

Ron Tyler.

11 January 1992

Dear Ron,

Scott and I enjoyed receiving your Christmas Card - as always. I just got a new word processor as a Christmas Gift and so it is as good a time as any to practice on my machine and catch up on my much neglected Correspondence.

First of all, I did not know that you were doing a book on Audubon. I can't wait to see it. I will always be interested in him and his work and I try to get every new book on Audubon. I ~~later~~ eagerly await your observations.

One of the most wonderful things that happened to us concerning our bird book happened about three years after it was published. I received a letter from Alice Ford of all people! I thought she was ^{long} dead! She was interested to know ~~that~~ who finally ended up owning our Audubon Boat-tailed Grackle painting after the Sathulby Sale. Sathulby would not tell her. At that time I had not seen her latest revised and augmented Audubon biography and did not know she had ^{no concern} ~~dealt with~~ the Audubon's experience in Philadelphia in light of this painting's recent re-appearance. As you know, there are so many wonderful coincidences about how we came to own the Grackles and how that painting literally saved our skin.

bird book ~~dedicated~~ from disaster - a book
dedicated to Audubon and ⁱⁿ which the
introduction of which I had ~~just~~ written
about this Grackle ^{written} six months before ~~its~~
discovery ~~of it~~.

I told Mrs. Ford that I did not know
who owned it and that Schuchep had kept
the sale strictly confidential. Strangely enough,
about a week after I had spoken to Mrs. Ford
I received a letter from a Mrs. Francis Fox, a
woman I had corresponded with from December
of 1936. At the time she first contacted me
she was compiling a massive index on American
Bird books & as part of her job with the American
Museum of Natural History. Her book had already
gone to press, but she wanted to know about our
book anyway. ~~and~~ (She ^{later} ~~clided~~ ^{clided} me for not
promoting it ~~more vigorously~~ nationwide.)

Mrs. Fox's letter which, as I said, I got
a week after Alice Ford's inquiry, related ~~the~~
~~incident~~ another incredible coincidence.
It was icing on the cake ~~to~~ for ^{the} the
Gentling - Audubon - Grackle ^{story} connection.
It seemed that she had just traveled from her
home in Florida to visit her daughter in
New York. One afternoon she accompanied
her daughter to a tea party at the country
of her daughter's friend - proper she had never
met. To her amazement there on the wall

of the study when the party was held
was ~~the~~ the original Audubon Grackle
painting! Mrs. Fox was very familiar
with an discovery of the picture and
its subsequent sale, and one can only
imagine her astonishment to see the painting
hanging in the house of strangers. She
would not tell me who ~~they were~~ the
new owners were, but assured me
that the Audubon had a very good
home.

I know that I have been remiss for
not writing a full account of this
story - especially for the North American
Bird Conference publication. What knows,
maybe some day.

Now, perhaps you can help me with
something. I have purposely avoided
thinking about publishing a smaller
version of our bird book until now. For
all intents and purposes the elephant folio
is sold out. I have saved a few copies for
a rainy day and for well placed gifts. Our
book only received one criticism - that it
was too cumbersome to read. It has really
been praised by those stalwarts who have
read it and I have been asked repeatedly
to publish it. I'll consider it if it doesn't take

And
Arthur's
Article

too much time and effort. Psychologically,
of Birds and Texas is really a part of my part,
but I do think the book merits a more
general distribution to a wider audience
and in a more readable form.

Oddly enough, though I learned a lot
from our own publishing efforts, I never ~~have~~
learned a thing about ^{the mechanics of} getting a book prop'd
to a proper publisher etc. I have been told that
it should be done through an agent, but
there are no literary agents in North Texas.
I want it to get a wide distribution and
I want to make money from it if possible. I
know that the ~~Robert~~ ^{University} you expressed
some interest doing something through the
Historical Association but that the book would
have to have many of the bird plates printed
in Black and white. I really would like
the book to be published all in color and
perhaps to include some of our preliminary
studies and remarks to make a slightly
different format from our folio. I am not
in a hurry to do this and I want to avoid
as many mistakes as possible. If you have
any suggestions about an agent to contact,
or an approach to a publisher I would greatly
appreciate your ^{help} ~~input~~.

By E. & Ring Ranch