

Birds Along the Missouri

On March 28, 1843, John James Audubon arrived at St. Louis and began preparations for his long trip up the Missouri River. Cold weather and ice-locked streams delayed his immediate departure. Meanwhile, Audubon busied himself "procuring, arranging, and superintending the necessary objects for the comfort and utility of the party attached to my undertaking."

On April 25th, the rivers of the Upper Mississippi Valley being open and the weather growing warm, Audubon, with his scientific companions and supplies, boarded the steamboat *Omega*, Captain Joseph Sire commanding.

Eleven days later, on May 3, 1843, the *Omega* reached Fort Leavenworth, situated on a fine elevation overlooking the Missouri. Audubon noted a "great number of Parrakeets" and saw several Turkeys on the ground and in the trees. . . "After leaving this place we fairly entered the Indian country on the west side of the river, for the State of Missouri, by the purchase of the Platte River country, continues for about 250 miles [173 miles to the Missouri-Iowa line] further on the east side, where now we see the only settlements. We saw a good number of Indians in the woods and

on the banks, gazing at us as we passed; these are, however, partly civilized, and are miserable enough."

The *Omega* was now approaching the southwestern border of the Territory of Iowa, and, since one of the most detailed accounts of bird life during the entire trip appeared in Audubon's *Journal*, we will pick up his story on May 4 and carry it past the Big Sioux River, which was reached on May 13.

Thursday, May 4. We had constant rain, lightning and thunder last night. This morning, at the dawn of day, the captain and all hands were at work, and succeeded in removing the boat several hundred yards below where she had struck; but unfortunately we got fast again before we could reach deep water, and all the exertions to get off were renewed, and at this moment, almost nine, we have a line fastened to the shore and expect to be afloat in a short time. But I fear that we shall lose most of the day before we leave this shallow, intricate, and dangerous channel.

At ten o'clock we found ourselves in deep water, near the shore on the west side. We at once had the men at work cutting wood, which was principally that of ash-trees of moderate size, which wood was brought on board in great quantities and lengths. Thank Heaven, we are off in a few minutes, and I hope will have better luck. I saw on the shore many "Gopher" hills, in all prob-

ability the same as I have drawn. Bell shot a Gray Squirrel which I believe to be the same as our *Sciurus carolinensis*. Friend Harris shot two or three birds, which we have not yet fully established, and Bell shot one Lincoln's Finch—strange place for it, when it breeds so very far north as Labrador. Caught a Woodpecker, and killed a Catbird, Water-thrush, seventeen Parrakeets, a Yellow Chat, a new Finch, and very curious, two White-throated Finches, one White-crown, a Yellow-rump Warbler, a Gray Squirrel, a Loon, and two Rough-winged Swallows. We saw Cerulean Warblers, Hooded Flycatchers, Kentucky Warblers, Nashville ditto, Blue-winged ditto, Red-eyed and White-eyed Flycatchers, Great-crested and common Pewees, Redstarts, Towhee Buntings, Ferruginous Thrushes, Wood Thrush, Golden-crowned Thrush, Bluegray Flycatcher, Blue-eyed Warbler, Blue Yellow-back, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-White Creepers, Nuthatch, Kingbirds, Red Tanagers, Cardinal Grosbeaks, common House Wren, Blue-winged Teals, Swans, large Blue Herons, Crows, Turkey-buzzards, and a Peregrine Falcon, Red-tailed Hawks, Red-headed, Red-bellied and Golden-winged Woodpeckers, and Partridges. Also, innumerable "Gopher" hills, one Ground-hog, one Rabbit, two Wild Turkeys, one Whippoorwill, one Maryland Yellow-throat, and Swifts. We left the shore with a strong gale of wind, and after having returned

to our proper channel, and rounded the island below our troublesome situation of last night, we were forced to come to under the main shore. Here we killed and saw all that is enumerated above, as well as two nests of the White-headed Eagle. We are now for the night at a wooding-place, where we expect to purchase some fresh provisions, if any there are; and as it is nine o'clock I am off to bed.

May 7, Sunday. Fine weather; Saw several Gray Squirrels and one Black. I am told by one of our pilots, who has killed seven or eight, that they are much larger than *Sciurus macrourus*, that the hair is coarse, that they are clumsy in their motions, and that they are found from the Black Snake Hills to some distance above the Council Bluffs.

We landed to cut wood at eleven, and we went ashore. Harris killed another of the new Finches, a male also; the scarcity of the females goes on, proving how much earlier the males sally forth on their migrations towards the breeding grounds. We saw five Sandhill Cranes, some Goldfinches, Yellowshanks, Tell-tale Godwits, Solitary Snipes, and the woods were filled with House Wrens singing their merry songs. The place, however, was a bad one, for it was a piece of bottom land that had overflowed, and was sadly muddy and sticky. At twelve the bell rang for Harris, Bell, and me to return, which we did at once, as dinner was preparing for the table. Talking of dinner

makes me think of giving you the hours, usually, of our meals. Breakfast at half-past six, dinner at half-past twelve, tea or supper at seven or later as the case may be. We have not taken much wood here; it is ash, but quite green. We saw Orchard Orioles, Bluegray Flycatchers, Great-crested and common Pewees, Mallards, Pileated Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, and Bluebirds; heard a Marsh Wren, saw a Crow, a Wood Thrush, and Water Thrush. Indigo-birds and Parrakeets plentiful. This afternoon we went into the pocket of a sand bar, got aground, and had to back out for almost a mile. We saw an abundance of Ducks, some White Pelicans, and an animal that we guessed was a Skunk. We have run about fifty miles, and therefore have done a good day's journey. We have passed the mouths of several small rivers, and also some very fine prairie land, extending miles towards the hills. It is now nine o'clock, a beautiful night with the moon shining. We have seen several Ravens, and White-headed Eagles on their nests.

May 8, Monday. A beautiful calm day; the country we saw was much the same as that we passed yesterday, and nothing of great importance took place except that at a wooding-place on the very verge of the State of Missouri (the north-west corner) Bell killed a Black Squirrel which friend Bachman has honored with the name of my son John, *Sciurus Audubonii*. We are told that

this species is not uncommon here. It was a good-sized adult male, and Sprague drew an outline of it. Harris shot another specimen of the new Finch. We saw Parrakeets and many small birds, but nothing new or very rare. This evening I wrote a long letter to each house, John Bachman, Gideon B. Smith of Baltimore, and J.W.H. Page of New Bedford, with the hope of having them forwarded from the Council Bluffs.

May 9, Tuesday. Another fine day. After running until eleven o'clock we stopped to cut wood, and two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were shot, a common Bluebird, and a common Northern Titmouse. We saw White Pelicans, Geese, Ducks, etc. One of our trappers cut one of his feet dreadfully with his axe, and Harris, who is now the doctor, attended to it as best he could. This afternoon we reached the famous establishment of Belle Vue where resides the brother of Mr. Sarpy of St. Louis, as well as the Indian Agent, or, as he might be more appropriately called, the Custom House officer. Neither were at home, both away on the Platte River, about 300 miles off. We had a famous pack of rascally Indians awaiting our landing—filthy and half-starved. We landed some cargo for the establishment, and I saw a trick of the trade which made me laugh. Eight cords of wood were paid for with five tin cups of sugar and three of coffee—value at St. Louis about twenty-five cents. We have seen a Fish Hawk, Savannah

Finch, Green-backed Swallows, Rough-winged Swallows, Martins, Parrakeets, Black-winged Gulls, Blackbirds, and Cow-birds; I will repeat that the woods are fairly alive with the House Wrens. Blue Herons, *Emberiza pallida*—Clay-colored Bunting of Swainson—Henslow's Bunting, Crow Blackbirds; and, more strange than all, two large cakes of ice were seen by our pilots and ourselves. I am very much fatigued and will finish the account of this day to-morrow. At Belle Vue we found the brother-in-law of old Provost, who acts as clerk in the absence of Mr. Sarpy. The store is no great affair, and yet I am told that they drive a good trade with Indians on the Platte River, and others, on this side of the Missouri. We unloaded some freight, and pushed off. We saw here the first ploughing of the ground we have observed since we left the lower settlements near St. Louis. We very soon reached the post of Fort Croghan, so called after my old friend of that name with whom I hunted Raccoons on his father's plantation in Kentucky some thirty-eight years ago, and whose father and my own were well acquainted, and fought together in conjunction with George Washington and Lafayette, during the Revolutionary War, against "Merrie England." Here we found only a few soldiers, dragoons; their camp and officers having been forced to move across the prairie to the Bluffs, five miles. After we had put out some freight for the sutler,

we proceeded on until we stopped for the night a few miles above, on the same side of the river. The soldiers assured us that their parade ground, and so-called barracks, had been four feet under water, and we saw fair and sufficient evidence of this. At this place our pilot saw the first Yellow-headed Troupial we have met with. We landed for the night under trees covered by muddy deposits from the great overflow of this season. I slept soundly, and have this morning, May 10, written this.

May 10, Wednesday. The morning was fine, and we were under way at daylight; but a party of dragoons, headed by a lieutenant, had left their camp four miles distant from our anchorage at the same time, and reached the shore before we had proceeded far; they fired a couple of rifle shots ahead of us, and we brought to at once. The young officer came on board, and presented a letter from his commander, Captain Burgwin, from which we found that we had to have our cargo examined. Our captain was glad of it, and so were we all; for, finding that it would take several hours, we ate our breakfast, and made ready to go ashore. I showed my credentials and orders from the Government, Major Mitchell of St. Louis, etc., and I was therefore immediately settled comfortably. I desired to go to see the commanding officer, and the lieutenant very politely sent us there on horseback, guided by an old dragoon of

considerable respectability. I was mounted on a young white horse, Spanish saddle with holsters, and we proceeded across the prairie towards the Bluffs and the camp. My guide was anxious to take a short cut, and took me across several bayous, one of which was really up to the saddle; but we crossed that, and coming to another we found it so miry, that his horse wheeled after two or three steps, whilst I was looking at him before starting myself; for you all well know that an old traveler is, and must be, prudent. We now had to retrace our steps till we reached the very tracks that the squad sent after us in the morning had taken, and at last we reached the foot of the Bluffs, when my guide asked me if I "could ride at a gallop," to which not answering him, but starting at once at a round run, I neatly passed him ere his horse was well at the pace; on we went, and in a few minutes we entered a beautiful dell or valley, and were in sight of the encampment. We reached this in a trice, and rode between two lines of pitched tents to one at the end, where I dismounted, and met Captain Burgwin, a young man, brought up at West Point, with whom I was on excellent and friendly terms in less time than it has taken me to write this account of our meeting. I showed him my credentials, at which he smiled, and politely assured me that I was too well known throughout our country to need any letters. While seated in front of his tent, I heard the note

of a bird new to me, and as it proceeded from a tree above our heads, I looked up and saw the first Yellow-headed Troupial alive that ever came across my own migrations. The captain thought me probably crazy, as I thought Rafinesque when he was at Henderson; for I suddenly started, shot at the bird, and killed it. Afterwards I shot three more at one shot, but only one female amid hundreds of these Yellow-headed Blackbirds. They are quite abundant here, feeding on the surplus grain that drops from the horses' troughs; they walked under, and around the horses, with as much confidence as if anywhere else. When they rose, they generally flew to the very tops of the tallest trees, and there, swelling their throats, partially spreading their wings and tail, they issue their croaking note, which is a compound, not to be mistaken, between that of the Crow Blackbird and that of the Red-winged Starling. After I had fired at them twice they became quite shy, and all of them flew off to the prairies. I saw then two Magpies in a cage, that had been caught in nooses, by the legs; and their actions, voice, and general looks, assured me as much as ever, that they are the very same species as that found in Europe. Prairie Wolves are extremely abundant hereabouts. They are so daring that they come into the camp both by day and by night; we found their burrows in the banks and in the prairie, and had I come here yesterday I should have had a superb

specimen killed here, but which was devoured by the hogs belonging to the establishment. The captain and the doctor—Madison by name—returned with us to the boat, and we saw many more Yellow-headed Troupials. The high Bluffs back of the prairie are destitute of stones. On my way there I saw abundance of Gopher hills, two Geese paired, two Yellow-crowned Herons, Red-winged Starlings, Cowbirds, common Crow Blackbirds, a great number of Baltimore Orioles, a Swallow-tailed Hawk, Yellow Red-poll Warbler, Field Sparrow, and Chipping Sparrow. Sprague killed another of the beautiful Finch. Robins are very scarce, Parrakeets and Wild Turkeys plentiful. The officers came on board, and we treated them as hospitably as we could; they ate their lunch with us, and are themselves almost destitute of provisions. Last July the captain sent twenty dragoons and as many Indians on a hunt for Buffaloes. During the hunt they killed 51 Buffaloes, 104 Deer, and 10 Elks, within 80 miles of the camp. The Sioux Indians are great enemies of the Potowatomies, and very frequently kill several of the latter in their predatory excursions against them. This kind of warfare has rendered the Potowatomies very cowardly, which is quite a remarkable change from their previous valor and daring. Bell collected six different species of shells, and found a large lump of pumice stone which does float on the water. We left our anchorage (which means

tied to the shore) at twelve o'clock, and about sunset we did pass the real Council Bluffs. Here, however, the bed of the river is utterly changed, though you may yet see that which is now called the Old Missouri. The Bluffs stand, truly speaking, on a beautiful bank almost forty feet above the water, and run off on a rich prairie, to the hills in the background in a gentle slope, that renders the whole place a fine and very remarkable spot. We tied up for the night about three miles above them, and all hands went ashore to cut wood, which begins to be somewhat scarce, of a good quality. Our captain cut and left several cords of green wood for his return trip, at this place; Harris and Bell went on shore, and saw several Bats, and three Turkeys. This afternoon a Deer was seen scampering across the prairies until quite out of sight. Wild gooseberry bushes are very abundant, and the fruit is said to be very good.

May 11, Thursday. We had a night of rain, thunder, and heavy wind from the northeast, and we did not start this morning till seven o'clock, therefore had a late breakfast. There was a bright blood-red streak on the horizon at four o'clock that looked forbidding, but the weather changed as we proceeded, with, however, showers of rain at various intervals during the day. We have now come to a portion of the river more crooked than any we have passed; the shores on both sides are evidently lower, the hills that curtain the distance are fur-

ther from the shores, and the intervening space is mostly prairie, more or less overflowed. We have seen one Wolf on a sandbar, seeking for food, perhaps dead fish. The actions were precisely those of a cur dog with a long tail, and the bellowing sound of the engine did not seem to disturb him. He trotted on parallel to the boat for about one mile, when we landed to cut drift-wood. Bell, Harris, and I went on shore to try to have a shot at him. He was what is called a brindle-colored Wolf, of the common size. One hundred trappers, however, with their axes at work, in a few moments rather stopped his progress, and when he saw us coming, he turned back on his track, and trotted off, but Bell shot a very small load in the air to see the effect it would produce. The fellow took two or three leaps, stopped, looked at us for a moment, and then started on a gentle gallop. When I overtook his tracks they appeared small, and more rounded than usual. I saw several tracks at the same time, therefore more than one had travelled over this great sandy and muddy bar last night, if not this morning. I lost sight of him behind some large piles of drift-wood, and could see him no more. Turkey-buzzards were on the bar, and I thought that I should have found some dead carcass; but on reaching the spot, nothing was there. A fine large Raven passed at one hundred yards from us, but I did not shoot. Bell found a few small shells, and Harris shot a Yellow-rumped

Warbler. We have seen several White Pelicans, Geese, Black-headed Gulls, and Green-backed Swallows, but nothing new. The night is cloudy and intimates more rain. We are fast to a willowed shore, and are preparing lines to try our luck at catching a Catfish or so. I was astonished to find how much stiffened I was this morning, from the exercise I took on horseback yesterday, and think that now it would take me a week, at least, to accustom my body to riding as I was wont to do twenty years ago. The timber is becoming more scarce as we proceed, and I greatly fear that our only opportunities of securing wood will be those afforded us by that drifted on the bars.

May 12, Friday. The morning was foggy, thick, and calm. We passed the river called the *Sioux Pictout*, a small stream formerly abounding with Beavers, Otters, Muskrats, etc., but now quite destitute of any of these creatures. On going along the banks bordering a long and wide prairie, thick with willows and other small brush-wood, we saw four Black-tailed Deer immediately on the bank; they trotted away without appearing to be much alarmed; after a few hundred yards, the two largest, probably males, raised themselves on their hind feet and pawed at each other, after the manner of stallions. They trotted off again, stopping often, but after a while disappeared; we saw them again some hundreds of yards farther on, when, becoming suddenly alarmed, they bounded

off until out of sight. They did not trot or run irregularly as our Virginian Deer does, and their color was of a brownish cast, whilst our common Deer at this season is red. Could we have gone ashore, we might in all probability have killed one or two of them. We stopped to cut wood on the opposite side of the river, where we went on shore, and there saw many tracks of Deer, Elk, Wolves, and Turkeys. In attempting to cross a muddy place to shoot at some Yellow-headed Troupials that were abundant, I found myself almost mired, and returned with difficulty. We only shot a Blackburnian Warbler, a Yellow-winged ditto, and a few Finches. We have seen more Geese than usual as well as Mallards and Wood Ducks. This afternoon the weather cleared up, and a while before sunset we passed under Wood's Bluffs, so called because a man of that name fell overboard from his boat while drunk. We saw there many Bank Swallows, and afterwards we came in view of the Blackbird Hill, where the famous Indian chief of that name was buried, at his request, on his horse, whilst the animal was alive. We are now fast to the shore opposite this famed bluff. We cut good ash wood this day, and have made a tolerable run, say forty miles.

Saturday, May 13. This morning was extremely foggy, although I could plainly see the orb of day trying to force its way through the haze. While this lasted all hands were engaged in cut-



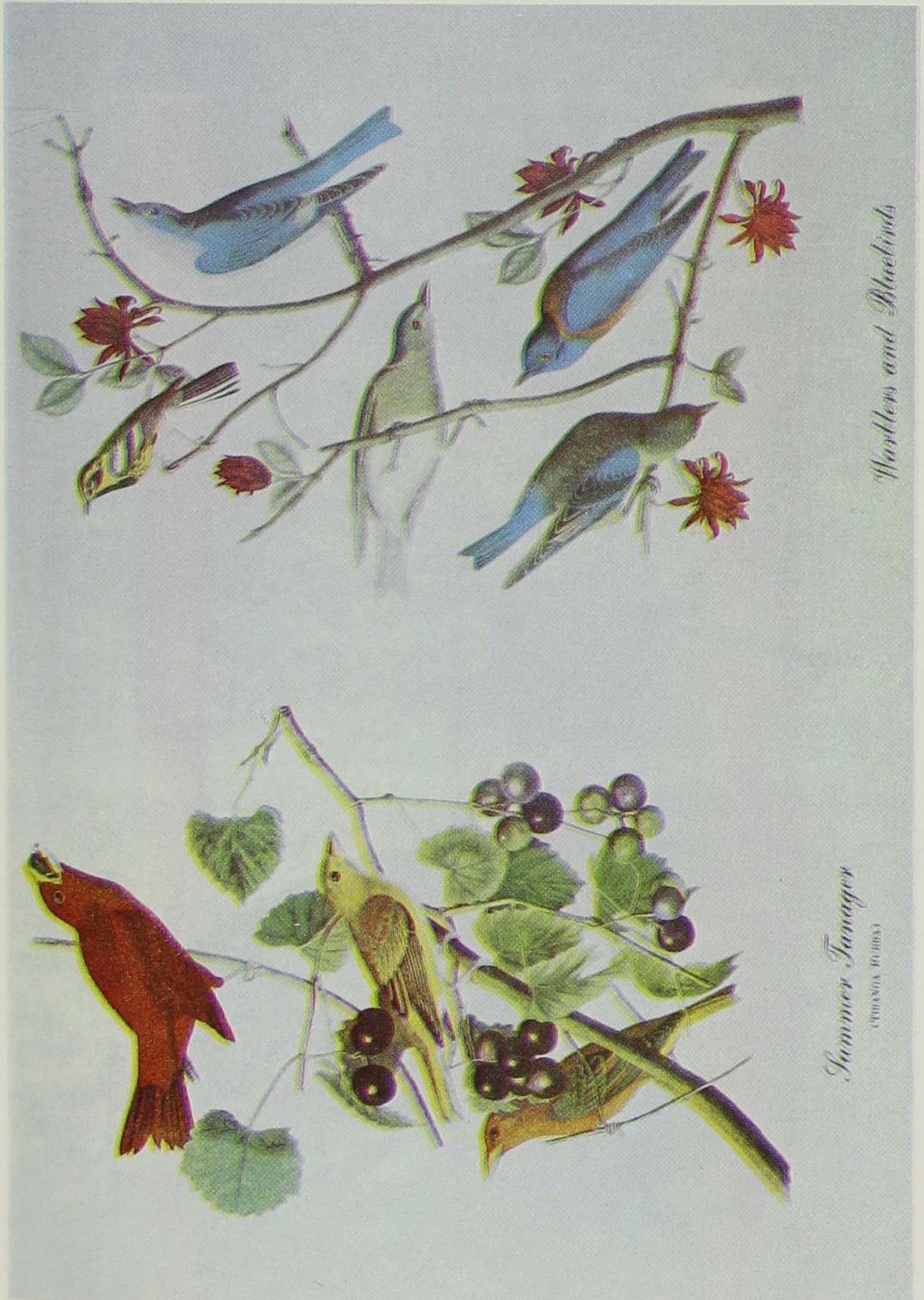
Wild Turkey



Yellowthroat
(SPARROW TROOP)



Blue Jay
(CASCADIA WINTER)



Warblers and Bluebirds

Summer Tanager
(TANAGRA RUBRA)



Red-bellied Woodpecker

From the collection of the Smithsonian Institution



Yellow-bellied Woodpecker

From the collection of the Smithsonian Institution



Red-breasted Woodpecker

From the collection of the Smithsonian Institution



Purple Finch
(CAMPANUS PURPUREUS)



Cardinal
(HEMIPROCTES CARDINALIS)



Mourning Dove
- (VERREAUX, VERREAUX)
1871



Robin
(VERREAUX, VERREAUX)
1871



Great Blue Heron

ting wood, and we did not leave our fastening-place till seven, to the great grief of our commander. During the wood cutting, Bell walked to the top of the hills, and shot two Lark Buntings, males, and a Lincoln's Finch. After a while we passed under some beautiful bluffs surmounted by many cedars, and these bluffs were composed of fine white sandstone, of a soft texture, but very beautiful to the eye. In several places along this bluff we saw clusters of nests of Swallows, which we all looked upon as those of the Cliff Swallow, although I saw not one of the birds. We stopped again to cut wood, for our opportunities are not now very convenient. Went out, but only shot a fine large Turkey-hen, which I brought down on the wing at about forty yards. It ran very swiftly, however, and had not Harris's dog came to our assistance, we might have lost it. As it was, however, the dog pointed, and Harris shot it, with my small shot-gun, whilst I was squatted on the ground amid a parcel of low bushes. I was astonished to see how many of the large shot I had put into her body. This hen weighed $11 \frac{3}{4}$ pounds. She had a nest, no doubt, but we could not find it. We saw a good number of Geese, though fewer than yesterday; Ducks also. We passed many fine prairies, and in one place I was surprised to see the richness of the bottom lands. We saw this morning eleven Indians of the Omaha tribe. They made signals for us to land, but our captain never

heeded them, for he hates the red-skins as most men hate the devil. One of them fired a gun, the group had only one, and some ran along the shore for nearly two miles, particularly one old gentleman who persevered until we came to such bluff shores as calmed down his spirits. In another place we saw one seated on a log, close by the frame of a canoe; but he looked surly, and never altered his position as we passed. The frame of this boat resembled an ordinary canoe. It is formed by both sticks giving a half circle; the upper edges are fastened together by a long stick, as well as the centre of the bottom. Outside of this stretches a Buffalo skin without the hair on; it is said to make a light and safe craft to cross even the turbid, rapid stream—the Missouri. By simply looking at them, one may suppose that they are sufficiently large to carry two or three persons. On a sandbar afterwards we saw three more Indians, also with a canoe frame, but we only interchanged the common yells usual on such occasions. They looked as destitute and as hungry as if they had not eaten for a week, and no doubt would have given much for a bottle of whiskey. At our last landing for wood-cutting, we also went on shore, but shot nothing, not even took aim at a bird; and there was an Indian with a flint-lock rifle, who came on board and stared about until we left, when he went off with a little tobacco. I pity these poor beings from my heart! This evening we came to the burial-ground

bluff of Sergeant Floyd, one of the companions of the never-to-be-forgotten expedition of Lewis and Clark, over the Rocky Mountains, to the Pacific Ocean. A few minutes afterwards, before coming to Floyd's Creek, we started several Turkey-cocks from their roost, and had we been on shore could have accounted for more than one of them. The prairies are becoming more common and more elevated; we have seen more evergreens this day than we have done for two weeks at least. This evening is dark and rainy, with lightning and some distant thunder, and we have entered the mouth of the Big Sioux River, where we are fastened for the night. This is a clear stream and abounds with fish, and on one of the branches of this river is found the famous red clay, of which the precious pipes, or calumets are manufactured. We will try to procure some on our return homeward. It is late; had the weather been clear, and the moon, which is full, shining, it was our intention to go ashore, to try to shoot Wild Turkeys; but as it was pouring down rain, and as dark as pitch, we have thrown our lines overboard and perhaps may catch a fish. We hope to reach Vermilion River day after tomorrow. We saw abundance of the birds which I have before enumerated.

May 14, Sunday. It rained hard and thundered during the night; we started at half-past three, when it had cleared, and the moon shone brightly. The river is crooked as ever, with large bars, and

edged with prairies. Saw many Geese, and a Long-billed Curlew. One poor Goose had been wounded in the wing; when approached, it dived for a long distance and came up along the shore. Then we saw a Black Bear, swimming across the river, and it caused a commotion. Some ran for their rifles, and several shots were fired, some of which almost touched Bruin; but he kept on, and swam very fast. Bell shot at it with large shot and must have touched it. When it reached the shore, it tried several times to climb up, but each time fell back. It at last succeeded, almost immediately started off at a gallop, and was soon lost to sight. We stopped to cut wood at twelve o'clock, in one of the vilest places we have yet come to. The rushes were waist-high, and the whole underbrush tangled by grape vines. The Deer and the Elks had beaten paths which we followed for a while, but we saw only their tracks, and those of Turkeys. Harris found a heronry of the common Blue Heron, composed of about thirty nests, but the birds were shy and he did not shoot at any. Early this morning a dead Buffalo floated by us, and after a while the body of a common cow, which probably belonged to the fort above this. Mr. Sire told us that at this point, two years ago, he overtook three of the deserters of the company, who had left a keel-boat in which they were going down to St. Louis. They had a canoe when overtaken; he took their guns from them, destroyed the canoe, and

left them there. On asking him what had become of them, he said they had walked back to the establishment at the mouth of Vermilion River, which by land is only ten miles distant; ten miles, through such woods as we tried in vain to hunt in, is a walk that I should not like at all. We stayed cutting wood for about two hours, when we started again; but a high wind arose, so that we could not make headway, and had to return and make fast again, only a few hundred yards from the previous spot. On such occasions our captain employs his wood cutters in felling trees, and splitting and piling the wood until his return downwards, in about one month, perhaps, from now. In talking with our captain he tells us that the Black Bear is rarely seen swimming this river, and that one or two of them are about all he observes on going up each trip. I have seen them swimming in great numbers on the lower parts of the Ohio, and on the Mississippi. It is said that at times, when the common Wolves are extremely hard pressed for food, they will eat certain roots which they dig up for the purpose, and the places from which they take this food look as if they had been spaded. When they hunt a Buffalo, and have killed it, they drag it to some distance—about sixty yards or so—and dig a hole large enough to receive and conceal it; they then cover it with earth, and lie down over it until hungry again, when they uncover, and feed upon it. Along the banks of the rivers,

when the Buffaloes fall, or cannot ascend, and then die, the Wolves are seen in considerable numbers feeding upon them. Although cunning beyond belief in hiding at the report of a gun, they almost instantly show themselves from different parts around, and if you wish to kill some, you have only to hide yourself, and you will see them coming to the game you have left, when you are not distant more than thirty or forty yards. It is said that though they very frequently hunt their game until the latter take to the river, they seldom, if ever follow after it. The wind that drove us ashore augmented into a severe gale, and by its present appearance looks as if it would last the whole night. Our fire was comfortable, for, as you know, the thermometer has been very changeable since noon. We have had rain also, though not continuous, but quite enough to wet our men, who notwithstanding have cut and piled about twelve cords of wood. . .

Above the Big Sioux the *Omega* made good time, reaching Fort Pierre on May 31 and Fort Union at sundown on June 12. The *Omega* left Fort Union two days later, reached Pierre on June 21, and St. Louis on on June 29. The trip upstream had required 49 days from St. Louis to Fort Union while the downstream trip had consumed only 17 days.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN