

more skilled hand to make it scientifically appropriate for publication. Such re-working also insured that, for the time being, Audubon's true talent would be kept from view.

→ This message from Ord and Lawson and, to some extent, from Charles Bonaparte was unambiguous to Audubon. Never had he felt more like an outsider in his adopted country. Even the printer, Fairman, who was sympathetic to his work had to agree with Bonaparte that it would be better for Audubon to seek a printer in Europe where there were facilities and skilled artisans capable of publishing his birds life-size. When ^Aaudubon had asked Bonaparte if he would finance such a trip, the Prince made excuses and backed off. The manner in which his painting of boat-tailed grackles had been handled and the way he had been received in Philadelphia convinced him that his only hope lay in Europe. In 1826, with money from his wife's savings, he sailed for England. After a rather fitful start with one publisher, he finally met Robert Havell of London, whose incomparable printing skills were to bring the Birds of America into being. This monumental undertaking required eleven years of unceasing labor, resulting in one of the most spectacular publications in history. It made both Audubon and Havell famous. Even his enemies in Philadelphia eventually had to acknowledge that his book was an incomparable publishing feat.

There is an interesting postscript to this story. The Bonaparte-Audubon grackle painting and his Philadelphia antagonists were very much on his mind when, in 1832, at Charleston, South Carolina, he undertook a third water-color of the boat-tailed grackles, the version which became Plate 187 of Birds of America. Carole Slatkin, Assistant Director of the New York Historical Society which owns the largest collection of Audubon original paintings in the world, has offered some unique observations about Audubon's thinking as he created this third and final version of the boat-tailed grackles. She writes that "Audubon relied not at all on his earlier versions (except to place them in an oak tree with Spanish moss) but actually recreated in an infinitely more accomplished image the Lawson engraving (the adulterated