

Mrs. Francis H. Low
(Susanne M. Low)
Miles River Road
Rte.1 Box 210
Easton, Maryland, 21601
United States of America

I am engaged in researching all known copies of John James Audubon's Double Elephant Folio - The Birds of America. This is a collection of 435 prints, each 39 1/2" x 29 1/2", and is usually but not always bound in four volumes. It was published in London, 1826-1838, and was sold by subscription. My research is being conducted under the aegis of the Department of Ornithology of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and their letter of introduction is enclosed.

In essence this is an updating of information found in Waldemar Fries' fine book, "The Double Elephant Folio, The Story of Audubon's Birds of America", pub. 1973. Much has happened since 1973. Copies have been moved, sold, broken up, and, sadly, stolen.

There are over 100 copies in existence. We plan to store in the museum as much information about each copy as possible including present ownership, present location, name of original subscriber, provenance, number of volumes, how bound, condition, how stored and/or displayed and any other pertinent data. We also plan to check up on each copy probably every five years but would appreciate being notified of any changes.

Now In Print
An Index and Guide to Audubon's Birds of America
by Susanne M. Low
Abbeville Press

and
The American Museum of Natural History

Includes an illustrated description and history of each of the 435 prints, list of the species as called by Audubon cross indexed to a list of the species' currently approved names, plus information about print variants, legends, number of species, birds foreign to America Audubon should not have included, American birds Audubon missed, extinct birds, birds near extinction, birds of mystery, the composite prints, size & watermarks, value, the copper plates, Lizars succeeded by Havell, Havell's technique, and short biographies of Audubon's peers mentioned in *Birds of America*.

for bookstores wishing to place an order please contact
Miss Amanda Adams or her assistant Miss Jean Gillespie
Abbeville Press

488 Madison Avenue, New York City, N.Y. 10022

Tel: 212-888-1969

The book retails for \$47.50. The average cost to bookstores for an average order is 40 % off, \$28.50. Special arrangements may be made with Miss Adams or Miss Gillespie. If they are not available please ask the switchboard for assistance.

for individuals wishing to buy a copy or two, please first contact your local bookstore or if necessary purchase directly from Abbeville using the special 800 number.

800-227-7210

credit cards accepted.

the writing on the inside flap of the dust jacket

An Index and Guide to Audubon's **BIRDS OF AMERICA**

John James Audubon's double-elephant folio *Birds of America* (1827-38) is probably the most valuable American book. It contains 435 life-size, scientifically accurate, hand-colored prints of every species of North American bird known at the time. A single print has brought almost \$50,000 at auction, and a full set (as prints) has totaled \$1,930,000.

Interest in *Birds of America* has never been greater, but, surprisingly, no in-depth, variorum study of the prints has yet been published—even though there have been nearly 100 reprint and facsimile editions, as well as dozens of books on Audubon himself. Since *Birds of America* was first published, most of the species and popular names for the birds have changed, and there has been no work that systematically relates bird names Audubon used in his watercolors to names on the plates and, most important, to the modern popular and scientific names. In this volume, with the full cooperation of the American Museum of Natural History, Susanne M. Low has set out to fill this need.

This is not only a comprehensive, cross-indexed concordance to the entire book in terms of bird names, but it also deals with variants in several plates, misnumbered plates, birds that are extinct, and mystery birds Audubon depicted that have never satisfactorily been identified. Mrs. Low also clarifies the discrepancies between the paintings and the engraved plates and provides short biographies of Audubon's contemporaries whose names appear in bird nomenclature, as well as those who directly contributed to the creation of *Birds of America*.

In summary, this volume provides a detailed description of each of the 435 plates in the double-elephant folio as well as their original paintings, and includes image dimensions, geographical distribution of each bird pictured, and a history of the discovery of the species in addition to identification of all the plants and animals in the engravings. Each variant is listed, every error of misidentification, every misnumbering—in short, every bit of information known about each plate. For easy reference, a photograph of each plate is provided.

(continued on back flap)

(continued from front flap)

In addition, there are three comprehensive indexes:

- All the birds in *Birds of America* listed in phylogenetic order by their present-day names. These are cross-indexed to their names in Audubon's day and to their plates.
- An alphabetical listing of all the birds in *Birds of America* as they appear on the plates. These are cross-indexed to the names by which they are known today.
- An alphabetical listing of all the bird names that appear on the original paintings, cross-indexed to both the plate names and current names.

This book will be extraordinarily useful to Audubon enthusiasts, including ornithologists, print dealers, auction-house catalogers, print collectors, librarians, and amateur birdwatchers.

About the author

Susanne M. Low was associated with the American Museum of Natural History for thirty years, fifteen of them as a trustee. Her close affiliation with the Department of Ornithology and her personal interest in Audubon prints combined to inspire the research and writing of this book.

Other Books of Interest

National Audubon Society-Abbeville Press facsimile edition of the double-elephant folio of John James Audubon's *Birds of America*. Each facsimile contains 435 full-color plates measuring 26½ x 39½". Available as portfolios or four leatherbound volumes. Strictly limited to 350 sets. ISBN 0-89659-425-4 and 427-0

John James Audubon by Alice Ford
25 illustrations, 512 pages, 6 x 9".
ISBN 0-89659-744-X

The 1826 Journal of John James Audubon
Edited and annotated by Alice Ford
35 illustrations, 448 pages, 6 x 9".
ISBN 0-89659-689-3

For additional information and a complete free catalog, write:

Abbeville Press, Inc.
488 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Printed in U.S.A.

During Friedman's eight-year tenure as executive producer of *Today*, he was greatly responsible for regaining the ratings crown for the morning program, which had succumbed to the new guys on the block, led by David Hartman, the host of ABC's *Good Morning America*. Hartman has since left the ABC show. Friedman also was responsible for assembling the show's current successful anchor team of Jane Pauley and Bryant Gumbel.

Gentlings featured in 'People'

Definitive fame and fortune have come at last to Fort Worth artists Stuart and Scott Gentling. The 44-year-old twins, creators of the monolithic *Of Birds and Texas*, have just merited a two-page story in the June 15 issue of *People* magazine.

The national exposure comes on the heels of a Sotheby's auction that brought the Gentlings \$253,000 for a long-missing John James Audubon painting of boat-tailed grackles — the highest price ever paid for an Audubon work.

Besides providing indirect financial backing, Audubon also provided artistic inspiration for the twins' *Of Birds and Texas*. The 50-painting project, a study of native birds and landscapes, is on view at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

— LISA KESTLER

Compiled from staff and wire reports

TODAY'S CALENDAR

Art

- An exhibition of works by Filbert to Chapa closes. At D-Art, 2917 Swiss Ave., Dallas (214-826-8509).
- *Pixel Art Collection*, an exhibition of technologically created abstracts by Michael Judlin closes. At D-Art, 2917 Swiss Ave., Dallas (214-826-8509).

Pop music

- Hudy Gurus. 8 p.m. at the Arcadia Theater, 2005 Greenville Ave., Dallas. \$15.25 at Sears stores.
- Loudon Wainwright III. 9 p.m. at Poor David's Pub, 1924 Greenville Ave., Dallas. \$12.65 at Sears stores.
- 14K. 9 p.m. at Froggy Bottoms in Dallas Alley, Market at Munger, Dallas (214-988-WEST). \$5-\$3.
- Montgomery, Plant and Stritch. 9, 11 p.m. at the Fairmont Hotel's Venetian Room, 1717 N. Akard St., Dallas (214-720-2020). \$10 at Dillard's stores.

Theater

- *Cats*. 8:15 p.m. at the Tarrant

County Convention Center theater, 1111 Houston St., Fort Worth. \$20-\$35 at Sears stores.

- *The Octette Bridge Club*. 8:15 p.m. at the Dallas Repertory Theater, at NorthPark, Dallas (214-369-8966). \$14 at Sears stores. Remaining tickets half-price noon-6 p.m. at Tkts/KVIL, Hulen Mall, 4800 S. Hulen St., Fort Worth (cash only).
- *My One and Only*. 8:15 p.m. at the Dallas Summer Musicals, Music Hall, Fair Park, Dallas (787-1500). \$5-\$35 at Sears stores. Remaining tickets half-price noon-6 p.m. at Tkts/KVIL, Hulen Mall, 4800 S. Hulen St., Fort Worth (cash only).
- *The Foreigner*. 8 p.m. at the Majestic Theater, 1925 Elm St., Dallas (214-692-0909). \$22.50-\$29.50 at Sears stores. Remaining tickets half-price noon-6 p.m. at Tkts/KVIL, Hulen Mall, 4800 S. Hulen St., Fort Worth (cash only).
- *A Luv Musical*. 8:15 p.m. at Theater Three, 2800 Routh St., Dallas (214-871-3300). \$15 at Sears stores. Remaining tickets half-price noon-6 p.m. at Tkts/KVIL, Hulen Mall, 4800 S. Hulen St., Fort Worth (cash only).



LOBSTERMAN

JUNE 8-14

TWO FOR \$17.95

With Baked Potato & Salad

Bill Martin

SEAFOOD RESTAURANTS

251 University Drive
532-9244

7712 South Freeway
293-9002

GOOD SEAT

Winner of

Bes

C

OPENS TONIGHT

Tarrant Co. Convention

8:15 P.M. Nightly

2 P.M. Matinee Sat. & Sun

Tickets at CASA MANANA TICKET

Rainbow/Ticketmaster

CHARGE BY PHONE

Presented by Casa



COMING ATTRACTIONS

Long-lost Audubon work on auction in New York

BY CAROL SEWELL
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

A John James Audubon bird painting thought lost for 160 years was found by Fort Worth artists Scott and Stuart Gentling, and today they will sell it to help pay for their own book of bird prints.

A *Pair of Boat-Tailed Grackles*, painted by Audubon in 1824, is expected to bring \$200,000 to \$300,000 when auctioned at Sotheby's New York.

The Gentlings bought the painting in 1984 for \$18,000.

"I guess you could say Audubon came to our rescue from his grave," Stuart Gentling says.

The money will help pay for the Gentlings' monumental book/folio, *Of Birds and Texas*, a \$2,500-a-copy limited edition book of their watercolors showing Texas birds life-size and in their natural habitat.

Texas author A.C. Greene has called *Of Birds and Texas* "the most stunning and prodigious book in Texas history."

The Gentlings' discovery of the Au-

dubon painting just when they were about to publish their own works "was a most unusual coincidence," Stuart Gentling says.

The Gentlings found the painting in a Philadelphia print dealer's catalog in December of 1984. The modest price indicated the dealer could not positively attribute the work.

Stuart Gentling telephoned and after questioning the dealer and relying on his own knowledge of Audubon's work, Gentling was convinced the painting was genuine. The twins bought it on the spot.

A *Pair of Boat-Tailed Grackles* was later authenticated by the New York Historical Society, the authority on Audubon paintings, just when several costly printing delays had threatened the very existence of the Gentlings' own epic work. Using the painting as collateral, "we were able to refinance our project and complete publication," Stuart Gentling says.

"In a very real sense, Audubon has participated in the creation and actual publication of *Of Birds and Texas*."

Audubon painting brings \$253,000

NEW YORK — An 1824 bird painting by John James Audubon, which Fort Worth artists Scott and Stuart Gentling say enabled them to publish their own monumental book/folio *Of Birds and Texas*, was sold at Sotheby's New York on Thursday for \$253,000.

The Audubon work, *A Pair of Boat-Tailed Grackles*, had been thought lost or destroyed for 160 years, before it was discovered by the twin brothers in 1984 and purchased for \$18,000.

Once authenticated, the brothers were able to use the painting as collateral in financing the publication of their art book, *Of Birds and Texas*, which cost more than \$500,000. The painting was sold to pay off debts accumulated during the artists' 10-year project to publish the 525-copy limited edition book depicting Texas birds in their natural habitats.

— CAROL SEWELL



"GREAT CROW BLACKBIRD"

(Boat-tailed Grackle)

The female, by Audubon, was his first published figure, apart from a "grouse" drawn for a banknote in 1824. The male is by A. Rider.

Engraved by Alexander Lawson.

From C. L. Bonaparte, *American Ornithology* (1825), Plate 4

ALICE FORD'S BIOGRAPHY
of Audubon.