

8 September 1989

Mr. Reginald Robinson, President
Board of Directors, The Ft. Worth Museum of
Science and History
1501 Montgomery Street
Ft. Worth, Texas 76107

Dear Sir:

I am very pleased to hear that the Board of Directors will be meeting this week to re-acquaint themselves with the Gentling bird painting project and to consider my recent offer. I have made this offer to stimulate good will and re-kindle the enthusiasm shown by the Museum from 1984 through 1986 when almost all the pledges securing the collection so far were made with the active participation of Board members. I would also like to re-affirm an offer I have made many times over the years to work closely with Don Otto and the Board to aid them in promoting the collection and getting the pledges necessary to purchase the rest of the paintings.

Since there are members who apparently know little or nothing about the Gentling birds and in fact have never seen the paintings or the elephant folio, OF BIRDS AND TEXAS, I would be more than happy to meet with them at the Museum or our studio a few blocks away to answer their questions and introduce them to the project. I have a prepared lecture with slides that I have made many times over the years, and I would be happy to give this lecture again to any and all Board members. In the meantime perhaps it would be useful to show them the enclosed information concerning the book reviews, press and TV coverage and the exhibitions which have been obtained and organized in the last three or four years. When it reviews this information I believe the Board will be truly impressed at the attention that the paintings and the book have garnered from important art and book critics, ornithologists, historians and other museum people throughout Texas and the U.S.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Gentling collection can be an outstanding public outreach and promotional tool for the Museum of Science and History, not just in Texas but throughout this country and even abroad. Both Don and I know of several museums who would right now welcome an opportunity to exhibit the paintings if the Museum wishes to show them. And if properly handled, these shows can also be money earners for the Museum. Scott

and I will soon be embarking on an effort to publish a smaller, octavo version of the elephant folio which will be offered to thousands of additional readers throughout the country and not just to the select few who were able to purchase the large original book. This new publication could bring even greater public attention to the Museum and the collection.

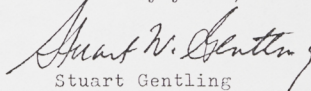
At this moment the Museum of Science and History now has complete possession of all 40 original bird paintings with the preliminary watercolor and pencil studies, and I have just turned over the entire archives as required by our agreement. There remains only the final framing of the paintings. In spite of the language of the contract, Don Otto and I had an understanding that it would not be wise to frame the paintings with their final frames until all the pictures had been purchased and the museum tours which I was planning at that time had been completed. I still believe this to have been a good idea, since it minimized the possibility of frame damage which almost always occurs when paintings tour. However, if the Museum Board wishes to have all the paintings framed now, I will be happy to work with the Board and Museum personnel to get this done as quickly as needed and to the satisfaction of us all. To that end I am submitting for your review several frame and mat samples and two bids from reputable local framers who will see that the framing meets museum standards.

In conclusion I would like to say to you, sir, and to the other members of the Board that I have complied with the terms of our agreement to the best of my ability, and I think I have done a good job to promote the Gentling collection outside the city of Fort Worth. I also want to mention that I volunteered the gift of our preliminary studies and archives long before they became Museum demands in the contract, and I have from the beginning volunteered to actively participate in seeking pledges for the Museum. Again, in spite of the contract language, Don and I had a clear understanding that every reasonable effort would be made to raise the purchase^{Funds} in three years, not the eight years stated in the contract. I believe that if my current offer can help to re-kindle that early enthusiasm and get this project moving again, that with Board help everything can be successfully completed in a very short time, especially now since the collection and related materials are all in the secure possession of the Museum, and only 10 more paintings remain to be pledged. I repeat that almost all these pledges were secured between 1984 and 1986 quite

early in the project. The proposed reduction of the total purchase price by \$31,500 should provide a potent incentive to complete the purchase quickly and thus insure a tremendous saving for the Museum. I hope that you understand that my offer is not for an indefinite time. It will, quite frankly, terminate if it is not accepted in the next few weeks.

If I can be of any help to the Board now or in the future, please do not hesitate to call on me. I have some ideas which might be helpful. I hope the Board has the chance to look at the materials I have sent and will seek me out if it has any questions. I think I have done all that I can at this point to fulfill my part of our agreement in good faith. I only ask that the Board of Directors do the same.

Sincerely yours,


Stuart Gentling

cc. Don Otto

Mollie Lasater