

Dust jacket

Front cover

Of Birds and Texas

Scott Gentling and Stuart Gentling

With an essay by John Graves

Spine

Of Birds and Texas

Gentling and Gentling

Texas

Flaps

"With Birds of America, John James Audubon created an unmatched monument to the beauty of his country's wildlife and proved himself one of the truly great bird artists of all time. Since his day, there have been many painters who have surpassed him in the scientifically accurate portrayal of birds, but for Scott and me, his work still stands fresh, unique in spirit, and unrivalled as art. It possesses a vitality, an elegance of line and color and composition that continue to excite and inspire us. Though our own

artistic interests have taken us in directions far removed from our early bird paintings, we have never lost our original delight in painting pictures of birds, and I suppose we never will. Though we have developed our own styles of bird painting over the years and continue to make changes in the way we approach the subject, the pervasive influence of Audubon's art remains with us.

With these dry-brush watercolors, we have combined our personal vision of the birds and the land of Texas with our own sense of composition, line, and color to bring to you a testament of our love of the people, the history, and the wildlife of Texas. If in doing this, we can honor our state and pay homage to John James Audubon, recognizing the part that both have played in our lives, then so much the better."

—Stuart Gentling

As John James Audubon's Birds of America was the most magnificent ornithological publication of the nineteenth century, Of Birds and Texas may rightfully claim

that honor for the twentieth. Originally published in a twenty-two-by-twenty-eight-inch elephant folio limited edition in 1986, this collection of forty exquisitely detailed bird portraits and ten Texas landscapes, with accompanying commentary by the artists Scott Gentling and Stuart Gentling and a personal essay by Texas' most respected writer, John Graves, won widespread acclaim. A. C. Greene praised it as "the most stunning and prodigious book in Texas history (and possibly forever)," while the Dallas Morning News deemed it "the most magnificent book ever produced in Texas."

This edition is intended to bring Of Birds and Texas to a wider audience. Maintaining the high standards of design and production that characterized the limited edition, it amplifies the original publication by including nearly thirty additional bird paintings or remarks, which the Gentling brothers produced for subscribers who helped underwrite the first printing. It also contains a new essay by Stuart Gentling, "Of Birds and Texas, Audubon and Us," in which he describes

not only how the brothers' deep admiration for John James Audubon led to the creation of this book, but also how their serendipitous discovery of a long-lost Audubon painting saved the project when a lack of funds threatened to end it.

John Graves' autobiographical essay, "Self-Portrait, with Birds," beautifully complements the Gentlings' paintings, expressing the same appreciation for the varied landscapes and bird life of Texas. As a whole, Of Birds and Texas is at once a work of art, literature, and natural history. Or as Ron Tyler put it in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, "This book . . . is the mature work of [three] of Texas's most talented and creative artists, a mammoth accomplishment of intensity and depth, of dedication and single-mindedness, that could only have been carried out by such renaissance men."

Twin brothers Scott Gentling and Stuart Gentling, of Fort Worth, Texas, are professional artists, authors, and lecturers. They were honored as the official artists for the Texas Audubon Society's centennial celebration. In

addition to their bird paintings, they are well known for portraits, still lifes, and landscapes done in a meticulous and demanding dry-brush watercolor style.