

THE FORT WORTH MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY

Progress Report - The Gentling Collection

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 ^{Fort Worth} 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 ^{early} that the paintings will go on display in San Antonio from early March until ~~late~~^{early} 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 exhibit all 40 paintings from mid-April through the summer. When the Gentling collection exhibition opens here in the spring, the Museum, with the further help of more patron donations, is looking forward to adding the remaining 16 paintings to complete its acquisition of the Gentling collection. For friends of the Museum who would like to contribute a painting before the end of 1986, the purchase price for each painting is \$7,500. Those who contribute a painting will have their names and/or those in whose name the picture is donated displayed on the label for that particular work. Those who contribute 50 percent or more of the cost of a painting will be listed on a label at the entrance of the gallery in which the paintings will be exhibited.

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