

GEORGE BREWER'S MOVING PANORAMAS OF THE MAMMOTH CAVE AND OTHER NATURAL WONDERS OF AMERICA

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PART II*

George Brewer's collection of paintings for exhibition consisted of two types — the still and moving scenes. The still views of the local, timely subjects "called forth the plaudits and warmest expressions of approbations and delight." Then there were the "fine moving pictures," or "artistical moving representations of the wonders" of America, all perennial subjects by which viewers were "carried . . . away with rapture and astonishment." They were all grouped together in the exhibition, as "Brewer's Grand Series of moving panoramas." Sometimes "nine distinct sceneries" of both types would be shown in one performance, which made "the exhibition as a whole . . . one of the most attractive of the kind." In each panorama, "the hand of the accomplished artist is seen, not only in coloring but in the arrangement of the views." Their order led up to a climactic scene, such as those of the Mammoth Cave "ending with a tableau of the *Fairy Grotto*" and the London World's Fair "concluding with the *Triumph of the Yacht America*." Then the whole series of paintings "are so arranged as to keep up an incessant interest as they pass before the spectator." "The exhibition grows in interest to the close, and ends in a blaze of glory."⁴²

Each of the paintings had its characteristic qualities and emotional appeals. There were "the enchanting views on the Schuylkill" River and "the boundless beauty of the prairies," with "the wide and flowered covered expanse," and ending with a prairie fire, "a spectacle terrific and sublime," that were all "scenes unique and thrilling" to observers. The Crystal Palace of the World's Fair was presented "in all its glittering and almost interminable extent." But Brewer's main panoramas and "the great attraction of the exhibition" were "the two greatest wonders of our continent"—the Niagara Falls and the Mammoth Cave. It was difficult "to adjudge the palm between these wonders of creation, either as stupendous realities, or as finished works of art."

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The long celebrated Niagara Falls, in their "restless rush" through "the chasmy shores," were featured with all their "awful grandeur and sublimity," "in their summer glory, moonlight splendor, and winter magnificence." The next spectacle, that was a life-time experience, appeared in the "vastness and beauty," "the mysterious wonders" and the "subterranean sublimity" of "the dizzy abysses of that great cavern which sleeps beneath the forest's hills of Kentucky." "Brewer's panorama, interestingly varied by other scenes, owes its chief attraction to his excellent representation of the stupendous and magnificent chambers of the Mammoth Cave," "one of the greatest wonders of our continent." This special panorama was so singular and appealing that sometimes the whole exhibition was known as Brewer's "Mirror of the Mammoth Cave." Its views were so "perfectly wonderful and exquisitely beautiful" that they frequently "cause[d] ejaculations of wonder" simultaneously, from all the assembled viewers.⁴³

The series of paintings were characterized by certain features that made them outstanding as an exhibition. They "contain[ed] the greatest variety of subjects ever offered to the public in a single evening's exhibition." There was such an untiring, "attractive variety of most instructive and pleasing views," that the public memory of them remained a long time. It was hard to vie with this panorama "in the grandeur of its subjects," for it "disclosed more of the sublime and beautiful" of the country, especially notable in the premiere and "grandest panoramic views" of the Mammoth Cave. The whole panorama was distinguished for "the artistic excellence of its execution" and "in point of beauty, finish, interest, diversity, and intricacy of subject." It was "highly lauded by good and disinterested judges," as being "far beyond the usual exhibitions of the kind." Some classed Brewer's "congregation of attractions, in the pictorial line of art," as "a noble specimen of art," having "the highest order of merit."⁴⁴

The artistic qualities of the panorama reflected credit and honor upon the creator, George Brewer, who had "evinced much industry and talent in the production of this picture." It was commonly agreed that "this gifted and persevering artist merits the entire public approbation." Kentuckians were especially proud that their Ohio River City of "Louisville will become famous in the eyes of the world as the mother of great panoramists," such as John Banvard, Samuel A. Hudson, and George Brewer. Of the last star in the constellation, greater things and "higher walks in his profession" were expected. He was accepted as being among the most "gifted American artists," in the panorama field, because of the great "American wonders [he had] transferred with such correctness to glowing canvas." After witnessing the pictorial "wonders and the splendors of the Columbian scenery,"

viewers could not forbear exclaiming poetically — "Thanks, gentle artist! Now I can descry/This fair Creation,/With a mastery eye." ⁴⁵

George Brewer had produced his moving panoramas and still pictures for public exhibition, and he proceeded to give them good introductions. The publicity about their merits included daily notices in the press of the towns and cities on the itinerary routes, as well as extensive distribution of programs on the streets and sales of descriptive pamphlets at the halls. Wide appeals were made for patronage of the different classes of people to see "an attractive variety of most instructive and pleasing views." By including "instruction as well as amusement," the painting enlisted the support of teachers, pupils, and parents. All of the panoramas were educationally "excellent geographical aids, as they give a vivid impression of the scenes" depicted. They were sometimes advertised as "Brewer's Great Moral Panoramas," and as "harmless to the morals of the rising generation." In fact, they were "calculated to change the viciously inclined minds of youth to more rational enjoyment." They had a tendency "to enlarge the circle of thought and elevate the taste and feelings of the [whole] community," and thereby won the favor of the clergymen, church people, and moral reformers. These were artistic paintings that attracted and held "wraapt in contemplation," the "lover of the chaste, the sublime and beautiful." All were invited to attend these "extraordinary attractions" and spectacles, "who have an eye for the wonderful and beautiful in nature." Visitors would find the exhibition "beautiful beyond conception" and great in "excellence and truthfulness." ⁴⁶

These panoramas did not have the strong economic appeals of some others having subjects on business streets, river commerce, sea fishing, and western settlements, although in the latter case the colorful illustrations were said to be "extremely interesting, . . . for intending emigrants" from Europe. On the contrary, the promoters attempted to influence the growing class of prosperous people on the farms and plantations, or in the towns and cities, away from "the chain of business," into some leisure time activities, as "an oasis in the desert of life," where they could "cultivate that intimacy with nature and her works, which is . . . an essential in the full enjoyment of existence." All of these persons were urged to seek and find "great pleasure," by looking at these "representations of wonderful objects" in the travelogue. The mass of the people, or "stay-at-home travelers," as they were called, would be "saving an outlay of much time and expense," "personal annoyances and fatigue," and "laborious travel themselves." Mammoth Cave, "the wonder of nature," as well as the other "curiosities of the American Continent," were subjects to "challenge the admiration" of the million.⁴⁷

Special groups of people were singled out for attention and attraction. The "thousands, who have never had the opportunity to visit the great American celebrities — the Mammoth Cave, the Prairies of the West, Niagara Falls, &c., can here see as perfect a facsimile of them as can be put upon canvas." First, the cave "affords the greatest interest to naturalists," in beholding this "great natural curiosity," the earth's monstrosity, and "extraordinary freak of nature." "To chemists, the cave presents a magnificent laboratory." It was of special interest to those having "some knowledge of geology" who were asked to go repeatedly to see the paintings, especially of the cave, "the only one extant" of "the wonders of the world," that was "hollowed out at the time the earth was formed." Such panoramas that gained the patronage of the mass of the people in the cities, towns, and communities on the itinerary routes, would at the same time enlist the support of the leading professional and public men, as the city mayors, state governors, and the people's representatives. These men also added their influence in the publicity of the paintings. Some editors made appeals to all classes for patronage of "Brewer's moving panoramas." They assured the public that it "is indeed a grand, interesting, and instructive exhibition — presenting nature in her grandest and most attractive features, with all the charm of art, fidelity of truth, and vividness of reality." As paintings, they found, "the series is an admirable and exquisite specimen of art, and it most compressively combines gratification of the taste and excitement of the imagination, with geographical and other instructions, serving in lieu of actual travel to such as have not been on the wing, and stamping its delineations anew and indelibly in the mind and memory of the traveler. We know of nothing," concluded the editors, "addressed merely to the eye, better calculated to delight and inform the young, and yet more abounding in gratification and in lessons, too, for enlightened maturity." ⁴⁸

The various half dozen panoramas were wound on large, wooden rollers to be unwound across a stage, before audiences, in the available halls. The total length of the canvas exceeded half a mile, if the width was the usual run of eight or ten feet. At night the moving canvas was lighted-up by lamps, so as to show more "brilliantly illuminated scenes." In the afternoon, the room was darkened and again lighted, so that "the illusory effects is quite as perfect" as at night. The public "form[ed] some idea of the amount of canvas covered by the artist," as they watched "the pictures pass in continued and quick review" for two hours or more to see the whole collection of paintings; and their subjects, arrangements, and pageantry were such as "to give the utmost satisfaction." ^{48a}

The order of the various panoramas and still pictures were arranged

appropriately for the best showing at the itinerary stops. In Toronto, Canada, an editor reported seeing them in the following order — "The first *moving* scene consists of a portion of the river Nile." "Afterwards, the wonderful 'Mammoth Cave' was brought before us." The "third view was the course of the 'Niagara River'." After this "the vast 'prairies' of Illinois came into view." Then, finally, were presented "the views of Mount Vernon and Washington's tomb" and "the Natural Bridge over Cedar Creek in Virginia." There was "one continued change from the commencement to the end," and "the great interest awakened in our midst at its first start is kept up to the close." After seeing "the gorgeous and brilliant views of the subterranean world," the "marvelous revelations" of nature "astonish[ed] every beholder," and the visitors uttered "exclamations of delight," as they "passed a charming evening." Often the whole exhibition "closes with views of Mount Vernon," that aroused popular patriotic feelings to a high point.⁴⁹

The explanations of the painted scenery were given to the public by a narrator. George Brewer was the first lecturer while he exhibited his own works in the years from 1848 to 1850. "A full and very instructive description of the wonders is given as the panorama unrolls." The artist could relate "many interesting details" of the places he had visited and painted. His lectures on the passing scenes were also given "in a clear and lucid style," that combined a tone of "amusement and instruction" for popular enjoyment. There were other lecturers with the two copies of the panoramas, including Mr. Hough, who delineated the exhibition in London in 1851; John Howorth, a proprietor of the American copy, who "explains every scene, as it passes, in the most distinct and intelligible manner"; and Dr. G. D. Beale, the veteran exhibitor of panoramas, who was still showing Brewer's work in 1859.⁵⁰

The greatest narrator of the panoramas of American wonders was Rufus Choate Somerby, who patterned the lectures after his famous namesake in an age of oratory. While scarcely out of his teens, Somerby was a gifted orator and genius in the use of speech and its oral delivery. He charmed his audiences first with "an introductory lecture of great power and his delineation of the successive scenes, as they appear in all their beauty and extent," are delivered with both "graphic power and great original humor." The comments were "given in a clear and distinctive voice," in a forthright, natural manner, that expressed all the human emotions evoked by the depicted scenery. A graceful figure stood before the moving panorama, explaining its scenes. "His words are fluent, simple, and sincere; rising with the

grandeur of the subject, but never straining after effect"; only giving "a full articulation of the spirit."⁵¹

Somerby delineates "the successive scenes with astonishing power and rapidity. His voice is soft and full," and is plainly "heard above the roar of that cataract he so vividly describes, and yet there is music and gentleness in his tones, which dwell with many a loving pause upon the sunset glories of the Schuylkill" River. His voice sets the public mood for seeing "the wild wastes of the western prairies, the savage grandeur of the Cataract of Niagara, and the gloomy splendor of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky." As Somerby "illustrated the various sections" appropriately, the listeners were surprised "by its fluency, vivacity and descriptive powers." The speaker "elicited frequent bursts of applause" from his audience at some scenes, as well as impressive silence before others of solemnity. He had "a style of oratory, at once pleasing, instructive, and entertaining," that made his personality an attraction in the exhibition hall, as well as the panorama subjects and there were expectations that his "name will yet be heard" across the continent.⁵²

The proprietors of the panoramas discovered a psychological problem of jaded feelings from the total exhibition, due to the heavy emotional impact of the numerous wonders of nature presented. This was the case, especially "after the solemn, almost painful emotions of wonder and astonishment, excited by 'the revelation of earth's mysteries,' in the sinister depths of the 'Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.'" On account of the deeply impressive scenery of the natural wonders, the mass audiences "seemed to need some lighter food for the imagination — some gentler topics for our memory to dwell upon," for an emotional release. This need was filled by putting more emphasis on the accompanying entertainments that included a puppet show. Then vocal and instrumental music "accompanies each entertainment," "liberally interspersed" with "a succession of well chosen and charming popular songs."⁵³

One of the outstanding performing artists with the exhibition was Professor Canterbury. He was a "vocalist of superior talents," with a "sweet, powerful voice, and brilliant execution," who "enlivens the entertainment" and "relieves the tedium of the eye." He "illustrates the glowing scenes with suitable and characteristic songs." He introduced "every variety of song — both comic and sentimental," "alternating between the grave and gay." His "songs are all appropriate as illustrations" and "introduce[d] just apropos to every scene," and were "invariably well received." When the Professor sang "the delightful cantata of 'Echo River,' written expressly for the panorama," it "elicited unqualified applause." "His *Grave of Washington* drew tears from

everyone and roars of laughter followed his '*Away Down East*.' Other musical talent was introduced at various places and on special occasions.⁶⁴

Brewer's panoramas and some western scenes on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers were first exhibited in Louisville, where they were painted. They remained for two weeks, from July 19 to August 3, 1848, at Odd Fellow's Hall, the charge being 30 cents. It was received as the "beautiful-very beautiful" "work of our townsman," and portraying "our far-famed Mammoth Cave." They hailed it as being in the same class of work as Banvard's famous panorama of the Mississippi River, but "of greater interest to us as Kentuckians" and "should be seen by every person in the city," to offer the deserving artist "a very liberal remuneration." The response was generous and the painting was "universally admired and appreciated" by "very large and fashionable audience[s]" and by "crowds of delighted spectators." By the end of August, the new panorama, after having been "a very considerable attraction" in "Louisville and in other parts of Kentucky," proceeded to Cincinnati, the Queen City of the West. After being highly recommended by Louisville editors, it opened at College Hall on August 31 and continued until September 16, 1848. Here a "skilful performer" played "exquisite music" on a "fine Stodart Dunham Piano." Within a week *a day exhibition* was introduced "for pupils of the City Schools" and for the families, to see these "great wonders of nature." The patronage of the people increased steadily until the two main scenic spectacles of the west and the striking still pictures on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers were "nightly attracting large audiences," and they felt the opportunity to see them was "very precious" to the last day in the city. The local press gladly recommended the paintings to other towns and cities, when taken on a tour of Ohio.⁶⁵

The panoramas left Cincinnati September 18, for a showing in Dayton. Then they opened at Mechanic's Hall in the Capitol City of Columbus on October 2, for three days, where the young people could see these "interesting and valuable" works that gave "the most entire satisfaction." The exhibition reached Cleveland October 11 and for four days was "drawing crowds at Empire Hall," indicating that it was "well worth seeing." Cleveland's editors urged "a popular run in the City of the Straits" or Detroit, where it was opened from October 17 to 26. There City Hall was "crowded by large and fashionable audiences," to enjoy "a pleasant hour" in watching the splendid paintings and "celebrated views." The itinerary stops for the next few weeks have not been traced.⁶⁶

Brewer then returned to Kentucky on November 9, 1848, to show

the townspeople his panoramas again, with some new additions that included the western prairies. For two weeks and longer the exhibition was again "very popular in Louisville," and "liberally patronized." Other cities in the state, especially Lexington and probably Frankfort, had a chance to see the new panoramas before the artist took them to the East. Seven of the leading men of Louisville, among them George D. Prentice and Noble Butler, were eager to provide certificates of merit for the paintings of "the greatest wonder of the western world." Local editors again voiced the proud popular feelings that "one of our own citizens will thus be the means of opening to the eyes and minds of thousands and tens of thousands, both in this and foreign lands, such beautiful and correct views of American scenery."⁵⁷

We find the panoramas next in Baltimore, opening at Peale's Athenaeum, on March 12 and running until May 7, 1849. The admission starting at 50 cents was soon reduced one half. The exhibition was "extensively visited" during March and appreciated by both adults and school children. The following month it "continue[d] to attract hosts of admirers," that were "charmed and delighted." The splendid still views, that included a new one of Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, called forth the "warmest expressions of appreciations," while "the panoramas have carried them away with rapture and astonishment." In the later performances, the artist shared his profits by giving benefits for St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum and St. Andrews Church. Then the panoramas are reported in Philadelphia on June 18, at the well adapted Sansom Street Hall and were here about two months. More scenes were added — Niagara River, Mt. Vernon, Natural Bridge, "a scene on the Nile," and another on the Mississippi River not before exhibited. The first guidebook was published here. There were regular performances in the evenings, with two or three matinees each week. The curiosity and interest of the people increased the attendance. On August 27, 1849, the exhibition was removed to the new Philadelphia Museum, with its raised seats, for a run of more than a month. There were two and finally three performances daily, with a single admission being good for repeated attendance. The show became "a favorite with the public," which "proves its excellence as an entertaining exhibition," as well as being highly informative about America's natural wonders. The paintings received more meritorious certificates from Philadelphia's "eminent artists" — Thomas Sully, Rembrandt Peale, and John Neagle, as well as from Dr. R. M. Bird, editor of the *North American* who had written a book on his visit to the cave.⁵⁸

Brewer opened his expedition in the Capitol City of Washington on November 7, 1849, where it remained two weeks, and gained "much attention here" at Odd Fellow's Hall. The "exquisitely beautiful

views," to which Niagara Falls in winter was added, did not "pall on the sight, as every evening the room is crowded with a fashionable and elegant audience." Daily matinees offered opportunities for the country people, city families, and school children. The visitors left with appreciative impressions of many grand scenes. Then the exhibition moved into the Southland, but the exact itinerary has not been discovered. We know it opened at the South Carolina Society Hall, in Charleston on December 4 and had a run of two weeks, with admission at 50 cents. The hall was filled during the first week, the people being "highly gratified with the view of the fine paintings" and two performances daily, morning and evening, were held in the second week. The "large concourse of visitors" attending indicated the attractions had won "in favor with our community." The exhibition came to a close on December 17, with the people being eager to get the last glimpse of "these exquisite paintings" of "some of nature's greatest wonders."⁵⁹

The exhibition reached the Southwest and opened at New Orleans on January 22, 1850, in the "large and commodious room" of the Amory Hall, for a stay of one month. Henry Clay's Ashland Residence was added here. The hall attracted "a large attendance" of citizens regularly, who "seemed exceedingly pleased with the succession of beautiful and American scenery." The editors pointed out that "the subjects are mostly national and deserve encouragement," and the people continued to crowd the hall. The unrolling of the "matchless paintings" "enchanted all who behold them" and more eminent citizens gave testimonials of their visits. After the proprietor offered a charity benefit for the Lafayette Orphan Asylum, he went up the Mississippi River for a short stop at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and then on to St. Louis, Missouri. There he opened performances in Wyman Hall on March 26, with admission at 50 cents and guidebooks were sold at the door. On the program were the "nine distinct sceneries, all located in our own country" and "each day adds to the number of visitors" enjoying "this really attractive exhibition," which was called "one of the wonders of art." During the second week "these beautiful paintings" were "receiving the patronage they so richly deserve," as "meritorious works of art." The exhibition closed on April 11, after it had been "visited by large and gratified audiences" for two weeks. Having received such liberal rewards, the proprietor gave back to the community a charity benefit for Bishop Hawk's Orphan Home.⁶⁰

The panoramas reached Cincinnati for an opening on April 19 at College Hall, showing many new scenes since it was here previously. The attendance was slow at first and then the paintings began "drawing audiences something like their merits deserve." The performances

lasted over two weeks, the people watching closely all the new views of the "most imposing of the natural curiosities of the North American Continent." The closing came May 4, when the exhibition moved again through Ohio and opened at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York, on May 18, with a charge of 25 cents. Here the people found it "a great pleasure to see these representations of wonderful objects," which "continue[d] to attract numerous and discerning visitors." The closing came May 30, when plans were made to go through the Canadian provinces.⁶¹

The show opened at Toronto in the Royal Lyceum, on May 31, 1850, and ran until June 8, the charge being 2 shillings and 6 pence for boxes, with the pit cut one half. The proprietor had "a great many letters from persons of high standing in the United States highly praising the views, both as works of art and for the fidelity" of the scenes. These "beautiful works" were "exhibited every afternoon and evening to well-pleased assemblages." The Earl of Elgin and Governor-General of Canada "honor[ed] the panoramas at the Lyceum with his presence" and "the band of the 71st Regiment" of Sir Hugh Dalrymple attended. Because George Brewer "was formerly a resident" of Toronto, he was proudly "considered a Canadian artist" by the local editors, who reviewed at some length his "several wonders of art and nature." But some over-zealous Englishmen frankly confessed a little embarrassment at the feature of Washington's home and tomb, that "possess little charm beyond those of our association, in which we certainly do not pretend to emulate the countrymen of that great man." Generally it was "praised by all who have visited it."⁶²

The itinerary continued down the St. Lawrence River, stopping at Montreal on June 19, where the exhibition received "as great an amount of enthusiasm" as elsewhere. Col. Horn of the 20th Military Regiment furnished "appropriate music, during the passage of the Mammoth Cave." There were "select pieces of music" played about "the scenes as they pass in review." While Echo Chamber rolled by "the different airs sung by poor Wilson in his concert in this subterranean hall [were] performed." The Canadians, like their friends across the border, were impressed with the truthfulness of painted Niagara, with which they were familiar. But as for the novel, little-known Cave of Kentucky, they were "awed by the vastness of the 'Temple,' astonished at the 'Fairy Chamber' and dazzling incrustations and fanciful freaks of nature's handiwork." Some editors attended the performances repeatedly to see "the monarch of caves," and the number of visitors, both young and old, increased markedly before the closing date of July 2.⁶³

The itinerary along the St. Lawrence River was concluded at Halifax,

Nova Scotia, in the first half of August, 1850. During the performances, the magnificent painting made "deep and lasting impressions on the young," as well as the adult population. The proprietors had already planned the exhibition of his works in Europe and as an introduction had collected "hundreds of flattering notices of this great work of art in the United States and Canadian papers." Then on August 19 the press at Halifax reported "the proprietors having embarked it in the *Canada*, to try their luck on the other side of the Atlantic." ⁶⁴

The panoramas arrived in London and made early preparations for the showing at the World's Fair of 1851. The exhibition opened at Baker Street Bazaar on May 7, with Mr. Hough as the general manager and lecturer, his wife furnishing the music. A new guidebook was published in London this year for the European visitors, probably a reprint of the Philadelphia edition. The Mammoth Cave was "scarcely known in England," but at the first private showing it "was honored with a large and fashionable attendance." It continued to be well received for about three months, the last press notice appearing July 26. Afterwards, it reportedly "made a most successful tour through Europe, during which the splendid and costly panorama of the World's Fair of London was added." The itinerary has not been traced, although the press mentioned it as "having visited all the principal cities of Europe and received the entire approbation of thousands who visited the exhibition, and spoken of in the highest terms of praise." ⁶⁵

In the meantime Brewer had plans underway for creating a second copy of his panoramas, for the continuation of exhibitions in America. The facts are mostly lacking as to the repainting, but it seems to have been carried out in Boston, where Brewer was fortunate in gaining the friendship of and business connections with George Howorth, who had some wealth, professional knowledge of rare old paintings, and an interest in the reproduction of the new panorama. The copy was ready for showing about the same time the original one was sent to Europe. George Howorth gladly accepted the management of the new exhibition, handled it "in the most admirable manner," and the result was a most enviable run in Boston. The build-up was made in the usual daily press notices and editorial comments. Public recommendations were offered by several of Boston's "most distinguished artists," including Joseph Ames, Chester Harding, and Bass Otis. It was here that the second guidebook and two playbills were published. The editors emphasized the importance of the Mammoth Cave panorama as being one "entirely new" and novel. The artist added other scenes to the collection — Boston Commons, to show the fidelity of his work, the Mignot's Light House of Boston Harbor, Philadelphia's Fairmount

Water Works, and "a magnificent view, on a large scale, of Niagara Falls in wintertime." In addition, "a fine collection of specimens from the Mammoth Cave, including eyeless fish caught in the waters and the crickets from the cave," were shown gratis in the hall daily.⁶⁶

The Boston exhibition opened August 14, to begin a run of ten months in the city. It was promoted under the conviction that it "should be witnessed by all our citizens, and by the school children in particular." The schedule was made "to accommodate the public by exhibiting it every afternoon, as well as evening." "The explanatory lecture is given by Mr. Brewer, the artist," and "singing, with piano accompaniment" by Helen Emmons, a blind music teacher. The quality of the performances "attracted a succession of good houses." The paintings were "so highly lauded by good and distinguished judges" that the promoters could not "doubt of its success." Editors readily predicted that "the ultimate success of this painting will . . . be second only to that of Banvard's, the pioneer in this line."⁶⁷

The excellent houses in Boston continued to build up month after month in 1850, until the flocking of the multitude to Amory Hall seemed only comparable to the "resistless rush" of Niagara Falls. The hall was "nightly thronged with fashionable audiences," made up from the "thousands who have never had the opportunity to visit the great American celebrities — the Mammoth Cave, the prairies of the West, and Niagara Falls." In the hall could be seen special groups, like "the Mechanic Riflemen in their beautiful uniforms" and the charity inmates of the Children's Friend Society. During the five months' showing in 1850 were "elicited the most decided approbation, from the reverend clergymen, the artists, and all others of our citizens who have witnessed the magnificent work of art at Amory Hall." The "fame of the great painting is rapidly spreading in the country," and a "panorama campaign" was opened "to attract more strangers to the city" by making liberal arrangements for parties coming from such New England towns as Taunton, Norton, and other places.⁶⁸

During the final months in Boston there was a succession of striking entertainments that helped to maintain public interest. In January, 1851, the manager introduced the Nova Scotia Giant, Angus McKaskill, a human wonder, 19 years old, 8 feet tall, and weighing 400 pounds. Then the Riley Sisters of Maine "enliven each entertainment with their vocal and instrumental music," and they proved to be "a trance of delight" for the audience and "elicited the highest applause" in their performances for three months, when they "gained their great popularity" in the city. The "beautiful works of art" continued to attract "large and intelligent audiences" in Amory Hall. Numerous school children from Boston and Cambridge attended and more

excursion parties came in from nearby towns, like Lowell. Howorth introduced Jeannie Reynolds during April as making "laudable efforts to amuse and instruct an intelligent community," and "who would be delighted with the superior beauty of the painting and enraptured by the soul-stirring music of Scotia's sweet singer." The exhibition came to a close in Boston on May 10, 1851. It had been "well attended during the last ten months and its numerous patrons have always expressed the greatest satisfaction at every representation of its truthful revelations." The exhibition had been "one of great interest and beauty," one "admired and praised by the thousands who have visited it." During the time in Boston, it is estimated that the panorama "was witnessed by over 300,000 persons," and the gross receipts between \$50,000 and \$75,000. "Its great success in Boston" and elsewhere was taken as "the best criterion of its merits."⁶⁹

In Boston an important turning point was reached in the exhibition history of the panorama. Its long run and popularity "created an excitement there that has spread far and wide," and the painting "gained a superior reputation as a work of art." At this point, George Brewer seems to have terminated his connection with these paintings, for he was working on his second panorama — a *Glance of the World* or a "Grand View of the Torrid, Temperate, and Frigid Zones." It had "engrossed his unremitting study and skill ever since the completion of the former work," and was finally finished in St. Louis, September 9, 1852, when he started on a separate itinerary with it in this country.⁷⁰

As the second copy left Boston on its itinerary, John Howorth was the proprietor, with the lectures being given by Rufus Choate Somerby. It was shown at Brinley Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts, from July 16 to 26, 1851, the tickets selling for 25 cents and discounts offered for quantity purchases. The show moved southward, stopping at Taunton and then opening at Liberty Hall, from October 20 to November, in New Bedford, the whaling capital of America. The press reprinted an article on the Mammoth Cave from the *Christian Register*. The paintings were introduced as the "great and magnificent triumph of art," supported by statements from Boston's panel of artists and Louisville's editors. They were classed far above the ordinary exhibitions and "infinitely more worthy of extensive patronage." The hall was filled at the night shows and matinees were started "to accommodate the great crowds who flocked to witness" the spectacle. Before leaving, the management had "received the most flattering and substantial testimonies" from the school board, city judges, church, clergy, and others.⁷¹

The next stop was at Nantucket, where the hall was "thronged by

crowded and literally overflowing audiences" in November. In fact the patronage was so heavy and persistent that the exhibition was "detained beyond the time of appointment." Fall River was also on the schedule in November, and there was a good response by reducing the admission to 12½ cents. John Howorth was the distinctive lecturer, with fine "vocal and instrumental music accompanying each performance." During the day there were free exhibits of Mammoth Cave "specimens of the eyeless fish, lobsters, crickets, etc.," as well as "specimen of stalactite and stalagmite formations found in the cave." The itinerary moved northward, stopping again at Taunton where "it was hailed with delight," and reaching Lynn in December, with the interest there being heightened by reprinting the same article on Mammoth Cave from the *Christian Register* of 1848. The hall in Lynn was filled to the last day, when "over 200 persons could not obtain admittance." All during 1851 this panorama was "received in the most enthusiastic manner, at every place it has visited since it left Boston," early in the year.⁷²

The exhibition schedule in 1852 began in January at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Then at Salem, Massachusetts, the performance opened February 11, in the spacious Mechanic Hall with a seating capacity of 1,200 people, after programs were freely distributed about the city to alert the people. Everything was done to have "Brewer's Great National Mirror of the wonders of America" "patronized by the entire community," and some found "increased delight" by making repeated visits. The "crowds that have attended" the performances so regularly through the months and listened so intently to Somerby's oratory and the comic and sentimental songs of the "Cherry and Fair Star Sisters," "have always evinced the greatest pleasure and delight" and even felt a sense "of wonder" at "this superior work of art."⁷³

The panoramas were at Howard Hall in Providence, Rhode Island, by the middle of March, 1852, for a stay of one month. The press advertised them for two weeks in advance and then carried an illustration of the Mammoth Cave. The performances, under Howorth the proprietor, Somerby the orator, and Canterbury the vocalist, were here molded into high "moral and intellectual entertainments" that were extraordinarily "worthy of public patronage." The whole exhibition was transformed into an excellent artistic performance, by blending painting, music, and oratory so appealing as to deeply affect the lives of the visitors. The entertainment was later increased by adding Robert's enchanting mechanical Lilliputian Family. Attendance was good and regular, by which Howard Hall became "the center to which the wealth, fashion, and intelligence of Providence [was] irresistibly attracted." The exhibition closed at this hall April 17 and removed to Pawtucket

for a short run, but returned to Providence on May 11 for a new showing during the rest of the month at Mechanic's Hall. A new panorama of the World's Fair of 1851 was added to the natural wonders and Signora Principia now sang "appropriate songs to illustrate many of the scenes" in the panoramas. After the unusually successful run in Providence, the proprietor entered Maine to show at Waterville, where Somerby's lectures continued to hold the interest and affection of his audiences. In December, 1852, the exhibition had "a most successful run" at Libby's Hall in Portland, where the eminent ballad singer G. B. McFarland of New York, with Jenny and Rosa Avondale of Boston, sang lively songs. During the whole period, "the houses have been crowded nearly every night" and sometimes "more than 300 persons" were unable to get seats.⁷⁴

The later itineraries of Brewer's panoramas increased and are hard to distinguish and follow, after the return of the original paintings from Europe. The records in 1853 indicate a reappearance at Portsmouth, in January, Hartford in May, and Washington, D.C., in December. In the following year, 1854, it returned to Cincinnati and Louisville in March and was back at Portland in November. We lose sight of it for two years and then it is found at Davenport, Iowa, in November, 1857, with John Howorth still being in charge. A new proprietor, Dr. G. D. Beale, had the panorama in New Orleans in March and April, 1859, with the supplementary entertainment of Signor Vivaldi's Italian Marionettes and with patronage being stimulated by a lottery, where the audience made drawings of beautiful golden gifts. The people still enjoyed seeing the moving panoramas, as well as listening to the music, and "the lectures illustrating them [were] exceedingly interesting and instructive." We lose trace of the famous paintings in America at Natchez, Mississippi, in April, 1859, but about the same time the second copy of the panoramas was being exhibited in London again.⁷⁵

These panoramic paintings, both the originals and copies, were shown in America and Europe for more than a decade and certainly had some influence upon the life and culture of the people seeing them. In this country, they were taken to "most of the cities of the Union," and were "received with the greatest approbation and delight." In addition to "the great excitement shown by the public generally," the exhibition had the approval of the editors, clergymen, "the most discriminating artists, professional men, and travelers, who can competently judge of its merits." As for the various panoramas, all "have vied with each other in bestowing upon them the highest praises." These panoramas also offered special patriotic appeals for national unity at a time when sectionalism was strong in America. The subjects

were national in scope and so were the exhibition itineraries. The paintings first "gained an envied celebrity in the South," the place of their origin, and then "met with great success in the cities of the West," where they were watched "with admiration and astonishment." They also "excited great admiration in some of our Eastern cities" and especially in New England of the Northeast, where they received the greatest popular patronage and "the most flattering and substantial testimonies." The patriotism inspired by these paintings, in all sections of the country, made the people feel proud to be Americans.⁷⁸

The exhibition brought some friendship from other nationalities. The Canadian provinces gave the stamp of their approval to the pictorial display of the wonders of the western continent. In Europe, where the arts had attained higher levels and standards, the professional opinion was not so generous as in America, but we know that while these works were shown in London, "many of the nobility, clergy, and gentry of England have seen the panorama and have accorded to it their most unqualified approbation."⁷⁹

These paintings advertised the natural wonders of the eastern half of America and helped to popularize them and increase travel to them. The Mammoth Cave painting had climaxed the efforts of the early owners to make a tourist attraction of the cave, when its early economic importance had declined. Brewer had painted the old and new cave routes that remained the guided tours in the future, and left in popular memory such "imposing wonders and glories of the spectacle" as Gothic Chapel, Star Chamber, Chief City, Fairy Grotto, Echo River, and Cleaveland's Cabinet. After Croghan published his book on the cave in 1845 and Brewer began sketching this strange geological underworld, crowds of special visitors from many quarters of America and Europe were being attracted to it. In 1850, two years after the panorama exhibitions had started, the cave was becoming "a sort of watering place and in August and September, there are frequently 200 or 300 (daily) visitors, but almost all from the surrounding country, the place being still very little known." The tide was turning more and more in that direction, "during the pre-Civil War days and for some time thereafter, when from 30,000 to 40,000 people visited the cave annually." As travel increased to the cave, its fame spread abroad and Americans at home took more pride in their own natural spectacle. The panorama not only centered public attention on the famous cave itself, but the whole cavernous world gained more attention from its publicity. At a later time, there was a tendency to look back to the visits in "the good old days," or the golden decades, "when one was liable to meet on the broad hotel piazza such notables as Daniel Webster, Jenny Lind, Ralph Waldo Emerson, [Edward] Everett, Ole Bull, Dom Pedro,"

Edwin Booth, an Emperor of Brazil, the Grand Duke of Russia, and even a president of the United States, "with four members of his cabinet."⁷⁸

George Brewer was one of the pioneers in the panoramic portrayal of the natural wonders of America. Though working contemporaneously with others, his panorama of Niagara Falls appeared before those of William Burr in 1849 and Godfrey Frankenstein in 1853. Robert Burford's old cyclorama of Niagara Falls, produced in the 1830s, appeared at the London World's Fair along with Brewer's paintings in 1851. Peter Grain, Sr., painted his panorama of Virginia's Natural Bridge soon after Brewer's work appeared. The pioneer panorama on Mammoth Cave was preceded by Henry Hanington's short diorama entitled "Fairy Grotto," in 1839, and was followed by other later productions, including one by Obediah Fowler or Luther Emerson and a collection of stereoscopic views by Prof. D. C. Kilbourn who had made explorations in the cave.⁷⁹

Brewer's Mammoth Cave panorama appeared at a time when there was increased interest in pictorial illustrations in the cave guidebooks that were mostly non-extant or devoid of pictures in the 1830s. A map and six cave scenes had appeared in Dr. Croghan's volume, published in Louisville in 1845. Then Horace Martin used eleven scenes of the cave in his pictorial guide, published in New York in 1851, with engravings by the brothers William and Nathaniel Orr, and others. In 1870 there were a dozen engravings in William S. Forwood's guide to the cave. In the same year "forty-two stereoscopic views [were] taken within and about the cave," by "the aid of the intense magnesium light" and published for public enjoyment. In the 1880s Horace C. Hovey and A. D. Binkerd used up to sixteen scenes in their descriptive booklets on the cave. The newer river views, as well as the older scenes of the main cave, were popularized and kept before the public by other artists and photographers. The panorama had some influence on the later legends and literature written about the Mammoth Cave. John Hayward's account of the cave in his national gazetteer of 1851 was based on Brewer's panorama. Thus the young panoramist, George Brewer, had made his artistic contribution to American culture in mid-19th century.⁸⁰

FOOTNOTES, PART II

⁴² *Cincinnati Gazette*, April 16, 1850; *Missouri Republican*, March 28, 1850; Providence, R. I. *Journal* March 1, May 8, 1852; *Boston Transcript*, August 22, 1850, January 1, 1851; Washington, D. C. *National Intelligencer*, November 16, 1849; *Baltimore Sun*, April 17, 1849; *Columbus Ohio State Journal*, October 4, 1848; *Charleston Courier*, December 10, 1849.

⁴³ *Boston Transcript*, August 22, September 18, 1850, April 1, 1851; Providence, R. I. *Journal* April 3, May 19, 1852; *Salem Gazette*, February 2, 20, 1852; *Louisville Democrat*, July 19, 1848; *Philadelphia Guide*, p. 15; *Louisville Courier*, July 13, 1848; *Charleston Courier*, December 13, 1849.

⁴⁴ *Providence Journal*, April 3, 8, May 8, 22, 1852; *Baltimore Sun*, March 13, 1849; *Boston Transcript*, August 12, September 30, 1850, March 31, 1851; Washington, D. C. *National Era*, November 15, 1849; *Louisville Courier*, November 13, 1848; *New Orleans Picayune*, February 20, 1850; *Toronto Examiner*, June 5, 1850; *New Brunswick Mercury*, October 18, 21, 25, 1851; *Missouri Republican*, April 11, 1850; *Rochester American*, May 18, 1850.

⁴⁵ *Louisville Courier*, July 20, 28, November 22, 1848; *Boston Transcript*, September 9, 1850, March 4, 1851; *Portland Eastern Argus*, December 9, 1852; *Boston Guide*, p. 4; *Providence Journal* April 2, 3, 1852.

⁴⁶ *Boston Transcript*, March 4, 1851; *Baltimore Sun*, March 13, 1849; *Providence Journal*, March 22, 1852; *Philadelphia Guide*, p. 16; *Cincinnati Gazette*, April 30, 1850; *New Brunswick Mercury*, October 22, 1851; *Boston Playbill*; *St. Louis Intelligencer*, April 5, 1850; *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, July 9, September 10, 19, 1849.

⁴⁷ *New Brunswick Mercury*, October 25, 1851; *Providence Journal*, March 8, April 3, 1852; *Rochester American*, May 10, 20, 1850; *New Orleans Picayune*, March 30, 1859; *Boston Transcript*, August 8, 1850, March 12, 1851; *The Queen*, May 24, 1851; *Charleston Mercury*, December 3, 1849; *Charleston Courier*, December 10, 1849.

⁴⁸ *Boston Transcript*, September 7, October 15, November 29, December 20, 1850; *Rochester American*, May 23, 1850; *Boston Guide*, p. 16; *London Times*, June 28, 1851; *Charleston Courier*, December 13, 1849.

^{48a} *Providence Journal*, March 23, May 12, 1852; *Providence Playbill*; *Montreal Gazette*, June 21, 1850.

⁴⁹ *Boston Transcript*, March 20, 1851; *Toronto Patriot*, June 6, 1850; *Montreal Gazette*, June 18, 1850; *New Orleans Picayune*, February 1, 1850; *Providence Journal*, March 22, 1852.

⁵⁰ *Cincinnati Gazette*, April 23, 1850; *New Orleans Picayune*, February 1, 1850; *Boston Transcript*, August 23, November 29, 1850; *London Times*, June 28, 1851, January 20, March 20, 1859; *The Queen*, May 24, 1851; *Fall River News*, November 13, 1851.

⁵¹ *Providence Journal*, March 26, April 5, 15, May 5, 1852; *Salem Register*, February 2, 1852.

⁵² *Portland Eastern Argus*, December 9, 1852; *Salem Gazette*, February 20, 1852; *Providence Journal*, March 26, 27, May 5, 12, 1852.

⁵³ *Providence Journal*, March 8, April 5, 9, 1852; *Fall River News*, November 13, 1851.

⁵⁴ *Providence Journal*, March 26, 29, 30, 31, April 1, 9, 16, 17, 1852.

⁵⁵ *Louisville Courier*, July 13, 20, 21, 28, 1848; *Cincinnati Chronicle*, September 1, 1848; *Cincinnati Gazette*, September 1, 6, 8, 16, 1848.

⁵⁶ *Columbus Ohio State Journal*, October 4, 6, 1848; *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 13, 14, 1848; *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 23, 24, 26, 1848.

⁵⁷ *Louisville Courier*, July 13, 28, November 11, 22, 1848; *New Brunswick Mercury*, October 20, 1851.

⁵⁸ *Baltimore Sun*, April 9, 17, 19, 1849; *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, July 11, September 7, 21, 1849; *New Brunswick Mercury*, October 22, 23, 1851; *Boston Playbill*; *New York Herald*, November 7, 1835.

⁵⁹ Washington, D.C., *National Era*, November 12, 15, 1849; *Cincinnati Gazette*, April 16, 1850; *Charleston Mercury*, December 6, 17, 1849; *Charleston Courier*, December 10, 1849.

⁶⁰ *New Orleans Picayune*, January 26, 29, 31, February 7, 21, 1850; *Missouri Republican*, March 28, April 3, 8, 1850; *St. Louis Intelligencer*, March 26, April 5, 1850.

⁶¹ *Cincinnati Gazette*, April 22, 25, May 1, 1850; *Rochester American*, May 20, 23, 1850.

⁶² Toronto *Globe*, May 30, June 6, 1850; Toronto *Patriot*, June 5, 6, 1850; Toronto *Examiner*, June 5, 1850; Montreal *Gazette*, June 18, 1850.

⁶³ Montreal *Gazette*, June 24, 25, 28, 1850.

⁶⁴ Halifax, *Novascovian*, August 12, 19, 1850.

⁶⁵ Washington, D. C. *National Intelligencer*, November 29, December 9, 1853; *The Queen*, May 24, 1851; Portland *Advertiser*, November 21, 1854; London *Times*, May 6, July 3, 1851.

⁶⁶ Boston *Transcript*, August 22, 23, September 9, 1850; Boston Playbill.

⁶⁷ Boston *Transcript*, August 12, 14, 23, September 7, 1850; Boston Playbill.

⁶⁸ Boston *Transcript*, September 18, October 4, 15, 18, 1850.

⁶⁹ Boston *Transcript*, January 27, February 21, 26, March 22, May 3, 10, 1851; Providence *Journal*, March 11, 1852; Hartford *Courant*, May 6, 1853; Howorth's special playbill for Brewer's panorama, Amory Hall, Boston, 1851; copy in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁷⁰ Salem *Gazette*, February 13, 17, 1852; *Missouri Republican*, September 6, December 28, 1852; Groce and Wallace, *Dictionary of Artists in America*, p. 79; Washington, D.C. *National Intelligencer*, November 29, 1853; Portland *Advertiser*, November 21, 1854; London *Times*, May 6, July 3, 1851; *The Queen*, May 24, 1851.

⁷¹ Worcester, Mass. *Spy*, July 17, 1851; American Antiquarian Society, letter of Marcus A. McCorison to writer, dated Worcester, Mass., June 11, 1962; New Brunswick *Mercury*, October 20, 21, 24, November 11, 1851.

⁷² Fall River *News*, November 13, 1851; New Brunswick *Mercury*, November 11, 1851; Salem *Register*, February 9, 1852.

⁷³ Portsmouth *Journal*, January 10, 1852; Salem *Register*, February 2, 19, 1852; Salem *Gazette*, February 20, 1852; Providence *Journal*, March 11, 1852.

⁷⁴ Providence *Journal*, March 12, April 8, May 11, 1852; Portland *Advertiser*, December 14, 1852; Portland *Eastern Argus*, December 25, 1852.

⁷⁵ New Orleans *Picayune*, March 23, 1859.

⁷⁶ Providence Playbill; Providence *Journal*, March 8, 1852; New Brunswick *Mercury*, October 22, November 11, 1851; Boston Playbill; Fall River *News*, November 13, 1851; Washington, D.C. *National Era*, November 15, 1849; Baltimore *Sun*, April 17, 1849; Salem *Register*, February 2, 1852.

⁷⁷ London *Times*, January 20, 1859.

⁷⁸ *Fraser's Magazine*, October 1850; Bayard Taylor, *At Home and Abroad* (New York, 1860), p. 224; Schaffer, *Romantic America*, p. 125; Charleston *Courier*, December 1, 13, 1849; Bridwell, *Story of Mammoth Cave*, p. 44.

⁷⁹ Charleston *Mercury*, February 18, 1839; Boston *Transcript*, August 22, 1838, January 8, 1851; New York *Post*, November 4, 1853; Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, August 30, 1849; Playbill of D. C. Kilbourn's lecture with Stereorama of the Holy Bible, copy in Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Conn. (n.d.); Playbill of Luther Emerson's Panorama of the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky in Haverhill, Mass. (n.d.) copy in Harvard College Library; London *Times*, June 21, 1851.

⁸⁰ Forwood, *Narrative of Mammoth Cave*, p. 65.