

Copy made

Harry Tennyson

March 20, 1896

Thanks  
for  
letter

Dear Harry -

I have been so busy since  
I last saw you <sup>at the bank</sup> that I have not had  
a moment to sit down to write you <sup>and it pains</sup> too  
often I find <sup>in my thoughtless letter</sup> that words cannot  
express my gratitude for a kindness done  
for Scott and me, but in this case I could  
write volumes

and almost  
incredibly  
often

<sup>on your mind for the last 9 years</sup> Scott and I have worked <sup>very</sup> hard  
to bring ~~out~~ this monumental book to the  
public. Time and again we were told <sup>by experts</sup> that  
a publication of this magnitude was impossible  
for people of our <sup>modest</sup> means to produce ~~by ourselves~~,  
and that there were many good reasons why a book  
of this magnitude caliber had never been  
published in the history of Texas letters. Until  
recent weeks I had taken great pride in the  
fact that Scott and I had, indeed, been able  
to finance this <sup>book</sup> ~~project~~ by ourselves. With a project  
as complex as this one which demands literally  
hundreds of decisions, I am still amazed that  
that, with my limited experience in the publishing  
field, I have made ~~for~~ as many correct decisions  
as I have. By choosing David Holman and  
his Wild River Press at Austin to do the  
~~book~~ design and printing of our book, I based  
my decision on the universal recommendations  
of fine book dealers, librarians, authors and other



in Texas printers throughout this state. It is a fact that they are considered to be the very best in their field. But even as they were highly recommended, I was warned that they were very independent <sup>people</sup> and could at times be difficult to work with. I was counseled that, if I was patient with David and his father, William, and ~~I~~ <sup>we</sup> would put up with their sometimes exasperating behavior, they would produce a book that would be truly an important work of the printer's art.

To produce a ~~truly~~ great book has always been Scott's and my <sup>principles</sup> aim. We wanted to create a book that would rival the great ornithological publications of the nineteenth century. I could have settled for a large commercial printing company to do the work, <sup>and</sup> I could have chosen to have the text printed by the standard industrial techniques currently employed by other publishers instead of <sup>just</sup> having <sup>the</sup> ~~text~~ <sup>set</sup> laboriously by hand and printed by custom letterpress - ~~was~~ a process which is rarely employed on books of this size anywhere in the world, and never before in Texas! The problem presented by the Halman was not whether the book would be of exceptional elegance and quality, but whether these small custom printers could produce the book at all. When I first



approached David Helman about our project,  
he did not have<sup>2</sup> color press <sup>and</sup> a letter press  
<sup>big</sup> ~~large~~ enough to print the <sup>work</sup> large, Imperial  
folio size ~~sheet~~ pages which would measure  
22 by 28 inches. He assured me that, if I  
chose his Wind River Press to publish the  
work, he could acquire the necessary presses  
and have them working within 30 to 45 days  
after their delivery. My attorney, Denny Ingram of  
Austin, a man with considerable knowledge of  
the printing business, expressed skepticism. Scott  
was also skeptical whether or not such presses  
could be acquired and put in working order in  
such a short period of time. I now realize<sup>about</sup>  
that David may have had second thoughts,  
probably on his father's advice, for after we had  
gotten our financing through the Camp Boyce  
National Bank in early January of 1985 and <sup>Scott</sup> ~~we~~  
and I were ready to sign the printing contract  
with David, he backed away from his offer. It took  
a month to rewrite a contract more suitable to  
~~him~~ him, a contract which removed all deadlines  
and penalties for failure to meet those dead lines.  
I was advised by my attorneys<sup>and Scott</sup> that I  
was taking a <sup>considerable</sup> gamble and that I would have  
no control over the ~~amount~~ <sup>cost</sup> of Helman's if they  
decided to take their time with the printing, causing  
us delays in meeting our delivery schedule.







the general promotion of  
subscribers and Museum people and in general  
promoting the book when ever possible.

Because of the expenses which continued  
in spite of delays, our cash reserves, which were  
to be used for the completion of the project, were  
eventually exhausted. A great many of our  
subscribers had made only modest  
down payments for their books with the intent  
to pay the balance when their books were ready  
for delivery. Others subscribers had availed  
themselves of the option of placing their  
money in our special Escrow account until  
their books could be delivered, and still others  
who were aware of our <sup>present</sup> delays simply told us  
to place their names on our list and ~~tell~~ that  
they would pay ~~us~~ when the books were  
~~ready~~ finished. <sup>and delivered</sup> Quite a few <sup>are</sup> ~~still~~ in this latter  
category.

To date we have not lost a single  
subscriber, and I feel very confident that all  
the work on the book will be completed by the  
middle of July and the books will <sup>then</sup> be ready  
for delivery. The Holmans must finish our book  
by then so that they can turn their attention  
to a <sup>whole</sup> major project, a book on Texas <sup>historical</sup> lithographs  
which has to be finished by Fall. (Their presses can  
not be used for any other projects while they are



working, on our book.)

~~It had~~

I have been told by those who are knowledgeable about the publishing trade that the delays which we have experienced are not at all unusual even when publishing small books. However, as I see it, most of our customers are not ~~knowledgeable~~ people who are knowledgeable about the intricacies of the fine art book business, and I will not be able to rest easy until I have this magnificent work safely in their hands. To achieve that goal would have been infinitely more complicated and expensive if you, Harry, had not stepped in to break the log jam and inertia which has plagued our project for the last few months. Though Scott and I have always known that we could come to you if we had a problem too <sup>big</sup> difficult for us to work out by ourselves, it was nevertheless one of the most difficult things that I have ever had to do. It was my pride, of course, which prevented me from coming to you sooner when it was evident that I could not get book back on schedule by myself. I have worked so hard to put this project on a sound financial footing and to avoid the many pitfalls that ~~any~~ <sup>such a</sup> publishing enterprise is subject to, that it was hard for me

I only wish that  
the general public could know  
how essential you are to the success.

admit that I had come upon a problem which  
I could not solve by myself. Your timely  
intervention assures that the book will be  
completed and delivered as Scott and I originally  
conceived it. That the book will be a rewarding  
financial success is already <sup>guaranteed</sup> ~~assured~~ by the  
way in which it has been received by the  
public just in the Fort Worth Area alone. When collectors  
in Dallas see the <sup>only</sup> ~~prop~~ <sup>prop</sup> at the Dallas Museum of  
Natural History where it will be <sup>displayed</sup> ~~displayed  
from September 15 to November 16th during the  
sesquicentennial State Fair, there is the  
distinct possibility that all the remaining  
books will sell out. Then there will be  
more than two million dollars worth  
of limited edition prints which people who  
cannot afford the <sup>book</sup> ~~book~~ will be able to  
purchase. <sup>Two</sup> The prop is very economically  
sound one or ~~two~~ the Camp Bowie National  
Bank would never have lent us the money  
in the first place nor would they have  
helped us to ~~go~~ with the additional <sup>financial</sup> ~~money~~  
needed to complete the project.~~

Of course you, Harry, have played a  
critical role in the production of what I personally  
believe, is one of the truly great books of its  
kind ~~two~~ published in America in this century.  
The book has two dedications <sup>as you proposed</sup> ~~two~~ books

Not just one



is dedicated to two very important people  
in our lives - one person <sup>you & Gloria</sup> whom we never  
knew but whose work <sup>has</sup> had a profound  
impact upon our ~~lives~~ destiny - and  
another person, Shirley, whose help and  
affection, whose wit and humor and love  
of animals and natural things are reflected,  
we hope, in many of the paintings, which  
are there in our book for <sup>us</sup> ~~the~~ world to  
enjoy. And when I say "our" book, I  
mean to say a creation ~~that~~ in which  
Audubon and you and Gloria and Shirley  
and John Brown and Scott and I ~~and~~  
~~all~~ ~~about~~ a host of other people are literally  
brought together. In this way and in a very  
real sense "our" book is dedicated to all  
of us and I hope that in the coming  
generations who will view the book long  
after we are gone, that they will in  
some way experience the some of the ~~magic~~  
and ~~the joy~~ ~~warmth~~ <sup>joy of nature</sup> and the  
joy and the magic <sup>which</sup> ~~which~~ has been such  
an important part of our relationship since that  
night when two skinny, wide-eyed, unbothered kids sat  
down next to you and Gloria at the Children's Museum.  
I only wish that the public could know the  
whole story about ~~that~~ the full importance  
of the part you have played in the creation

of this work. Again, I want to thank you  
for your timely help and to re-affirm  
that when the books are ready for delivery,  
you will have ten <sup>vol</sup> volumes waiting for  
you, each with a remargued page containing  
a watercolor study of a Texas Bird to use  
in whatever way you may wish <sup>them</sup> ~~it~~ but  
a small token of our <sup>gratitude</sup> affection and appreciation.

Shunt

P.S. I will keep you regularly informed  
about the Helman's progress.