

STUART W. GENTLING

19 August 1983

Dear Colette and John,

I can't tell you how pleased Scott and I have been to hear from you at last. I guess all of our ears have been ringing lately, because we are always talking about you and wondering how life has been treating you. About three months ago I got a telephone call from the baggage department down at the Santa Fe Station telling me that I had received a package. When I got down there was I surprised and pleased to see the beautiful yarn painting. It hangs in my mother's house which is free from staining cigarette smoke and I get more excited about it every time I see it. The odd thing about receiving the shipment was that the clerk told me that it had been down there for months and that they had called me for months trying to reach me. I immediately wrote you a letter to thank you for the shipment, but I have this feeling that you may never have received it. I sent it to your Mexico address.

About two weeks ago I called out to LA to see if I could get in touch with you and I talked to somebody who did not speak very fluent English. She was able to tell me that she thought that you two were in Mexico and that I might be able to get in touch with you there. I was in the midst of catching up with my back correspondence when I received your letter.. I absolutely promise that we will not wait so long to get in touch with you again.

Scott and I still have a long way to go with the Bird project, but we have indeed made a lot of progress. The book has been made a Texas state Sesqui-centennial project to honor the celebrations surrounding the 150th anniversary of the Texas revolution. The Institute of Texan Cultures has asked us to allow them to have a show for the book and the original paintings there in San Antonio, and then they would sponsor some sort of traveling exhibition throughout Texas during the 1986 celebrations.

Our basic schedule for the bird book is this: We go to press probably in early February of 1984 and will be spending most of that year in the actual publication process. We still have about a dozen of the proposed forty bird plates yet to do, but many of these have already been drawn and will be ready for painting when the time comes. That time will be after we have a formal opening of our re-modeled art gallery in October of this year. You have no idea what Scott and I have been put through in the course of transforming our old building. I started last February and am only now just about finished. I think you will be very pleased with ~~the~~ the transformation. It will be the perfect setting in which to show our bird pictures and the opening ought to be quite an event.

The opening might very well be a golden opportunity to expose your project to some potential investors. In the present economic climate I can make no promises, but if this opening is anything like the last ones, there should be plenty of interesting and wealthy people there. If we could have a few of our Aztec pictures to show them including some of the ones that you have, perhaps we might generate some interest. Whatever is convenient for you. At the moment Scott and I are keeping our fingers crossed that you might hit it off with the supermarket king.

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his other award-winning productions. David Holman needs no introduction to collectors of custom designed limited editions dealing with our Texas heritage. His company, Wind River Press, in Austin, Texas is one of the most respected publishers in the country. He brings to this project the knowledge, the taste, and the sense of purpose necessary for the completion of a work of such magnitude.

This historical publication thus represents a fortuitous combination of four different elements -- the paintings of Scott and Stuart Gentling, the poetic prose of John Graves, the designing hand of David Holman and lastly that of the land of Texas itself. No other state in the union is more blessed with the variety of bird life possessed by Texas with its unique location on the central migratory flyway, and few states can boast of a richness in its geography matching the diversity of its wildlife. The paintings reproduced in the book encompass every major environmental region of Texas from the Gulf of Mexico and its coastal marshes and prairies to the pine and hardwood forests of East Texas to the semi-tropical Rio Grande country west to the arid lands of the Big Bend and the Davis Mountains. Also included are the plateau and cross timbers country of central and north-central Texas and the open plains of the Pan Handle stretching far to the north and west. The variety of the settings is further enhanced by showing the country in all seasons of the year, at various times of the day and in all kinds of weather -- from sunrise to late afternoon, from the bright, clear light of Summer to the cool blue of an autumn afternoon, from the low, gray days of Winter to the awesome storms of our vernal equinoxes.

It is perhaps a pleasant coincidence that a book being published to honor an historical occasion should itself be an historical event. To the best of our knowledge nothing like this volume has ever been attempted in the history of Texas publishing. The very size of the book measuring as it does 22 inches by 28 inches with its forty bird plates and five landscape plates, each individually signed by the artists and accompanied by a first edition text also signed by the author -- all this is further enhanced by the fact that both prints and text are left unbound to be inclosed in a fine handfinished hardwood box suitable for a work of such importance. In spite of the preliminary demand for this volume the edition of this book will be strictly limited to not more than

*This large format has allowed the artists to paint all of the birds but one - the wild Turkey - in their natural size.*