

Spare the Birds!

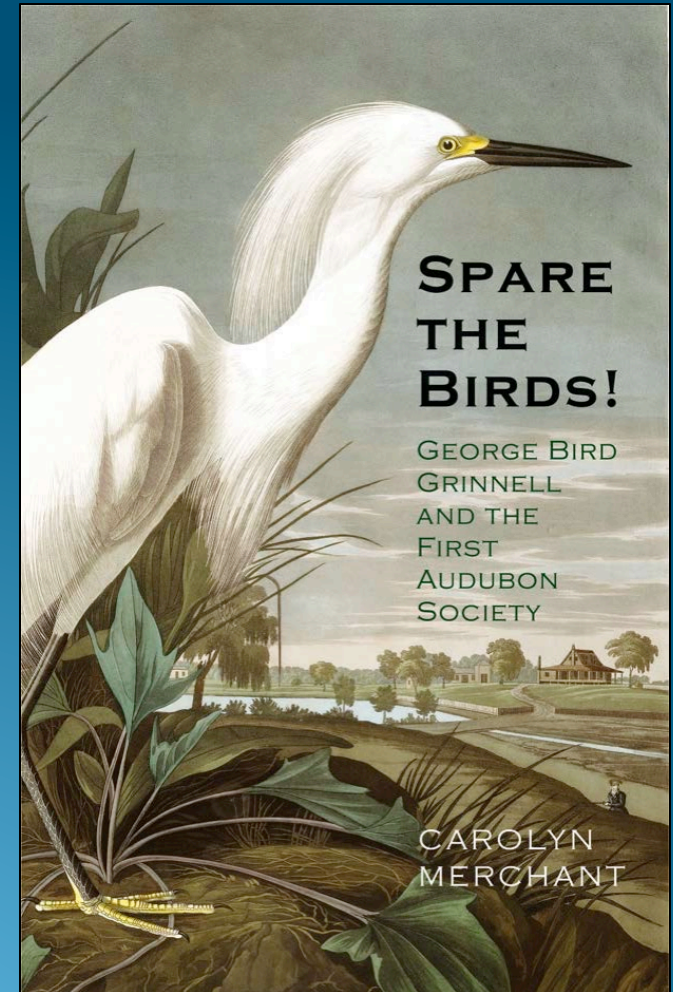
Audubon, Grinnell
and the *Birds of America*

Carolyn Merchant

Spare the Birds!

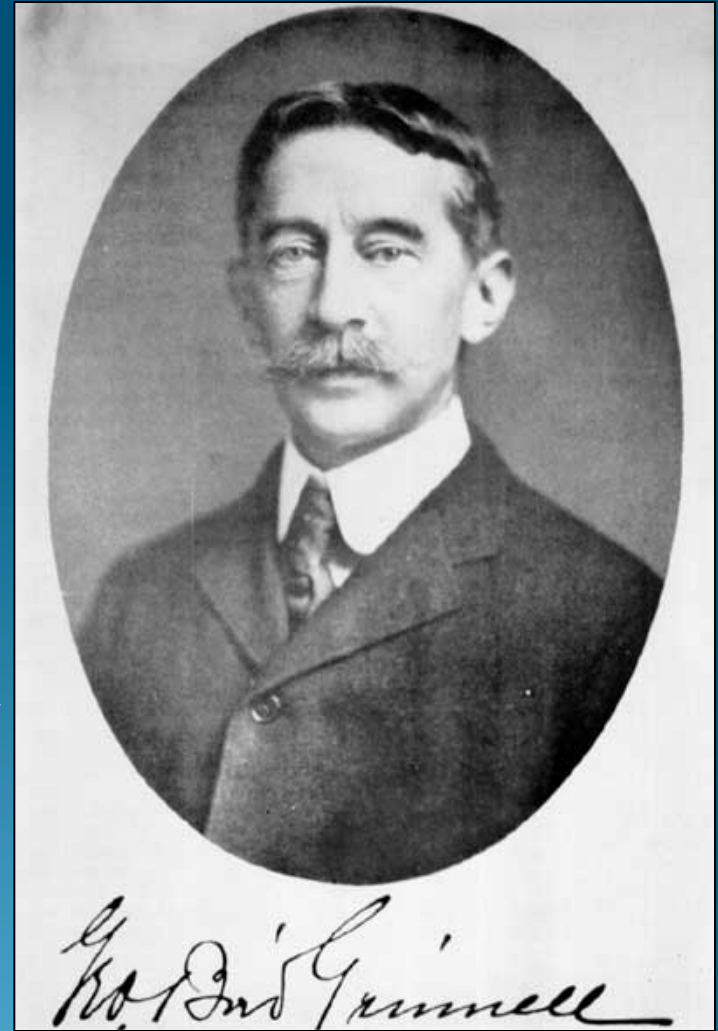
George Bird Grinnell and the First Audubon Society

- Carolyn Merchant.
- Yale University Press, 2016.
- Grinnell's Biographies of Audubon and Wilson.
- Grinnell's descriptions of Audubon's birds.
- Women's contributions.



George Bird Grinnell

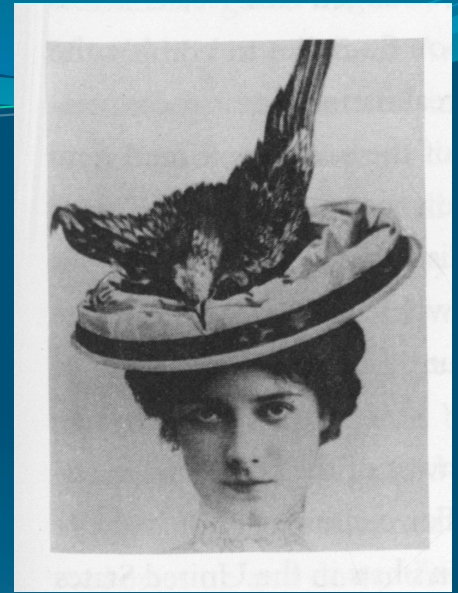
- Founder of the first Audubon Society, 1886.
- Founder of the first *Audubon Magazine*, 1887-1889.
- Goal was to save plume birds being plundered for women's hats, shooting of song birds, and some hunting of game birds.
- Abolished both the Society and the Magazine in 1889.
- Unable to achieve passage of a bird protection law.



George Bird Grinnell
1849-1938

Women and Hat Trade

- 1884. Grinnell: “From Florida to Maine the bird butchers are shooting, netting, snaring, and poisoning, 7 days in every week and every week in the season.”
- 1886. Ornithologist Frank Chapman walked through NYC shopping districts and made a list of birds worn on women’s hats.
- Of 700 hats counted, 543 were decorated with feathers.
- 1886. Women join the protest.
- Contribute to *Audubon Magazine*.



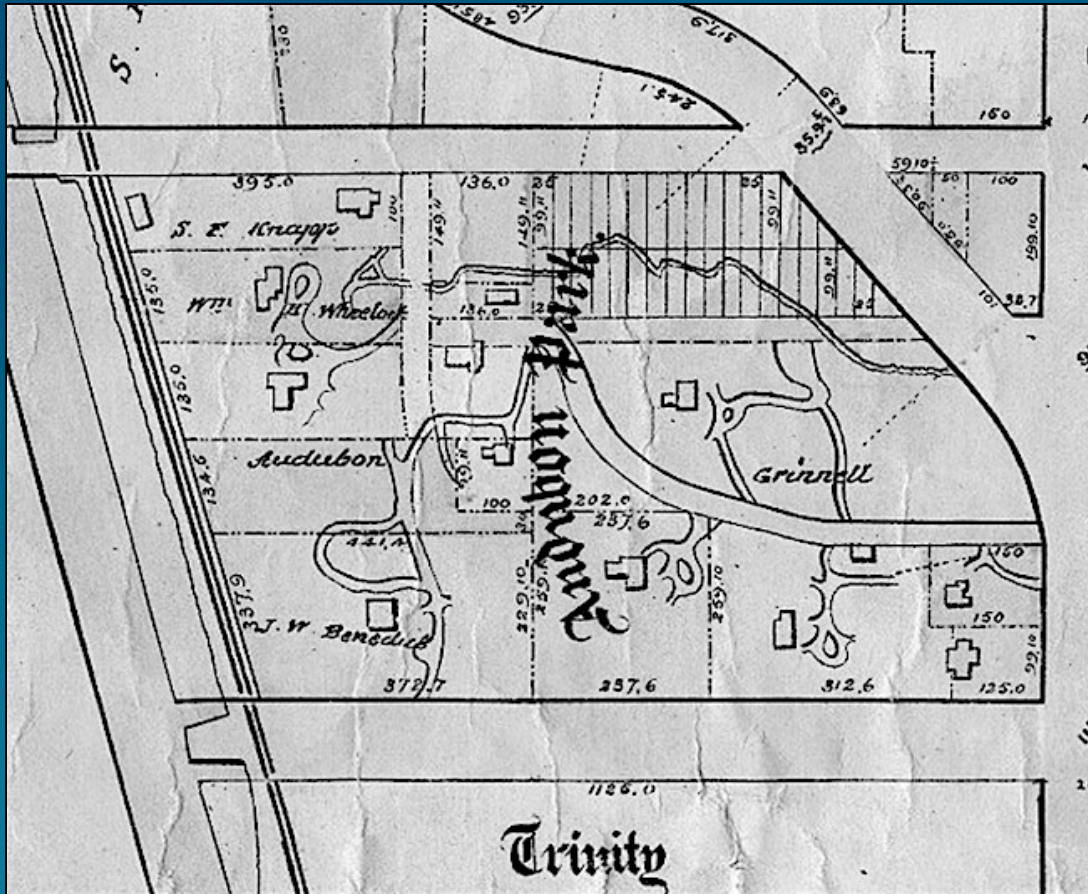
Godey's Ladies Book

George Bird Grinnell

- Founded *Audubon Magazine*.
- Published serialized biographies of Audubon and Alexander Wilson (8 issues each).
- Published a (black and white) photograph of an Audubon bird as the frontispiece of each issue of *Audubon Magazine*.
- Wrote his own description of each bird.
- Did not sign them so no one has recognized that he wrote the biographies or descriptions.



Why did Grinnell found the Audubon Society?



- Grew up on Audubon's estate in NYC.
- Moved there at the age of 7 in 1857.
- Lucy Audubon (Audubon's widow) was his teacher.
- Taught him to love birds.

Grinnell's Childhood



- “The year was 1857. In that year the 7 year-old George Bird Grinnell moved with his family to Audubon Park in New York City. The 30 acre wooded property on the Hudson River, between today’s 155th and 158th streets, had been acquired by John James Audubon who moved there in 1841. On January 1, 1857, the day the Grinnells arrived, it was snowing on the slushy road, hampering the horses, and delaying the party’s entry into the house Grinnell’s father had leased on the estate. Three years later the elder Grinnell built a home on what had been Audubon’s cow pasture.” (C. Merchant, p. 3)

John James and Lucy Audubon



1785 - 1851



1787 - 1874

- Met in Mill Grove, PA in 1804; married in 1808.
- Children: Victor Gifford Audubon (b. 1809) and John Woodhouse Audubon (b. 1816). Both became artists.

Lucy Audubon, Grinnell's Teacher



Lucy Audubon and Granddaughters



Audubon's Home—"Minnie's Land"
Audubon's term of endearment for Lucy

- Lucy teaches the young Grinnell to love birds.

Who was Audubon and how did he paint his birds?

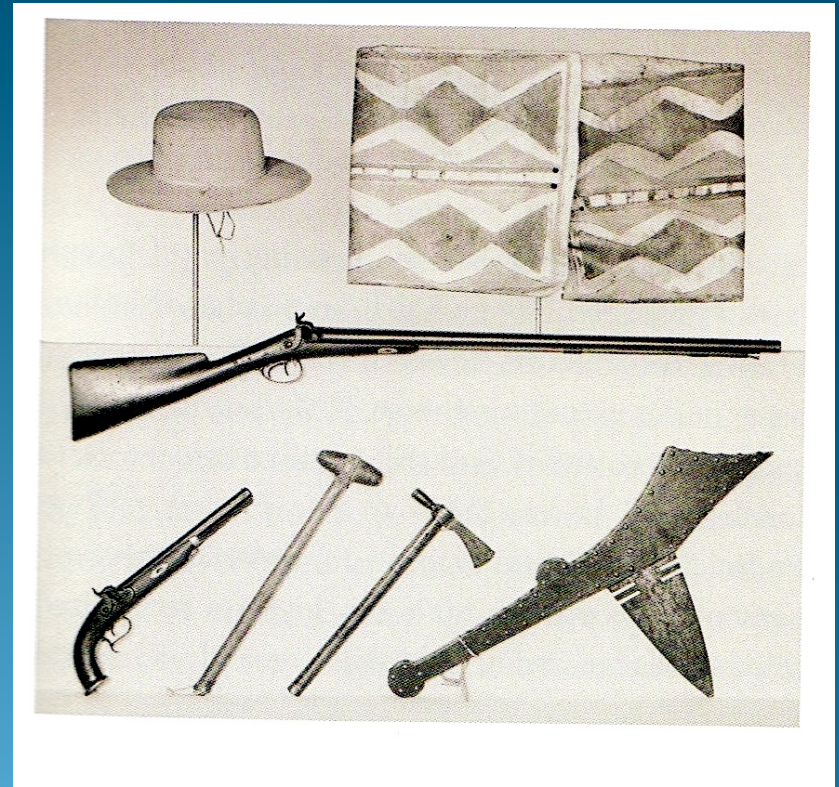
- Born in Les Cayes, Haiti, 1785.
- Migrated to U.S. in 1803.
- Married Lucy Bakewell, 1808.
- Traveled all over the U.S. painting birds while Lucy taught school.
- Published the *Birds of America*, 1827-1838.
- How did he paint birds?



John James Audubon
1785-1851

Audubon's Traveling Tool Kit

- No binoculars or opera glasses existed at this time in history.
- Had to shoot the birds in order to paint them.
- Gun, pistol, war club, hat, pipe, tomahawk for trading with Native Americans, cloth fabric.



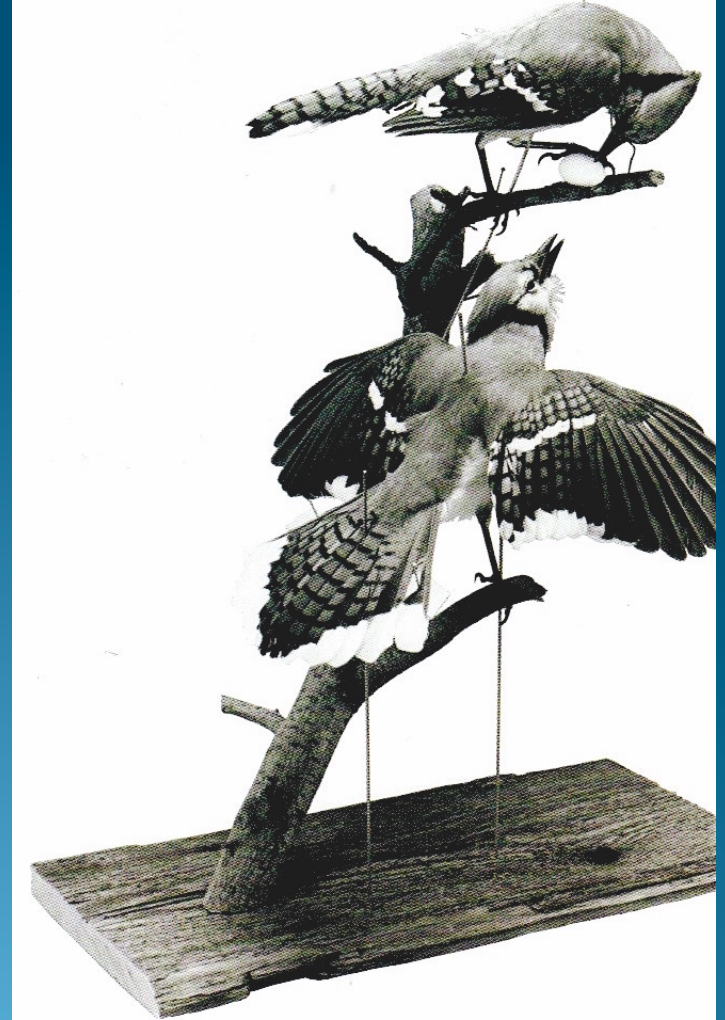
- Watercolors, brushes, pencils, pen, chalk.
- Large sheets of paper (39 x 29 inches) rolled and carried in metal tubes.
- Portable writing desk.
- Journals for keeping notes.

Audubon's Painting and Note Taking Materials



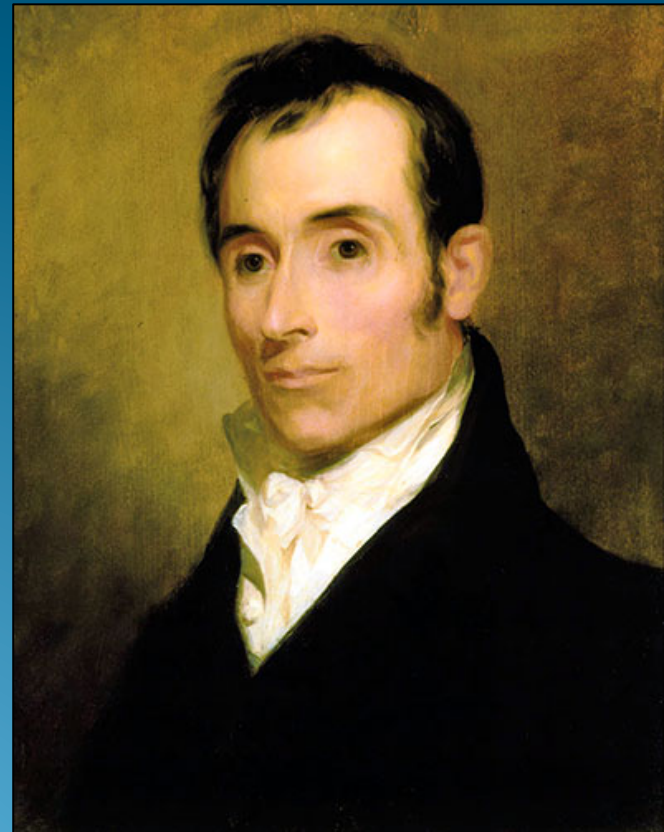
Audubon's Painting Method

- Wired birds in dramatic poses on a stand.
- Placed a grid behind them and another on his sheet of paper.
- Painted them with watercolors.
- Assistants often filled in backgrounds.



- Alexander Wilson, Audubon's rival.
- Born in Paisley, Scotland, 1766.
- Migrated to U.S. in 1794.
- Lived next door to naturalist William Bartram.
- Bartram encouraged him to paint birds and travel around the U.S.
- George Ord helped him publish; called him the "Father of American Ornithology."
- Published *American Ornithology*, 1808-1814, 9 vols.

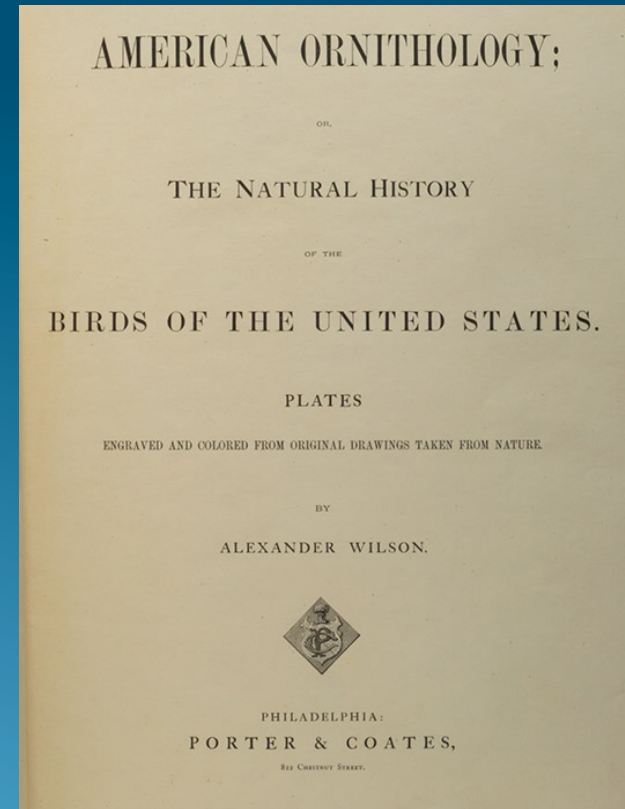
Alexander Wilson



1766-1813

Wilson Meets Audubon, 1810

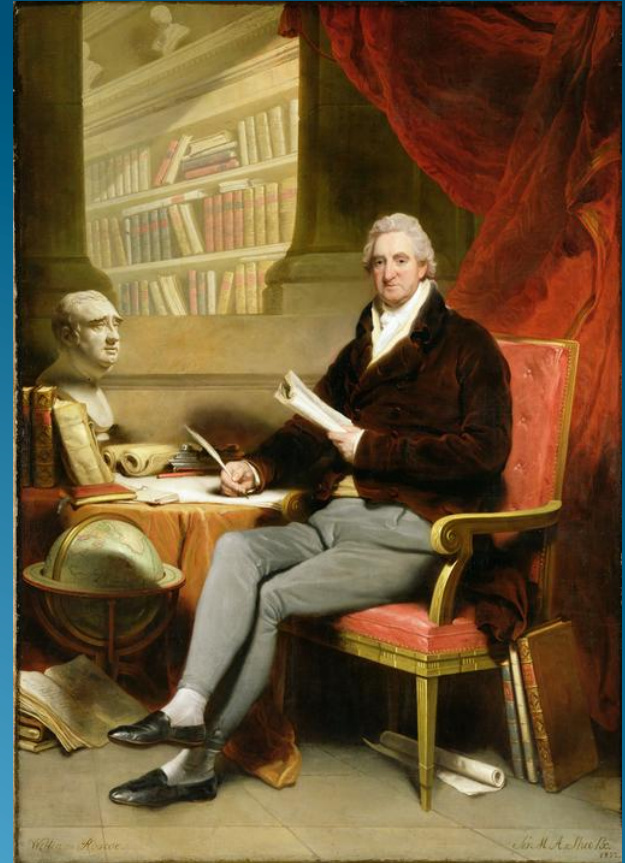
- Meet in Audubon's store in Louisville, KY, 1810.
- Wilson examines Audubon's paintings; goes birding with him.
- Realizes that Audubon's paintings are better than his own.
- Wilson meets George Ord in 1811; Ord becomes his champion.
- Ord prevents the publication of Audubon's *Birds of America* in U.S.
- Audubon forced to go to England to seek a publisher.



Wilson's
American Ornithology
Title Page

Audubon Travels to England to Seek Subscribers for the *Birds of America*

- Arrives in Liverpool in 1826.
- Among the first subscribers was William Roscoe of Toxteth Park.
- Outspoken abolitionist. In House of Commons voted against the slave trade. "*The Wrongs of Africa*"
- Supported women's education.
- Founded the Liverpool Botanic Garden in 1802-1803.
- Wrote *The Monandrian Plants... Arranged According to...Linnaeus* (1828).



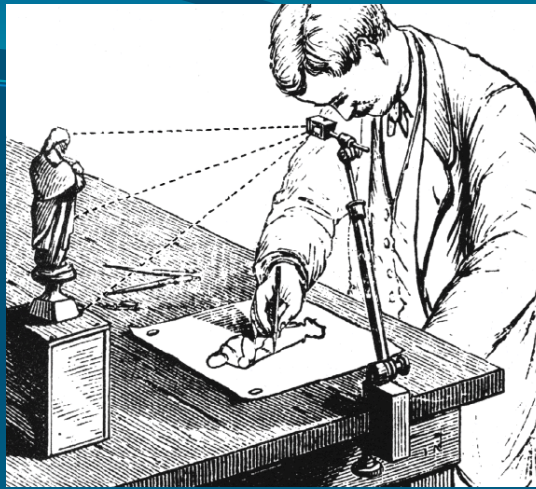
William Roscoe, 1753-1831

How were the *Birds of America* printed?



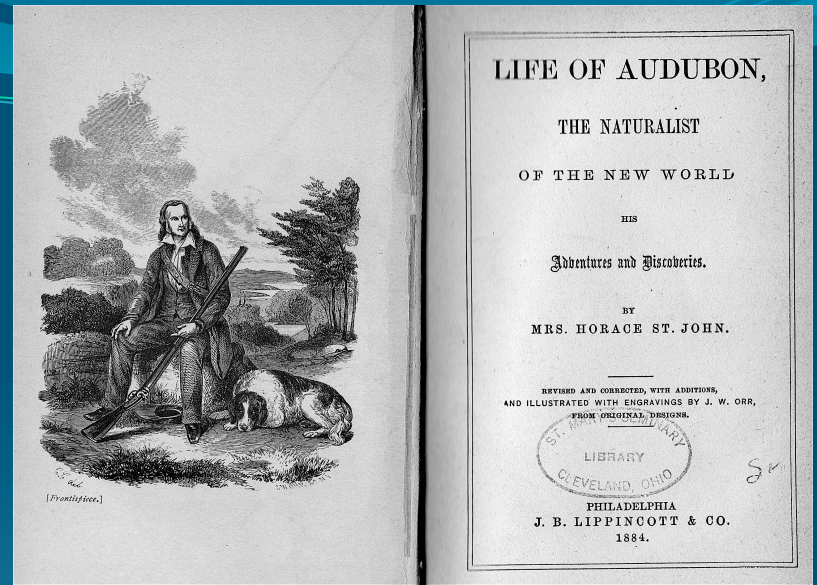
- Audubon's printer was Robert Havell, Jr in London.
- Used copper engraving and aquatint on Double Elephant paper.
- Tracing paper was used to copy images of the original watercolor birds. Then placed as mirror image on copper plate.
- Lines were etched into the copper. Plate was covered with ink which seeped into the incisions. Surface of plate cleaned off.
- With printing press, image on copper plate was pressed onto moistened paper. Ink in the depressions transferred to paper.
- Print was allowed to dry. Colorists filled in the lines with tints duplicating the original watercolor.

Octavo Edition (1840-1844)



- To produce the smaller, cheaper octavo edition (10.5" x 6.5") of the *Birds of America*, lithography was used.
- Double elephant folio sheets had to be reduced to octavo size using a *camera lucida*.
- The print on the wall was projected onto a sheet of paper using a prism with 4 surfaces (the *camera lucida*). Projected image was reduced in size. Drawn with greasy inks on paper; placed face down on limestone and rubbed, transferring the image to it.
- The limestone was dipped into acid which etched away the surfaces not protected by the oiled ink. Raised surfaces printed.

Biographies of Audubon Jane Elizabeth Roscoe St. John (1830-1906)

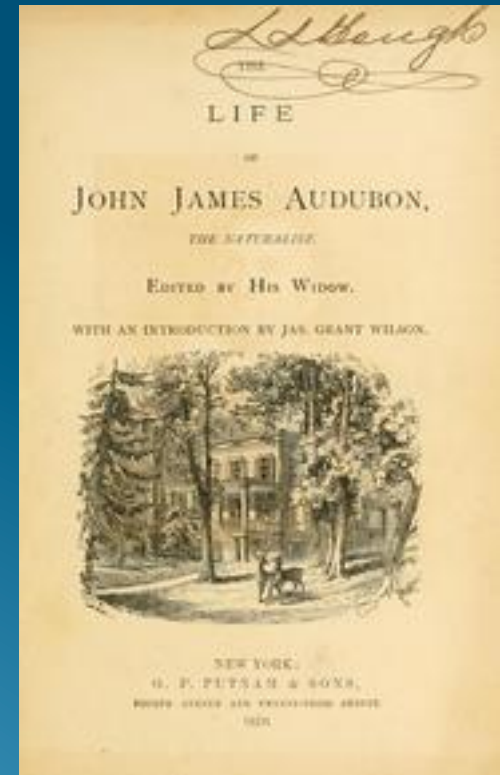


- Granddaughter of William Roscoe.
- Was a young girl when Audubon's birds were delivered in "fascicles" of 5 Double Elephant hand-colored prints via mail coach. Unveiled in her home in Toxteth Park as she grew up.
- Writes first book-length biography of Audubon at age 26.
- *Audubon, the Naturalist in the New World. His Adventures and Discoveries* (1856; 1861, 1864, 1884, 1894). 1869, 1870, 1871, juv. ed.
- Published under her married name, Mrs. Horace St. John.
- Probably met Audubon in 1837. Her connections to William Roscoe and to Audubon have not heretofore been recognized.

Biographies of Audubon

Lucy Bakewell Audubon (1785-1874)

- Lucy assisted Audubon with his *Ornithological Biography* (1831-39) while they were living in Edinburgh.
- Kept Audubon's journals and notebooks.
- In late 1860s, with assistance of Charles Coffin Adams, assembled 5 volumes and sent them to London for publication.
- Were reduced to one volume by Robert Buchanan in Scotland and published in Buchanan's name, 1868.
- Re-published by Lucy Audubon in New York, 1869, in her own name.

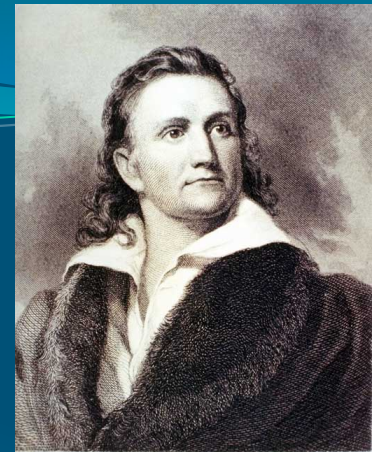


Lucy Audubon,
*Life of John James
Audubon*, 1869

Biographies of Audubon

George Bird Grinnell,

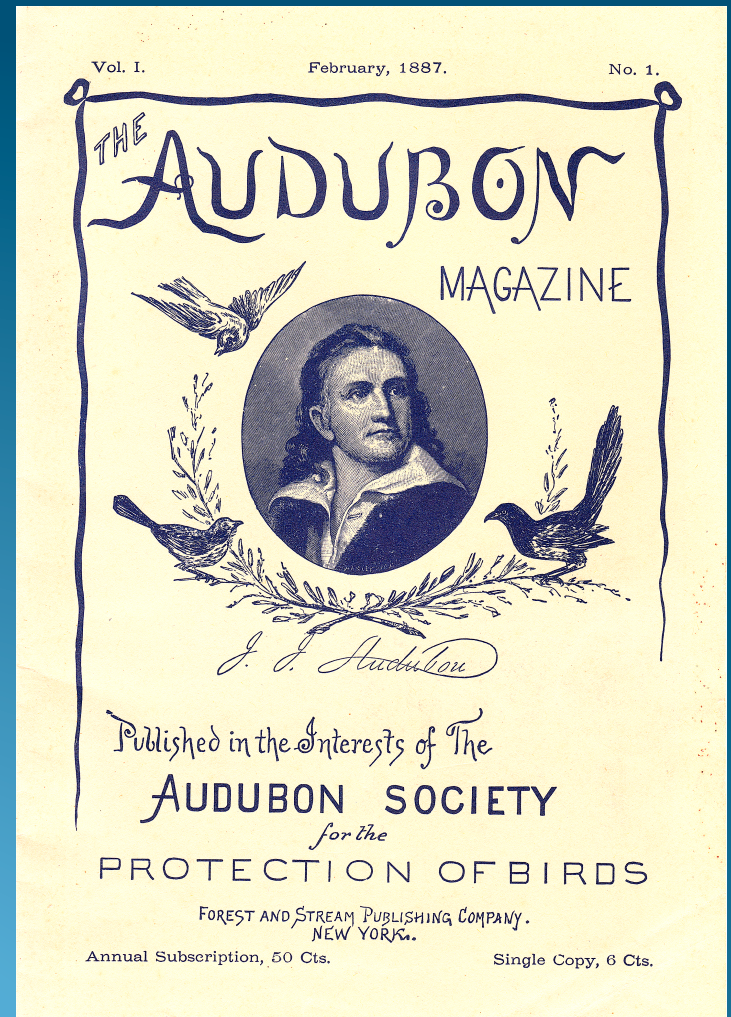
1887-1889



- Grinnell wrote his biography of Audubon as unsigned editorials, serialized in the first 8 issues of *Audubon Magazine*.
- Compared Audubon's artistry to that of Alexander Wilson, Charles Bonaparte, William Swainson, and Thomas Nuttall.
- Wrote that Audubon differed from all of them "as the artist differs from the skilled mechanic" and as "immobility" differs from "arrested motion."
- Praised Lucy Audubon who "from the beginning shared his hopes and fears, encouraged him in times of depression and doubt, labored that he might have money" and was ever "his closest friend and firmest supporter."

Grinnell's "Monthly Birds" in *Audubon Magazine*

- Grinnell printed one of Audubon's *Birds of America* as frontispiece of each issue of *The Audubon Magazine*.
- He photographed the color images in black and white to print in the magazine.
- Which version of Audubon's *Birds of America* did he use?
- Double Elephant or Octavo?



Grinnell's "Monthly Birds" in *Audubon Magazine*

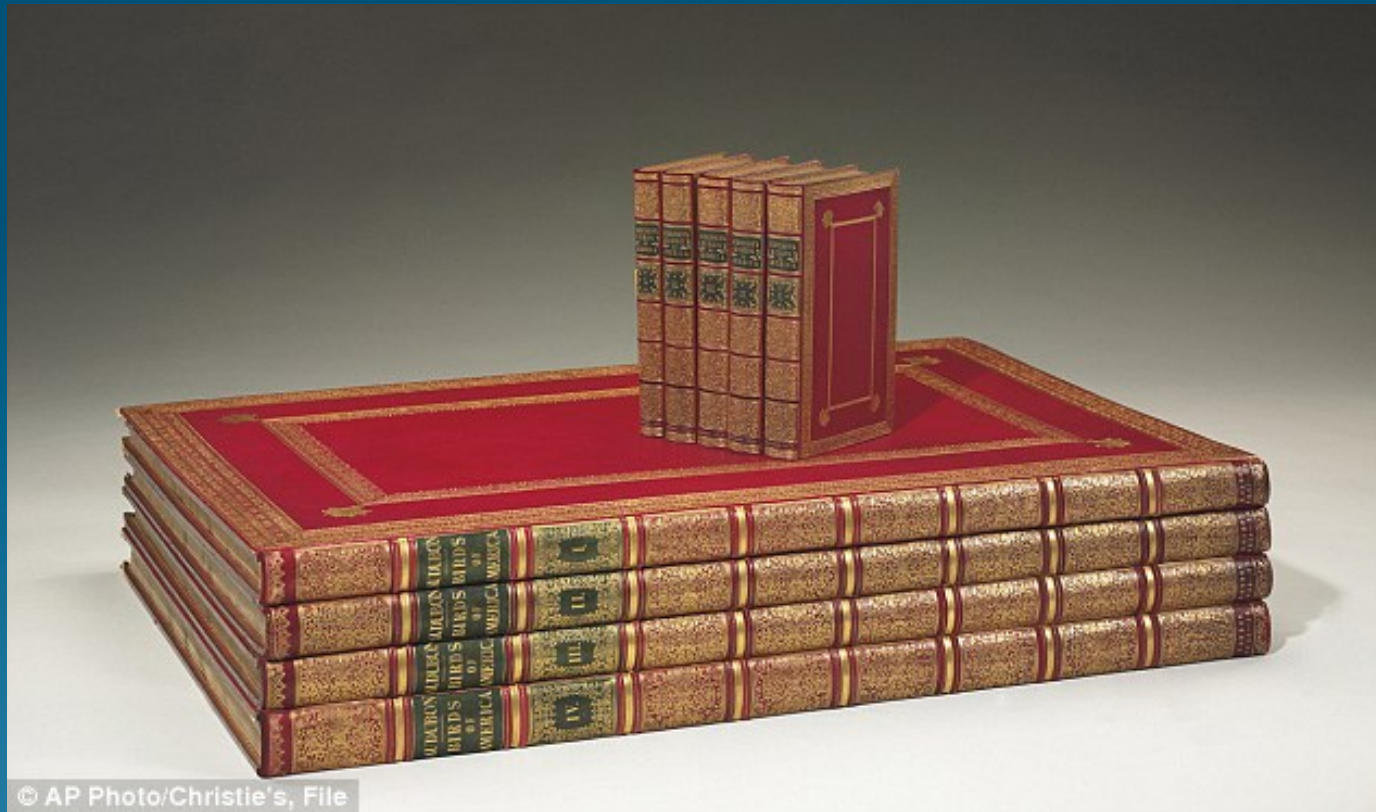
- Grinnell used unbound copies of *The Birds of America* from the original Double Elephant publication (1827-1838).
- Copies were brought to America from London by Robert Havell, Jr. who had produced the hand-colored Double Elephant prints.
- 39 inches tall x 29 inches wide.
- Grinnell owned copies and photographed them.



California Academy of Sciences,
San Francisco

Audubon's *Birds of America*

Double Elephant vs. Octavo Editions



© AP Photo/Christie's, File

- Double Elephant Folio, 4 vols. 39" high x 29" wide.
- Octavo, 10.5 x 6.5 inch plates (1840-1844).

Which edition did Grinnell use for *Audubon Magazine*?



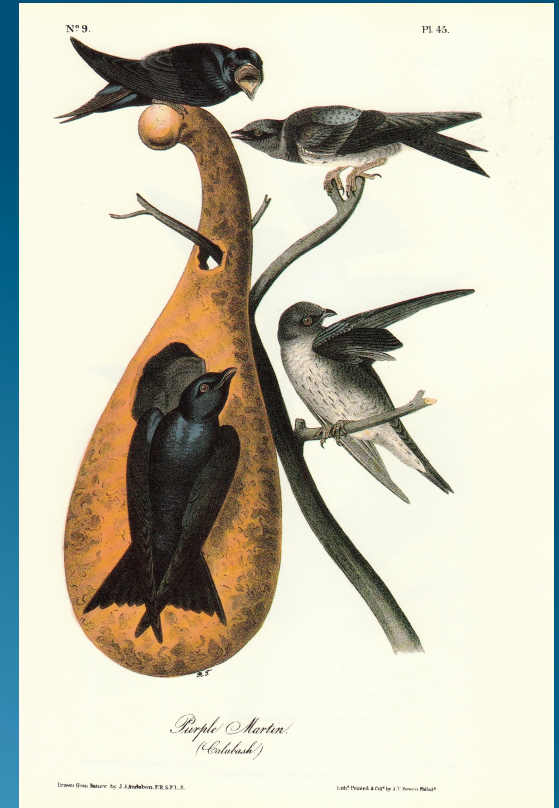
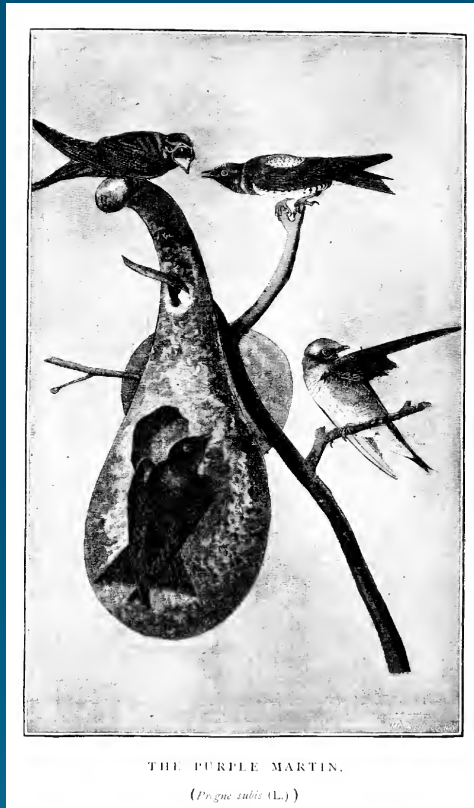
- Grinnell likely owned an unbound copy of the *Birds of America*.
- His family was “fabulously wealthy.” (John Reiger)
- Grinnell’s father bought out the *Forest and Stream* weekly magazine from Charles Hallock. Grinnell became editor in 1876.
- The offices of *Forest and Stream* and *Audubon Magazine* were both at 40 Park Row, NYC.
- In 1896, Grinnell wrote that plates he published in an 1896 issue of *Forest and Stream* were photographed from a now “very rare” “copy of the double elephant folio edition of [*the Birds of America*] in possession of a member of the Forest and Stream Publishing Co.” This was almost certainly himself.

Double Elephant vs. Octavo Editions



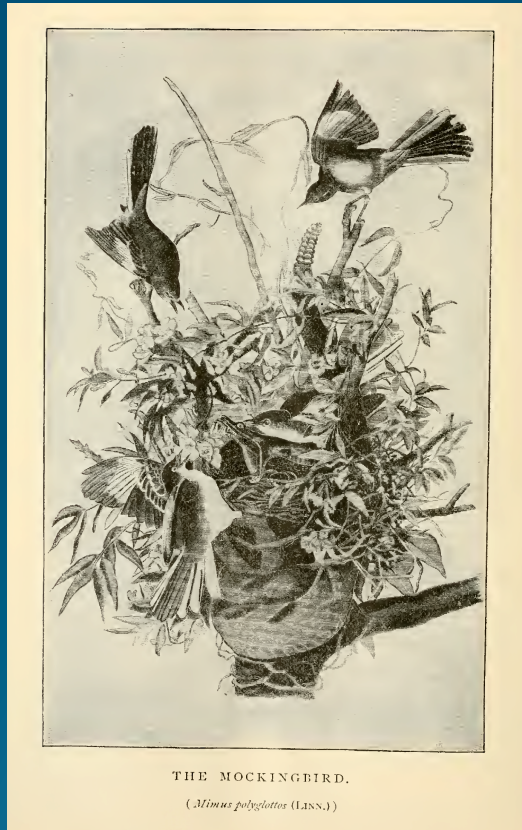
- 1.1 Baltimore Oriole: More leaves in Grinnell and Double Elephant (left and center) than Octavo (right).
- Different bird on bottom of Octavo (Right).

Double Elephant vs. Octavo Editions



- 1.6 Purple Martin: Extra calabash in Grinnell and Double Elephant (left and center).
- Only 1 calabash in Octavo (right)

Double Elephant vs. Octavo Editions



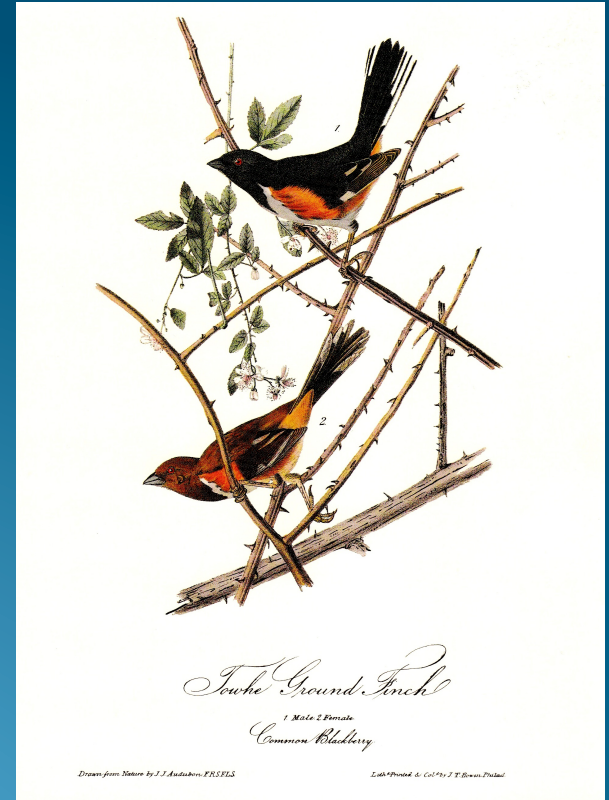
- 2.3 Mocking Bird: Top bird missing in Octavo (right).

Double Elephant vs. Octavo Editions



THE TOWHEE BUNTING.

(*Pipilo erythrophthalmus* (LINS.))



Towhee Ground Finch

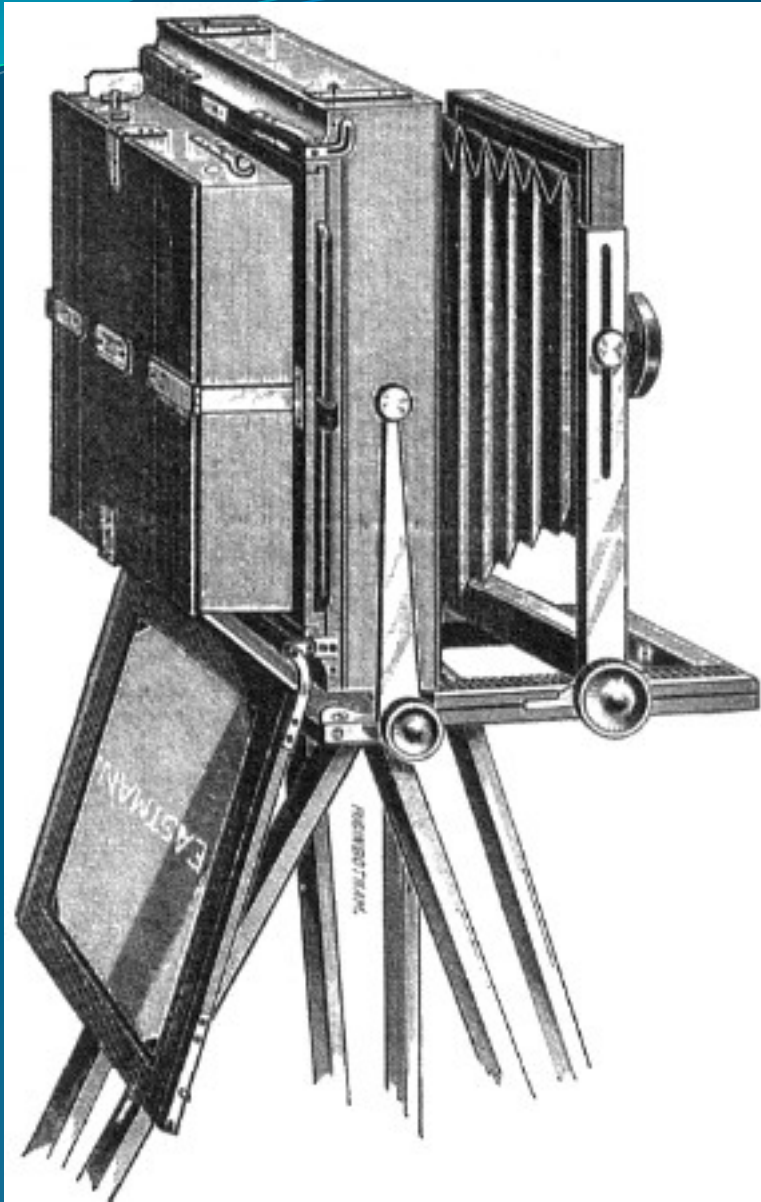
1 Male 2 Female
Common Blackberry

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon, F.R.S.E.L.

Engraved by J. T. Bowen, Philad.

- 2.8 Towhee: Extra twigs on top and bottom in Grinnell and Double Elephant (left and center).

How did Grinnell take the photographs for *Audubon Magazine*?



- Grinnell probably had the latest in photographic equipment in his offices at 40 Park Row in NYC for use by *Forest and Stream* and *Audubon Magazines*.
- For *Audubon Magazine* in 1887-1889 this would have included a bellowed camera and photographic plates.
- Unbound Double Elephant prints would have been mounted on the wall and photographed.
- Could then be printed directly.

The Demise and Rebirth of the Audubon Society



Harriet Lawrence Hemenway
1858-1960

- January 1889. Grinnell abolished both the Audubon Society and Audubon Magazine.
- Was unable to achieve his goals of preserving plume birds, song birds, and seasonal regulations for game birds.
- Extra work publishing both a weekly and a monthly magazine.
- 1896. Massachusetts Audubon Society founded by Harriet Hemenway and Minna B. Hall.

Women Found Audubon Societies



Florence Merriam Bailey
1863-1948



Mabel Osgood Wright
1859-1934

- 1897. Audubon Society of D.C. founded by Florence Merriam Bailey.
- 1898. Connecticut Audubon Society founded by “a score of ladies.”
- Mabel Osgood Wright elected president.
- 1899. *Bird-Lore* founded by Frank Chapman. Mabel Osgood Wright edits the “Audubon Department.”
- 1903. National Association of Audubon Societies founded.
- 1905. 28 states pass the AOU Model Law.
- 1913. Tarrif Act outlaws importation of bird feathers.
- 1918. Migratory Bird Treaty Act passed.

The End