

enc: letter form describing current research
~~enclosed~~ how to get my book
working on book trip.

Mrs. Francis H. Low
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In reference to research into the location
and provenance of all known copies of
Audubon's "Birds of America", the Double
Elephant Folio, under the aegis of the
American Museum of Natural History,
New York.

July 11, 1989

Mr. Scot Gentling
4801 Harley St.
Fork Worth, Texas 76107

Dear Mr. Gentling,

I hope you will remember me and our
correspondence and phone calls of 1986-7. I got in touch
with you because I was so interested in your discovery
of the Audubon painting of the Brak-tailed Grackles at
that time known as Great Crow Blackbirds.

In one of my many moves between our Florida
house and our house here part of my files turned up missing
including my correspondence with you so I am writing
you now to ask you if you will refresh my memory as
to how, when, and where you discovered the painting as

I and my colleagues have become interested in the whole curious story.

We all from time to time have funny things happen that cause us to say "isn't it a small world" but I think you will agree that what I am about to tell you beats all. About a month ago my husband and I were staying with one of our married daughters. We went to have tea with some friends of hers and there on the wall was your Audubon painting of the Grackles!! She told me they had bought it at Herchel & Adler in New York. They would love to know more about it so I told them what I knew and said I would try to find out more by writing to you.

Then I worked for a few hours in the library of the American Museum of Natural History in New York and put together the history of your painting as best I could. I enclose a copy.

One point in particular interests me. In your painting (The one I saw while visiting my

daughter) is written "Drawn from Nature by John J. Audubon" or perhaps it was John James Audubon - I can't quite remember. This line is beautifully and carefully written and looks as though it were an engraved line rather than hand-written. Yet it could hardly be engraved, could it, as this is a water-color done by Audubon for Boscawen. The line certainly isn't in Audubon's handwriting. Do you think the line was written in by Lawson?

So, to recapitulate, would you consider all that is in this letter and all that is in the history attached and tell me what you can. I would love to be able to tell my daughter's friend your part in how you found the painting and from whom you got it, etc. Then, besides that, I would so appreciate anything you can add to my research from a scholarly point of view.

My book on Birds of America is in print and I enclose information about it. Now that the book is finished I have embarked on a new project for the American Museum of Natural History which is to locate all the

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surviving copies in the world of Birds of America (at present count 121) and also to learn what happened to the others. As you know it is generally believed that between 175 and 200 copies were printed. All this to go into a data bank in the new Audubon Room in the Museum. Information in the original Double Elephant Folio, the Octaves, the Synopsis, the Biers, and modern copies will all be included.

You will be pleased to know that your painting is beautifully framed and beautifully hung in a lovely house.

Looking forward so much to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Susanne W. Low
(Mrs. Francis H. Low)