

Acknowledgements

This book would not exist if Catriona Glazebrook, past director of the Texas Audubon Society, had not taken an interest in us and our work. My contact with her, tentative at first, became one of genuine friendship as she learned more about us, our paintings of Texas birds and the mysterious folio we had produced more than a decade earlier. Catriona personally introduced me to Shannon Davis who has helped me to edit this new edition of our "Of Birds and Texas" and she also set up a meeting for me to show our work to Joanna Hitchcock and Theresa May of The University of Texas Press. Finally when Scott and I were chosen to be the official artists to celebrate the 1999 centennial of the Texas Audubon Society, it was largely her doing. I will always be grateful to her for re-kindling my old enthusiasm and for setting into motion the events that led to the publication of this book.

Scott and I will always consider ourselves lucky that we were able to collaborate with author John Graves on our original elephant folio and to have his folio essay revised and re-titled "My Life with Birds" as an important part of our new book. In my Preface I tell how this almost did not happen. Scott and I have been honored to call John a friend since 1960 when we were first introduced by Dutch Phillips whose parents were John's boyhood friends on Fort Worth's west side. It was the same neighborhood with adjacent woods and Trinity River bottoms that we lived in and explored as kids. That year of our meeting marked the publication of John's best known book "Goodbye to a River" which has since become an american classic translated into fourteen languages. It is in many ways as treasured a work of literature as Thoreau's book about Waldon Pond.

I had the pleasure of attending one of John Graves's creative writing classes in 1962 at Texas Christian University. I could not then have even dreamt that one day Scott and I would actually co-author a book with John that would become something special in the history of Texas publishing. Graves is a cautious and wiley sort. Though he showed genuine interest in our folio project when I first explained it to him and was supportive in his way, he did not commit himself until we had shown him the first twenty or so of our bird paintings. From that moment on he became a quiet source of confidence and inspiration. Just simply knowing that he was working with us gave Scott and me hope that together we just might actually create something that would prove a work of literature as well as an attractive collection of paintings with commentaries. If our new book succeeds as well as our folio succeeded, John Graves will be in no small measure responsible.

Scott and I again wish to thank Harry Tennison for writing the Foreword to our original folio which is now included here.

Both Harry and his late wife Gloria have played an important part in our lives since we were children. It was to Gloria's sister, the late Shirley Holmes, that our folio was personally dedicated. We have shared together with the Tennisons and the Holmeses many happy and sad times - experiences that forged a very special relationship. Harry is well-known as a hunter and conversationist working with many world organizations to save endangered wildlife. As the founder and president of Game Conservation International he has sponsored many projects that have given back to nature far more than he has taken as a hunter. In 1989 I was with Harry and Gloria in Zimbabwe to observe the capture of Black Rhinos for a breeding program sponsored by the Fort Worth Zoological Association which Harry helped to organize almost fifty years ago.

Although Ralph Carr's name is not on the cover of this book or our folio, he has been an indispensable source of help from the very beginning and has at first hand overseen our book through all its incarnations. He has represented Scott and me off and on in Fort Worth for thirty years. I simply could not have carried out the many necessary and burdensome publishing duties without him.

Many thanks to David Wharton for his excellent photographs of our paintings for this book. He is the son of the late Bob Wharton who did all the photography for our original folio. David has been a good friend and an valuable aid in much of our other work as well.

Deserving of our deep gratitude is Don Otto director of the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History which purchased all our original bird paintings from "Of Birds and Texas." He has cooperated in every way by making the pictures available for photographing and also permitting the Texas Audubon Society to organize an exhibition of the paintings to tour the state in celebration of their centennial. Our thanks also to museum curators Dennis Gabbert and Chris Hailey.

Since this new book also contains the landscapes that were part of our original folio, we would like to thank those patrons who generously permitted their pictures to be used again. We too would like to thank the owners of the thirty watercolor bird studies known as remarques which have been added to this new edition.

I would like to mention Garland and Mollie Lasater who have been special friends of ours and our book project from the very beginning. As chairman of the board of the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History Mollie was a great help in balancing our interests with those of the museum. And although I have not discussed it with her, I'm sure that she proved a great help in vetting our book through the UT Press book review committee of which she was a member. I recently heard that Claiborn(sp?) Carrington, himself a wonderful and witty writer from San Antonio, was also a member of that committee. My thanks

to him as well.

Thanks again to Shannon Davies for seeing the merit in our work and the exciting possibilities in a new book. As a former editor for the University of Texas Press I have no doubt that her enthusiasm carried a great deal of weight with the UT Press staff.. I'm probably an ideal author for Shannon to edit; I have rarely disputed her suggestions, asking her instead just to make me look good and reasonably literate.

As far as the staff at UT Press is concerned I would like to thank director Joanna Hitchcock and senior editor Theresa May for their enthusiasm, not just for our bird book but for possible future projects as well. (Shannon, you know who else at UT Press will be involved in the design and production of the new book and you may insert my thanks to them here if you wish)

Finally, I want to express not only my gratitude but also my love to Nancy Ferguson my companion for more than twelve years. Interestingly, I first met her on January 10th 1988 when she came to the studio to pick up a folio purchased by her grandfather Harold Gish. I'm the last person to believe in love at first sight, but that's what it was. Since that day she has been a constant source of inspiration and a great help to both Scott and me. She never gave up on the possibility of us one day publishing a trade edition of our folio. She has gamely put up with my artist's antics, possibly because she is a talented artist herself. A great lover of dogs, she has at times concentrated her considerable training skills on me - with modest success. She is a world traveler, a passionate hunter and she is now an occasional taxidermist after having persuaded me to resurrect my own skills in that field that had been dormant for almost thirty years. I am very fortunate to have her in my life, and I hope to spend the rest of my days in showing her my gratitude.

Stuart Gentling