

Creating an American Culture

The Hudson River School 1820s-1870s

The Hudson River School

- ▶ These artists captured the undiluted power of nature
- ▶ Paint the nation's most spectacular and undeveloped areas [the new Garden of Eden].
- ▶ Nature was the best source of wisdom & fulfillment.
- ▶ They created visual embodiments of the ideals of the Transcendentalists.
 - * painting is the vehicle through which the universal mind could reach the mind of mankind.
 - * art is the agent of moral & spiritual transformation.

Characteristics of the Hudson River School

“A new art for a new land.”

1. Paint grand, scenic vistas.
2. Humans are an insignificant [even non-existent] part of the picture.
3. Experiment with affects of light on water and sky.
4. Symbol of the school --> a broken tree stump

Issues/Themes Addressed by the Antebellum Artists

- ▶ Transcendentalist thinking.
- ▶ Westward expansion.
- ▶ American nationalism --> **What is America?**
 - * creation of a national mythology
- ▶ Racism and Native Americans.
- ▶ Concern for political extremism.
- ▶ The price paid for progress and the advances of civilization.

In Nature's Wonderland
Thomas Doughty, 1835



Niagara – Frederic Church, 1857



View of the Catskills, Early Autumn
Thomas Cole, 1837



View from Mt. Holyoke: The Oxbow
Thomas Cole, 1836



The Course of Empire: The Savage State
Thomas Cole, 1834



The Course of Empire: The Arcadian
or The Pastoral State - Thomas Cole, 1836



The Course of Empire: Consummation
Thomas Cole, 1836



The Course of Empire: Destruction
Thomas Cole, 1836



The Course of Empire: Desolation
Thomas Cole, 1836



Kindred Spirits – Asher Durand, 1849



Watercolors by John Audubon



Stanley Hawk



Barred Owl

The Luminists

Boston Harbor from Constitution Wharf
Robert Salmon, 1833



The Constitution in Boston Harbor
Fitz Hugh Lane, 1848-49



Fur Trappers Descending the Missouri
George Caleb Bingham, 1845



The Classical Styles of Greece & Rome

Neo-Classical Architecture:
U. S. Customs House, 1836



Jefferson Rotunda (Univ. of VA), 1819-26



The Capitol Rotunda



Patriotic Art

The Landing of the Pilgrims
Unknown Artist, 1830s



Washington Crossing the Delaware
Emmanuel Gottlieb Leutze, 1851



George Washington
Horatio Greenough, 1841



Our Banner in the Sky - Frederic Church, 1861



The "Frontier" Artists

Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri, and Pawnees - Charles Bird King, 1821



1. The "Noble Savage" Image

Buffalo Bull's Back Fat, Head Chief, Blood Tribe - George Caitlin, 1832



2. The "Stoic" Indian

Mato-Tope – Karl Bodmer, 1830s



3. The "Demonic" Indian

Osage Scalp Dance – John Mix Stanley, 1845



Last of the Race – Tompkins Matteson, 1847



4. The "Doomed" Indian

Dying Indian Chief Contemplating the Progress of Civilization – Thomas Crawford, 1857

