



Roger Beachman, *Publisher* 4509 Balcones Drive Austin, Texas 78731

May 10, 1987

Dear Stuart:

Here is a proof of the typesetting for the prospectus -- please don't change any copy at this stage because of the costs for resetting.

We can now determine the exact length of the printed copy-- and if you lay this on a blank page -- it will be difficult to place any illustration without crowding. Perhaps you should have a b&w halftone illustration with the comments on the book. I believe you were going to print the reviewer comments as another separate page on a smaller sheet?

I have the copy for the specifications and related pages-- out in San Francisco. They are to send me a cost for Monotype with shipping back and forth. So I should have the complete costs in by next week.

In the meantime I have had the type set for the letterheads, A6 envelopes, order card, mailing label and sets of business cards set. They have been pasted up, negatives are made and I will print these the later part of this week. So something is moving along.

Sincerely,



Bill Holman

PROSPECTUS

Occasionally there occurs in the world of book publishing an event so special as to justify superlatives. Such an event is the publication of a new book entitled *Of Birds and Texas*, a Great Imperial Folio with color plates and commentary by painters Scott and Stuart Gentling and an important new work of prose by author John Graves. Although it is dedicated to John James Audubon and its folio-size format will inevitably lead to comparisons with his and other great ornithological books of the past, *Of Birds and Texas* is not only a book about birds. In spite of its impressive size it is an intimate work which presents the personal views of three Texas artists as they look at their state, its long history and a few of its more interesting inhabitants, feathered and otherwise.

Eight years were required to produce the paintings which comprise this volume's 50 offset color plates. Both plates and text were printed by David Holman at his Wind River Press in Austin. The printing was done on sheets of acid-free Mowhawk Superfine paper measuring 22 inches by 28 inches. In the critical matters of typography and page design the award-winning printer worked closely with the Gentlings to create a work of classical clarity and simplicity. He printed the entire text by letterpress, setting the metal type by hand, using Centaur monotype, an elegant lettering derived from texts carved upon the column of Trajan at Rome. Holman printed both the text and the color plates at the same time. The resulting product, issuing from a one-man shop, has been described as nothing less than a printing tour-de-force.

As with many of the best European books of similar scale and import, the pages of this volume are not bound but are arranged in two linen-covered portfolios which are then placed in a linen-covered box. Both the box and portfolios are constructed with museum-quality bookboard. They are designed by Craig Jensen and are handcrafted at the Jensen Bindery in Austin. Only the most appropriate PH neutral (acid-free) materials have been used throughout to insure that the book meets the highest standards of archival quality.

THE PORTFOLIOS

Portfolio One, contains 10 color plates of Texas Landscape subjects painted in the Gentlings' more familiar drybrush watercolor style. A page of Gentling commentary preceeds each plate. Stuart has contributed the Acknowledgements, the Introduction and the Dedication page which is enhanced with a small portrait of John James Audubon by Scott. The Foreword is written by Harry Tennison, world sportsman and conservationist and currently president of Game Conservation International. The literary highlight of this portfolio, however, is an essay by John Graves entitled "Recollections of a Texas Bird Glimpser." Graves, who currently lives and writes on his hard scrabble farm near Glen Rose, Texas, is best known for his book, *Goodbye To A River*, which has been issued in thirteen editions in this country and translated into eight foreign languages. Many critics consider it to be the finest Texas book ever written. In his book, *Talking to Texas Writers* (1980), Patrick Bennett stated that "He is perhaps the writer most admired and respected by his fellow Texas writers. . . . John Graves is the writer's writer in Texas. . . . He thinks clearly and then writes in wonderful style, one of the more distinctive styles of our era." Most of Graves' writing is autobiographical, but "Recollections" is perhaps his most personal work so far. Critics are already declaring that it will stand with the best of his work.

2

Portfolio Two contains 40 color plates of American birds which live in Texas or pass through the state in their annual migrations. A page or more of commentary by Scott or Stuart Gentling precedes each plate. All the birds except the wild turkey are depicted life-size against backgrounds of the state's many different regions, showing seasonal changes and the varying moods of day and night. The Gentlings have also included two remarkable Audubon works from their personal collection of Audubon memorabilia. On page 73 is a facsimile reproduction of the first page of an original manuscript, the bird artist's first-draft account of the red-shouldered hawk written in 1830 for his famous *Ornithological Biography*. The manuscript's entire text is published here for the first time with Audubon's original punctuation, spelling and charming syntax preserved unedited. It gives the reader a rare insight into the man and his thinking and serves as commentary to the Gentlings' own portrait of the red-shouldered hawk.

On page 87, also published for the first time in its unaltered original state, is an Audubon painting of a pair of boat-tailed grackles which the artist created in 1824 in Philadelphia. Research has confirmed that this is, indeed, Audubon's first published bird painting, and it is the very picture, long thought to be lost or destroyed, which appeared considerably altered as plate IV, in volume one of Charles Lucian Bonaparte's four volume supplement to Alexander Wilson's *American Ornithology*. It is the only Audubon bird painting published in the artist's lifetime that remains in private hands. The Gentlings have published it in their book in facsimile-size for the first time as Audubon actually painted it and would have wanted it to be seen. Its discovery and authentication by the Gentlings and its publication in their book unites *Of Birds and Texas* in a very unique way to the two most important 19th century books about American birds, Alexander Wilson's *American Ornithology* and the *Birds of America* by John James Audubon.

THE ARTISTS

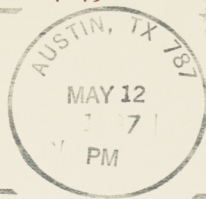
62

Scott and Stuart Gentling were born in Rochester, Minnesota on New Year's Eve 1942, but Fort Worth, Texas has been their home since they were five years old. At the time they arrived in Texas they were already developing keen interests in art and natural history studies and within a couple of years extended their interests to the study of archaeology and constructing models of historic ships and buildings. They were educated in the Fort Worth public school system, and both attended Tulane University and later the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the country's oldest art school.

They paint almost exclusively in the exacting technique of dry brush watercolor. Although they each work independently, *Of Birds and Texas* is their first collaborative effort and represents a departure from the main direction of their art which is the painting of landscapes, still lifes and portraits. Bird painting has occupied the twins sporadically from their earliest painting days, but today it constitutes strictly a peripheral interest. The Gentlings have no plans to make careers in natural history art. Although they are not regional artists in the strict sense, they are primarily painters of their southwestern homeland in a manner best shown by the first ten plates of this book.



Roger Beacham, *Publisher* · 4509 Balcones Drive · Austin, Texas 78731



Stuart Gentling

902 Boland Street

Fort Worth, Texas 76107

First Class Mail

Forwarding & Return Postage Guaranteed