

16 September 1989

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

Dear Sir:

Thankyou for your letter of September 13th. There seems to be some misunderstanding about the archives, and perhaps that is my fault, since my last letter got to you just before your meetings with the Board of Trustees. It would certainly be more efficient if I could meet with you or the president-elect and other board members and talk to you face to face to answer most board questions, the moment they are asked.

Let me repeat here unequivocally that the Museum of Science and History is now in full possession of the entire Gentling bird book archives. It should also be made clear that our purchase contract of October 31, 1985 does not specifically grant the Museum the power to tell me how to frame the pictures including choice of frames or framer. The contract requires only that the framing meet museum standards for archival quality. I want to say, however, that I welcome Museum input and will be glad to consider the bids that the Museum is about to submit to me.

For us time is of the essence here. I also hope I have made it clear that my recent offer will not remain in effect for an indefinite period of time. At the time I made our offer to Mollie Lasater I had no idea that the Board would literally have to be re-educated about the Museum's entire purchase program for the Gentling paintings and that many board members knew absolutely nothing about what was going on with this major museum commitment.

I am somewhat reluctant to give a specific termination date that would interfere with Board deliberations or subject it to unreasonable pressure, but the motive behind my offer was to stimulate Board interest and to get the project out of the stagnation that has characterized it in the last few years. Mr. Robinson, I have served on many local civic boards over the years, and I know that they can and do act with dispatch as needs and opportunities arise.

I would like to point out that it took an extraordinary eleven months from the time the Museum Board voted to purchase the Gentling collection to the time it submitted its purchase contract. There were no difficult negotiations to resolve in those intervening eleven months nor were there any changes made in the contract. I pray that we are not facing similar delays with respect to Board deliberations on my current offer.

Now that the Museum has all the materials including paintings, pencil and watercolor pre-studies and the entire archives, only the final framing itself remains to be done. Whoever does the work, this framing will require a considerable immediate expenditure on my part to frame the entire collection of 40 paintings, only 20 of which are currently owned outright by the Museum. Sadly, your letter of September 13th only states that the Board of Directors will discuss my recent offer only when I have met every one of the Museum's demands. In effect you are requiring^{me} to pay the considerable expence to frame 20 paintings the Museum does not yet own without in return making any promise for a special effort on the Board's part. If you will examine the contract, you will certainly see that the agreement has always been heavily weighted in the Museum's favor. I was originally content with this, because I thought the Museum, inspite of contract language, would make a sincere effort to purchase the collection in three years.

Regardless of how events have played themselves out since our original agreement was made, I am prepared to proceed to get all the framing done very quickly so that the demands of the Museum can be completely met by your board meeting early next November. However, I think that simple fairness should persuade the Board of Directors to give me some firm decision on my offer before I undertake this considerable expence. A simple promise to consider my proposal, frankly, falls short of the kind of enthusiastic Board performance that my recent offer was originally intended to inspire. I will be ready to act on the framing as soon as the Museum's bids are in my hands which, as your letter stated, should be September 20th. With me ready to act, I see no reason why the Board can not give me a firm decision at its October meeting.

In the spirit of cooperation, however, I will wait until after your November board meeting to withdraw my offer to reduce the original purchase price of the Gentling collection by \$31,500 if the Museum will take timely action

and finance its remaining purchase through a bank, preferably the Camp Bowie National Bank with its offered low interest loan. I am certain that everything can be done by November and our business successfully concluded. Then, if called upon, I will help the museum in every way possible to find pledges for the remaining paintings so as to maximize the substantial savings that our offer makes possible.

If you would like to talk to me personally, I would be happy to meet with you or other Board representatives at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Stuart W. Gentling

cc. Don Otto
Barclay Ryall
Mollie Lasater