

Examine the exquisite portraits of the American Indian leaders

McKenney, Thomas, and James Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*. Philadelphia: Edward C. Biddle (parts 1-5), Frederick W. Greenough (parts 6-13), J.T. Bowen (part 14), Daniel Rice and James G. Clark (parts 15-20), [1833-] 1837-1844

20 Original parts, folio (21.125 x 15.25in.: 537 x 389 mm.). 117 handcolored lithographed portraits after C. B. King, 3 handcolored lithographed scenic frontispieces after Rindisbacher, leaf of lithographed maps and table, 17 pages of facsimile signatures of subscribers, leaf of statements of the genuineness of the portrait of Pocahontas, part eight with the printed notice of the correction of the description of the War Dance and the cancel leaf of that description (the incorrect cancel and leaf in part 1), part 10 with erratum slip, part 20 with printed notice to binders and subscribers, title pages in part 1 (volume 1, Biddle imprint 1837), 9 (Greenough imprint, 1838), 16 (volume 2, Rice and Clark imprint, 1842), and 20 (volume 3, Rice and Clark imprint, 1844); some variously severe but, usually light offsetting and foxing, final three parts with marginal wormholes, not affecting text or images. Original printed buff wrappers; part 2 with spine lost and rear wrapper detached, a few others with spines shipped, part 11 with sewing broken and text and plates loose, part 17 with large internal loss of front wrapper affecting part number, some others with marginal tears or fraying, some foxed or soiled. Half maroon morocco folding-case, gilt rubbed.

FIRST EDITION, second issue of title-page of volume 1. McKenney and Hall's *Indian Tribes* has long been renowned for its faithful portraits of native Americans. These portrait plates are based on oils by the government artist Charles Bird King, who was employed by the War Department to paint the portraits of Indian delegates visiting Washington D.C., for the Department's Indian Gallery. Most of King's original paintings were destroyed in a fire at the Smithsonian, and their appearance in McKenney and Hall's magnificent work is thus our only record of the likenesses of many of the most prominent Indian leaders of the nineteenth century. Numbered among King's sitters were Sequoyah, Red Jacket, Major Ridge, Cornplanter, and Osceola.

McKenney was the first director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and he provided the biographies, many based on personal interview, that accompany the portraits. Hall, an Illinois lawyer and journalist, wrote the long general essay on the history of the North American Indian. Both authors, not unlike George Catlin, whom they tried to enlist in their own publishing enterprise, saw their book as a way of preserving an accurate visual record of a rapidly disappearing culture. Although *History of Indian Tribes of North America* was eventually hugely successful and often reprinted in both folio and octavo formats, the first edition appeared haltingly, as is shown by the frequently changing imprints on the wrappers. Four publishers, three lithographic firms, and more than a decade were required to bring this first edition to completion.

References. Bennett 79; Field 992; Howes M129; Lipperheide Mc4; Sabin 43410a

Octavo code: **mkyhll**

