

From the desk of Pierre Beaudry



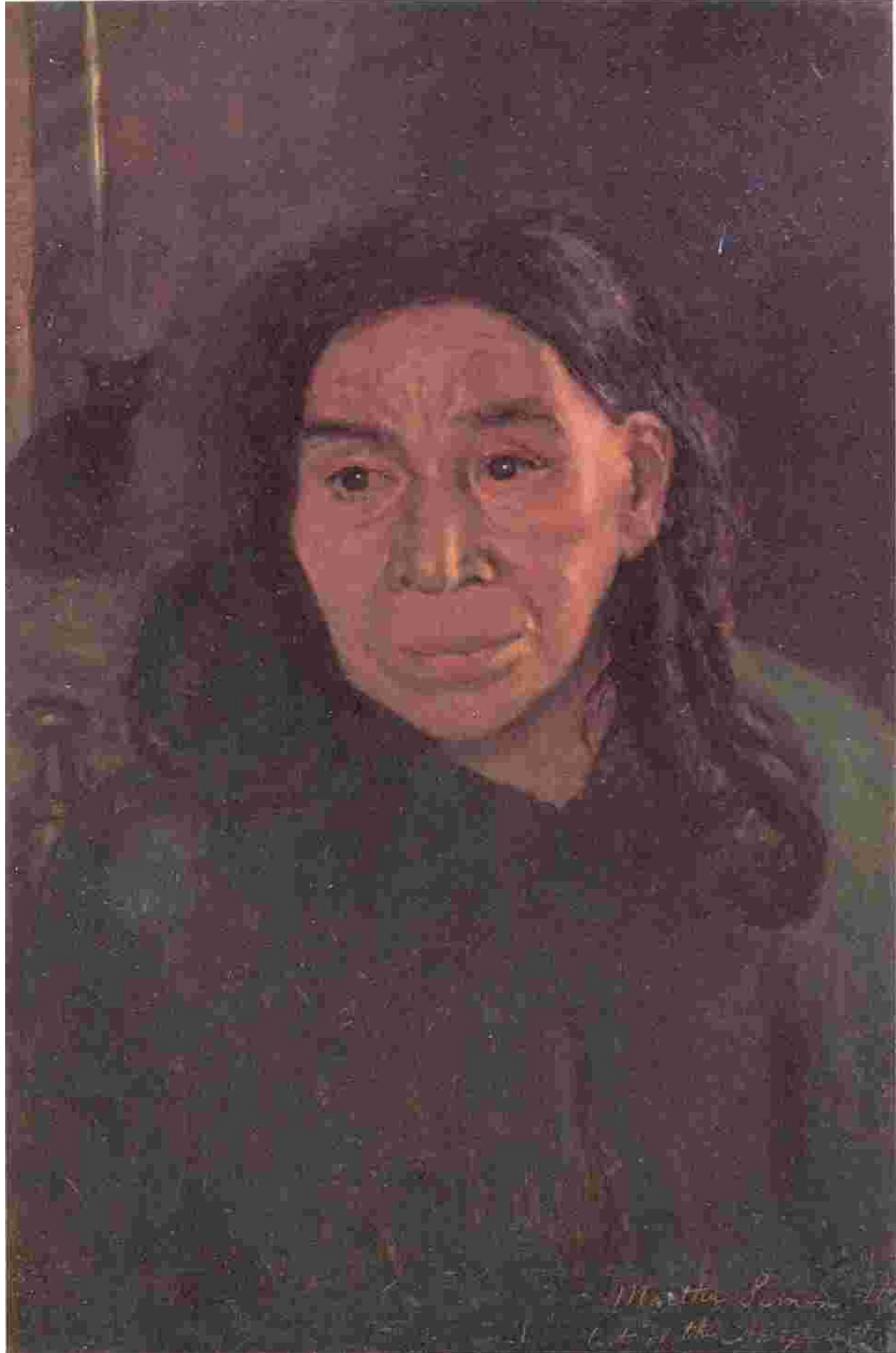
**ALBERT BIERSTADT
OR
THE ART OF MANIFEST DESTINY
PART II.**

by Pierre Beaudry
02/14/2008



INTRODUCTION: THE INDIAN QUESTION AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE

“A nation, coextensive with the North American Continent, destined by God and nature to be the most populous and most powerful people ever combined under one social compact.” (J. Q. Adams to Abigail Adams, St Petersburg, August 30, 1811.)



Albert Bierstadt, *Martha Simon*, 1857. “The Sublime of Manifest Destiny.” Bierstadt had identified Martha Simon as a Narragansett, which was the name that Cooper had found for an Indian tribe that lived originally on the coast of Rhode Island.

Did the U.S. Government have the right to claim complete and unconditional control over the native lands of Indians and occupy them by force? The answer to the first part of the question is yes, but the answer to the second part is no. This is the question that split the United States into two opposite camps both of which made a claim to the idea of Manifest Destiny during the nineteenth century. President Andrew Jackson answered both parts of the question affirmatively; President Abraham Lincoln answered the second part of the question negatively.

It was John Quincy Adams who had first established in his Monroe Doctrine that the United States represented a community of moral and political principle among all of the peoples of the world. This principle was established against all forms of imperialism and colonialism based on the *advantage of the other*, the principle of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. The principle became the unshakable principle that linked the destiny between the Indian Nations of America and the government of the people of the United States. That was the issue of principle that John Quincy had expressed in a letter to his mother from Saint Petersburg, on August 30, 1811.

A few weeks later, he also wrote to his father: “The whole continent of North America appears to be destined by Divine Providence to be peopled by one nation, speaking one language, professing one general system of religious and political principles, and accustomed to one general tenor of social usages and customs. For the common happiness of them all, for their peace and posterity, I believe it indispensable that they should be associated in one Federal Union.” (JQA to JA, Saint Petersburg, August 31, 1811.) This is the crux of the whole matter, which raises a related question of decisive importance, which is: “What is the difference between colonization and colonialism?” That question reflected the irreconcilable difference between the two factions of Manifest Destiny.

On the other hand, the British imperial faction, inside and outside of the United States, considered that the Indians should have their independent territory at the expense of the United States and that, therefore, the United States should have their own separate territory at the expense of the Indian people. This had always been the British imperial policy of divide and conquer the United States based on the principle of taking advantage of the other. That was also the principle behind the expression of “Manifest Destiny” that was coined by the British agent, John L. O’Sullivan. From that moment on, it became the term used to express “diabolically” that the United States was “divinely inspired” to spread democracy as George Bush and Dick Cheney do today, and was used to justify the genocide of the Indian population of America during the territorial expansion of the United States to the Pacific. The meaning of “Manifest Destiny” that was coined in 1854 and the significance of what had been stamped on its original metal by J. Q. Adams in 1811 were completely opposed. Their irreconcilable positions were the primary cause behind the War of 1812 and were settled at the Peace of Ghent in 1814 in favor of the J.Q. Adams faction. (See Samuel Flagg Bemis, {*John Quincy Adams and the Foundation of the American Foreign Polity*}, New York Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.)

However, in 1823, the Supreme Court overturned the J. Q. Adams Westphalian orientation of Manifest Destiny in the Johnson versus McIntosh decision that established in the Justice System of the United States, from that moment on, the imperialist Ultramontane right of “Christian Discovery” of 1452. That right to claim any non-Christian “discovered territory” had been given to the Portuguese King Alfonso V by Ultramontane Pope Nicholas V.

The pope’s Bull, *Dum Diversa*, essentially served as the basis for justifying “Christian Discovery” and encouraged the king of Portugal to loot and enslave the Muslim people.

“We weighing all and singular the premises with due meditation, and noting that since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso -- to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit...” (Pope Nicholas V Bull, “Dum Diversa”, June 18, 1452.)

In the United States, the Supreme Court decision stated that, “As a result of European discovery, the Native Americans had a right to occupancy and possession.” In the 1823 Supreme Court decision, Justice John Marshal further stated that Americans had “*ultimate dominion*” and that upon discovery, the Indians lost “their rights to complete sovereignty as independent nations.” To this day, this has been the prevailing law in the United States.

That was the official judicial way to kill the true purpose of Manifest Destiny. So, the question became, what sort of “inroads of civilization” were capable of meeting the requirements of wilderness in such a manner that untamed nature itself would be able to accept the intervention of the human mind as the guide to its own pathway of progress? It is from the standpoint of this strategic understanding of the role of civilization that the question of Art and the Indian question must both be seen as a matter of the same universal physical principle of economic *agape*. The question can only be resolved based on the dynamics of the principle of the Peace of Westphalia; the principle of the “*advantage of the other*,” which had rejected the implications of the Ultramontane rights of “Christian Discovery” and had put an end to this type of savagery on the European continent by stopping the Thirty Years War, in 1648. Thus, the objective of John Quincy Adams’s Manifest Destiny was anti-imperialist and anti-free-trade from its inception. The decision was made to the effect that the civilizing mission to the Indians had to be made with true economic gifts, and not just handouts of blankets, booze, and trinkets.

This was a long-standing project. The planification and architectonic purpose of such a colonizing least action strategy had been in the making ever since Solon of Athens, but in the more recent American period, since Thomas Jefferson had written to Washington from France during his visit to the great economic project of Pierre Paul Riquet and his great project of the French Canal du Midi. Fermat's economic principle of the path of least time, which was used quite efficiently in this French Colbertian design of European infrastructure, became a model for American canal building and for the American transcontinental railroad. Note, for example, how Fermat's principle of natural law by which "nature always acts by the shortest paths" corresponded to the American notion of the pathway of "Providence."

As the American missionary, Calvin Colton, had stated about the railroad project of Asa Whitney, in 1850: "As the human family at a very remote period of antiquity was scattered abroad over the face of the earth, from the base of the Tower of Babel, by the confusion of tongues, so the people of all languages, thus created, are now coming together again, to erect another and a perpetual monument not of human pride against heaven, but of freedom against despotism; and to perfect this work, they require to be chained to us by a band of iron across this continent.[...] We see, then that God in his providence, by the operation of the stupendous machinery of man's collective power, as organized by himself in the succession of ages, has precipitated these great and startling events at the same moment that we find a pathway marked out by the same divine superintendence, to connect not only the great east with the great west of this continent, but also to connect America with Asia and Europe and Europe with Asia across this continent by most intimate and neighborhood ties. There too, is our public domain, a legacy of Providence, and of little value but for this object; and there is the path, altogether as straight as a bird can fly through the air, and in the shortest possible line over the terrestrial sphere, for Eastern America and Western Europe, to establish intercourse, commercial, social, political, and religious, with the islands of the vast Pacific, and with all Asia. Events have pointed out, events demand, and events will sustain the enterprise with the strong hand on interest; and that interest is nothing else than the united interest of all nations and therefore powerful." (Calvin Colton, *A Lecture on the Railroad to the Pacific*, Ed. Paul Royster, 1850, p. 4.)

The New York businessman, Asa Whitney, had proposed this project to Congress in 1845 as a means to bring together the nations of the world in harmony with the American principle of the *pursuit of happiness*. Colton had the same purpose. In his vision of the future of America that he counterposed to the designs of the British-Dutch imperial forms of free trade looting in Asia, Colton added the following interesting insight. He said: "A people invaded and subjugated by arms, and held in subjection by arms, as in the British and Dutch East Indies, and as in Hindustan, will never love their subduers; nor can it be expected that they will readily entertain the gospel in that way. And this, undoubtedly, is the reason why the gospel has produced no greater effect in those quarters. But, the way in which we expect Christianity will go to the heathen on the railroad across this continent is not by the sword, not by force of arms, but in the path of a peaceful and voluntary commercial traffic. The weapons of this warfare will be those of

‘peace on earth and good will towards man,’ ‘mighty through God,’ to the pulling down of the strongholds of paganism, and not by the hostile array of man’s power.” (Op. Cit.)

This Peace of Westphalia principle was also the fire that was burning at the heart of the lifework of Albert Bierstadt; not merely because he was a native of the Westphalia region of Germany, but also because the very future of America, as a sovereign Republic, was entirely dependent on whether the “*artistic inroads of civilization*” were to succeed with respect to the Indian populations of America. Manifest destiny became, for him, the sublime mission of civilizing the Indian people. The writings of James Fenimore Cooper were, and still are, the indispensable means to develop this artistic strategy of Manifest Destiny, as it was expressed primarily in the Hudson River School of painting.

Bierstadt was not the first artist to paint grandiose Rocky Mountains. The earliest Rocky Mountain landscapes were from Samuel Seymour, a good ten years before Albert Bierstadt was born. What was unique, however, about Bierstadt’s treatment of the western subjects was the principle of the American spirit of discovery that had initially inspired the Corps of Discovery of Lewis and Clark. This was a most difficult task in the wake of the 1847- 49 Indian genocide of Presidents Jackson and Buchanan. So, the purpose of Bierstadt’s trip West was not simply the curiosity of a newly discovered region of landscapes, but the national enthusiasm to civilize the Indian population of the West, and the strategic unity of the United States. Bierstadt joined the peace mission of Colonel Frederick West Lander’s with the same purpose of bringing unity to America, as J. Q. Adams saw it. That meant peace with the Indians.

This objective was also integral to the need to create an authentic American culture which would compare favorably with Europe in celebrating the beauty of American landscape abroad, especially its mountains, prairies, and cascades. In no small way did the Rocky Mountain scenes intrigue Bierstadt’s mind in the same way that the Swiss mountains range had captured his imagination as a youth, but, by painting western scenes, Bierstadt was able to properly adjust Cooper’s view of looking beyond the homey rounded hills of New England.

Cooper had written: “Any well delineated view of a high-class Swiss scene must at once convince even the most provincial mind among us that nothing of the sort is to be found in America, east of the Rocky Mountains [...] As a whole, it must be admitted that Europe offers to the senses sublimer views and certainly grander, than are to be found within our own borders, unless we resort to the Rocky Mountains, and the ranges in California and New Mexico.” (James Fenimore Cooper, *American and European Scenery Compared*, in *The Home Book of the Picturesque: or American Scenery, Art, and Literature*, Scholars Facsimiles & reprints, 1967, p. 52, 64.) Cooper’s sense of the sublime captured Bierstadt’s imagination and the challenge to civilize the wilderness became his life’s overriding mission.

1. THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE LANDER EXPEDITION OF 1859.

After losing the War of Independence in 1783 and simultaneously losing their claim to the border Declaration Line set by their 1774 Act of Quebec, the British imperialists added a new twist to their Quebec tactical boundary claim “for the benefit” of their Indian allies in America. Their aim was to give the Indians a sovereign right to a vast hunting ground in the northwest corner of the American continent and bring Quebec sovereign territory down to the navigable part of the Mississippi River and the Red River Valley, thus, securing a passage between Quebec City and New Orleans. Thus, under the cover of magnanimity for the Indian population, the British intended to divide the United States internally by encouraging a conflict that would lead to a massive genocide against the Indian Population. The ultimate aim was for the British to establish their free-trade policy on the American Constitutional Republic. The aim was to ultimately eliminate the fair-trade constitutional credit system of the United States and replace it with the privatized free-trade usurious monetary system of the British East India Company. This has been standing British policy to this day.

The British signed the Indian Treaty of Greenville of 1795, whereby the Western Indian tribes retained sovereign possession over a large tract of land within the Northwest Territories that went from west of Cleveland, Ohio to the Ohio River near Louisville, Kentucky, establishing a new boundary restriction at the expense of the Americans, and creating a new judicial *causus belli*. On the other hand, the United States had created sixteen strategic places within the Indian area of the Northwest Territories for military posts with a right of way to them across sovereign Indian land.

And moreover, in order to prevent the invasive British fur traders from invading American Indian Territories, the Americans and British signed the Jay Treaty of 1796, which defined the clear demarcation of the boundary between Canada and the United States and excluded the cross-border trade of furs between Canadians and Americans. The courageous expedition of the Corp of Discovery sponsored by President Jefferson and led by Captains Lewis and Clark in 1804, marked the first decisive step of bringing Manifest Destiny to the Pacific Coast. This was the historical context in which Albert Bierstadt had participated in the second most important “Peace of Westphalia” mission to Western America, with the economic expedition of Colonel Frederick West Lander in May of 1859.

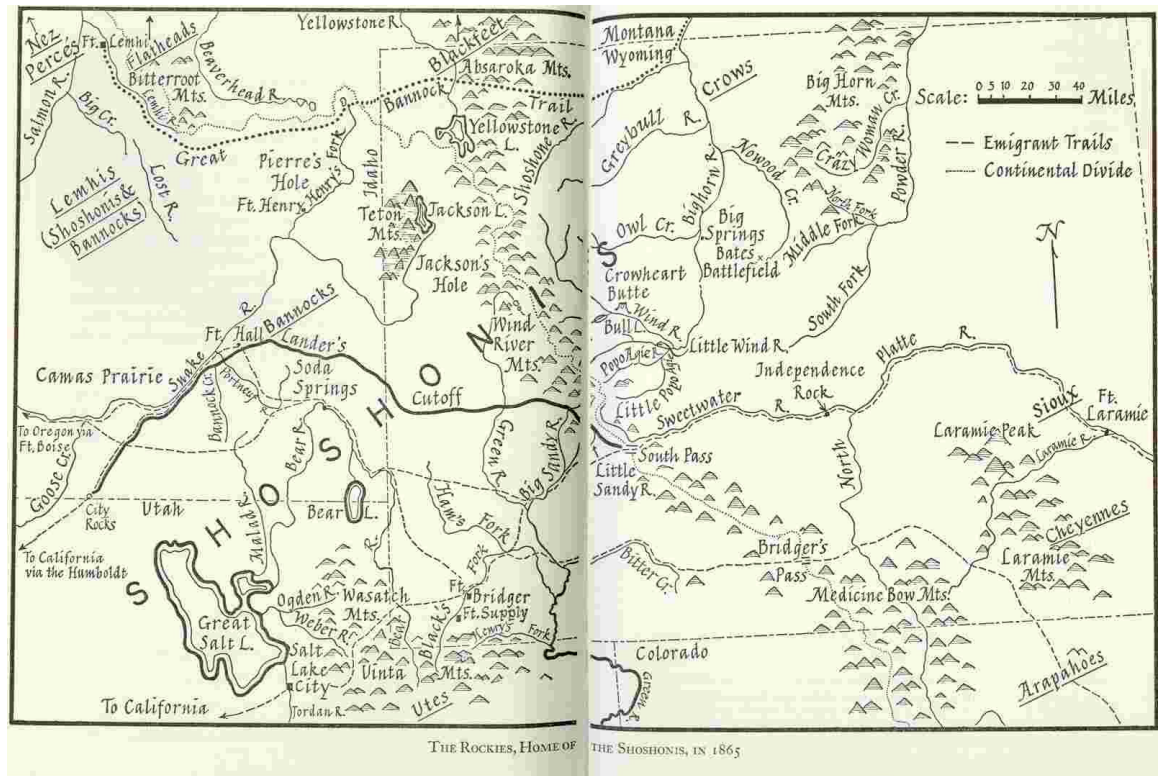


Figure 1. Shoshone territory at the time of Colonel Frederick West Lander’s expedition.

According to the records of his report to Congress, the official purpose of Colonel Frederick West Lander’s mission was: “*Exploration and Survey to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.*” (Colonel Frederick West Lander, Executive Document 46, 35th Congress, 2nd Session, No.758, 1859.) This was the economic infrastructure program that the Buchanan Presidency initiated, and that the Lincoln government successfully implemented, in order to secure the entire continent of the United States against the encroachment of Great Britain. However, the only way to secure this mission was to establish a lasting peace with the Indian Nations of the territories west of the Mississippi. Lander had clearly defined his patriotic mission to Congress, as early as 1855, and showed that he was following the principle of the Peace of Westphalia and the patriotic faction of Manifest Destiny. He wrote:

“The representatives of a people known to possess more mechanical ingenuity and constructive faculty than any nation on the globe, were called upon by the united voice of the nation to look this subject of overland communication boldly in the face; to view it in its manifold relations; to grapple with its great apparent difficulties; and if, constitutional, to decide when, where, and in what manner, it should be best and most speedily accomplished. All sources of information were open to them; and, if a problem and an experiment, it could be met by the *full force of that acute American intellect* which had done, and will continue to do, so much towards accomplishing the destiny of

this wonderful republic. “ (Colonel Frederick West Lander, *Report of a Reconnaissance from Puget Sound, via South Pass, to the Mississippi River*, p. 10. In *Reports of Explorations and Survey to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean.*)

In other words, the most effective way to establish a lawful pathway to the Pacific coast was to establish the means of discovering the economic benefits for the Indian population. And so, in all of his negotiations, Lander made good use of the “*full force of the American intellect.*” The central problem that he had to solve was that of the *paradox of change* that the Indian people were confronted with. Colonizing required that the Indians change their way of life, and the underlying assumption of each and every Indian person was that if he changed, he would lose his culture and his identity and he would die. The choice that had to be made was devastating for all of those people: *change or die*. Lander understood full well this fear of losing one’s identity, and he knew that he had to develop the means of socializing the process of change that would force the required breakthroughs without the use of military force. He opted for beauty!

A recent essay on the 1859 expedition of Colonel Frederick West Lander, written by a man and wife team of independent researchers, provides us with crucial new evidence for this peace mission as part of a joint cultural, artistic, and infrastructure effort that reflected a true American economic program. This report, by Alan Fraser Houston and Jourdan Moore Houston, raised a very important question that had been left out by all of the art books on Bierstadt so far. The question was: “Why would a military expedition like Lander's road-construction project take along artists, and why were the chosen artists a necessary part of such an expedition?” The authors may not have succeeded in answering completely this question, but it was the right one to ask. * They wrote:

“Lander's Oregon Trail expedition of 1859 has come to define this complex Yankee from the Massachusetts shipping town of Salem. But how Lander, a future Civil War general, defined the American West to a curious eastern culture has been largely overlooked. Recent discovery of new descriptions and images from his 1859 wagon trip west, however, clarify questions about the scope of the trip that have long challenged historians. The discoveries, which include more than one hundred previously unpublished sketches and paintings, recast this journey into one of the best-documented expeditions of the Oregon and Lander trails.

“Launched in May from Saint Joseph, Missouri, Lander's 1859 expedition is also known for establishing the reputation of Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902), a twenty-nine-year-old German American from Massachusetts who traveled with Lander. With the new findings, however, the perspective of the journey shifts. Long known as a wagon road construction project and less as an Indian peacekeeping mission, Lander's expedition of 1859 was invested much more broadly in the arts than previously perceived, a commitment to the arts understood and sanctioned from the federal cabinet level down.” (Alan Fraser Houston and Jourdan Moore Houston, *The 1859 Lander Expedition Revisited: Worthy relics Tell News Tales of a Wind River Wagon Road*, published on line by the Montana Historical Society.)

The Houstons' report raised another question about this expedition, which, if it had been answered, as a matter of principle, it might have adequately given a basis for formulating answers to the previous inquiry concerning the unity of purpose between Art, Indians, and economics. The question was: "*What is 'Manifest Destiny,' and why does it play an important part in the settlement of the West?*" That is the most important question and I will attempt to provide an answer with this present report in view of the current LaRouche economic policy for the Eurasian Landbridge and the Bering Strait Tunnel proposal.

From the outset, it is clear that the Lander expedition was a very important mission of civilization that was organized under the Buchanan Presidency, and which was aimed at establishing a durable peace with the different Indians tribes, west of the Mississippi. All efforts were being made to eliminate the remnants of the unfortunate genocidal policies of mass relocation known as the "Trail of Tears" to the West, that had been imposed on the Cherokee Indians by the administrations of Andrew Jackson in 1737-38 and his successor, Martin Van Buren, in 1839.

Colonel Lander had been commissioned in 1858 by the United States Interior Department as a "*Special Agent to Shoshonees, Eastern and Western, and the Pannachs.*" According to the Houston report, Lander "was vocal in advocating peace rather than federal force with both the Mormons and Indians. In 1860, he negotiated the end to the 1860 Pyramid Lake War with the Paiute Indians." The recognition of this peace function is the key to the whole expedition. Furthermore, Colonel Lander was not only a peace negotiator, but he was also an artist and a poet. The Houston report makes the point very clear as to the crucial connection between Lander and the Arts. It was probably the poet and statesman, Bayard Taylor, an American teacher of Frederick Schiller who had kindled the flame of Schiller's idea of the sublime in Bierstadt, and introduced him to the idea of going west. On the other hand, it was more than likely the American historian artist, Emmanuel Leutze, who convinced him to go. However, in the end, it was Colonel Frederick West Lander who recruited him through the Washington Art Association (WAA) in January of 1859. This could have been called the Schillerzeit faction in America! The Houstons reported:

"In 1859, Lander wrote and delivered several essays on the fine arts while in Washington. He was present at the WAA's sumptuous entertainment on January 13, attended by political notables and forty artists, and was referred to as "artist-engineer." The dinner party, noted one observer, 'comprised more men of mind than are usually found together.' Six weeks later, Lander was asked to speak extemporaneously before the same association due to the scheduled speaker's illness. Eloquently merging his experience on the plains with his sentiments on art, he observed: 'Often on the prairies, where the setting sun shone upon the cheerful campfires of a train of emigrants, the morrow showed no trace to mark their resting-place save, perhaps, the gravestone of some way worn woman buried in the night. And so it was with Art. The nations of the earth as they passed away, too often left no worthy relic to tell the tale of their existence, except the monuments of their art. We are too prone to forget the Past, to discourage sentiments of reverence for those who have gone before us; and hence the need of Art to

quicken those sentiments and give them worthy expression.’ As Lander spoke, an unofficial plan was already taking shape to give "worthy expression" to the West by gathering a party of artists to accompany the thirty-six-year-old engineer on his next expedition along the emigrant road to California.” (Alan Fraser Houston and Jourdan Moore Houston, Op. Cit. Colonel Frederick West Lander, *The Aptitude of the American Mind for the Cultivation of Fine Arts.*)



Figure 2. Cartes de visite of Albert Bierstadt and Colonel Frederick West Lander.

The founding principle of the “unofficial plan” being prepared for the Lander expedition was a conscious return to the essence of the Indian policy that President George Washington had established, himself, during his fourth annual message to the U.S. Congress. The plan was unofficial because the artists were to pay for their own way. Washington stated:

“{I cannot dismiss the subject of Indian affairs without again recommending to your consideration the expediency of more adequate provisions for giving energy to the laws throughout our interior frontier and for restraining the commission of outrages upon the Indians, without which all pacific plans must prove nugatory. To enable, by competent rewards the employment of qualified and trusty persons to reside among them as agents would also contribute to the preservation of peace and good neighborhood. If in addition to these expedients an eligible plan could be devised for promoting civilization among the friendly tribes and for carrying on trade with them upon a scale equal to their wants and under regulations calculated to protect them from imposition and extortion, its influence in cementing their interest with ours could not but be considerable.}” (President George Washington, address to Congress, November 6, 1792.)

It is interesting to note that General William Tecumseh Sherman was also of the same sentiment as President George Washington. About the Indian situation generally, but especially during the period that led to the insane *Custer Last Stand at Little Big Horne*, in 1876, Sherman was revolted at the cowardness of the US Congress. “The poor Indians are starving,” he said. “We kill them if they attempt to hunt outside of the reservation and if they keep within the reservation, they starve. But Congress makes no provision, of course, and nothing is done. I wish Congress could be impeached!”

This was the reason why the WAA had become a recruitment center for Military Intelligence, the War Department, the Department of Interior, and possibly other government agencies. After Lander had spoken at the WAA, in March of 1759, then, in April, came the turn of the Secretary of the Interior, Jacob Thompson, who addressed a group of artists, poets, and military officers in the name of the President and of his Cabinet. These are the circumstances under which Albert Bierstadt was recruited for the western expedition.

In January 1759, Bierstadt had brought some paintings to Washington D.C. for an exhibition at the WAA, and participated in the proceedings of April. Bierstadt and Leutze rented rooms at the Willard Hotel on April 8, 1859, just four weeks before leaving to go west with Lander. The Willard Hotel in Washington D.C. was the usual residence of Colonel Frederick West Lander during his stay in the Capital. It was on that April day that Bierstadt received the letter of introduction from Secretary of War, John B. Lloyd. According to the Washington D.C. Evening Star of January 13, 1859, Bierstadt and Lloyd had already met in Washington D. C. on New Years Day, 1759, to socialize and to discuss the western expedition. According to the Houstons, it was Leutze who got the War Department Secretary Lloyd to provide Bierstadt with his letter of introduction as a security measure for the trip. Any travel to the west without military security was a risk and potentially hazardous in Indian Territory.

It is important to note that it was the Department of War that was directly responsible to Congress and to the President for the education program of Indians. As ICLC member, Richard Welsh, stated in his report: “Encouraged by the success so far, Congress in 1819, passed a bill appropriating \$10,000 annually for the development of the Indians, and the Monroe administration delegated [Jedediah] Morse to conduct a survey of the western tribes to determine the most effective path of implementation of the development policy.” [...] “In a circular to the War Department, [Secretary of War John C.] Calhoun urged his agents to cooperate with ‘benevolent associations’ in administering the new fund: two years later, upon his return, Morse founded the association which Calhoun clearly had in mind. Called the “American Society for the promoting of civilization and general improvement of the Indian tribes within the United States...” (Richard Welsh, [A7-50-3/REW001].) Jedediah Morse’s son, Samuel Morse was one the prominent artists of the Hudson River School.

Thus, the success of the artistic continental railroad project to the Pacific depended entirely on the successful peace mission of Lander with the Indians and of his artistic incursions among the different Indian tribes. It was also the characters of James

Fenimore Cooper fictional novels, such as the *Pathfinder* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, that became the role models for understanding how to bring civilization to the Indians. The presence of artists who were able to negotiate the setting of a landscape with the presence of historical Indian customs against the superstitious fear of losing their identity, was a great opportunity for developing the art of the benefit of the other and thus, immortalizing Indian cultural customs as part of the larger American heritage. It must have been quite ironic for Indians to discover that instead of killing their souls, paintings or photographs immortalized them!

It was from the same principle that Colonel Lander identified his immediate task of completing the road for the emigrants to go from South Pass to Fort Hall that he had surveyed and built in 1857 and 58 (See Lander Cutoff on Map in Figure 1). A hundred miles shorter than the other ones, Lander's road was officially called the "*Forth Kearney, South Pass, and Honey Lake Wagon Road,*" which was to bypass the salt desert and the dangerous Mormon territory. Up to that point, the Mormons had been deployed by the British imperial side of this equation against the American system, and had been used in several terrorist operations in association with some renegade Indians. For Lander, there were several conflicts to be resolved with the Pah-Ute tribe and the Schoshoco tribe on that account.

In a report to the 36th Congress, Lander explained, in detail, the diplomatic peace course that he was willing to undertake in order to alleviate the different dangers that a safe passage to California represented for the emigrants, and showed them how a peace arrangement would work with the local Indian chiefs with a proposal for funding an agriculture program for the benefit of the Indians. Lander wrote:

"Referring to my Indian report for further information, I would respectfully suggest that, if the expedition be ordered to California, such a portion of the Indian funds as you may deem expedient may be placed at the disposal of the officer in charge, that he may visit the Pah-Utes and lay before them your views on the subject of their application. Without wishing to intrude upon the province of the regular agent of this tribe, I have simply to say that, being thoroughly acquainted with their northern haunts, and the points at which they usually assail the emigrants, I should consider it a most cheerful duty to again visit them, and prevent their attacking trains.

"Should you instruct me to do so, I have no doubt of being able to prevail on the principle chiefs to accompany me to Washington and execute the treaty there. They desire to sell the lands now occupied by whites, or adjacent to the settlements, and thus create a fund out of which they can be taught to farm.

"If these or other steps are taken, I have reason to believe that the passage of the Pah-Ute Indian country will be practicable to emigrants, and that the war of western Utah will not be reopened by those savages at the close of the stipulated year. " (*Letter from the Acting Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a communication from Colonel Lander in regard to the Fort Kearney, South Pass, and Honey Lake Wagon Road, 36th Congress, Second Session, Ex. Doc. 63.*)

Added to this infrastructure, artistic, and peace initiative by Lander, there was also a petition signed by emigrants to California and Oregon, which supported the proposition for bridging the Green River at what is now called Lander's Cutoff. The U.S. Government supported Lander's project, and many generations of American emigrants were able to safely reach northern California in peace for years to come. On the Lander Cutoff:

"Increased traffic during the 1850's resulted in the first government road construction project in the west. The 345-mile Central Division of the Pacific Wagon Road went from South Pass, Wyoming, to City of Rocks, and Idaho, a geological formation that marked the Division's western boundary. Superintendent Frederick W. Lander of Salem, Massachusetts, supervised construction for the U. S. Department of the Interior. The 256-mile section of the road leading from South Pass to Fort Hall, Idaho, is known as the Lander Cut-off. The cut-off traversed this Salt River Valley for 21 miles and parallels Highway 89 through this area. The new route afforded water, wood, and forage for emigrants and their stock. Between 1858 and 1912, it provided travelers with a new, shorter route to Oregon and California, saving wagon trains seven days. Lander, with a crew of 15 engineers, surveyed the route in the summer of 1857. The following summer, 115 men, many recruited from Salt Lake City's Mormon emigrants, constructed the road in less than 90 days at a cost of \$67,873. The invention of the automobile led to its abandonment."

(<http://www.untraveledroad.com/USA/Wyoming/Lincoln/H89A/37ESign.htm>)

The Houston report identified beautifully the dignified relationship that Colonel Lander had with the Shoshonee Indians during his 1859 expedition. The Shoshonees had already shown their willingness to collaborate with the Americans through the great patriotic Shoshonee woman leader and interpreter of the West and Clark Corp of Discovery, Sacagawea:

"Leading the advance was the Shoshone chief Washakie, an advocate of peace with the whites. Because the largest overland emigrant traffic to California and Oregon passed through Shoshone country, the federal commissioner of Indian affairs was anxious to see Washakie's policy succeed.

" A second observer at the July 3 gathering wrote about Lander's attentions to such concerns. "The talk with Washikeek and the warriors lasted three hours," he noted, "and in honor of the old chief, who is the best specimen of the Native American I have yet seen in these mountainous regions, I took a few whiffs of the peace pipe, although I have religiously eschewed smoking for some years past." He added: "Col. Lander deserves high commendation for the success with which he has treated with Washikeek." In his mid-fifties at the time, Washakie would live another four decades. When he died on February 21, 1900, the United States government gave him a military funeral.

“The talks over, according to Bierstadt, "Col. Landers [sic] then addressed the emigrants, telling them to treat the Indians kindly, and to live in peace together. The chief then came forward and received the presents, and distributed them among his men." Lander had ample gifts for the Shoshone tribesmen. The expedition included four wagons loaded with Indian presents worth five thousand dollars, a dramatic increase from the Office of Indian Affairs' five hundred dollars in 1858. The presents, from muskets to blankets, cotton shirts, and cooking utensils, were so numerous that Lander grumbled to Secretary Thompson "our Indian goods are in excellent order, although from their bulk, and the state of the roads we have been compelled to load four, instead of the three wagons with them." (Alan Fraser Houston and Jourdan Moore Houston, Op. Cit. Quoted from the Lander letter to Thompson, May 30, 1859, microfilm, Records of the Secretary of the Interior Relating to Wagon Roads, M95, roll 4, NA.)



Figure 3. Photography of Chief Washakie taken about the time of the Lander expedition.

Shoshone Chief, Washakie (Gourd Rattle), understood the principle of the Peace of Westphalia and the purpose of Manifest Destiny. You can actually see it in his eyes! He gave permission for the U.S. government to build the railroad through his land. He knew that he was not able to stop the advance of civilization and prevent his people from being assimilated. He also understood that the American government wanted the best for his people and agreed to have schools and hospitals built on Shoshone territory. In his report to Congress, Lander indicated that the Shoshonees had probably suffered more than any other tribe at the advance of the emigration, and yet, they remained peaceful.

One of the engineers working with Lander, C. H. Miller, reported how the Lander Cutoff (see map in **Figure 1**.) would bring misery to the Shoshonee people. He wrote: “The new road in many instances follows the summer and fall trail of the Shoshonee tribe. The animals of the emigrants will destroy the grass in the valleys, where the Indians have kept the pine timber and the willows burnt out for years as halting places in going and coming from their annual buffalo hunts, and I believe, even beyond the mere question of policy, that it would be very unjust and cruel course of action for the government to pursue should we take the use of the land without reimbursement to the tribe.” (C. H. Miller, Report, 36 Congress, 2 Session, Sen. Exec. Doc. 40, p. 69-71, quoted by Virginia Cole Trenholm and Maurine Carley, *The Shoshonis, Sentinels of the Rockies*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1964, p.177.) In 1868 Washakie and his Shoshonees were given the “Warm Valley” (Wind River Valley) as a reservation.

After his return to Washington where he wrote his report to Congress, Colonel Lander resigned from his surveying activities, but not from his peace initiatives. He turned down the offer of President Lincoln to become the Governor of Nevada, but he accepted to become Lincoln’s secret agent to Sam Huston in the mission of keeping Texas in the Union. The Hustons’ report also concluded:

“On the outbreak of the Civil War, Lander served on George B. McClellan's staff before receiving a command as a brigadier general on the Upper Potomac. Personally leading charges that cleared the Confederates from his department, he was wounded in the calf by a Confederate ball at Edward's Ferry in late October 1861. Lander later returned to combat but died as the result of his wound on March 2, 1862. After a huge Washington funeral led by Lincoln, his cabinet, and the Supreme Court, Lander's body, accompanied by his company of sharpshooters and his horse, was transported on a special train to his home in Salem, Massachusetts.” (Alan Fraser Houston and Jourdan Moore Houston, *The 1859 Lander Expedition Revisited: Worthy relics Tell News Tales of a Wind River Wagon Road*.) [* “ALAN FRASER HOUSTON and JOURDAN MOORE HOUSTON are independent scholars whose focus is American artists born before 1830 and artists who traversed the trans-Mississippi West before the railroads. Mrs. Houston holds a bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College and a master's degree from the University of Vermont. Dr. Houston graduated from Amherst College and Boston University Medical School and is an emergency physician.”]

2. ALBERT BIERSTADT'S TRIPS TO THE AMERICAN WEST:

In 1859, Albert Bierstadt had just returned to the U.S. from a successful four years of study at the Dusseldorf Academy, in the Westphalia region of Germany, when he began to show his patriotic motivation for *Manifest Destiny*. He had traveled through the Alps where he painted a couple of Swiss Alps subjects, one, *The Wetterhorn* (1857), expressing the firm and modest character of the Alpine scenery and people; the other was much more daring, *Lac Lucerne* (1857), represented massive ice-capped mountains disappearing far away in the distance. This second composition already presaged the dramatic compositions of American Rocky Mountains.

In December 1858, *Le Crayon* reported that Bierstadt had manifested the intention of going to the Rocky Mountains “to remain a couple of years, making sketches of the scenery, and studying the manners and customs of the Indians.” It was in 1859, after Bayard Taylor had come to Bierstadt’s hometown of New Bedford to deliver a lecture on *Eldorado*, that Bierstadt actually set out to go west. He had been recruited to the American system by Emmanuel Leutze who, as an official history painter of the U.S. Government, had already been well acquainted with U.S. government institutions from which he had received several commissions for the halls of the Capitol Building. Bierstadt was soon to become the visual historian of the West and its Indian culture.

According to the Houstons’ report, it was Leutze who got Bierstadt to solicit permission from President Buchanan’s Secretary of War, John B. Lloyd, in order to join the expedition of Colonel Frederick West Lander and travel to the Rocky Mountains with him. Lander was the Chief Engineer of the Overland Trail to the West sent out by the U.S. Department of Interior in order to recommend and survey a railroad route to California. Lloyd had given Bierstadt a letter of introduction that he could use at all military outposts along the way. It stated: “The bearer of this note, Mr. A. Bierstadt, who proposes to accompany Colonel Lander’s wagon road party, has been introduced to me as an artist and a gentleman of character, and as such I recommend him to the courtesy and kind attention of the commanders of such military posts as he may visit.”

The trip represented a certain number of risks, especially since the massacre of September 1857. In the vicinity of Cedar City, Utah, the Mormons had leagued themselves with some renegade Indians and massacred 128 Arkansas emigrants. The Mormon leader and British asset, Brigham Young, was later reported as having boasted with a tell-tale grin on his face: “*Vengeance is Mine; I have repaid saith the Lord.*” This highly upset Bierstadt who had been warned about the Mormons, but it did not deter him. Back home, the main New Bedford newspaper was rooting for him and wrote up the following sending off note well ahead of time.

“Mr. Bierstadt. – It is understood that the New Bedford artist is about to start for the Rocky Mountains, to study the scenery of that wild region, and the picturesque facts of Indian life, with reference to a series of large pictures. He expects to remain more than

one year, and has engaged companions, among them a photographer. We wish him all success and a safe return.” (*New Bedford Daily Mercury*, January 17, 1859.)

Bierstadt was accompanied by a Bostonian artist and photographer, F. S. Frost, and another artist, Henry Hitchings, originally from Lynn Massachusetts. From 1861 to 1869, Hitchings became a drawing teacher at the United States Naval Academy. Hitchings was also in agreement with the Bierstadt principle of representing ideas with shadows. He wrote: "Though the fascinations of the painter's art lie in color, yet the great essentials consist of form, composition, and light-and-shade; the latter may be comprehended alone; but color unaccompanied by these is incapable of conveying a single idea." (Henry Hitchings, "*True Principals of Art Founded in Nature*," unpublished manuscript, p. 79, Henry Hitchings Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.)

When the group of artists left on April 15, 1859, the journey with the Lander expedition took them to Saint Joseph, Missouri. By May, they had arrived to the Platte at Fort Kearney. Bierstadt and Frost made a number of stereographs and drawings of Indians and prairie sites before they arrived at their first destination of Wind River Mountains, Wyoming, by June 24. Since it was generally difficult to convince Indians to sit for a portrait, because of their superstitious fear of losing their identity, Bierstadt was only able to do a few. This artistic approach of painting Indian portraits went a long way into taking the edge off of the difficult civilizing mission. Bierstadt even joked about it when he wrote home: "One old Indian Chief declared to the officers that I had killed more of the Sioux tribe than any man who had ever been among them." On July 10, Bierstadt wrote a lengthy letter to the Art Magazine *The Crayon*.

"If you can form an idea of the scenery of the Rocky Mountains and of our life in this region, from what I have to write, I shall be very glad; there is indeed enough to write about – a writing lover of nature and Art could not wish for a better subject. I am delighted with the scenery. The mountains are very fine; as seen from the plains, they resemble very much the Bernese Alps, one of the finest ranges of mountains in Europe, if not in the world. They are of granite formation, the same as the Swiss mountains and their jagged summits, covered with snow and mingling with the clouds, present a scene which every lover of landscape would gaze upon with unqualified delight. As you approach them, the lower hills present themselves more or less clothed with a great variety of trees, among which may be found the cotton-wood, lining the river banks, the aspen, and several species of the fir and the pine, some of them being very beautiful. And such charming grouping of rocks, so fine in color – more so than I ever saw. Artists would be delighted with them – were it not for the tormenting swarms of mosquitoes. In the valleys, silver springs abound, with mossy rocks and an abundance of that finny tribe that we all delight so much to catch, the trout. We see many spots in the scenery that reminds us of our New Hampshire and Catskill hills, but when we look up and measure the mighty perpendicular cliffs that rise hundreds of feet aloft, all capped with snow, we then realize that we are among a different class of mountains; and especially when we see the antelope stop to look at us, and still more the Indian, his pursuer, who often stands dismayed to see a white man sketching alone in the midst of his hunting grounds. We often meet Indians, and they have always been kindly disposed to us and we to them; but

it is a little risky, because being very superstitious and naturally distrustful, their friendship may turn to hate at any moment. We do not venture a great distance from the camp alone, although tempted to do so by distant objects, which, of course, appear more charming than those near by; also by the figures of the Indians so enticing, traveling about with their long poles trailing on the ground, and their picturesque dress, that renders them such appropriate adjuncts to the scenery. For a figure painter, there is an abundance of fine subjects. The manners and customs of the Indians are still as they were hundreds of years ago, and now is the time to paint them, for they are rapidly passing away; and soon will be known only to history. I think that the artist ought to tell his portion of their history as well as the writer; a combination of both will assuredly render it more complete...

"I have told you a little of the Wind River chain of mountains, as it is called. Some seventy miles west from them, across a rolling prairie covered with wild sage, the soap-plant (?) and different kinds of shrubs, we come to the Wasatch, a range resembling the White Mountains. At a distance you imagine you see cleared land and the assurances of civilization, but you soon find that nature has done all the clearing. The streams are lined with willows, and across them, at short intervals they are intersected by the beaver dams; we have not yet, however, seen any of their constructors. The mountains here are much higher than those at home, snow remaining on portions of them the whole season. The color of the mountains and of the plains, and, indeed, that of the entire country, reminds one of the colors of Italy; in fact, we have here the Italy of America in a primitive condition

"We came up here with Col. F.W. Lander, who commands a wagon-road expedition through the mountains. At present, however, our party numbers only three persons: Mr. F_____, myself, and a man to take charge of our animals. We have a spring-wagon and six mules, and we go where fancy leads us. I spend most of my time making journeys in the saddle or on the bare back of an Indian pony." (*The Crayon*, September 1859. p. 287.)

In 1860, after Bierstadt had returned home, the railhead had reached Saint Joseph, Missouri. Bierstadt realized that, very soon, his six-week trip would be made in six days by way of the transcontinental railroad. All of the sketches and photographs and stereographic views that he took would become the material for exhibitions and large landscape paintings that were all painted as so many invitations for the youth to travel westward and settle America. As he reported to several newspapers on the flow of westward emigration: "Hundreds of families of what we call the West, are all bound still further West, truly a progressive people and a progressive country." (St. Joseph, Missouri, *Weekly West*, August 27, 1859; *New Bedford Daily Mercury*, August 10, 1859.)

Upon his return, Bierstadt became an overnight success and, immediately after visiting his family in New Bedford, he established himself in New York City where he joined the Hudson River School. As a matter of fact, it is possible that the project of joining that school may have already been made at the Dusseldorf School, in 1853, where

Whittredge and Leutze, had been enrolled themselves. Bierstadt settled in the school's new address at West Tenth Street, number 15 in New York City, which became known as the *Tenth Street Studio*. Bierstadt lived there until 1866 and, after a number of very successful exhibitions of his works; he rapidly became famous as both a great artist and a shrewd businessman. His first and most famous works, after his return from the West were *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, 1863, and *A Storm in the Rocky Mountains – Mount Rosalie*, 1866. They sold for \$25,000 and \$20,000 respectively. Bierstadt no longer needed to send his paintings home to New Bedford to get food and rent money.

The critics and the population were ecstatic about the Bierstadt executions of the newly discovered western territory. He had won both their hearts and minds. There had been well know and well celebrated photographs of the Western Rockies distributed in the East as early as 1860, by the California photographer, Charles Leander Weed, and others, but nothing compared with the impact of the Bierstadt artistic treatment of large wall size paintings. It was a revolution in American landscape paintings. Here is a sample of the judgment of the time by an enthusiastic critic whose newspaper identity has unfortunately been left out:

“Even dismissing the question of inspiration, and looking at “Lander’s Peak” from a purely technical point of view, we are compelled to accord the picture a rank with the foremost achievements in form and color. There are certain passages of it which indicate an acquaintance with artistic means unsurpassed in any painting of our age and country...the handling of these particulars is of a perfection which would entitle Bierstadt to the name of a great workman, did he not deserve that of a great artist more justly still.

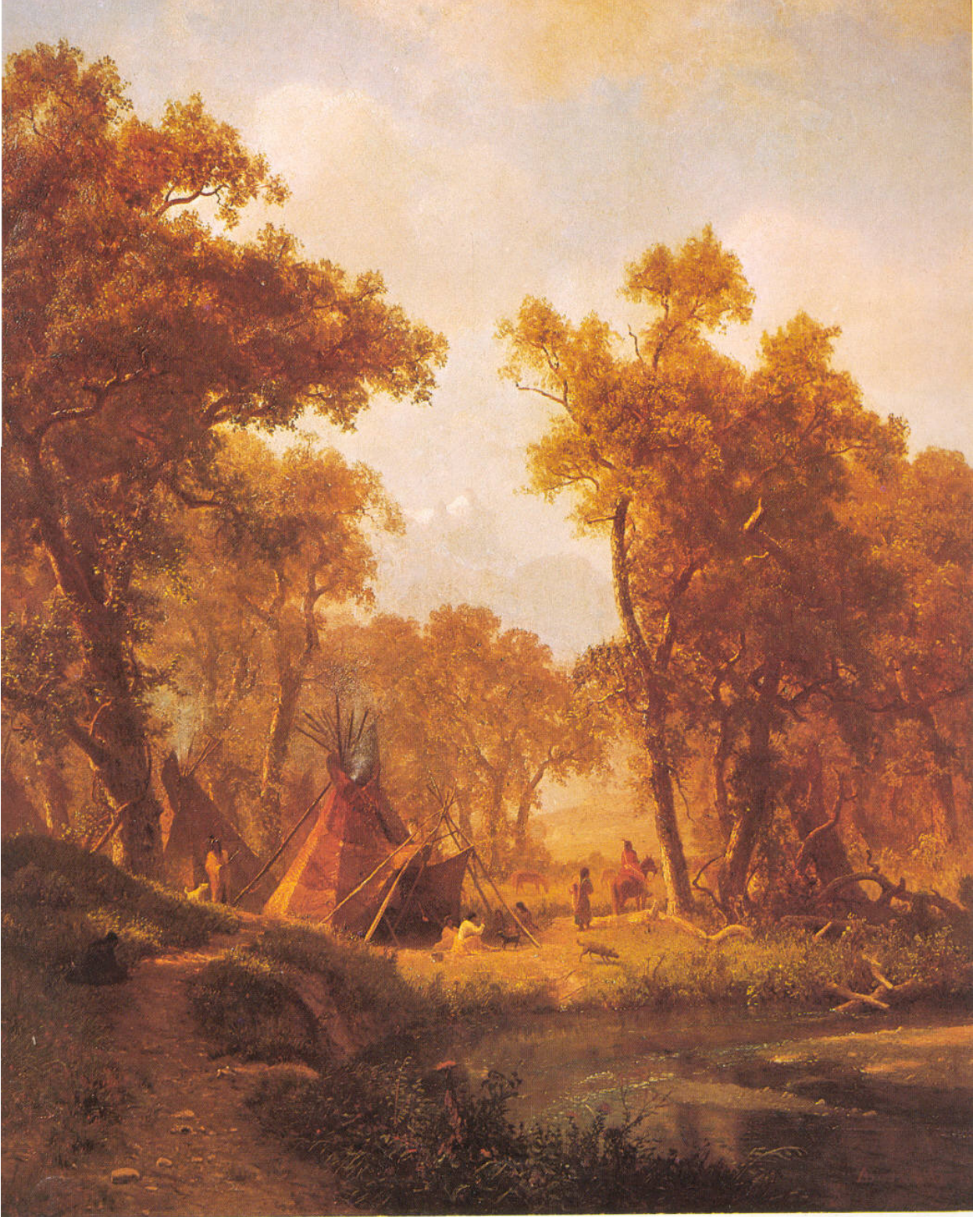
“We have studied the picture under all circumstances of external light, in dark and in bright weather, in bad and in good positions. It needs advantages as little as any picture we ever saw. Its sunlight seems self-supporting. It illumines a twilight room...These facts are decisive of the artist’s place in the very first rank of American genius...Human skill and patience, audacity and tireless enterprise of knowledge, have pioneered their way, all these thousands of dangerous slow miles into the very vestibule of virgin Nature. But the Holiest of Holies locks its door against them. The inmost, topmost spirit of things closes the gates of sight behind it and retires into the silent bosom of the Heavens.” (Undated, March 1864 clipping, collection Mrs. Orville DeForest Edwards, Dobbs Ferry, New York. From Gordon Hendricks, Op. Cit., p. 173.)

The second trip to the Rocky Mountains in 1863, included Albert Bierstadt, the writer, Fritz Hugh Ludlow, William W. Hill of Providence, and Horatio W. Durfee, of New Bedford. Two California artists, Enoch Wood Perry who studied with Bierstadt in Dusseldorf, and Virgil Williams who met Bierstadt in Rome met them in the Yosemite Valley. A physicist and metallurgist, Dr. John Hewston, also accompanied them. This time, Bierstadt went beyond Colorado and Wyoming. He established his camp in the Yosemite Valley for several months. From there he could travel to the Pacific coast.

Part of Bierstadt's mission was to write for newspapers with the purpose of reporting not only the salient facts of the Oregon Trail, but also educating the American people into looking at these new frontier sceneries with American eyes but with European culture. Thus, his reporting on the "colors of Italy", and on the favorable comparison with the "Bernese Alps." Art historian, Nancy Anderson, also emphasized the fact that Bierstadt filled a need for Americans to compare American landscape art with European achievements. Anderson made an immediate and direct connection between James Fenimore Cooper and Bierstadt. She noted that Bierstadt was able to reproduce the Cooper method of making "pictorial amalgams of fact and fiction." This was her way of identifying the method of Cooper whereby the scenery contained an intention, which was expressed as unintended, as if nature had produced it purely by accident.

Knowledgeable critics positively noted the relationship between Bierstadt, European Civilization, and James Fenimore Cooper. For instance, Nancy Anderson wrote: "Nowhere is Bierstadt's method more evident than in *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, 1863, the most important painting to result from the 1859 trip. Measuring six by ten feet, the picture was designed to be exhibited alone, as a showpiece, or "Great Picture." The second of Bierstadt's major western panoramas (*Base of the Rocky Mountains, Laramie Peak*, 1860, until now unlocated and unknown, was the first) the painting betrays the artist's eagerness to meet the expectations of an audience nursed on the novels of Cooper but also anxious to find an American equivalent for the European sublime." (Nancy A. Anderson, "Wondrously full of Invention" *the Western Landscapes of Albert Bierstadt*, in *Albert Bierstadt Art & Enterprise*, The Brooklyn Museum, 1991, p. 74.)

This Bierstadt first mission with the Indians was also very successful. In his Tenth Street Studio of New York City, he not only promoted the fine arts but also the importance of Indian culture. In January of 1860, he gave an exhibit of his studies of prairie Indians. Bierstadt had brought back with him a wagonload filled with Indian paraphernalia, including a complete Shoshone wigwam which he installed inside of his New York Studio to accompany his paintings. By March, he had finished his first monumental western painting, *Base of the Rocky Mountains, Laramie Peak* (1860). The masterpiece received much newspaper coverage at the time, but it was never to be seen again, after it was sold. In order to attract more people to visit his studio, Bierstadt would also hire Indian performers to provide a display of their cultural dances and songs.



Albert Bierstadt, *Shoshone Village*, 1860.

The imperialist pro-British critics in the United States hated the fact that Bierstadt painted his gorgeous sceneries not as they were but as they ought to be; because that gave Americans the sense that their United States could be considered as the Promised Land for all of future mankind, including the Indians. That was, no doubt, Bierstadt's ultimate intention.

3. THE WEAKNESS OF HIDING THE NOOSPHERE BEHIND THE BIOSPHERE



Albert Bierstadt, *Donner Lake from the Summit*, 1873

Bierstadt's last trip West, in 1871, showed that he had, unfortunately, given into the environmentalist propaganda of his day. What amazed Bierstadt the most was the fact that by 1869, the entire trip across the United States took only six days by rail, yet, he refused to introduce the technological advance in his paintings. Bierstadt had become rapidly the main attraction of Art lovers in San Francisco. *The San Francisco Bulletin* reported on July 29, 1871: "We have seen no painting that came nearer to our ideal of the best in landscape art, combining perfect truth with freedom, largeness and sentiment." This last visit West was more of a show of popularity than anything else. However, it was an opportunity that represented a moment of crucial significance with respect to the

completion of the intercontinental railroad. The *Donner Lake from the Summit*, 1873, by Bierstadt represented the sort of challenge that demanded to replicate a very thoughtful interaction between the Noosphere and the Biosphere, between the developments of industrial technology represented by the achievement of the transcontinental railroad, and the beautiful setting of grandiose Rocky Mountain wilderness. This was the only known painting of Bierstadt that included a railroad!

One morning, during the summer of 1871, the railroad businessman, Collis P. Huntington climbed to the summit at Donner Lake with Bierstadt, in order to show the precise spot from which he wanted his painting done. The view Huntington chose represented the location where the railroad engineering challenges had been the greatest. It also marked the place, in the High Sierra, where, during the winter of 1846-47, the Donner party of émigrés had suffered death and starvation in their ill-fated attempt to reach safety on the other side to the Pacific. The choice of the site, therefore, represented a double challenge that Bierstadt could have exploited by demonstrating the civilizing role of the railroad, and the preciousness of human life.

So, Bierstadt was confronted with the same type of problem that Leonardo da Vinci had been confronted with by a commission of the *Virgin of the Rocks*. [See my report, LEONARDO DA VINCI'S {*VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS*}: A FIELD-PERSPECTIVE EXPERIMENT IN LEIBNIZIAN DYNAMICS, 10/19/2007.] In both cases, the commission required a precise treatment of the subject: both Leonardo and Bierstadt had a similar opportunity for axiom busting. The Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception initially rejected Leonardo's painting, because the central focus was not on the Virgin. Similarly, Huntington initially rejected the Bierstadt painting, because no train appeared in the picture. Bierstadt had referenced the railroad simply by hiding it behind a blue puff of smoke lost in the morning mist, and which was there to indicate the recent passage of a train.

Though the transcontinental railroad through the Rocky Mountains was the greatest engineering feat of the entire Manifest Destiny project, Bierstadt had rejected the idea of showing the harmony between this giant step in human technology and the giant setting of nature. The great project included nine tunnels dug through solid granite with thirty-seven miles of snowsheds, an accomplishment never before realized anywhere in the world, which was undoubtedly worthy of celebrating. However, Bierstadt's attempt at solving the dilemma of accommodating technology and nature failed, and his failure came from the fact that these two elements had been considered as antithetical. He had internalized, in advance, the generally accepted view of public opinion, whereby technological progress was invasive and, therefore, contrary to nature.

The point, however, is that the railroad has improved the universe as a whole by improving human life, and the universe as a whole was made more beautiful as a consequence. Such was the true subject of celebration: if the introduction of a new technology can increase the relative population density of mankind in the universe, then, it is naturally good and beautiful. The natural organization of our universe is perfectly capable of accepting the willful intervention of this kind of human development. It is a

certain lower-type of animal species called the environmentalist which has a conflict with nature.

Therefore, by attempting to accommodate the industrialist, Huntington, and the Californian environmentalists, Bierstadt rejected the task of confronting the truth of the matter and of resolving the apparent contradiction. By hiding the train deep inside of the scenery, Bierstadt was hiding the Noosphere behind the Biosphere, as if the railroad of civilization had something shameful to hide. This is the reason why *Donner Lake from the Summit* lacks the beauty and the enthusiasm of Bierstadt's earlier works. The painting could have shown the same workmen laying tracks and erecting a monument in honor of the Donner Party, instead of hiding them both in the cold indifference of a morning sunrise over the High Sierra. Bierstadt's enemies exploited that weakness and a systematic campaign was undertaken to destroy him.

4. RUSKINITE AND PRE-RAPHAELITE ATTACKS AGAINST BIERSTADT

“It is Fenimore Cooper upon canvas!”
Morning Post, London, 16 Jan. 1868.

If you want to know if any one is doing something good, take a quick look at who his enemies are. The international alert signal against Bierstadt can be dated from the London Morning Post of January 16, 1868. So, simply considering the fact that Bierstadt's enemies were British Ruskinites and Pre-Raphaelites, then that should be enough to know that he must have been doing something good for mankind. Just when you think that he has painted the greatest masterpiece in the whole history of American landscape art with his *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, Bierstadt offers the world the greatest of all of his works, *Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mount Rosalie*. And, that was when the British imperialists, under the evil pen of *Watson's Weekly Art Journal*, went completely bezerk and launched the biggest slander operation against Bierstadt inside of the United States.

On May 2, 1867, the New York Times characterized Bierstadt's new masterpiece as superficially “beautiful” but “destitute of sentiment.” On May 11, the *Albion*, attacked the Dusseldorf Academy behind the Bierstadt success. It was this intention of elevation of the human mind with sublime subjects and situations that the British chose to attack. Examine, for example, the attack by the New York City based *Watson's Weekly Art Journal*. On March 3, 1866, this Ruskin influenced publication, wrote the following outrage about the heights of *Mount Rosalie*.

“The truth is, we fear, Mr. Bierstadt has undertaken a subject much beyond his powers... To suggest God's nature on Canvas required a depth of feeling which not every artist possesses, and a severity of study which few artists care to bestow... This depth of feeling, Mr. Bierstadt does not seem to evince...[his] cold, brilliant talent... produces work which may impose upon the sense, but does not affect the heart, which may astound but does not elevate, for God's reality enters into it in a very slight measure...The whole

science of geology cries out against it... The law of gravitation leagues itself with geological law against the artist. Away up, above the clouds, near the top of the picture, the observer will perceive two pyramidal shapes. By further consultation of the index-sheet, the observer will ascertain that these things are the two "spurs" of Mount Rosalie. Now let him work out a problem in arithmetic: The hills over which he looks, as we are told, are three thousand feet high; right over the hills tower huge masses of clouds which certainly carry the eye up to ten or twelve thousand feet higher; above these, ...the two "spurs;" what is the height of Mount Rosalie? Answer: approximately, then thousand miles or so. Impossible." (Watson's *Weekly Art Journal*, on March 3, 1866.)

This poor imbecilic critic obviously should have stayed home staring at his wallpaper designs. "How dare an artist invent a height that does not exist in God's nature?" What this Watson critique shows, besides his own ignorance, is that there was an organized British effort to denigrate Bierstadt and the German Dusseldorf Academy, which had been systematically criticized by Watson as an "infection" expressing "harshness and dryness."

The attacks, however, were not only directed against Bierstadt, but also explicitly against Manifest Destiny. A true hater of Bierstadt, art critic Linda Ferber showed her venom for the American system when she wrote: "This interest was fueled, even during the apprehensive years of the Civil War, by the powerful idea of Manifest Destiny. The prevalent belief that Americans were divinely ordained masters of the continent lent special significance to Bierstadt's choice of subjects. The direct correlation between the imagery of his "Great Pictures" and the promise of Manifest Destiny was amply demonstrated by the rhetoric these paintings stimulated. Bierstadt's own pamphlet for *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* concluded with the hope that, upon the painting's foreground plain, 'a city, populated by our descendants, may rise, and in its art galleries this picture may eventually find a resting place.' The Leader expressed the opinion that 'He who lays his ear to the wild grass may perhaps hear the distant tramp, not of the buffaloes, but of civilization, coming like an army with banners.'" (Linda S. Ferber, *Albert Bierstadt Art & Enterprise*, The Brooklyn Museum, 1990, p. 25.) Then, Ferber is outraged by the fact that, in 1867, a local newspaper had endorsed *The Domes of the Yosemite* by announcing: "We recommend our readers to go at once and see the work. They will feel that the world is progressing and the Americans are a great people."

Then, came the British-French "alliance cordiale" against Bierstadt: the promoter of the French Barbizon landscape movement, the Fontainebleau precursor of the French Impressionists movement, James Jackson Jarves, and the fanatical British Pre-Raphaelite, Clarence Cook. Their collaborative objective was to destroy the Dusseldorf School and the Hudson River School together. In 1864, Jarves wrote about the German academy: "The Dusseldorf school is a millstone around our necks." And against Bierstadt: "Bold and effective speculations in art on principles of trade, [but] emotionless and soulless." (Quoted by Linda Ferber, in *Op. Cit.*, p. 33.) Another vicious critic of Bierstadt, who followed the British lead against Germany, was Samuel G. W. Benjamin, and who also made the case against the Dusseldorf school, complained that Bierstadt could have been a

great artist if only “he had not grafted on the sensationalism of Dusseldorf a greater ambition for notoriety and money than for success in pure art.”

As for the fanatical Ruskinian leader of the American Pre-Raphaelites, Clarence Cook, he attacked more than Bierstadt and the Dusseldorf Academy, he blasted Germany as a nation by saying that it was: “an arid waste, where Art lives only as the expression of a rigorous science without life, without sentiment.” What Cook hated about Bierstadt’s *The Rocky Mountains, Lander’s Peak*, was that “So great a charm have mere grandeur of landscape...[and] the word ‘the West’ – to the mass of our people, especially to the young, that this picture must have been run after and praised...[...] We must still regard this work as immature, and on too pretentious a scale. The ambition of our young artists is leading them to attempt impossibilities.” (In Ferber, Op. Cit., p. 29.) Well! Well! Well! Here you have it! As Lyn once put it: “If it is not impossible to do, then, it is probably not worth attempting!”

Even inside the government there were those who did not wish to see the large-scale ideas of Bierstadt exhibited. Great ideas, impossible ideas might even infect some of the younger congressmen and lead them to think bigger than they should. You would not want this to happen, would you? Near the end of 1866, Schuyler Colfax, later to become the vice-president of President Ulysses Grant, proposed a government project to Bierstadt for the commission of two paintings of the Rocky Mountains and of the Yosemite Valley for the chamber of the House of Representatives’ Committee on the Library. Bierstadt accepted the commission, but by February 13 1867, a political operation was put together and forced the appropriation for the project to be cancelled.

It was Andreas Achenbach’s school that *The Albion* America haters had attacked. It stated: “We cannot aver that there is much idealization, or what is called the poetry of nature, in this remarkable picture –for that it certainly is. The hard truth is given here, though, with wonderful skill – only it has too much of the hardness of the school in which the painter once studied.” (*The Albion*, May 11, 1867.)

In his Autobiography, the original teacher of Bierstadt, Worthington Whittredge, made the point very succinctly and correctly about Ruskin. “It cannot be denied that a great deal of the work done and exhibited was of a very mediocre kind. The study of nature proved to be too strong meat for all the babes to digest. They never got beyond a literal transcript. Ruskin, in his “Modern Painters” just out then and in every landscape painter’s hand, had told these tyros nothing could be too literal in the way of studies, and many of them believed Ruskin. The consequence was that many of them made carefully painted studies of the most commonplace subjects without the slightest choice of invention, and exhibited them as pictures. It did not require a very shrewd critic to overhaul such work as this. But in the ranks were also creative men who were inspired by the ever changing aspects of nature and grasped its fleeting effects, and if the study of the time was too much towards the merely literal, as it undoubtedly was, it was nevertheless sinning on the right side.” (Whittredge, Op. Cit., p. 55.)

Ruskin had advocated a strict Aristotelian code of naturalism in painting leaving out any room for ideas. He wrote: “The highest art is that which seizes this specific character, which assigns to it its proper position in the landscape.... Every class of rock, every kind of earth, every form of cloud, must be studied with equal industry, and rendered with equal precision.” (John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Intro. to Vol. III (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1847), p. xxxiii.)

Just to make clear the difference in perspective, see how Whittredge identified the method of artistic discovery with respect to his friend and associate of the Hudson River School, Sanford R. Gifford. Whittredge said: “If I remember rightly, he [Gifford] said in general terms that no historical or legendary interest attached to landscape could help the landscape painter, that he must go behind all this to nature as it had been formed by the Creator and find something there which was superior to man’s work, and to this he must learn to give intelligible expression.” (Whittredge, *Op. Cit.*, p. 56.)

5. THE DEMISE OF BIERSTADT AT THE 1876 PHILADELPHIA CENTENIAL EXPOSITION.

The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition was a milestone in the success of Manifest Destiny, especially the railroad development permitting the developments of the entire continental range, for sea to sea. However, it was a disaster for the Indians and for Bierstadt. After realizing that the attacks of the Ruskinian and Pre-Raphaelites had failed in destroying the reputation of Bierstadt, the British imperialist forces concentrated all of their efforts on giving Bierstadt the coup de grace at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.

In fact, the two most popular and dynamic artists of the Hudson River School, Frederic Church and Albert Bierstadt, were targeted simultaneously. The British Free Traders of the Century Club recruited one of the younger artists of the Hudson River School, John Ferguson Weir, who had worked with Bierstadt and others at the Tenth Street Studio in New York City. Weir viciously attacked Bierstadt by issuing an unusually nasty criticism that stigmatized Bierstadt in the official report of the Philadelphia Centennial. He wrote: “The earlier works of the artist showed a vigorous, manly style of art that had its undeniable attraction. His pictures exhibited at Philadelphia indicate a lapse into sensational and meretricious effects, and a lost of true artistic aim. They are vast illustrations of scenery, carelessly and crudely executed, and we fail to discover in them the merits which rendered his earlier works conspicuous.” (John F. Weir, *Painting and Sculpture*. In *International Exhibition, 1876, Reports and Awards*, vol. 5, pp. 2-45, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1877.)

As a direct result of this attack, Bierstadt’s works were rejected two years later, at the 1878 Paris Exposition. The rejection had been organized by another American artist and lawyer, David Maitland Armstrong, director of the American section of the Art

Department at the Paris Expo. Armstrong sent a note warning the Paris organizer of the Exposition, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, not to accept the Bierstadt entry. The note said: “Bierstadt offered a picture here which was declined. He has sent it to Paris & will try to get it in there. This Committee here to head him off passed a resolution that no picture offered here should be considered by the Committee in Paris –Look out for him. He should not get it in but do not let it be known, as we do not wish to make a martyr of Bierstadt.” (Armstrong letter to Saint-Gaudens, March 20, 1878. From Linda S. Ferber, *Op Cit*, p. 59.)

A similar operation was orchestrated against Church. Bierstadt hater, Linda Ferber also stressed how Church was targeted. She reported: “The Journal of Philadelphia artist Russell Smith (1812-1896) echoed John Ferguson Weir’s disappointment in Bierstadt’s Centennial pictures and extended the criticism to Church, the other landscape star of the 1860’s: ‘When Church exhibited his Niagra (sic) and ‘The Heart of the Andes’ and Bierstadt his ‘Rocky Mountain Storm’ I thought that they were princely painters, and it would be very hard for anyone in my day to surpass them. But, from failing powers, wealth and ease, or other cause, they both are much behind in this exhibition. Although the canvases are large, and subjects grand [,] ‘Chimborazo’ and others, a Rocky mountain peak and lake, they are overwrought, heavy and dead...I wish they had both held their rank as formerly.” (Linda Ferber, *Op. Cit.*, p.33.)

Then, the ultimate insult was proffered by a third artist, Earl Shinn (Edward Strahan) who was the American publisher of The Chefs-d'oeuvre d'art of the International exhibition, 1876 of the Centennial exhibition in Paris. He summarized his hatred of Church and Bierstadt. He wrote that Bierstadt and Church embodied “the taste for panoramic art in this country, now gone entirely out of fashion among the lovers of refinement and technique. It is only fair to remind ourselves that [Church and Bierstadt] secure for us memoranda of the really great and stupendous scenes of nature...Mr. Bierstadt may be considered as a convenience enabling us to pay a visit to a region we would not take the pains to travel to...” (Earl Shinn, *The Art Treasures of America (1880)*.) Thus, by the 1880’s, the artistic component of the Manifest Destiny strategy had been buried by a French-Brutish alliance against the patriotic American landscape artists of the Hudson River School.

The Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 had been the decisive turning point for the American school of classical artistic composition represented especially by the nationalist heritage of Bierstadt, Leutze, Church, Whittredge, and Gifford. The French Barbizon School and the British Pre-Raphaelite had subverted the American ideal of Manifest Destiny and had trampled on the unifying ideals and principles of the Dusseldorf-American tradition of patriotic vigor. The purpose of the enemy was to keep separate from one another the artistic progress and the technological progress. Given all of this British hatred of a great American artist, there may have been another reason why the British wanted Bierstadt out of the way.

6. THE LAST OF THE BUFFALO “BRINGING FRESH AIR INTO PARIS!”

In 1887, none of the twelve paintings that Bierstadt had entered in the American Exhibition in London were sold. This was the first international confirmation that the operation against him at Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876 had succeeded. The second confirmation would come from Paris in 1889. During the mid 1880's, high-ranking Canadian officials also rejected large paintings of scenes that Bierstadt had made along the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1888, Bierstadt finished his last large western painting, *The Last of the Buffalo*, and was making plans to enter it into the Paris Centennial 1889 exhibition.

The painting was first rejected by the American jury committee in New York. Refusing to accept the verdict of the committee, Bierstadt sent his painting to Paris to be exhibited at the Salon as opposed to the Centennial Exhibition.

Even the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* was outraged at the fact that the most representative artist of the American School had been rejected without cause at the Centennial Paris Exposition. *Le Monde* identified the American jury that had rejected Bierstadt's entry as “pigmies of the pigment” who were “servile imitators of French fads,” who reproduced “French subjects, handled in French fashion with French brushes and French paint.” (*Le Monde* undated clipping, 1889, Bierstadt Scrapbook, Edwards collection.) Among the Bierstadt haters was the American sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, from the French Fontainebleau Barbizon School who became famous for his pin up weathervane figure of Diana on top of the Original Square Gardens in 1891. It was Saint-Gaudens who made sure the Bierstadt painting would not enter the Paris exhibition.



Albert Bierstadt, *The Last of the Buffalo*, 1888.

The Last of the Buffalo was in homage to the Indian people of America, which was recognized in Paris as such by the Indians themselves! A non-identified newspaper clipping in the Bierstadt archives showed that even though the painting had been rejected at the Paris 1889 Exposition, it was nonetheless included in the Paris Salon where Chief Rocky Bear and fellow Indians, who had come to Paris as performers in the Wild Bill Cody Wild West show, manifested their enthusiasm in visiting the Bierstadt painting. The Newspaper clipping stated: “These men of the plains leave their tents in the Cody camp each morning to come and breath the air – as they put it – of their native soil; and their grunt of satisfaction after a silent hour of contemplation should be a joy to the painter’s soul, for it is a recognition of the truth of the scene and is eloquent to its sentiment and poetry.” (*Le Monde* undated and unidentified clipping, 1889, Bierstadt Scrapbook, Edwards collection.)

The tragedy, however, is that by 1889, not only had the buffalos been nearly exterminated by American hunters, but the remaining few American Indians that were still alive had been locked up in their concentration camp-type reservations and had not hunted the buffalo for food during a decade or more. The wholesale killing of the buffalo had begun in the 1870’s for free-market entrepreneurs. Moreover, since the buffalo was the primary food source for the Plains Indians, killing the buffalo was an assured way of also culling the Indian population. By the mid 1880’s, the slaughter of the buffalo herds was such that the number of still grazing buffalos in the great American plains had been reduced to a few hundreds. Records show that the species was nearly extinct by 1886.

In 1888, at the same time that Bierstadt was painting his *Last of the Buffalo*, William T. Hornaday, chief taxidermist for the Smithsonian Institute who saved the Buffalo from complete extinction, commissioned Washington artist, James Henry Moser, to paint two murals showing who was responsible for the true extermination of the buffalo. One of his paintings, entitled *Where the Millions Have Gone*, showed a Montana plain littered with buffalo bones. The other painting, entitled *The Still Hunt*, was the tragic counterpart to Bierstadt's painting and may even have been done with the full knowledge and agreement of Bierstadt.



Figure 73

James Henry Moser. *The Still Hunt*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (116.2 × 156.2 cm). Jefferson National Expansion Memorial/National Park Service, Saint Louis.



Figure 74

James Henry Moser. *Where the Millions Have Gone*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (116.2 × 156.2 cm). Jefferson National Expansion Memorial/National Park Service, Saint Louis.

Figure 4. James Henry Moser, *The Still Hunt* and *Where the Millions have gone*, 1888.

What Moser showed was how a single hidden hunter with a powerful rifle and a lot of ammunition, was able to kill hundreds of buffalos by merely moving the barrel sight of his rifle a few centimeters at a time. This was the most destructive method of eliminating the buffalo because the death of one buffalo did not frighten the others away. A hunter remaining hidden and stationary could kill as many animals as he wished without alarming the herd. In January of 1889, when Bierstadt's *Last of the Buffalo* was exhibited for the first time in New York, an art critic, Edmund Clarence Stedman noted that Bierstadt had executed his painting as an outcry against the method of still-hunting represented by Moser. As Bierstadt was finishing his painting, the news was circulating that Plains Indians had begun to wear "ghosts shirts" and were performing "ghost dances" in the hope of bringing back the buffalo and their cultural heritage, which had been destroyed. It is, therefore, not accidental that Bierstadt's masterpiece was celebrating how both the Indian and the Buffalo, locked in mortal combat, had become nearly exterminated together by the same British free-trade forces.

The Indians who visited daily with this painting in Paris, outside of the premises of the Centennial Exposition of 1889, did not miss this irony of Bierstadt who painted half a dozen Indian hunters with their traditional lance, bows, and arrows, as being responsible for the disappearance of the Buffalo from the Western plains of America. The joke was proportionate to the statement of the old Indian Chief who remarked about Bierstadt making portraits of Indians in 1859 that he "had killed more of the Sioux tribe than any man who had ever been among them!" Nancy Anderson did not fail to note the final irony of the matter when she reported: "Unless the question is posed by the pointed contradiction between the title and the image –What is the meaning of "Last of the Buffalo" when thousands of buffalo are visible in the picture? – is addressed, the force of the painting is lost. The bitter irony of the answer lies in the fact that, at the time Bierstadt painted his picture, the possibility that the "last of the buffalo" might be those depicted on his canvas was very real." (Nancy Anderson, Op. Cit., p. 103.)

According to the June 3, 1890 *Evening Star* of Washington D.C., *Last of the Buffalo* was sold to an English Nitrate Industrialist, John Thomas North, for \$50,000. A newspaper article reported that such a purchase, "without parallel in the annals of American Art, may be regarded as a tribute to the magnificent conception of the artist and as a condemnation of the New York Committee which took upon itself to refuse a place to this truly National masterpiece." (Quoted by Linda Ferber, Op. Cit., p. 64.)

7. WAS BIERSTADT AN AGENT FOR U.S. MILITARY INTELLIGENCE?

In early July 1871, just before leaving New York for San Francisco, Bierstadt took a very surprising initiative. He wrote to General William Tecumseh Sherman, to propose organizing a buffalo hunt for the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia who was planning to visit California in July and the East Coast in October of 1871. The reader should remember that the Russian Imperial Court had been allied with the Lincoln presidency during the Civil War, and had signed a Pact of Armed Neutrality with the United States.

As I will report further below, Bierstadt had been involved in a number of political and strategic interests with the U.S. Military throughout his career. However the following Bierstadt note to General Sherman is quite fascinating:

“I am off for the far west in a few days, and part of my object in writing you is to ask for the letters which you so kindly offered me, to the commanders of posts on the plains. You are doubtless aware that the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia is to be here in October, and I have learned that he is quite anxious of witnessing a Buffalo Hunt. As his visit partakes of a somewhat national character, would it not be well to give him one on a grand scale, with Indians included, as a rare piece of American hospitality?

“If a large body of Indians could be brought together at that time, say the latter part of October, the performance of some of their dances and other ceremonials would be most interesting to our Russian guests. This would probably be the only way to give them a correct idea of Red America. Some of the best Indian hunters might go with the party on the buffalo hunt, to show the aboriginal style of “going for large game.” The herd could be driven up at the proper time within reaching distance of the railroad.

“It would add very much to the happiness and well being of our guests if you could find time to accompany them in person. In default of that it might accord with your views to delegate some officer of rank, as Sheridan for instance, in your place. This visit of the Grand Duke should be made a matter of no ordinary attention, as it has clearly a more important meaning than the mere pleasure trip of a Prince.” (Bierstadt letter to Sherman, July 3, 1871, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

What is most interesting about this letter is not so much the reference to the Grand Duke of Russia, but its tone of familiarity with General Sherman, who, after all was the commanding General of the U.S Army at the time. The fact that Bierstadt suggested to Sherman that he take some time off, or send Sheridan, in order to entertain the Grand Duke Alexis indicates that Bierstadt must have had some sort of significant personal function as Military Intelligence.

Bierstadt also wrote a similar letter to the Secretary of War who replied: “There will be no difficulty in procuring for the Grand Duke all the amusement of that nature which can be desired.” (W.W. Belknap letter to Bierstadt, August 7, 1871.)

In 1871, Bierstadt left San Francisco for a few weeks in order to arrange personally the visit of Alexis on the East Coast. He organized the buffalo hunt, he was a member of the reception committee that prepared the North River Pier docking of Alexis, in New York City, and he organized one of the two balls to celebrate the grand duke’s visit to New York. Bierstadt’s ball organizing committee reads like a Who’s Who in the mixed bag of the British free trade, the Wall Street crowd, and American Railroad builders; notably, W. H. Aspinwall, imperialist builder of the Pacific Railroad and Steamship Company, E.W. Stoughton, a former American Ambassador to Russia and an attorney for President Rutherford B. Hayes, Henry Clews, a Wall Street financier and partner with Democratic Party scoundrel, August Belmont. His presentation committee

included C.P. Huntington, a close friend from the West Coast and builder of the Central Pacific Railway, William Cullen Bryant, the most renowned American Poet of the period and one of the top leaders of the World's Free Trade political movement, and John Jacob Astor Jr., the son of the richest man in America who made his fortune in the fur trade and who had both legs in the two factions of Manifest Destiny. Bierstadt had all of the wrong business contacts but all of the right military connections.

General Philip Sheridan was effectively deployed by Sherman to organize the Bierstadt buffalo hunt and, consequently, hired Buffalo Bill Cody who, himself, arranged to have Chief Spotted Tail to rally a thousand Indians into what became known as "Camp Alexis" at Willow Creek just south of North Platte. Sheridan wrote to Bierstadt: "If His Royal Highness desires the Buffalo hunt I will place myself at his service and can take him to large herds south of McPherson on the Union Pacific R Road, say from fifty to sixty or seventy miles. Spotted Tail's band of Sioux Indians & Whistlers band are in the neighborhood & I can give them such inducements as will cause them to join us at least I think so." (Sheridan letter to Bierstadt, November 25, 1871.) Alexis arrived at North Platte on January 12 and Buffalo Bill arranged to have the Grand Duke kill his buffalo on his birthday, January 14, 1872. Meanwhile, Bierstadt had not participated in the hunt and was back in San Francisco by January 6, where he spent the winter. The visit of Alexis to the West in July did not materialize.

Bierstadt went back to work in the Yosemite region to do winter scenes. By spring, he had visited some deserted islands off the coast of California where he painted four paintings of California Seal Rocks. He spent most of 1872 in the High Sierras east of Sacramento making more studies. During the time Bierstadt was staying at the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco, he had ample opportunity to mingle with the high military brass, since that hotel was the Head Quarters of both the Army and the Navy on the Pacific coast.

Here is a timeline indicating some of the highlights of Bierstadt's less known connections in the political, Indian, and military fields:

March 20-30, 1858. Bierstadt attends the Washington Art Association meeting to recommend the creation of a congressional committee for the purpose of "procuring and execution of works of Art for national purposes." (*Proceedings of the National Convention of Artists*, Washington D.C., 1858.)

January 3, 1859. Washington Art Association exhibits Bierstadt's European works, Brunnen, Lac Lucerne, and autumn in Westphalia.

April 8, Secretary of War John B. Floyd gives letter of introduction for Bierstadt's trip to the Rocky Mountains on the Wagon Train of Colonel Frederick West Lander.

May 30, At Fort Kearney, Bierstadt meets with Indian Chief, Dog Belly, and obtains the permission to take several stereoscopic portraits of himself and his Indians.

November. Whittredge and Leutze have rented their studios at the Tenth Street Building in New York. Bierstadt joins them in January 1860 and fills his own studio with Indian paraphernalia. He exhibits his first Indian paintings, *Sioux Village*.

February 13, 1860 The Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Washington Art Association opens Bierstadt to the public.

October 15, 1861. General Winfield Scott granted a five-day pass for Leutze and Bierstadt to visit the Union troops and sketch the soldiers for future patriotic paintings. During the same period, Albert's brother, Edward Bierstadt who became famous for his stereographic picture of President Lincoln, is given permission to take pictures of soldiers. The photographs will be used for Bierstadt to produce his *Guerrilla Warfare (Picket Duty in Virginia)*.

March 31, 1862. Senator from Massachusetts, Charles Sumner, calls on Bierstadt to discuss a trip to the Rocky Mountains.

April 8, 1862. Bierstadt writes to Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, asking permission to travel west under the protection of the military. Bierstadt recruits artists Louis Agassiz, William H Beard, and Charles Gould, Jr. Bierstadt was also to be accompanied by President Lincoln's Assistant Secretary, John Hay. In his letter to Senator Stanton, Bierstadt stressed that the purpose of the trip is "study the manner and customs of the Indians as well as the scenery." (Letters received by the Secretary of War, National Archives.)

April 27, 1862. After reports of Indian uprisings, the Secretary of War declined to give Bierstadt permission to travel under the protection of an army regiment. Bierstadt wrote to the Secretary of Interior, Caleb Smith, about giving up his trip to the Rockies and inviting him to accompany him on a trip to Fort Randall on the Missouri River. (Register of Letters, Secretary of Interior, National Archives.)

May 5, 1862. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, wrote to Bierstadt does not advise against the trip but recommends he take a steamer from Saint Louis to Fort Randall. (Dole to Bierstadt, May 5, 1862, Outgoing Letters, Department of Interior, National Archives.) Bierstadt postponed his trip to 1863.

May 26, 1863, Bierstadt leaves for California by overland travel. He is accompanied by writer, Fitz Hugh Ludlow and travels with free-rail passes to Atchison Missouri. They will reach California via the Overland Mail Coach by July 17.

August 20, 1863. Bierstadt is drafted for service in the Union Army from New York's 15th Ward

August 22, 1863. Bierstadt wrote to Lincoln's Under Secretary, John Hay, telling him that he will not be able to join him in a buffalo hunt in the fall as they had planned.

October 26, 1863. Bierstadt paid a commutation fee in New York and is excused from military duty in the Union Army.

April 1-23, 1864. Bierstadt organizes an Indian exhibition with a group of participating Indians at the Metropolitan Fair for the U.S. Sanitary Commission in New York City.

April 9, 1864. Surrender of General Robert E. Lee to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, marking the end of the Civil War.

April 16, 1864. Bierstadt is given permission by the U. S. Sanitary Commission to extend his Indian Exhibition performing at the fair. Bierstadt became the director of the "Indian Department" at the Metropolitan Fair of New York. His paintings were exhibited at the Fair for the benefit of the Sanitary Fund, the precursor of the Red Cross. His Indian Department was also the precursor of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows of the 1880's.

June 30, 1864. President Lincoln signed a bill declaring the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Red Wood grove as state parks. (Designated a national park in 1890.)

April 14, 1865. The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak is exhibited in Washington D.C. before being exhibited to Chicago, and then sent to England where it was sold for \$25,000.

May 30, 1865. The Northwestern Sanitary Fair opens in Chicago with Bierstadt's Lander's Peak as the showpiece.

February 6-24, 1866. Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie is on exhibit for the benefit of the New York Nursery and Child's Hospital. At 25 cents per visitor, the exhibit has brought the Child's Hospital a total of \$2,200 in 4 weeks; the best day taking in \$250. Congressman from Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes (soon to become the 19th President of the United States) wrote to his uncle: "With a party, Generals Schenck, Crook, Smith, and their ladies, I went to see the picture of "The Storm in the Rocky Mountains" by Bierstadt. It is very beautiful and wonderful. By gas light the effect is incomprehensible, such brilliancy and light and shade! Mr. Bierstadt says it is better by daylight. I shall see." (Charles Richard Williams, Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes.)

January 21, 1867. House of Representatives authorizes a contract with Bierstadt for two large panels paintings for the chamber of the House of Representatives.

March 13, 1867. House of Representatives Joint Committee on the Library instructs that no appropriation will be given for Bierstadt's two paintings for the House Chamber. Bierstadt replies on March 18 that he is willing to bring his price of \$80,000 down to \$60,000 for the two paintings.

Late December 1867. *Rocky Mountain, Lander's Peak* and *Storm over the Rocky Mountains, Mt. Rosalie*, were presented before Queen Victoria and the royal family at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. Bierstadt was also personally invited to have lunch with the Queen for the occasion. The American, charge d'affaires, Benjamin Moran, had organized Bierstadt's audience with Queen Victoria.

January 16, 1868. The worldwide crew of art critics working for British Intelligence was put on alert. The London *Morning Post* sounded the alarm in a single sentence about Bierstadt's *Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*: "It is Fenimore Cooper upon canvas."

April 7, 1868. The British offensive against Bierstadt begins. The *Manchester Guardian* launched a vicious attack against Bierstadt's *The Domes of the Yosemite*, on exhibit in London. The critic stated: "In my judgment, it is wanting in all the attributes of high art, being simply an ambitious attempt to give gigantic effects without the least power of bringing conviction to the mind of the on-looker." The ranking critic for the *Saturday Review*, who might have won a prize if he had been present at the Queen Victoria meeting with Bierstadt, commented in a perfect British accent: "He is a servant of nature rather than a master of Art; and though this is a noble kind of servitude, there must always be a difference in rank between artists who, like Bierstadt, derive their force from an enthusiasm for natural grandeur and those who are mighty by their own grandeur. When we stand before a picture like this, it is not the art which moves us, but the sublimity of the natural objects in such a way as to affect us powerfully by art; but so far as this picture affects us at all, it is by a transmitted natural glory only." Hum, Hum! It is merely a matter of knowing your rank, you know!

July 9, 1868. Bierstadt holds a dinner at the Langham Hotel in London in honor of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The guests included a number of members of Parliament in addition to Robert Browning, Edwin Landseer, and the Duke of Argyll. Among the Americans, there were, William Gladstone, Cyrus Field, Admiral Farragut, Moran (the charge d'affaires who had arranged a Victoria interview for Bierstadt), Charles Mackay, and Parke Godwin.

July 15, 1868. The Prince of Wales, Lord Lorne, later duke of Argyll, and his wife, Princess Louise, fourth daughter of Queen Victoria granted Bierstadt an interview on the subject of the political differences between the British Empire and the American system. (*Art Journal*, London, August 1868, p.159.) This is the same London *Art Journal* that later published, in May 1870, the diatribe of James Jackson Jarves in which he described Bierstadt as a "pretentious realist." Qui se ressemble s'assemble!

May 10, 1869. The first intercontinental railway line is established across the United States. Union Pacific and Central Pacific are connected at Promontory, Utah.

July 26, 1869. Louis-Napoleon presents Bierstadt with the Legion d'Honneur in Paris.

May 1810, James Jackson Jarves joins the British effort in slandering Bierstadt in the London Art-Journal.

April 13, 1871. Bierstadt wrote to General John Adams Dix to propose arrangements for the visit to the United States of Grand Duke Alexis of Russia.

. June 7, 1871. An official of the Northern Pacific Railroad, A. B. Nettleton, approached F. V. Hayden, director of the United States Geological and Geographical survey of the Territories to propose Bierstadt as the resident artist during his survey of Yellowstone. A week later, it was scenery artist Thomas Moran who was chosen to join the party instead.

July 3, 1871. Bierstadt wrote a letter to General William T. Sherman asking him for letters of introduction and inviting him to be of assistance in arranging a Buffalo hunt for the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia.

August 1, 1871. Bierstadt accompanies the Central Pacific Railroad director, Collis P. Huntington to San Francisco and visited the camp of Col. Von Schmidt near Lake Tahoe. Colonel Von Schmidt was the engineer who in 1764 had planned to incorporate San Francisco Water Works Company with Lake Tahoe in order to break the monopoly of Spring Valley by bringing water to the coast from the mountain lake, a distance of 163 miles, thus creating what the *Daily Alta California* said would “throw into shade all similar works of either ancient or modern times, in the old or the new world.” Von Schmidt called his great project “the grandest aqueduct in the world.” According to a contemporary die in the wool environmentalist, Gray Brechin, the aqueduct would have provided an inexhaustible source of water to supply agriculture, mining, and industrial manufacturing, and San Francisco would have secured 20 million gallons per day, that is four times more than Spring Valley was producing. The project was politically sabotaged and accused of wanting to despoil “the jewel of the Sierra.”(Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power Earthly Ruin*, University of California Press, 2006, p. 78.)

September 18, 1871. Bierstadt returns to New York to take part of the Committee appointed to receive the Grand Duke Alexis in New York. General Sherman and Sheridan are making the preparations for a government-sponsored buffalo hunt for the Russian dignitary. During the American Civil War, Russia had signed a Treaty of Armed Neutrality with the United States.

November 20, 1871. The Grand Duke Alexis arrived at New York. Bierstadt is among the dignitaries on the reception committee.

November 25. General Philippe Sheridan confirms to Bierstadt that he will be in charge of the buffalo hunt for the Grand Duke Alexis.

November 29, Ball and reception for the Grand Duke. Bierstadt is on the organizing committee.

December 8, 1871. Bierstadt wrote to Rutherford B. Hayes to tell him that he will be off for the West next year.

March 23, 1872. Bierstadt received the cross of the Order of St. Stanislaus from the Emperor of Russia in recognition for his attentions to the Grand Duke Alexis. The New York Times claims that his decoration was presented to him “in recognition of his merits as an artist.” It is reported that the Czar had bought a painting from Bierstadt.

August 14, 1872. Bierstadt joined the party of Geologist Clarence King in the South Sierra. They traveled the Sierra together until their return to San Francisco on October 19. November 9, 1872. Bierstadt is commissioned by Railroad builder, Collis P. Huntington to paint *Donner Lake From the Summit*.

September 25, 1874. Reportedly, Bierstadt is working on a “historical painting” for the Washington D.C. Capitol.

March 3, 1875. Congress authorizes the purchase of Bierstadt’s *Discovery of the Hudson River* for the Capitol.

January 25, 1876. Bierstadt met with the Earl of Dunraven at Brevoort House in New York City. In 1872, the Earl of Dunraven, otherwise known as Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, was an Irish nobleman who had acquired land by spurious means and created for himself and his beautiful people a British styled feudal hunting estate in Estes Park in the Rocky Mountains. By 1886, the Earl had been chased out of the region by legitimate American homesteaders.

February 23, The Bierstadts attend a Grand Ball at Rideau Hall, the residence of the Governor General of Canada, in Ottawa, as a guest of the governor general, Frederick Temple Blackwood, Lord Dufferin. Dufferin had been the advocate of emigration of the Irish people as a solution to the famine problem of 1847 and later became Viceroy of India. Lord and Lady Dufferin inaugurated the trans-Canadian railway in Alberta when they drove the first pike in the line that became the Canadian Pacific Railway in September 1877.

May 10, 1876. Opening of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Bierstadt exhibits four of his Rocky Mountain paintings.

December 23, 1876. Bierstadt and the Earl of Dunraven returned from a moose hunt in Canada and travel to Estes Park for the Christmas period.

January 2, 1877. Bierstadt is traveling and sketching with the Earl of Dunraven in Colorado. Dunraven buys Bierstadt’s painting, *Estes Park, Colorado*, for \$15,000.

February 5, 1878, According to a letter from Webb Hayes to President Hayes, “Bierstadt traveled to Ottawa with Lord Dufferin, President Hay’s son (Webb) and

several others aboard Cornelius Vanderbilt's private railroad car." Montreal Gazette reports that the same group is in Montreal on February 12.

February 27 - March 1, 1878. Bierstadt is invited for three days at the White House. He attends a state dinner with President Hayes on February 28.

January 23, 1879. Bierstadt is at the Villa Marie Philippine in Cannes, France.

April 3, 1880. Bierstadt gives a dinner reception for the Earl of Dunmore at the Brevoort House in New York City. Other guests include Mayor Edward Cooper and Chief Justice Charles P. Daly.

April 10, 1880. Bierstadt receives an order from the Czar of Russia for a picture of Niagara Falls to be completed by the following September.

May 13, 1880. Bierstadt visits the new governor general of Canada, Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise, forth daughter of Queen Victoria, in Ottawa.

June 18, 1880. Bierstadt invites Presidential candidate James Garfield to have "our new President" come and have his picture taken by his brother Edward.

October 9, 1880. The Bierstadts are invited at the Citadel of Quebec City as the guests of the governor-general, Marquis de Lorne.

January 6, 1881. General Ulysses S. Grant accepts an invitation to join Bierstadt in a dinner at Delmonico's.

June 23, 1881. Bierstadt joins the governor-general of Canada at the Citadel of Quebec City and goes on a fishing trip.

April 1882. Bierstadt sends three of one picture of Yellowstone and two of Canada to President Chester Arthur for the White House.

September 5, 1882. Bierstadt and Princess Louise are making sketches of Niagara Falls with Marquis de Lorne.

February 26, 1883. Bierstadt is promoting a bill in Congress permitting free duty on imported works of art.

March 7, 1883. Bierstadt is in Ottawa, Canada, probably with Marquis de Lorne.

May 10, 1883. Bierstadt is in Ottawa, Canada, probably with Marquis de Lorne.

June 13, 1887. William C. Van Horne, general manager of Canadian Pacific Railway, responds to Bierstadt inquiry about scenery locations along the Canadian Pacific route. Bierstadt will make the trip in 1889. Bierstadt painted Mount Sir Donald, in

honor of the Canadian Donald Alexander Smith who developed the Canadian Pacific Railway.

January 17, 1889. Bierstadt invited General William T. Sherman to his studio in order to evaluate his last large western painting, *The Last of the Buffalo*. The painting was rejected at the Exposition Universelle de Paris, 1889. The arbitrary rejection of such a prominent artist as Bierstadt exposed the American committee as fraudulent, especially since 19 out of the 20 selected paintings had been made by the committee members themselves.

August 10, 1891. Bierstadt visits the Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise at the Royal family palace, Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight.

June 2, 1893. Bierstadt is granted a patent for the design of a railroad car.

November 29, 1893. Bierstadt writes to President Grover Cleveland advocating the removal of tariffs on works of art.

January 26, 1898. A series of three letters from the secretary to President William McKinley, John Adams Porter, acknowledges receipt of Bierstadt's letter concerning the appointment of Colonel Chaille-Long in connection with the Paris 1900 Exhibition.

February-March, 1899. Bierstadt writes to President McKinley and Secretary of State John Hay recommending the purchase of a chateau on the Greek Island of Corfu to be offered as a gift for Queen Victoria.

February 18, 1902. Bierstadt dies of a heart attack in New York City, at age seventy two.

Art historian, Gordon Hendricks, wrote: "Constantly, Bierstadt was involved in projects political and economic, far from the purpose of art. Reading in the paper that it had been proposed at a Cabinet meeting that government buildings should be built as near as possible to navigable waters so that they could be defended by gunboats against invasion, riots, etc., the artist proposed a canal – to be called the Hayes Canal, for the newly elected president – between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario." (Gordon Hendricks, *Op. Cit.*, p. 254.) In 1888, Bierstadt had also brokered gun sales with President Cleveland, introducing the inventor of a new gun, Henry Schulhof, to the President.

After returning from his 1896 trip to Europe, Bierstadt began to promote the scientific work of Charles Sanders Pierce, the mathematician-philosopher, especially his acetylene invention. He tried to sell the idea to European, even to the Russians, but without success. In 1897 he succeeded in selling the idea to an Englishman.

Hendricks mentions a few more political interventions that Bierstadt made, which suggests that he was significantly involved in some sort of intelligence operation between the United States and Great Britain. Hendricks wrote: "In July, 1897, from Switzerland,

Bierstadt was still trying to promote the Schulhof gun, and wrote McKinley about it; in January, 1898, he interceded with the president for a friend who wanted an appointment at the Paris 1900 Exposition; in July 1898, he sent the president a newspaper clipping from Bar Harbor, where he was staying; and the following month, he sent simply “good wishes” from West End, New Jersey. In 1899, he tried to persuade the government, through the good offices of John Hay, the secretary of state, to buy an area on the Island of Corfu and its castle, Achillon, lately owned by the empress of Austria. The artist thought that if the United States owned it, it could be offered to Queen Victoria for her regular three-month spring outing, “and when the heads of two great nations come together, it means peace.” Victoria regularly went to the south of France, but since there was then hostility between France and England, the Queen might be exposed to embarrassment. She could go through Germany to Corfu and could bypass France. The artist had previously written McKinley himself, suggesting the use of the island as a naval base; evidently getting nowhere with the president, he decided to contact the secretary of state. But the United States did not act, and Victoria was deprived of her projected American hospitality.” (Gordon Hendricks, *Op. Cit.*, p. 317.)

This “Oh! By the way...” note of Hendricks is very interesting and indicates that Bierstadt was acting in some sort of personal intermediary capacity between the United States government and the royal crown of Great Britain. Given the fact that this 1899 intervention occurred immediately after the false Fashoda conflict of 1898, where an “alliance cordiale” was actually established between France and Great Britain; and given the fact there was also a great chill and upset between Great Britain and Germany over the German Berlin to Baghdad railway project, it is not unlikely that all of the intelligence operatives of the art community would have all hands on deck. Not to mention that soon after, a British agent will assassinate President McKinley.

At any rate, Bierstadt was very well connected and acquainted with the Royal household of Great Britain since he had been, for several years, in close relationship with the governor general of Canada (1878-1883), the Marquis of Lorne, later duke of Argyll, and his wife, Princess Louise, fourth daughter of Queen Victoria. Lake Louise, in the Alberta Rocky Mountains was named after her. This is the only time that Canada had royalty at Rideau Hall. Princess Louise was said to have been an accomplished painter and sculptor. Bierstadt and the Lornes were very close friends and spent lots of time together at Rideau Hall in Ottawa as well as at the royal palace on the Isle of Wight.

During his governorship, Lorne became known as the patron of the Arts in Canada, founding the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and the National Gallery of Canada. Bierstadt gave him his rendering of the Chuttes Montmorency near Quebec City. Argyll was later to become Governor and constable at the Windsor castle from 1892 until 1914. Bierstadt probably met the Argylls in England at one of those celebrated dinners that Bierstadt knew how to organize among the rich and the famous. One of his own celebrated dinners was a reception that he gave for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow at the Langham Hotel, London, in 1868.

CONCLUSION.

From his first Great Painting of *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* to *The Last of the Buffalo*, Bierstadt had remained truthful to his mission of producing a historically specific American Art of Manifest Destiny, thus, defining a high point in original American culture. His greatest achievement was to have, in spite of systematic and organized attacks against him, reinvented and transposed to America the sublime principle of the Dusseldorf school of classical artistic composition, which, itself, had been steeped in the science of light and shadow developed by the schools of Rembrandt and Leonardo. From the vantage point of this landscape form, Albert Bierstadt, therefore, truly represented the American continuation of the principle of classical artistic composition of European civilization.

Bierstadt also succeeded in applying, ever so discretely to the canvas, the principle that James Fenimore Cooper had established as a standard for American artists to improve on God's nature. As Cooper put it: "The Greater natural freedom that exists in an ordinary American landscape, and the abundance of detached fragments of wood, often render the views of this country strikingly beautiful, when they are of sufficient extent to conceal the want of finish in the details, which require time and long-continued labor to accomplish. [...] The Rocky Mountains, and the other great ranges in the recent accession of territory, must possess many noble views, especially as one proceeds south; but the accessories are necessarily wanting, for a union of art and nature can alone render scenery perfect." (J. F. Cooper, Op. Cit., p. 54 and 56) It was with the use of such patiently crafted "accessories" that Bierstadt had labored and achieved a perfection that no other American scenery artist had demonstrated to such an extensive degree. It was by wisely mixing on his palette the intended human factor that was missing in the wilderness that Bierstadt found the means by which nature, on a grand scale, could accept the willful intervention of man, that is, by concealing in it a finish that appeared as if nature itself had produced it by some extraordinary unintended coincidence.

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