

Basic Detail Report



Buffalo Bull, Grazing

Date

1845

Primary Maker

George Catlin

Medium

Hand-colored lithograph on paper

Description

This noble animal, which is the largest and most formidable of the ruminating species, existing in North America since the extinction of the Mastodon race, has been the most useful in contributing to

Man's subsistence; and, consequently, most probably, allowed the longest to inhabit with him those vast and almost interminable regions of forest and prairie where the Great Spirit designed them to roam together. By this portrait of a bull, which is a very faithful one, it will be seen that the American Buffalo is a very different variety of the Ox species from the buffalo of the Eastern continent, and probably closely allied to, if not exactly the same as, the European Bison. These animals, which were once spread in vast herds over nearly all of North America, from the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the Atlantic, but now confined to a much narrower limit near the base of the Rocky Mountains, extending from the Mexican provinces in the south, to the latitude of Hudson's Bay in the north, are in size somewhat above the ordinary bullock, and their flesh of a delicious flavor, resembling, and quite equal to, the best of beef. From the noble bearing and fine proportions of this animal, one instantly admits his gigantic strength, and estimates his splendid utility to man, provided he could be made to bear the yoke. Almost endless efforts have been made by eager and avaricious man to enslave this noble Animal, and humble him to the drudgery of the plough; but with the like result as with the noble Men of the same free country (almost the only living exceptions); who, if they lack the merit of meekness and docility, have had and maintained the virtue of courage to contend for their lives with civilized man, and the sternness to resist his slavery. The flesh of the Buffalo, which is easily procured, furnishes the Indians of those tracts of country over which they still roam, the means of a wholesome subsistence, and they live almost exclusively on it; converting the skins of the animals, their horns, hoofs, and bones, to the construction of dresses, shields, bows, &c. The Buffalo Bull is perhaps one of the most formidable and frightful-looking animals in the world when excited to resistance (as will be seen in some of the various phases through which he is to be passed in the following chapter of accidents and disasters that befal him), his long and shaggy mane hanging in great profusion over his neck and shoulders, and often extending down quite to the ground.

Dimensions

Composition: 12 x 17 3/4 in. (30.5 x 45.1 cm) Sheet: 15 5/8 x 22 1/8 in. (39.7 x 56.2 cm) Frame: 22 7/8 x 28 1/8 x 1 in. (58.1 x 71.4 x 2.5 cm)