

9 December 1986

Linda Johnson
The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History
1501 Montgomery
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Dear Linda,

Now that the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History has decided to schedule another exhibition of our bird paintings from mid-April until September 1987 and to coordinate a re-newed fund-raising effort, I would like to meet with you to make certain that all of this gets a reasonable amount of publicity - especially in Fort Worth and in the Harbinger. Because there has been little or no follow-up about the project in the newsletter, too many people think that the Museum has already purchased the entire collection. Just mentioning the donor's names on your donations page does not give people sufficient information to keep the project alive in the public mind. And when no articles appear in the Harbinger or the Star-Telegram, people who do know that paintings remain to be donated receive the impression that the Museum is not very interested in the project. To remedy this frustrating situation I propose that a regular GENTLING COLLECTION: PROGRESS AND NEWS column be established that will be printed in every edition of the Harbinger. There are always interesting tidbits of news concerning the collection which, I think, will entertain your readers and keep them informed. I would like for you to consider the following:

1) Establish a news and progress column in every edition of the Harbinger newsletter which will always include the following information:

- a. The number of paintings already purchased to date.
- b. The number of paintings (perhaps mentioning titles) yet to be purchased.
- c. The total sum of money contributed so far.

2) Perhaps it would be a good idea to include a photo of a bird painting - either recently donated or one that awaits donation.

3) Be consistent. The news column should be in the same place and on the same page in every Harbinger so that interested people can easily turn to this page to get an update on our progress. You might be surprised that there are a number of people who read the newsletter and want to know what's happen-

ing with the fund-raising.

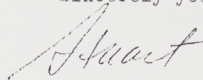
Linda, it should be kept in mind that certain individual donors and Trust managers plan to contribute more money — but only if the Museum demonstrates enough response from other donors to show that there is sufficient support for this project in other parts of the community. When the Harbinger neglects to mention anything about the Gentling collection it sends a confusing signal to people — that the Museum has either acquired all the paintings or that it is not very interested in doing so. In order to keep such a special news column alive and interesting, I will be only too happy to come in and give you an update and provide some interesting news sidelights for your readers. Just contact me every two months before you go to press. I think it would also be a good idea for you or someone in the Museum who has regular contacts with the news media to send out occasional press releases to magazines or at least make a telephone call to the Star-Telegram to keep the wider public informed.

I am enclosing copies of a thankyou letter and progress report which we are mailing to our major donors. These should bring you up to date about our progress so far. I believe that people here should know about the very successful exhibition of the paintings at the Dallas Museum of Natural History which was held-over for two more months because of popular demand, and they should hear about the forthcoming exhibition of the paintings at the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio. Also the January-February issue of Southern Accents Magazine is publishing a major article on our project. The November 1986 issue of Town and Country mentioned the project and included a photo of the birds and Scott and me at our gallery in its excellent article on Fort Worth. In July the Texas Historical Quarterly is running a cover-page article on the book and the paintings. This will help greatly to emphasize the collection's historical importance rather than only the natural history aspect.

It is very important, Linda, that friends of the museum here see and know that this collection is valued and being enjoyed by other people and important public institutions throughout the state. I truly believe that the Harbinger, though not the complete solution to the public relations problem, is certainly a step in the right direction toward communicating to the general public, and I hope, that in the future, at least some consistent attempt is made to keep the people adequately informed and to demonstrate some show,

some measure of enthusiasm for this project on the part of the museum of Science and History. Just give me a call, if you wish, and we will discuss this at length.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stuart", written in dark ink.

Stuart W. Gentling

CC Don Otto

Ann Tinsley

Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

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