebooks of the twentieth century. The sheer volume of emigrants who had passed along the Platte River route in the early 1850s supports this assumption to some degree. [16] The recognition of individual places grew in stature as places to see and were still being visited up to recent times. Ephemera and sight-seeing tchotchkes in the museums along the trail routes today vividly demonstrate the levels of the popularity of a number of places including Jail and Court House Rocks, Fort Kearney, Chimney Rock, Ash Hollow, and Scotts Bluff.

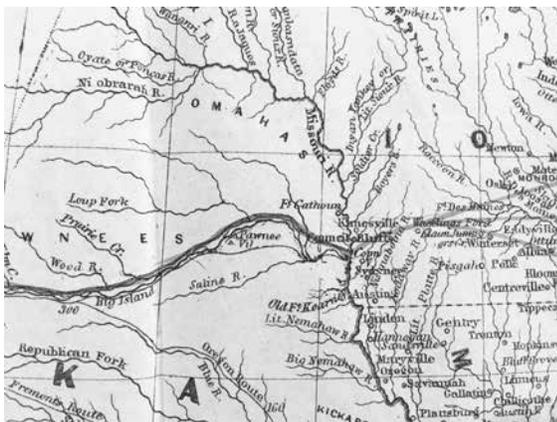


Fig. 6. Horn's Guide to California, 1852, New York, J. H. Colton, Newberry Library, Chicago.

Many of the maps from the mid 1840s onward mark a location that appears to be the one depicted by Wilkins and Bruff. Close to the Loup River Fork of the Platte it is identified by a graphic image that resembles a stylized group of tents. The same location can be verified by descriptions in the guidebooks and there are echoes in the descriptions in many journals too. It seems remarkable, given the details of its destruction, then, that Marsh Town

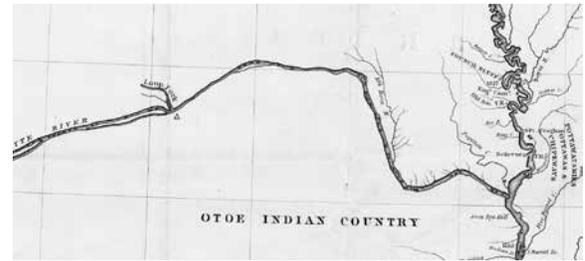


Fig. 7. Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River, 1843, J. N. Nicollet, David Rumsey Map Collection

continued to be included in maps and noted in descriptions for a number of years after 1849. Perhaps it is a speculative suggestion of its popularity as a place to see. Today it is a relatively easy drive out from Iowa and Missouri to visit this area, and the faded architectural heritage from the 1940s and '50s along that route really speaks to the former mid-century popularity of many of the locations depicted by James Wilkins. As already suggested by the residue of twentieth century objects in museums, many of the locations between Council Bluffs and Scott's Bluff became sight-seeing destinations with relatively easy access to them once the roads were paved.

The second location included by Wilkins is marked further along the route, on the way to Scotts Bluff and close to the foot of the steep decline in the trail at Ash Hollow, in present day Nebraska. Again, going by the evidence of many accounts of the late 1840s and early 1850s, an island in the river was acknowledged as an Indian burial ground. Many of the accounts and guidebooks erroneously call this a "burial" site, whereas in actuality it was an active Sioux funeral site. The drawing Wilkins made on June 18th is titled simply "lone tree." At that time in this area, it was not at all common to see tall trees, and for this reason alone any tree might have warranted some attention both as an oddity and as a way marker.

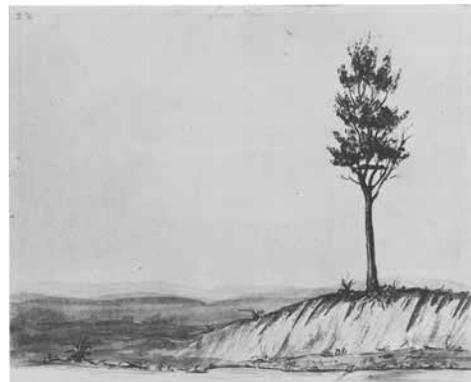


Fig. 8. Wisconsin Historical Society, James Wilkins, Wilkins 14. Lone tree With Indian burial IM31446, 1849. Viewed online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM31446>

What is significant about the tree in Wilkins's drawing is that it holds a platform upon which there appears to be a human body. Research will reveal that while Sioux funeral traditions more usually placed the deceased on platforms raised above the ground on four sturdy posts, some have also been noted in trees.

One of the most vivid accounts of the tree can be found in James M. Hutchings's journal, in an entry he made just nine days prior to the date Wilkins made his observations. Hutchings's account describes how he saw "a singular-looking object in a small group of trees on an island in the Platte." He then describes wading and swimming through the deep channels of the river until he "reached the island with the group of trees, and climbed up the tree with the curious object in it, found it to be an Indian grave, a nicely constructed and interwoven kind of basket, flat on the bottom, oval at the top, egg-shaped, four feet long and two and a half feet wide. It was made of buffalo hide and peeled willow sticks. Inside was an Indian Body Wrapped up in fine buffalo robes, a bow and arrows, a pair of finely worked moccasins, [sic.] and a very beautifully worked frontlet, with several other trinkets. . . . My curiosity might have led me to stealing, but my respect for the creed of the Indian bade 'hands off,' so after a second look. I replaced and left them." [17]



Fig. 9 Minneapolis Art Institute, Seth Eastman, Indian Burial Ground, 1849-1855. <https://collections.artsmia.org/art/36163> (2014.31.23)

Encounters with Sioux funeral grounds were noted often across the plains. In a particularly respectful manner, a vivid visual record of life on the northern plains has survived in the paintings by Captain Seth Eastman. [18] One painting known as *Indian Burial Ground* depicts a place that is considered sacred by Dakota people. [19] As a landmark today, it is called "Pilot Knob" in Minnesota. It is known in Dakota language as "Ohéyawahe," meaning, "the hill much visited." Around 1847 the painting was acquired by Henry Lewis who hung it in his St. Louis studio. A studio that James Wilkins and he shared until the late 1840s. [20] It seems safe to assume then that Wilkins had some familiarity

with such funerary practices. Finally, though, a painting by Richard Lorenz from 1904 depicts a similar platform funeral structure. The image however speaks to a very different set of concerns and is very much pointing to the demise of traditional life on the Great Plains. The title, *Solitude (or Prairie Twilight)*, [21] suggests such a sense of imminent disappearance and yet the mood is framed by the poetics of the light, specifically, "twilight." As the light fades, the demise of both the "wild" and the "savage" is confirmed here as a tragic certainty.

Notes

1. James Wilkins, *Journal of overland trip from St Louis MO to Sacramento CA* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1849).
2. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 183-185.
3. Wilkins's biography is explored in detail John F. McDermott's *An Artist Of The Overland Trail: The 1849 Diary and Sketches of James F. Wilkins* (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1968)
4. See John F. McDermott, *The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi* (The University of Chicago Press, 1958) and *An Artist Of The Overland Trail: The 1849 Diary and Sketches of James F. Wilkins* (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1968)
5. See Max Von Boehn's *Dolls and Puppets* (Boston, 1932), and John Bell, ed.'s *Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).
6. John Milton, "Plains Landscapes and Changing Visions," *Great Plains Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 57.
7. Milton, 56.
8. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick; or, The Whale*. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1851).
9. See chapter 6 of Erkki Huhtamo's "The Mid-Century Moving Panorama Craze," in *Illusions of Motion* (MIT Press, 2013).
10. John Egan, *Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley*, c.1850, Saint Louis Art Museum, <https://www.slam.org/collection/objects/841/>.
11. Huhtamo. See figure 6.10, p.186.
12. Bertha L. Heilbron, "Documentary Panorama," *Minnesota History* 30, no. 1 (March 1949): 14.
13. Bell, ed.
14. Robert Z. Melnick, "Considering Nature and Culture in Historic Landscape Preservation," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 26.
15. Roger Echo-Hawk, as quoted in the author's blog post "The Journey: 2 where the plains begin," *Itinerary Landscape Process* (blog), *Wordpress*, September 20, 2017, <https://ruftydogblog.wordpress.com/2017/09/20/the-journey-2-where-the-plains-begin/>.

16. Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Book Edition, 1987), 5.
17. J. M. Hutchings, [1849]. 1980, 117-118.
18. Captain Seth Eastman served as the commander at Fort Snelling between 1833 and 1840. See Marybeth Lorbiecki, *Painting the Dakota: Seth Eastman at Fort Snelling* (Afton Historical Society Press, Afton, MN, 2000).
19. Seth Eastman, *Indian Burial Ground*, 1849-1855, watercolor, (Prints and Drawings 2014.31.23) Minneapolis Institute of Art.
20. McDermott, *An Artist Of The Overland Trail: The 1849 Diary and Sketches of James F. Wilkins*, 45.
21. R. Lorenz, *Solitude (or Prairie Twilight)*, 1904, oil on canvas, (Layton Art Collection, L199.) Milwaukee Art Museum.

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Author Biography

Nicholas Lowe is an interdisciplinary artist, curator, author, and teacher. Significant curatorial projects include *goat island archive – we have discovered the performance by making it* (2019) and *Roger Brown: Calif U.S.A.* (2010). His visual and performance works explore archival detail and museum display contexts as research-based iterative practices. Lowe joined the faculty at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2003 where he is Chair of the Department of Historic Preservation.

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