

December 3, 1986

Contributor

Address

Dear _____;

Scott and I would personally like to thank you for your generous support of the efforts of the Museum of Science and History to acquire the complete collection of our original bird paintings from our book, OF BIRDS AND TEXAS. We are mindful that it is quite rare for artists and their work to be honored in this way, especially in their own lifetime and by their own home city. For us it is the most gratifying reward for nearly a decade of hard work to create something very special in the history of Texas publishing. The public response to the paintings as well as the eagerness of other institutions throughout the state in wanting to exhibit the works in their own cities provide, we think, ample proof that this collection will be an asset to the museum and the people of Fort Worth that will increase in importance in the years to come. Many donors may not realize that, in addition to the entire collection of 40 original bird paintings, the museum will acquire as a gift from us most of the watercolor studies, preliminary sketches, master drawings and all pertinent notes and correspondence relating to the creation and publishing of our book. The Museum of Science and History will then become the major source of information and future scholarship concerning this monumental publication.

We are sending you by separate mail two signed artist's proofs of color plates which were printed from an original painting which you helped the museum to acquire. We hope that in some small way this gift can express our gratitude for your support. We are also sending you a brief summary of the considerable progress which the museum has made to get the collection and some interesting news concerning our book and the paintings themselves. Again we would like to thank you for your support and to say that through your gift you have become a very real part of an historically important project which, we hope, will give pleasure to art and nature lovers of all ages and become for Fort Worth a special source of pride for generations to come.

Sincerely yours,

Stuart Gentling Scott Gentling
Stuart Gentling Scott Gentling

As we look ahead to the final days of 1986 we would like to thank those of you who have supported the efforts of the Museum of Science and History to purchase the Gentling collection of 40 original bird paintings from their book OF BIRDS AND TEXAS. We also wish to take the opportunity to summarize the Museum's fund-raising progress to date. So far 12 paintings have been purchased outright and donated to the museum. In addition to these complete purchases ~~14~~¹² more paintings have been spoken for, and significant partial payments have been made for most of them to secure these pictures for the museum. At the time of this writing 16 more paintings remain to be purchased and donated by interested patrons. Considering the financial difficulties which many Texans and Texas institutions have had to face since the museum briefly displayed the Gentling paintings last January and began to raise money, the fact that 24 have been committed to the museum in less than a year is a most impressive accomplishment.

Since last January a number of important events have occurred concerning the Gentling collection and the book for which it was created. Having finally been published in July of this year, the book has been universally received with astonishment and praise as one of the most important publications ever created in Texas. The San Antonio Express - News recently called it " the largest and most expensive book ever published in Texas destined to become the Audubon of rare Texana the most ambitious one-man printing venture ever attempted it is a masterwork of its kind. " Such enthusiasm for the book and the collection is being shared by a number of public institutions throughout the state. The original paintings are currently on display at the Dallas Museum of Natural History at Fair Park where they were part of the museum's Sesquicentennial display during the state fair. The exhibition proved to be so popular that the Dallas museum requested and received permission to show the paintings for two more months to remain on view until early January 1987. The prestigious Institute of Texan cultures in San Antonio has also asked the Museum of Science and History here to allow it to exhibit the collection, and it is expected that the paintings will go on display in San Antonio from early March until late April when they will return to Fort Worth.

Since the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History was only able to schedule a brief exhibition of the paintings last January when parking problems due to rodeo traffic made it difficult for many Fort Worthers to visit the show, the

museum plans to prominently display all 40 paintings for a six month period beginning in late April or early May. When the Gentling collection exhibition opens here in the spring the museum, with the further help of more patron donations, is looking forward adding the remaining 16 paintings to complete its list of Gentling Acquisitions. For friends of the museum who would like to contribute a painting before the end of 1986, the purchase price of each work is \$7,500. Those who contribute \$1,000 or more will have their names or the names of people they wish to memorialize displayed on a master plaque whenever the collection is exhibited. Those who contribute 50% or more of the cost of a painting will have their names and/or those in whose name the picture is donated separately displayed on the title plate for that particular work.

We would like to close by saying that many important museums and libraries throughout Texas have acquired the Gentling book OF BIRDS AND TEXAS. However, only one institution will be able to own the complete collection of the original paintings for this monumental publication, and the Gentlings feel both honored and grateful that citizens of Fort Worth are making it possible for this important collection to remain in the city in which it was created. For your information accompanying this letter is a title list of all 40 paintings of the Gentling collection designating those pictures which have been completely or partially purchased and the 16 works remaining to be spoken for.

E. Ralph Carr
Project Manager