



Sentimental Journey: The Art of Alfred Jacob Miller

Lisa Strong

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Alfred Jacob Miller (1810–1874) was the first artist to journey into the heart of the Rocky Mountains. He did so as the commissioned expedition artist for William Drummond Stewart (1795–1871), a Scottish nobleman and veteran of a five-year hunting tour in America. Their destination would be the annual fur traders' rendezvous at Horse Creek, near the present-day border of Colorado and Wyoming.

Miller, Stewart, and the rest of their party departed from Independence, Missouri, in mid-May 1837. They arrived at the rendezvous two months later and, after a week among the trappers and traders, headed into the Wind River Mountains to the source of the Green River. There, they spent the waning summer hunting moose and elk before returning to St. Louis in early October. Miller executed some one hundred watercolor and pen-and-ink sketches during the expedition, and he later reworked them into finished watercolors and oils for a variety of patrons.

Over the past two decades, much valuable scholarship has emerged on how western American art has reflected American nationalist or expansionist ideologies. In *Sentimental Journey: The Art of Alfred Jacob Miller*, Lisa Strong takes a new approach, however, by examining how Miller tailored his western scenes to suit the specific needs and interests of local American audiences. She also crosses national boundaries to explore how Miller's paintings helped promote a vision of Scottish aristocratic identity.

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