

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON DRAWINGS AND PROOFS

Mss. 5160

Inventory

Compiled by
Michael Taylor
and Hans Rasmussen

E.A. McIlhenny Natural History Collection
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La.

2014

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SUMMARY

Size.	1.0 linear foot
Geographic Locations.	United States
Inclusive Dates.	1840-1844
Languages.	English
Summary.	The John James Audubon Drawings and Proofs consist of drawings, colored proofs, and uncolored proofs used to produce the illustrations in the 1840-1844 first octavo edition of the <i>Birds of America</i> .
Restrictions on Access.	None
Reproduction Note.	If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm.
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Citation.	John James Audubon Drawings and Proofs, Mss. 5160, E.A. McIlhenny Natural History Collection, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Location.	VAULT:53

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

John James Audubon (1785-1851) was the most distinguished wildlife artist of the nineteenth century. His best known work, the double elephant folio edition of the *Birds of America*, was published in Edinburgh and London between 1827 and 1838. Approximately 200 copies were printed, selling for £184 14 shillings in Britain and \$1,000 in the United States. A complete set contained 435 hand-colored engravings. Audubon later published a less expensive edition, priced at \$100. Produced using the lithographic process, it became known as the petite, royal octavo, or Birds in Miniature edition. It was published in installments as *The Birds of America, from Drawings made in the United States and their Territories* (1840-44) (Call number: McIlhenny Natural History Collection, QL674 .A9 1840). A complete set contains 500 plates measuring 11 by 7 inches, about one fourth the size of the illustrations in the folio edition.

Lithographer J. T. Bowen of Philadelphia employed various artists to create the smaller plates. In some cases, they were made using a grid or camera lucida, which projected a reduced image onto paper. In other cases, Audubon himself created new drawings based on the originals or of birds not in the folio edition, such as the Western Meadowlark (included in this collection). Drawings were then transferred onto a lithographic stone by covering them with a sheet of tracing paper held in place by wax, then traced over in red or brown crayon. In some instances, the crayon was applied directly to the drawing. (The drawing of the Downy Woodpecker, in this collection, still bears small pieces of tracing paper and wax.) After the images were transferred, proofs were made to test the accuracy of the drawings and background tints before producing the final prints, which were hand colored.

The materials in this collection were previously owned by the noted book collector H. Bradley Martin, grandson of Andrew Carnegie's business partner Henry Phipps. After Martin's death in 1988, they were purchased at auction by Texas bookseller and publisher W. Thomas Taylor, who planned to include the drawings and proofs in deluxe copies of a book he was publishing on the royal octavo edition, written by art historian Ron Tyler. Tyler, however, determined that thirteen of the drawings were by Audubon himself. Rather than break up the collection, Taylor sold it to the LSU Libraries in 1992. (For more information on the collection's provenance, see "La Petite Édition: Sketches by John James Audubon" in *Treasures of LSU*, and Ronnie C. Tyler, *Audubon's Great National Work: The Royal Octavo Edition of The Birds of America*.)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of 32 pencil drawings, three colored proofs, and 14 uncolored proofs of 38 illustrations from the first octavo edition of the *Birds of America*. Box 1 contains unmatted illustrations and box 2 matted illustrations.

The number and plate designations refer to those on the final prints. Like the original folio edition, the octavo edition was sold by subscription, its subscribers receiving prints in installments of five, which were then bound together, usually in seven volumes. "Number" refers to the installment, "plate" to the individual image.

CONTENTS LIST

Location	Box	Folder	No.	Plate	Subject	Type of Illustration
VAULT:53	1	1			Leaflet advertising seven works of John James Audubon for sale by C. S. Francis & Co., New York, including the elephant folio and royal octavo editions of the <i>Birds of America</i> .	
		2	5	22	Sparrow Falcon	Colored proof
		3	15	75	Wilson's Flycatching-Warbler	Drawing with grid
		4	17	83	Hemlock Warbler	Drawing with grid
		5	18	86	Carulean Wood-Warbler	Drawing
	2	1	19	93	Hermit Wood-Warbler	Drawing
	1	6	21	101	Mourning Ground-Warbler	Drawing with grid
		7	22	110	Tennessee Swamp Warbler	Drawing with grid
		8	28	138	Common Mocking Bird	Colored proof
		9	43	213	Saffron-headed Marsh-Blackbird	Colored proof
	2	2	49	243	Red-eyed Vireo or Greenlet	Drawing
	1	10	49	245	Black throated Wax-wing or Bohemian Chatterer	Drawing
		11	49	245	Black throated Wax-wing or Bohemian Chatterer	Uncolored proof with tint block
	2	3	50	248	Red-bellied Nuthatch	Drawing
		4	52	258	Canadian Woodpecker	Drawing
		5	53	263	Downy Woodpecker	Drawing
	1	12	53	263	Downy Woodpecker	Uncolored proof with tint block

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON DRAWINGS AND PROOFS

1840-1844

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Location	Box	Folder	No.	Plate	Subject	Type of Illustration
VAULT:53	2	6	55	275	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Drawing
		7	59	292	Welcome Partridge	Drawing
		8	60	299	Willow Ptarmigan	Drawing
	1	13	60	299	Willow Ptarmigan	Uncolored proof with tinted background
		14	61	304	Common Gallinule	Uncolored proof with tinted background
	2	9	62	306	Sora Rail	Drawing
	1	15	62	310	Clapper Rail or Salt Water Marsh Hen	Uncolored proof with tinted background
	2	10	63	311	Virginian Rail	Drawing
		11	63	313	Whooping Crane	Drawing
	1	16	63	315	Black-bellied Plover	Drawing
		17	63	315	Black-bellied Plover	Uncolored proof with tinted background
	2	12	64	318	Rocky Mountain Plover	Drawing
	1	18	75	375	American Flamingo	Uncolored proof
		19	87	431	Sandwich Tern	Drawing
		20	87	433	Common Tern	Drawing
		21	87	433	Common Tern	Uncolored proof with tinted background
		22	89	445	Ivory Gull	Drawing
		23	89	445	Ivory Gull	Uncolored proof
		24	93	462	Tufted Puffin	Drawing
		25	94	467	Curled-crested Phalaris	Drawing

Location	Box	Folder	No.	Plate	Subject	Type of Illustration
VAULT:53	1	26	94	467	Curled-crested Phalaris	Uncolored proof with tinted background
		27	94	468	Knobbed-billed Phalaris	Drawing
		28	95	475	Slender-billed Guillemot	Drawing
		29	97	484	Harris' Finch	Drawing
		30	97	484	Harris' Finch	Uncolored proof with tint block
		31	97	485	Bell's Vireo	Drawing
	2	13	98	489	Missouri Meadow Lark	Drawing
	1	32	98	489	Missouri Meadow Lark	Uncolored proof
		33	98	490	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Drawing
		34	98	490	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Uncolored proof
		35	99	491	Least Flycatcher	Drawing
		36	100	497	Western Shore Lark	Drawing
		37	100	497	Western Shore Lark	Uncolored proof with tinted background