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THE COPPER-PLATES OF THE FOLIO EDITION OF  
AUDUBON'S 'BIRDS OF AMERICA,' WITH A  
BRIEF SKETCH OF THE ENGRAVERS.

BY RUTHVEN DEANE.

I.

THE engraving of the copper-plates for the elephant folio edition of the 'Birds of America' occupied the time between 1827 and 1838 when the 435 plates were completed. These plates were afterwards sent to America and stored in a warehouse in New York City. In 1845 many of these plates were seriously damaged by fire. In a letter from Spencer F. Baird to Audubon, dated Carlisle, Penn., August 4, 1845, he writes: "It is with the sincerest regret that I see by the papers that your copper-plates were injured or perhaps ruined by fire which occurred a few weeks ago."

Miss M. R. Audubon informs me that in 1851-52 when her grandfather's new house was built, a fire-proof vault, detached from the other buildings, was put up for them, and there they remained until the death of her father in 1862, when they were sold.

Under date of February 10, 1908, Miss Grace H. Dodge writes me that the plates were stored in the warehouse of Phelps, Dodge and Company, New York, about 1865, and at that time her father, the late William E. Dodge, had them sorted and presented a number of those that were in the best state of preservation to several colleges, museums, friends and members of his family.

The probabilities are that the majority of the plates were shipped from the New York warehouse to the Ansonia Brass and Copper Company, Ansonia, Conn., of which company Mr. Dodge was president, and I am indebted to Mr. Charles A. Cowles, Ansonia, for a most interesting account of how he was the means of saving several of these plates from being thrown into the smelting furnace and converted into copper bars. I quote from Mr. Cowles letter of March 7, 1907: "The story of the saving of these plates from a smelting furnace will probably interest you. Some time about the year 1873, there was found a number of the Audubon copper-plates among the scrap copper sent to the refinery of the Ansonia Brass & Copper Company, at Ansonia, Conn., to be converted into copper bars. I am of the opinion that the number included the complete set of plates engraved by Robert Havell for the 'Birds of America.'

"At that time I was about fourteen years old. I was beginning the study of taxidermy, and was naturally deeply interested in birds. I happened to be at the refinery watching the process of loading one of the furnaces, and noticed on one of the sheets of copper that a man was throwing into the furnace, what appeared to me to be a picture of a bird's foot. I took the plate from him, cleaned it with acid, and thereupon discovered the engraving, or as I termed it, the picture, of a bird (Plate CVI, Black Vulture). I made an immediate but unsuccessful request to the foreman of the furnace not to melt the plates; and then I appealed to the superintendent, but without avail. I next brought the matter to the general manager of the concern, my father, from whom I received no encouragement. This sort of treatment was evidently what I needed, for I hastened back to the works in a state of mind so determined that I succeeded in having all of the plates that had not been melted removed to a place of safety. This occurred in the spring of the year; and the plates remained undisturbed until the annual inventory was taken the first of the following year. At that time the question of the disposition of the plates was brought up. I appealed to my mother and interested her to such an extent that she drove to the factory and looked at one of the plates. She of course recognized that they were Audubon plates; and instructions were given by my father to keep them intact. The plates

were subsequently submitted to a treatment which removed all oxidation and then taken to the main office of the company, and, to the best of my recollection, distributed as follows: Mr. Wm. E. Dodge, president of the company, had a few plates sent to the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, and a few plates to the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., and I think he retained one or two for himself. The remainder of them, with the exception of two, my father kept; and they have since come into my possession by purchase from the estate. The two plates just excepted were Nos. 22 and 82 and they particularly struck my fancy, so much so that when the plates were first discovered I managed to secure them on the quiet, cleaned them myself and hid them; and when the plates were distributed no one knew of the existence of these two and they later became my property.

"I have sent two plates to Miss M. R. Audubon; and there are two others that I think I could locate. This will make nine plates that I know of, besides the plates in the museums previously mentioned and those that may be in the possession of the heirs of Mr. Wm. E. Dodge.

"Some of the plates in my possession are in very much better condition than the rest of them; and I have no doubt but what good imprints could be obtained if it was thought desirable to use them for that purpose."

A number of the plates were unquestionably sold from New York before they were shipped to Ansonia, as Mr. John H. Sage, Portland, Conn., informs me that two in his possession were presented to him in 1893 by Mr. Thomas R. Pickering, president of the Pickering Governor Company of Portland, who purchased them with others, some years before that date, for old metal in a junk shop in New York City. All of these plates were scratched and bent, but he put those presented to Mr. Sage and two others to the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., in as good condition as possible. Such as were utterly ruined, were melted up in the works.

In the 'Forest and Stream' of September 12, 1896, is the following note on the copper-plates.

*"Audubon's Plates sold for Junk.*

Boston, Sept. 4, 1896.

"EDITOR FOREST AND STREAM:— I notice in your last issue you announce you propose to publish for the benefit of 'Forest and Stream' readers some of the Audubon pictures, and it reminds me that over twenty-five years ago our house had sent them from New York six of the original copper plates of Audubon's birds as sample of the lot, which were to be sold for old metal. They were in very good condition, and by a very little retouching could have been used again. We thought it a shame to destroy them and tried to get some of our Boston publishers to purchase them for legitimate use, but failed in so doing. James R. Osgood<sup>1</sup> almost was persuaded, but we finally sent them back to New York, as we would not consent to be instrumental in their final destruction. Whatever became of them eventually I never heard, or if I did have forgotten.

"I remember one of the sample plates we had was the bald eagle, and I managed to take a hand-rubbed copy from it. These plates were the Elephant Edition. I think our correspondents in New York at the time, of which there is one still living, might remember where they went to, for the senior took the same views of our house and thought it vandalism to destroy them: but as there were several tons in all, their value then for old metal, copper being so high in price, amounted to a good sum.

"RENIGNOLDS [E. R. SHATTUCK]."

As a matter of record of the present resting place of such of these plates as I have been able to locate, I append the following list. In addition to these thirty-seven plates, Mr. Cowles has record of two which he hopes to locate.

	<i>Plate.</i>	<i>Present location.</i>
Canada Goose.	CCLI.	American Museum of Natural History, New York.
Hutchins's Goose.	CCLXXVII.	"
Mallard.	CCXXI.	"
Wild Turkey, female and young.	VI.	"
Great Northern Diver or Loon.	CCCVI.	"
Snowy Owl.	CXXI.	"
Hawk Owl.	CCCLXXXVIII.	"
Louisiana Hawk.	CCCXCII.	"
Sooty Albatross.	CCCCVII.	"

<sup>1</sup> James Ripley Osgood, publisher, born Feb. 22, 1836, died May 18, 1892.

	<i>Plate.</i>	<i>Present location.</i>		
Rough-legged Falcon.	CCCCXXII.	Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.		
Raven.	CI.	"		
Red-shouldered Hawk.	LVI.	"		
Three-toed Woodpecker (banded)	} CCCCXVII.	"		
Canadian " "				
Phillips's " "				
Maria's " "				
Harris's " "				
Audubon's " "	} CCCCXVIII.	Charles A. Cowles, Ansonia, Conn.		
American Scoter Duck.				
Herring Gull.			CCXCI.	"
Labrador Falcon.			CXCVI.	"
Black Vulture.			CVI.	"
Marsh Hawk.	CCCLVI.	"		
Snow Goose.	CCCLXXXI.	Miss M. R. Audubon, Salem, N. Y.		
Great White Heron.	CCLXXXI.	"		
American Robin.	CXXXI.	Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.		
Chuck-wills-widow.	LII.	"		
Virginia Partridge.	LXXVI.	"		
Great Blue Heron.	CCXI.	"		
Scarlet Ibis.	CCCXCVII.	"		
Whooping Crane.	CCXXVI.	"		
Trudeau's Tern. }	} CCCCIX.	} Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.		
Havell's Tern. }				
Common Tern.			CCCLIX.	"
Arctic Jager.	CCLXVII.	John H. Sage, Portland, Conn.		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird.	XLVII.	"		
Wild Turkey, male.	I.	Miss Grace H. Dodge, New York City.		
Blue Bird.	CXIII.	"		
Cowpen Bird.	CCXII.	"		
Double-crested Cormorant.	CCLVII.	Rev. D. Stuart Dodge, Simsbury, Conn.		
Pomarine Jager.	CCLIII.	Cleveland H. Dodge, New York City.		
Night Heron.	CCXXXVI.	"		
Brant Goose.	CCCXI.	Mrs. William Church Osborn, New York City.		

I wish to express my sincere thanks to those who have rendered me assistance in securing information on this interesting subject.

## II.

### ROBERT HAVELL.

Robert Havell was born in Reading, Berkshire, England, November 25, 1793. He was in business with his father Daniel Havell until 1828 when the partnership was dissolved. It was at about this time when Audubon transferred the work of the engraving and coloring of his plates of the 'Birds of America' from W. H. Lizars, who had already issued the first ten, to Havell. His place of business was located at 77 Oxford St., London, opposite the Pantheon, and known as the Zoölogical Gallery, and it was here that the great work was carried on and completed. Besides the business of engraving and the publishing of works of art, an agency was formed for the sale of specimens and other objects connected with natural history. A general business was also done in water-color paints, brushes, crayons, albums, books, etc. In 1812, father and son published a series of 'Picturesque Views on the River Thames' engraved by them in aquatint from drawings by Robert's cousin, William H. Havell, who had a reputation as a painter in water-colors.

Here he remained until September, 1839, when he came to America with his wife and daughter. Under date of March 9, 1906, his daughter, Mrs. Amelia J. Lockwood<sup>1</sup> of New York, wrote me that they sailed in the ship 'Wellington' and upon their arrival traveled up the Hudson River to West Point and other towns, returning after a few weeks and visited at Mr. Audubon's, who had also returned to America and was residing in White St., New York. After residing in Brooklyn, N. Y., for two years, in 1841 Havell purchased a home in Sing Sing (now Ossining), a beautiful spot commanding a fine view of the Hudson River and Palisades, and named it 'Rocky Mount.' There he remained until 1857, when he purchased land and built another home at Tarrytown,

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<sup>1</sup> Amelia Jane Lockwood, born 1826, died New York City April 6, 1907; widow of the late Brig. Gen. Munson Ingersoll Lockwood, Commander of 'The Lockwood Light Guard of Ossining.'

Robert Havell has a sister, Miss Marion Elington Havell, now living in New York City.

N. Y., remaining there until his death November 11, 1878, in his eighty-fifth year, and was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery with his wife, who died July 10, 1878. Their first boy was named Audubon, and the naturalist stood god-father, holding the child while being baptised, in St. James church, London. This boy died two years later.

After coming to America, Havell devoted much time to painting in oils and a short time before his death gave an exhibition and sale at his home, of some seventy-five paintings representing landscapes, panorama views and ornithological subjects. The titles of some of these were 'Sun Set on the Hudson,' 'Life and Death of the Pines' (a forest scene in Canada; the old pines dead and the young pines springing up amid their graves), 'Indians gathering Wild Rice,' panorama views of 'East River' and 'Niagara,' 'Hawk attacking Mallard Ducks,' 'Death of the Warrior' (White-headed Eagle dying, and Canvasback Ducks trying to protect their young), 'Carolina Doves courting.' Not long since some of Havell's paintings were still in possession of his grandson, who also has the silver loving-cup which Audubon presented to his friend and engraver on the completion of the second volume. On this cup is engraved, "To Robert Havell, from his friend J. J. A. 1834."

Havell's skill and patience during the eleven years which the publishing of this magnificent work occupied, won for him the reputation he so justly deserved. Prof. John Wilson<sup>1</sup> (Christopher North) in his review of the work in *Blackwood's 'Edinburgh Magazine,'* Vol. XXX, 1831, says: "Mr. Havell is an engraver of great merit, and his skill has found noble employment in perpetuating the creations, for they are all full of imaginations, of the 'American Woodsman.' We have heard some of our best engravers speak in the highest terms of the execution of the plates that have appeared since the work came into the hands of Mr. Havell. Audubon first employed Mr. Lizars of Edinburgh; but that admirable artist himself recommended his friend to get the work executed in London that it might have the advantage of his own personal superintendence during the first years of its progress."

As it required over seventy-six thousand plates for the one hun-

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. John Wilson, born Paisley, May 18, 1785; died Edinburgh, April 3, 1854. Frequent contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine* for many years from 1817.

dred and seventy-five copies<sup>1</sup> which are supposed to have been published, it is said that Havell was required to employ the services of over fifty persons. Notwithstanding the time and care which the engraver must have devoted to this mammoth undertaking, were it not for the constant and careful attention of Audubon in watching all details as the plates were executed, the work would not have the great reputation which it now bears.

Mr. Havell brought to America a copy of the 'Birds of America,' and it is said that every plate was carefully selected by himself. It remained in the family many years and was finally sold to Francis and Company, booksellers, New York. It was afterwards purchased by Dr. Gurdon W. Russell, Hartford, Conn., who presented it to the library of Trinity College July 10, 1900, after it had been in his possession for some twenty years.

I am much indebted to Mr. Robert Havell Lockwood, grandson of the engraver, for presenting me with the following hitherto unpublished letter, Audubon to Havell. It was written seven months prior to Havell closing up his business and sailing for America with his family.

*Audubon to Havell.*

Edinburgh, Feb. 20th, Monday, 1839.

My dear Mr. Havell

I perceive by the date of your letter of the 16th instant that you must have been some days beyond my expectations, in the receiving of my parcel to you, and that on that account my letter of Saturday last crossed yours of the same date. I thank you for what you say as regards the balance in my favor at Wright and Co.

Does Henry sail from *London Docks* or from *Portsmouth*? and pray what is the name of the Captain of the 'Wellington'? I do not precisely understand what you mean by the *loose sets* which you desire to know how they should be packed? let me hear what they are and how many of them by return of mail. The *five* perfect

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<sup>1</sup> I have record of the present resting place of seventy-five copies owned in this country. With the exception of a very few sets, they are complete and in good condition. A set in the library of the Mechanics-Mercantile Institute, San Francisco, Cal., which had been there for some thirty years, and another set in the San Francisco Art Association, presented in 1894 by Mr. Edward F. Searles, Methuen, Mass., were both destroyed by the disastrous earthquake and fire which visited that city April 18, 1906.



sets I think might all go into one case, tinned as usual and insured of course to the full amount of their value, as well as all others and to which I pray you to attend as if for your own self. It is impossible for me to go to London at present, and indeed I cannot exactly tell when I will, and I trust to you entirely for the seeing that all the volumes are fair and good and passed through *your own* inspection of them before they are packed. No volumes of Biographies must be put in the same boxes.

When you have disposed of your business, what will you do with what you may have on hand belonging to us? This requires an answer from you at once. You have a great number of volumes of Biographies, Pictures &c. &c., a regular list of which you ought to send me. I cannot yet say when the 5th vol. of Biographies will be finished, but will let you know as soon as I can. I received yesterday morning a letter from a gentleman who has procured a copy of the work through Mr. Eame the bookseller, he says that he has called upon you to say that he has missing *one plate* and begs to have a copy of the plate struck and remitted to Mr. Eame who will pay you whatever price the extra trouble on this account may amount to, but he does not say what plate it is, and I therefor suppose that you do? If so as he is the brother-in-law of Mr. Walker of Ravensfield Park, one of our *good* subscribers I would say do it for him! My wife begs of you to save all the loose prints which were returned to you by our son Victor, as well as any others whatever, perhaps among them you might find one to send Mr. Eame's subscriber?

On the 4th of this month the 'Great Western'<sup>1</sup> was nearly half way across the Atlantic!! Sir William Jardine<sup>2</sup> has published a

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<sup>1</sup> "At a meeting of the Directors of the Great Western Railway, Oct., 1835, one of the party spoke of the enormous length, as it then appeared, of the proposed railway from London to Bristol, Mr. Brunel exclaimed, 'why not make it longer, and have a steamboat to go from Bristol to New York, and call it the 'Great Western'?" The suggestion was evidently received with favor, for on July 19, 1837, the 'Great Western,' a steamship of 1340 tons and 236 feet in length, was launched and on April 8, 1838, she sailed on her maiden voyage, under command of Lieut. James Hosken, R. N., and reached New York on the 23rd inst. She was regarded as a nautical novelty and remained in commission for eighteen years.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Jardine, born Edinburgh, Feb. 23, 1800; died Sandown, Isle of Wight, Nov. 21, 1874. Editor of two editions of Wilson's 'American Ornithology' 1832-34. Co-author, at the age of 25 years, with Prideaux John Selby, 'Illustrations of Ornithology,' 1830. Editor 'Naturalists Library,' 40 volumes, 1833-45, of which he wrote 14 volumes. He was keenly addicted to field sports and a master of the rod and the gun.

capital review of the work! What a strange world we do learn in! Be sure to let me know about the original drawings at Henry's, if he has finished them, where they are &c. &c. We all remain as usual with kind good wishes to you all,

Your friend

John J. Audubon.

6 Alva St.

[Superscribed]

Robert Havell Esq.

Engraver.

77 Oxford St.

London.

### III.

#### WILLIAM HOME LIZARS.

William Home Lizars, the engraver of the first ten plates of the 'Birds of America,' was born about 1787 and died at Edinburgh March 30, 1859. His father was an artist, publisher and engraver of some merit, and several of his paintings are still in the National Gallery of Scotland. After his father's death in 1812, William carried on the business of engraving and copper-plate printing to support his mother and family.

He learned the art of engraving from his father to whom he was at first apprenticed, and later studied engraving at the Trustees Academy at Edinburgh. He executed numerous plates of Scottish scenery for various publications, and in 1822 made many anatomical plates for his brother John, who had acquired a reputation in that branch of study, but William made his mark as an engraver by his 'Scotch Wedding' and 'Reading the Will,' which were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1812. Later a co-partnership was formed with his brother Daniel under the firm name of D. and W. H. Lizars, the business being confined to the engraving and printing, as well as the selling of books. I am under many obligations to Mr. A. L. Wilkinson, Windsor, Ontario, for copies of three letters now in his possession, which were written by Audubon to his grandfather, Daniel Lizars, brother and partner of the engraver. On the 27th of October, 1827, Audubon had engaged him to act

as his agent in a certain territory. These letters refer to the selling of the parts as issued and the collecting of accounts from subscribers, and also dwell in a measure on the difficulty which Audubon was experiencing in receiving response to his communications. In the 'Journals' we see that Audubon at that time was intimate with the families and accepted the hospitality of both brothers, and Mr. Wilkinson writes me that he well remembers his mother telling him that Audubon staid at his grandfather's house for weeks at a time. Sir William Jardine, so prominent in ornithology, married in 1820 Jane Home Lizars, sister of the engraver, for his first wife.

*Audubon to Lizars.*

Daniel Lizars, Esq.,  
Book Seller  
5 St. David Street — Edinburgh.

Liverpool, 6th Dec., 1827.

My dear Sir:

I have been here two weeks today and would have wrote to you long since; but on my arrival at Manchester I received a large parcel of Letters from my wife, saying that she had relinquished the Crossing of the Atlantic for this winter that has so annoyed me and lowered my spirits that I really have had no wish to write to any one. I hope you are well and all the family. I received a letter from Mr. Havell saying that the Numbers and Prints to complete your sets had been forwarded you. I hope you have supplied the Glasgow Museum and the Revd. Mr. Craig. I will not ask if you have any new names for me as I *might* be disappointed were I to expect an affirmative answer. Please write to me here care of Messrs. Rathbone & Brothers and let me know what success you have had in collecting; and if any money of mine is in your hands please forward me. I will go from this to Derby and afterwards to Bristol and will acquaint you with my success. I have nine more names since I left you. If you see Sir Wm. Jardine tell him that Charles Bonaparte has left the U. S. for ever and is gone to reside at Florence in Italy. Pray tell your brother W. H. that I will write to him the moment I reach London and wish him and

his good wife Well and Happy. I have wrote to Mr. Havell to send you a No. 5 which I wish you to send to Professor Wilson or indeed a whole set, to enable him to write the notice he has promised me for the 1st of next month.

With sincere good wishes

I am yours ever and sincerely

John J. Audubon.

Daniel Lizars, Esq.,

Book Seller

5 St. David Street — Edinburgh.

London, January 21st, 1828.

My dear Sir:

My surprise at not hearing from you is extreme, I hope you are not unwell or that any misfortunes have befallen your family or your own concerns. When I write to any one I expect an answer but when I write to a man whom I esteem and to whom I entrust a portion of my business, I feel miserable until I hear from him. This is the third time since my leaving Edinburgh that I have addressed you and I now do beg that you will answer me by return of Post and attend to my injunctions detailed in my former letters. I am extremely desirous to close my business for 1827 and cannot do so without receiving your % and the money due by my subscribers. Pray answer me and believe me in great haste Yours

Truly and Sincerely,

John J. Audubon.

95 Great Russel Street  
Bedford Square.

Daniel Lizars, Esq.,

Book Seller

5 St. David Street — Edinburgh.

London, January 22nd, 1828.

My dear Sir:

I have just time to say that a fortunate demand of my work makes me request of you to forward me as soon as possible after receiving this all the sets of 5 numbers which you have on hand keeping only one full set to show.— The days are now so short and

so dark here that the coloring cannot go on fast enough for me.— If I mistake not you can send me six full sets of 5 numbers — and should you not have received back the sets intended for Dr. Meckleham who is no longer on my list of subscribers — send for it and keep that one on hand. You may have them all put in one of the Boxes sent you by Havell. My list of subscribers for your District amounts now to Eighteen, six that you will send and one copy for you to show make Twenty-five. I am extremely anxious to hear from you. This will be the 4th letter that I have wrote to you without a word of yours — in great haste

Yours Sincerely

John J. Audubon.

95 Great Russell Street,  
Bedford Square.

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## SOME BIRDS OF CENTRAL ALABAMA.

A LIST OF THE BIRDS OBSERVED FROM MARCH 7 TO JUNE 9, IN PORTIONS OF COOSA, CLAY AND TALLEDEGA COUNTIES, ALABAMA

BY ARETAS A. SAUNDERS.

SINCE our knowledge of the birds of Alabama is incomplete, and since few local lists have ever been published from this State, it was thought that the following would be worthy of publication, although the observations cover but a small area of country and a short period of time.

The area covered, consisting roughly of about 100 square miles, lies principally in the northwestern part of Coosa County, but includes also the southwestern corner of Clay County, at Hollins. Besides this, three days, April 14–16, were spent at Sylacauga, in the southern part of Talladega County. Our camp, about which the greater part of the observations were made, was situated one mile east of Woodbine, a small portable lumbering town which is moved about following the supply of timber, but was then situated in Coosa County, four miles to the west of Weogufka. Though