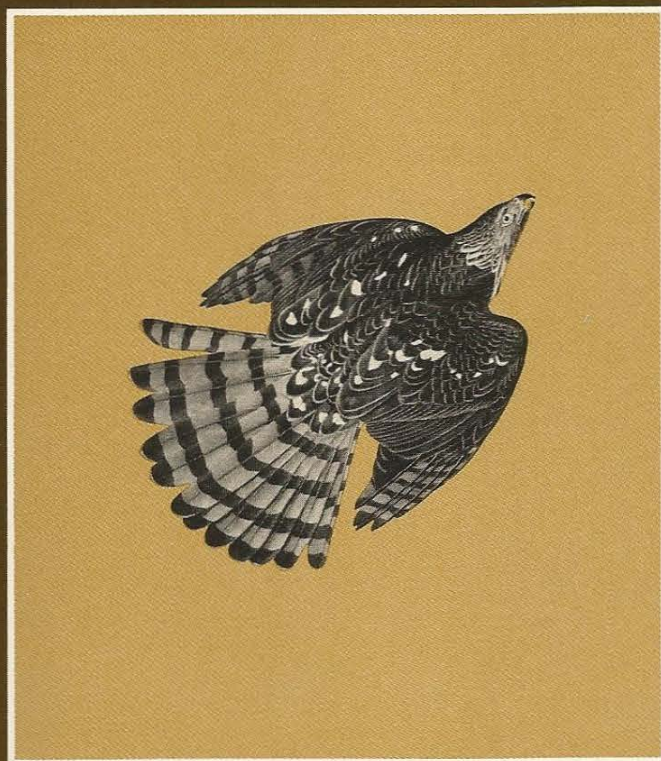


AMERICAN SCENE

THE THOMAS GILCREASE INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART, TULSA, OKLAHOMA



AMERICAN SCENE

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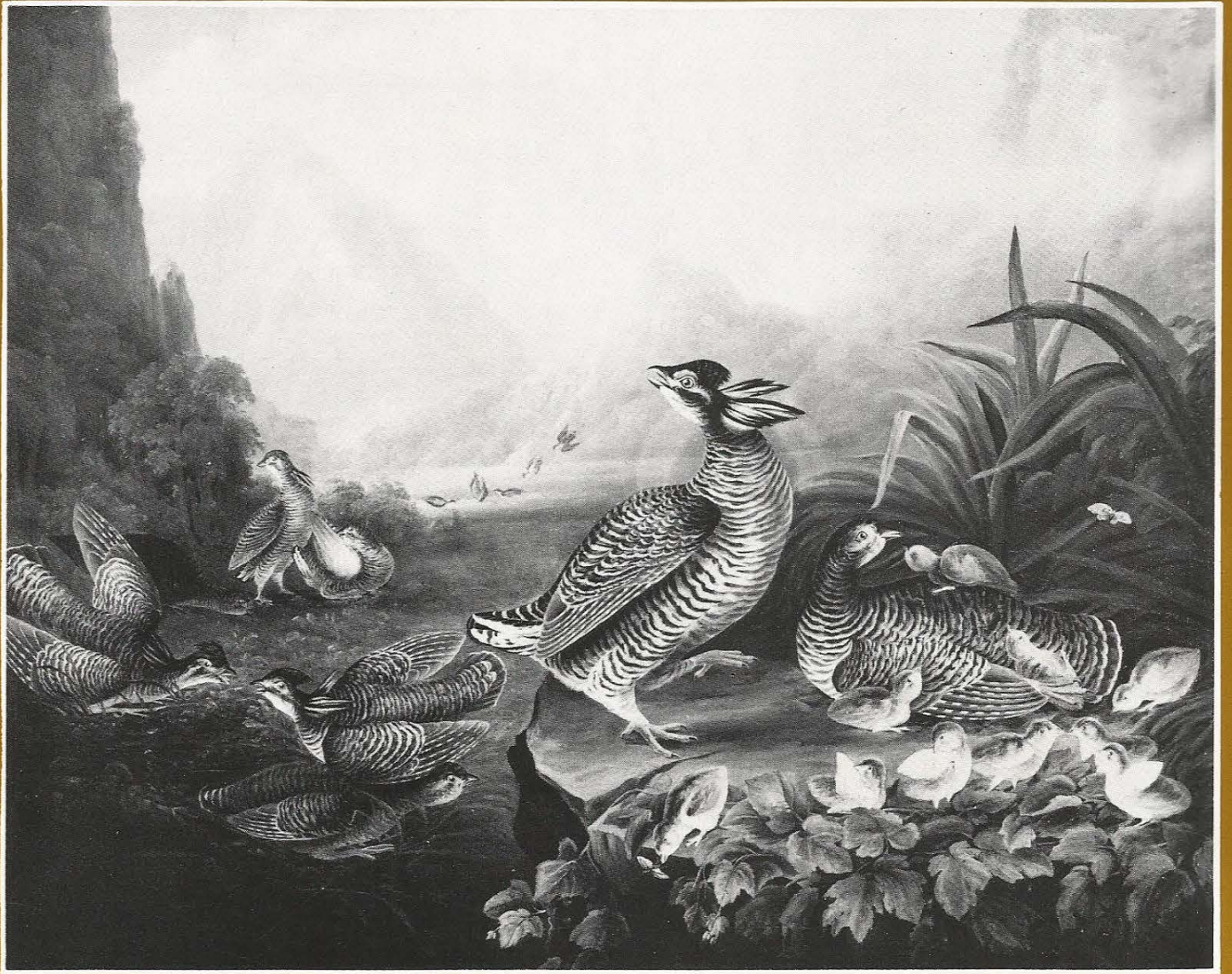
BIRDS



This issue of American Scene swings the spotlight of attention toward one of mankind's most interesting companions in life—the bird. More specifically, the focus is brought toward various recorded human comments made historically with respect to relationships between the earthbound and the airborne.

From the very beginning of his career of creative activity man has been fascinated by the bird-form. He has studied it scientifically, pondered it philosophically, and admired it artistically. It is this last approach, as reflected in our museum's collections, that we wish to honor in this current issue of our magazine.

Curatorially, then, we have attempted gently to pull aside a particular curtain from one of literally thousands of subject-area doorways to the Gilcrease Collection. We invite you, the observer, to walk through and at your leisure enjoy an extremely pleasant encounter with items from the collection which you have, perhaps, never seen before. You will be pleased, also, to discover that what is contained in these pages is but a small sample of what is available in the study areas of the museum.



Pinnated Grouse
Robert Havell, Jr.

AUDUBON & HAVELL

In his autobiography, *Myself*, John James Audubon says, "The precise period of my birth is yet an enigma to me." And so it remains for many. There seems to be general disagreement among writers about the date and place of his birth. His father, Jean Audubon, spent several years in Santo Domingo, now Haiti, but was a native of France. By 1774, he was captain of his own ship, and later served as commander of several armed and trading vessels. He was also a merchant, planter, and dealer in slaves, and managed to amass quite a fortune. However, little is known of the artist's mother. It is generally agreed that she was Creole, but there the agreement—or knowledge—ends. It is generally accepted by most authorities now that Aux Cayes, Haiti, was the birth place of John James Audubon and later by yet another alliance, his half sister. There are a few biographers who have maintained that the artist-naturalist was born in Louisiana, but this seems unlikely. While there probably remains some doubts about his birth date, it is accepted by most to be April 26, 1785. In 1794, Jean Audubon took his two children to France, and his wife of seven years, who had remained there in Nantes, formally and legally adopted the boy and his half sister. She became a devoted mother to both, and, when Audubon was baptized, he was given the name, Jean Jacques Fougère. According to one biographer, Audubon's full name was Jean Jacques La Forêt (La Forest) Fougère Audubon—small wonder that his paintings have been variously signed "J. L. F. A." or "J. J. L. Audubon!"

In his book, *Audubon—An Intimate Life of the American Woodsman*, Stanley Clisby Arthur says: "To which ever belief (about his birth and parentage) one gives credence in reading the man's life, John James Audubon presents a fascinating figure in American history, a high light in American romance, a model in American achievement."

Audubon was of a complex and often contradictory character. He was a lover of nature, yet he was an ardent sportsman, shooting for amusement as well as for food; in many ways he was a humble man, yet he was vain about his dress and appearance; in scholarly pursuits, he was often lazy, but as an artist and ornithologist, he worked avidly.

From a well-to-do family, he had all the advantages of good schools, but he showed little interest in formal education. When sent to a military academy, he fared only a little better. His father, who had always encouraged his interest in nature and his ability to draw, sent him to Paris to study with Jacques Louis David who later became the court painter for Napoleon. However, through the years at school, Audubon benefited by the revival of interest in nature, and by the time he was fifteen, he had quite a collection of original drawings of French birds.

In 1803, Jean Audubon unexpectedly decided to send his son to America. He explained that first, he wanted the boy to learn "about trade," and second, he wished him to learn the English language. During an earlier visit to America, the elder Audubon had purchased an estate near Philadelphia called "Mill Grove," and here young Audubon came to be intimately acquainted with the land he ever afterwards loved and studied, and where he began the work that was to lead eventually to his fabulous *Birds of America* series as well as subsequent publications.

In 1804, Audubon met the girl who was to be his wife. She was the daughter of William Bakewell, recently moved to America from England and a neighbor to Mill Grove. In Audubon's own words, it was a case of love at first sight, but Lucy Bakewell was very young. One source cites her age at fifteen, another at seventeen. However, she inspired a new desire on the part of the budding



John James Audubon

"Ever since a Boy I have had an astonishing desire to see Much of the World & particularly to Acquire a true Knowledge of the Birds of North America, consequently, I hunted when Ever I had an Opportunity, and Drew every New Speciman as I could, or dared steel time from my Business and having a tolerably Large Number of Drawings that have been generally admired, I Concluded that perhaps I could Not do better than to Travel, and finish My Collection or so nearly [so] that it would be a Valuable Acquisition—"

Audubon Journal 1820-21: p. 48

artist and naturalist to make a success in the business world. It was unthinkable at this time in his life that he could ask for her hand in marriage without financial security to offer.

Success did not come easily to John James Audubon. He tried his hand at "trade." He worked in the importing and exporting business which belonged to the man who was to become his father-in-law, William Bakewell. But Audubon's attention was not directed for long on laces, fine gloves, linens, and the like, and every minute he could find, he spent in the woods and fields hunting for birds. Some he sketched on sight, but he also shot many to carry back to his rooms where he could study them more closely before attempting a sketch. There were times when he kept the birds a bit too long and his neighbors complained!

Later he formed a partnership with Ferdinand Rozier and they decided to try their luck in business farther west, and they established a general store in Louisville, Kentucky. But a life of business was not for Audubon. In his journal, he says at one point, "Fortune if not blind certainly Must have his Lunatic Moments!" However, the Louisville store, Audubon admitted, "went on prosperously when I attended it; but birds were birds then as now, and my thoughts were ever and anon turning toward them as objects of my greatest delight. I shot, I drew, I looked on nature only; my days were happy beyond human conception, and beyond this I really cared not!"

In 1808, his business with Rozier must have achieved a modest success because Audubon journeyed to Philadelphia, married his beloved Lucy and returned to Louisville. His success was short lived, however, as all of his ventures into "trade" were.

One morning in 1810 a man walked into Audubon's and Rozier's general store with two books under his arm. This man was Alexander Wilson, the noted ornithologist, and the two books were the first two volumes of *Wilson's American Ornithology*. Accounts of the meeting vary; some say it was not a

friendly encounter, but in either case, whether friendly or unfriendly, each man respected the other's work. Wilson apparently saw birds which had been unfamiliar to him before his introduction to them by Audubon.

Between 1810 and 1820, Audubon knew many business failures. He and Rozier dissolved their partnership but remained friends. Sometime during 1820, Audubon decided to try publishing his bird drawings, and from then on his life had a definite aim. In October of that year, he worked his way down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, often going into the woods to find more birds, making his living as he went by doing portraits. In New Orleans, he worked at various things: more portrait work, teaching, even painting street signs, but it was Lucy who took a job as governess and assumed the main support of the family which now consisted of two sons, Victor Gifford and John Woodhouse. Two little girls had died in infancy. Lucy continued her support of the family for twelve years. The Audubons resided for a time at "Oakley" near St. Francisville, Louisiana; the home is still preserved and pointed to with pride by native residents as the former home of Audubon. It was in this area that he found the opportunity to paint many of his birds. He also taught music and drawing, and Lucy carried on her work as tutor and governess. Between them, they managed to save enough money for him to take his drawings to England and to seek a publisher for them.

In 1826, Audubon traveled to England in hopes of finding a publisher for his birds. He finally met with Robert Havell, Jr., who worked as aquatint engraver for all but the first ten of the plates. Havell worked from 1827 to 1838 before the work was completed for the first publication of Audubon's famous *Birds of America*.

Mrs. Audubon joined her husband in Edinburgh where they resided until 1831 when they returned to America. Word of the acclaim and success Audubon had won in England preceded him to America and, upon his return, (Text continued on page 7)



Stanley Hawks

Drawn from Nature by John J. Audubon and engraved and printed by Robert Havell, Jr.



Cooper or Stanley's Hawks

John James Audubon

The Print

In the field of graphic arts, the word "print" is used to describe the product of any of the methods used by the printmaker. There are, basically, four methods commonly used: (1) planographic, (2) relief, (3) intaglio, (4) stencil. Another way of describing these four methods, in order, would be: (1) lithography, (2) wood cut and wood engraving, (3) etching and engraving, and (4) serigraphy or silk screen printing.

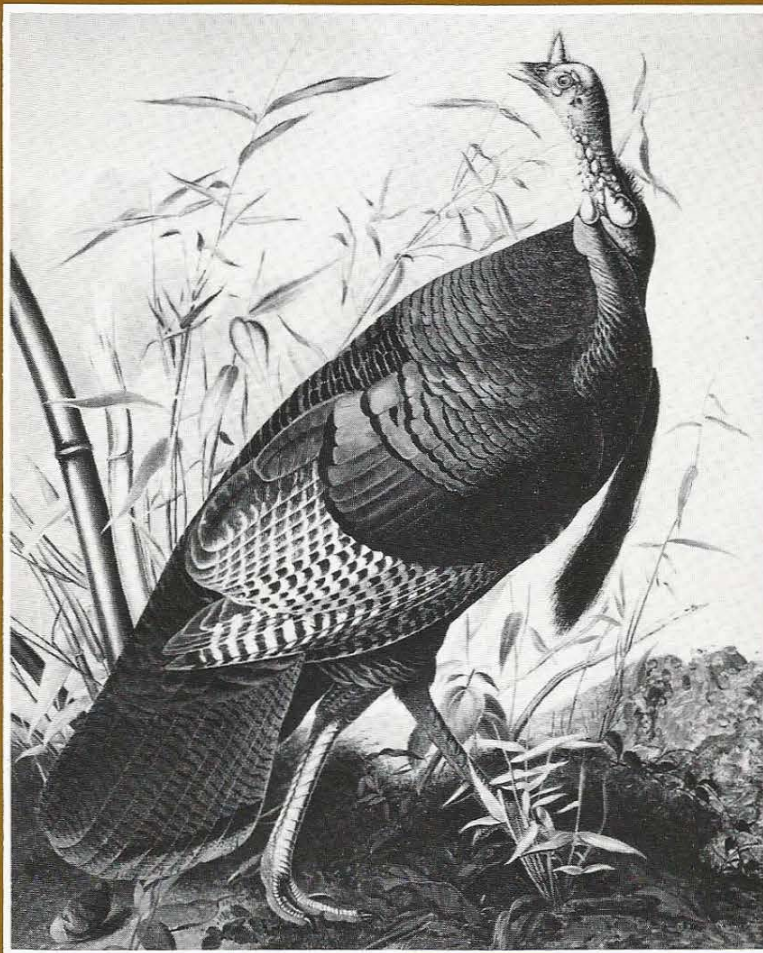
The Gould prints (pages 8-13) were produced lithographically insofar as the black and white drawing portions are concerned. The lithographic drawing is made with a grease pencil upon the surface of a block of limestone. After treatment of the stone surface with a gum arabic/nitric acid solution, an ink-covered roller is passed across the surface. The chemical treatment with gum arabic and acid will have created a condition of controlled absorbency on the stone surface. Ink is accepted by the drawn grease image and repelled by the blank areas. Important too is that the acceptance of ink is in direct proportion to the darkness of value of the original grease pencil drawing.

The "print" is obtained by placing a dampened paper over the stone surface and subjecting the whole to a scraping pressure on the bed of a printing press. The print is pulled gently from the surface and dried carefully. The resulting image is a mirror form of the original drawing of the stone block.

These "prints" are quite obviously beyond the realm of mere illustration. These are not to be confused with pure commercial mass printing, but are solidly individual works of art and deserve close study. The observer will be well rewarded by seeing the original pages in the Gilcrease library.



Woodducks
Robert Havell, Jr.



The Wild Turkey
John James Audubon

he was almost immediately hailed as the foremost naturalist in America, a reputation which has lasted through the years.

Audubon's *Birds of America*, in elephant folio size, began to appear in 1827. In 1830, he began to prepare the text called *Ornithological Biography*. On this work, he collaborated with the Scottish naturalist, William MacGillivray. Later, also with the help of MacGillivray, Audubon completed his *Synopsis of the Birds of North America*. In the later years of his life, he worked with the Carolina naturalist, The Reverend John Bachman, on a second series depicting many of the four-footed animals of the North American Continent called *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*—a work he did not live to see completed. John Woodhouse, the younger of his two sons, who had married the oldest daughter of John Bachman, completed this latter work.

Gilcrease Institute numbers in its collection one oil painting by John James Audubon, and two oils and two lithographs by John Woodhouse Audubon. Robert Havell, Jr., is represented by two oils and one colored engraving after John James Audubon.

To quote Stanley Clisby Arthur: "Vagabond at heart, Audubon let no responsibility or family tie keep him from the woods and the sound of bird music. He was alternately a fastidious dandy of the cities and a ragged, penniless wanderer of the by-ways and forest trail. He had a way with the ladies. He could play the flute and flageolet, bow the violin, and dance the cotillion with delicate grace. He liked his pinch of snuff and glass of grog..."

Audubon died just before his sixty-sixth year. Within thirty years after his death his name became synonymous with conservation of wild life and remains so today. However, for every bit of praise we give John James Audubon, we must give like acclaim to Lucy. In a journal written especially for his sons, Audubon tells a bit of their first meeting: "...and there I sat, my gaze riveted, as it were, on the young

girl before me, who, half working, half talking essayed to make the time pleasant to me. Oh! may God bless her! it was she, my dear sons, who afterwards became my beloved wife and your dear mother.... She showed both gracy and beauty.... and my heart followed every one of her steps." Without her prodding, her confidence, and her steadfast devotion, it is doubtful that he would have accomplished much of his magnificent work.

Robert Havell, Jr.

In the area of American ornithology, unquestionably the most important figure is J. J. Audubon, who was an accomplished artist-naturalist. However, we have Robert Havell, Jr., to thank for engraving and coloring the many plates of the Audubon *Birds of America* series. The copper engraved plates had to be colored by hand which, before the series was completed, ran to something in excess of 100,000 plates. Except for the first ten plates, which were done by William Lizars of Edinburgh, Havell was responsible for all the work done on this extraordinary achievement. Assistants would usually apply the first washes or watercolors, leaving Havell to produce the delicate shading and tone accents. His aquatints were unequalled in their likeness to the living birds and their natural habitat.

Robert Havell, Jr., (1793-1878) was the son of an already successful English engraver. In partnership with his father, Robert Sr., their firm produced the Audubon plates; sometimes Robert, Sr., is mistakenly given credit for the work done by his son. After bringing the Audubon enterprise to a successful end, the partnership of father and son was dissolved and Robert, Jr., with his wife and daughter, emigrated to the United States, settling in Tarrytown, New York. In this country, Havell was not only an engraver of note, but was considered a skillful oil painter and a member of the Hudson River School. Although in his later years he gave up watercolors and oil painting, he did complete a number of engravings of American cities and views of the Hudson River Valley.



Robert Havell, Jr.



TOPAZA PYRA, Gould
Fiery Topaz

"The late Mr. George Loddiges of Hackney, whose love for the Humming Birds was only equalled by his kind and amiable disposition more than once said to me, 'I think the *Trochilus pella* is the finest of all the *Trochilidae*, and I believe it will always remain so, for we cannot imagine a more beautiful species.' Had not his premature death deprived me of a friend, and natural science of one of its most enthusiastic devotees, I should have hastened with a corresponding enthusiasm to show him this new and still more lovely bird, well knowing that he would feel equal pleasure with myself in the discovery of a species still finer than that which he had ever regarded as the finest of its tribe: this gratification is however denied me; but another is still within my reach, that of stating that it was the sight of his fine collection, ever thrown open with the utmost readiness to my inspection, that first turned my attention to this beautiful group of birds, and determined me, since his lamented death, to attempt the delineation in a suitable manner of the forms in which he took so deep an interest.

"The native habitat of the *Topaza pyra*, as far as we yet know, is the higher part of the Rio Negro, a tributary of the Upper Amazon; it is in this locality that all the specimens which have been sent to Europe were obtained: the interesting nest which I have figured was procured at Barra, and given to me by W. H. Edwards, Esq., author of 'A Voyage up the River Amazon.'

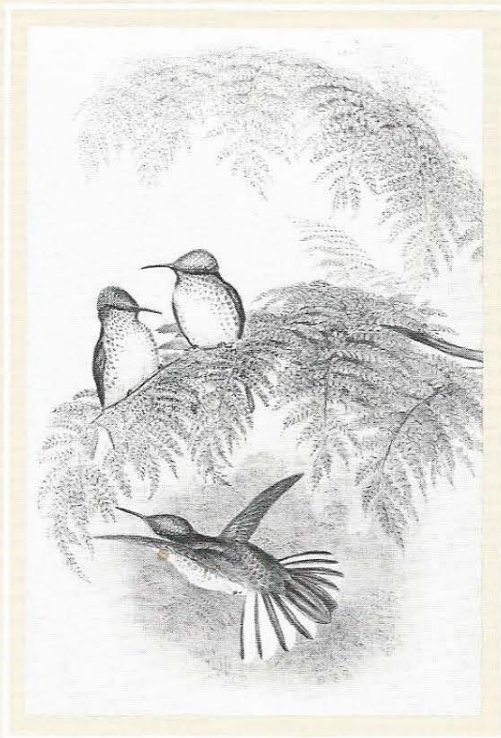
"In the size of its body and the length of its wings the *T. pyra* is somewhat larger than *T. pella*, while at the same time it has a smaller bill, a more circumscribed gorget, a larger proportion of deep velvety black on the head and surrounding the gorget; the whole of the body of a rich fiery scarlet, without any pectoral band of crimson; and, lastly, the three lateral feathers on each side purplish black instead of buff, and of a narrower form—features by which it may be at once distinguished from its near ally.

"The nest is precisely similar in form and materials to that of *T. pella*, and the eggs are also white and two in number."

The Humming Bird

Gould's *Humming Birds* is probably one of the most stunning examples of printers' art done in the 19th century. A *Monograph of the Trochilidae or Humming Birds*, the exact title, contains 360 plates brilliantly colored by hand and highlighted with gum arabic. Many of the subjects are American and are contained in twenty-five original parts, published between 1849 and 1861 in London with a dedication to the Princess Royal of England. The complete series is not ordinarily found intact because of the general practice in the past to cannibalize portfolios so that individual plates could be framed and sold. Having a complete set in original condition is of the utmost rarity and of considerable importance in the Gilcrease Library.

John Gould was born in Lyme Regis, England, in 1804, the son of a foreman gardener at Windsor Castle and prospered without the benefits of education, and gained success as artist and naturalist. The distinguished bibliographer, Joseph Sabin, said that the series is probably one of the grandest ever attempted by one naturalist. Gould progressed in his career from gardener, taxidermist, illustrator, and naturalist; he later became a Fellow of the Royal Society. In the early years of his work, he was unable to find a publisher for his folios and became his own publisher which realized a considerable fortune for him. He died in 1881, but before this he produced folios of the Birds of Europe, Australia, Asia, and Great Britain plus the never surpassed Humming Bird series, all of which amounted to forty-one folios and 2,999 plates. Like Havell, Gould specialized in illustrating his subjects in their natural haunts with incredible accuracy.



EUSTEPHANUS STOKESI
Stokes' Humming Bird

"The island of Juan Fernandez is the true and restricted habitat of this beautiful species, the honour of discovering and first describing which is due to Captain P. P. King, R. N., who, in dedicating it to his friend the late Charles Stokes, Esq., was desirous of paying a just tribute of respect to one of the most accomplished men of science, art and literature that has graced society for many years.

"Nothing has yet been recorded respecting this or the other Humming Birds inhabiting the island of Juan Fernandez, the extent of which is considerably less than the Isle of Wight, but in which we are told there are many lofty mountains, interspersed with pleasant valleys, clothed with an abundant vegetation. It is in these valleys, and among the shrubby trees close to the sea-shore, that this bird finds a congenial habitat. Mr. Bridges, who has lately returned to Valparaiso, after a short sojourn in this almost *terra incognita*, procured numerous examples, all of which, about thirty in number, have been sent to this country, and submitted to my inspection.



The Hunning Bird

There is a curious bird to see to, called a hunning bird, no bigger then a great Beetle; that out of question lives upon the Bee, which hee eateth and catcheth amongst Flowers: For it is his Custome to frequent those places, Flowers hee cannot feed upon by reason of his sharp bill, which is like the poynt of a Spannish needle, but shorte. His fethers have a glasse like filke, and as hee stirres, they shew to be of a chaingable coloure: and has bin, and is admired for shape coloure, and fize.

Thomas Morton (c. 1622-1647) English adventurer in America, whose rakish character brought him into bad repute with the Pilgrim fathers, wrote *New English Canaan*, a description of New England in which he describes the "hunning bird"

PHAETHORNIS AUGUSTI Sallé's Hermit

"In form and general contour the *Phaethornis Augusti* is so nearly allied to the *P. Pretrei*, that were skeletons of both placed side by side, I apprehend it would be most difficult if not impossible to distinguish one from the other; still I have no doubt as to their specific value, and I am quite sure that no ornithologist would question their being quite distinct. They beautifully represent each other in the countries they respectively inhabit. The present species, *P. Augusti*, is a native of the rich countries of Venezuela and Caraccas. I have never seen it in collections from Bogota, or any of the more elevated regions; we may consequently infer that the forests of the lowland countries I have mentioned constitute its principal if not sole habitat. If the *P. Augusti* and *P. Pretrei* differ at all in size the former may be considered the smallest; it also differs from its near ally in being rather less beautifully bronzed on the upper surface, in having narrower central tail-feathers, and especially in the hue of the under surface, which is lively grey instead of rich fawn colour, a feature by which it may be at once distinguished. This somewhat rare species was described for the first time by M. Bourcier, in 1847, when it was dedicated by him to M. Auguste Sallé, an enterprising traveller who collected numerous species of the Trochilidae and other groups of birds during his journeys into the interior of Central America.

LAMPORNIS GRAMINEUS
Green-throated Mango

"So much confusion exists respecting the synonymy of this species, that, after instituting the most rigid examination, I am compelled to give up the attempt to unravel it, and content myself with enumerating those terms only which, it appears to me, certainly have reference to the present bird. The state of confusion alluded to is due to two causes: first, from Lesson and the older authors considering the species to be a native of St. Domingo, and, secondly, in consequence of the females of two or three species bearing a great similarity to each other. Now I can positively state that the bird does not inhabit St. Domingo; nor do I believe it is to be found in any of the West India Islands, unless it be in Trinidad, and if so, that is the only one. Its true habitat is Cayenne and Guiana, whence all our collections are supplied with examples, and where it must be very numerous, as shown by the great number of specimens sent to Europe from those countries.

"The *Lampornis gramineus* is a large species, distinguished by the boldness and breadth of its markings; it differs from all the other members of its genus in the grass-green of its throat, a colour beautifully relieved by the jet-black hue of its breast and abdomen. The females and young males present a very different style of colouring from that of the male, both on the under surface and in the markings of the tail, which are very beautiful!"

HELIANGELUS AMETHYSTICOLLIS
Amethystine Sun Angel

"This beautiful Humming Bird was first made known to science by M. D'Orbigny, who procured a single example of it during his journey into Bolivia. It was subsequently found by Mr. Bridges in the same country, and it is from that source that the specimens in my own collection were obtained; I also received a single example from M. Warszewicz, who killed it in Northern Peru. Peru and Bolivia, then, evidently constitute the true habitat of this species, which may be regarded as the southern representative of the well-defined genus to which the appellation of *Helianthus* has been given. In size and in the semi-rounded form of its tail it assimilates to *H. Clarissae*; but it differs from that, as well as from every other member of the genus, in the buff colouring of its gorget, in the central line of the abdomen being buff, and in the under tail-coverts being of a darker hue; a marked difference from all its congeners is also presented in the greater size of the glittering green spot on the forehead, which, instead of being confined to the front, extends towards the crown. The female offers the usual difference in the colouring of the plumage, but preserves the buff band across the breast so characteristic of the male. "The specimen of this bird procured by M. D'Orbigny obtained on the eastern slope of the Cordilleras in the country of the Yuracares near Cochabamba, at the upper limit of the woody vegetation!"





SPATHURA MELANANTHERA, Jard.
Ecuadorian Racket-tail.

"It is to Sir William Jardine, Bart., that the credit is due of giving the first description of this very distinct species of *Spathura*, which appears to take the place in Ecuador of the more generally known *S. Underwoodi* so commonly sent from Bogota in Columbia. Both these birds are hill species, and both doubtless have similar habits and economies. The *S. melananthera* differs from *S. Underwoodi* in being of a smaller size, and in the form of the spatules, those of the former being shorter and more club-shaped than those of the latter; there is also a difference in the colouring of the spatules, those of the smaller bird frequently having a tinge of shining green pervading them, while the colour of those of *S. Underwoodi* is steel-blue; the *S. melananthera* has also a broad black band on the throat, while the corresponding mark in *S. Underwoodi* is smaller and often almost obsolete. The greatest difference, however, occurs in the females of the two species; the breast and centre of the abdomen of that sex being pure white in *S. melananthera*, while the same parts in the female of *S. Underwoodi* are spangled with green.

"All the specimens of *S. melananthera* I have seen are from Ecuador, whence they have been sent by Professor Jameson and Mr. Fraser.

"Sir William Jardine, when first describing this species in his 'Contributions to Ornithology for 1851', says, 'The last post from Quito brought us some Humming-birds which were of great interest; among them was one belonging to the subgroup which has been called *Spathura*, and of which the beautiful species *S. Underwoodii*, with its white boots and racket-tail, has been considered typical. This species, figured in the only Number yet published of Mr. Gould's Monograph, is found in the neighbourhood of Santa Fé de Bogota, and in Galipan, between La Guayra and the Caraccas, at an elevation of from 5000 to 9000 feet. Of the specimen lately received, Professor Jameson writes (considering it to be *S. Underwoodii*),—"I am not aware of its being hitherto met with to the south of the equator!" Along with a true *S. Underwoodii*, Mr. Gould had enclosed a female of a *Spathura* with an unspotted breast, with an opinion that the male of the latter would prove distinct; and on comparing the Quitian birds with these and the figure and description in the Monograph, there appears to be a considerable difference. The proportions and tints vary, and the large space of black on the chin and maxilla is very marked. We are not aware whether M. Bourcier has noticed it, and an examination of more specimens must decide whether it be only a local variety; but meanwhile we have applied the above specific name quite provisionally, until the point as to species is cleared up, and give a description from the specimen before us!"



A Copper Bird Effigy
Spiro, Oklahoma

Indian Bird Forms

There is not a society within observation or remembrance which has failed to deal with the bird-form in some fashion or another, as we have seen illustrated to some extent in the preceding pages. The Audubon, Havell, and Gould works are rather straightforward naturalistic representations. They were, in a sense, representative of needs on the part of more or less urbanized audiences for refreshing returns to nature. The factual picture of the subject in its natural habitat was the important thing. There is another approach, of course: symbolic interpretation.

The great variety of birdlife has been reflected as variety in symbolization. Out of need, fear, or respect, the bird has become a symbol for many peoples over the world. The eagle found a place in the war bonnet of the Plains Indian and on the national crest of many governments. The falcon and the hawk are not far behind as symbols of power and speed. To early farmers in need of water, the bird with its clear association with air and clouds became an important symbol of life-giving rain. Frequently the bird was associated with benevolent ancestors who were called upon to provide the benefits of the sky for early agriculturists. The Thunderbird is a widespread symbol and fetish form which offered destruction to some and benevolence to others.

Among the Pueblos of the southwest, a real feather in ceremonial context is light and fluffy like a cloud. The bird the feather comes from is a flying

(Text continued on page 18)



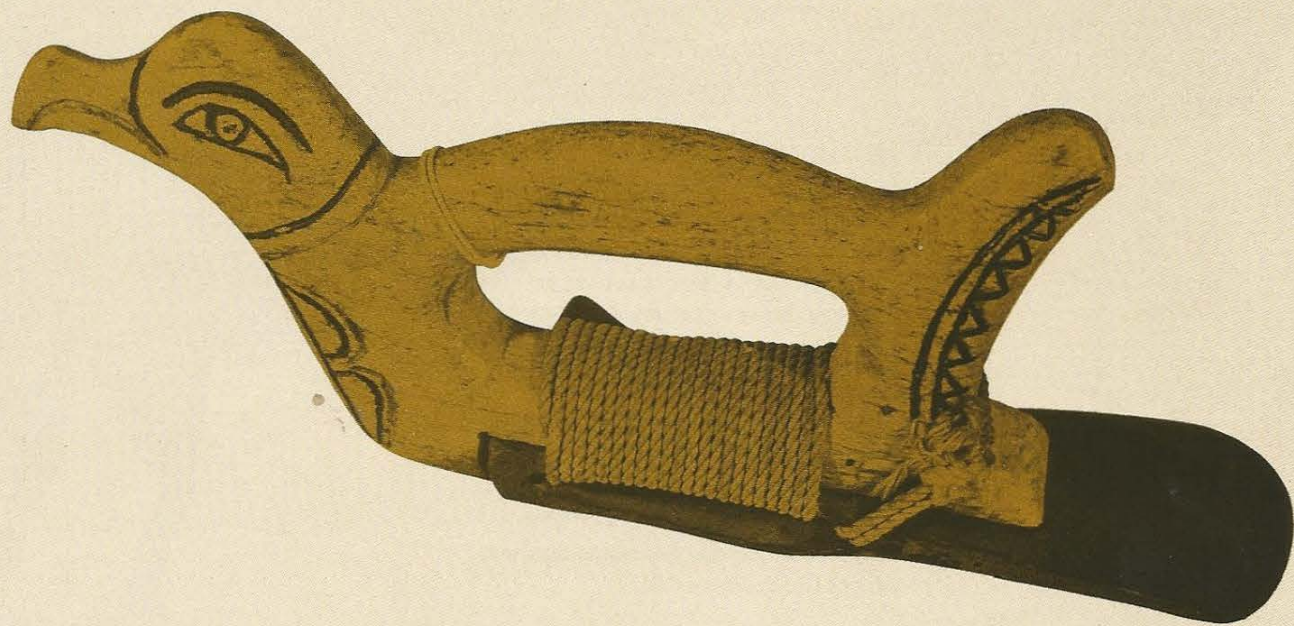
Executed by Indians who lived in the Mimbres Valley in southwest New Mexico, c. A. D. 900-A.D. 1500.

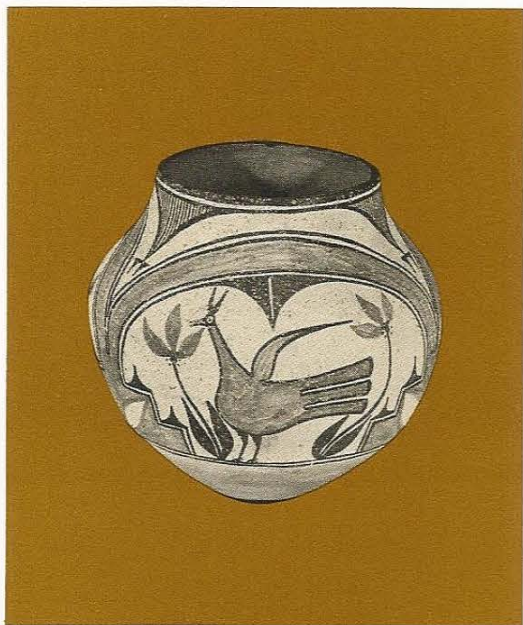
Probably the most superb of all pueblo pottery is that of the Mimbrenos. The vessels were coated in white and the designs applied in black. Often precise geometric and abstract designs were incorporated with representational drawings. Among the most interesting of Mimbres vessels are the mortuary bowls which have a hole in the center. These holes are called "killed" holes. The Mimbrenos placed the bowl, face down, over the head in a burial possibly in the belief that the individual's soul and the bowl's spirit would join in route to another world.



Eskimo of Northwest Coast Indian,
c. late 19th century.

Typical utilitarian objects such as the adze take a bird-like form. Although the use of this early-day woodworker's tool dates back to pre-Columbian (before Columbus), times in the Arctic and Northwest Coast areas, it was, more often than not, used by the Eskimo to cut up food and to dig roots.





Cochiti Pueblo Vessel, 20th Century

Since pottery is estimated to have been produced in at least one-fourth of North America, it is not surprising that many of our finest bird illustrations are seen on pottery, both pre-Columbian and contemporary.

Among the Rio Grande Pueblos in New Mexico, the bird is often painted on pottery. Vessels from Cochiti Pueblo, southwest of Santa Fe, often combine life forms with geometric designs on the same piece, and these designs are often widely spaced and surrounded by large areas of white slip.

animal and, therefore, also associated with clouds. Clouds and birds are of extreme importance in Pueblo religion.

The eagle is the highest flyer and closest to the clouds. Pueblo Indians imitate him in dances. On the plains the eagle is noted not so much for his weather associations as for his prowess and power.

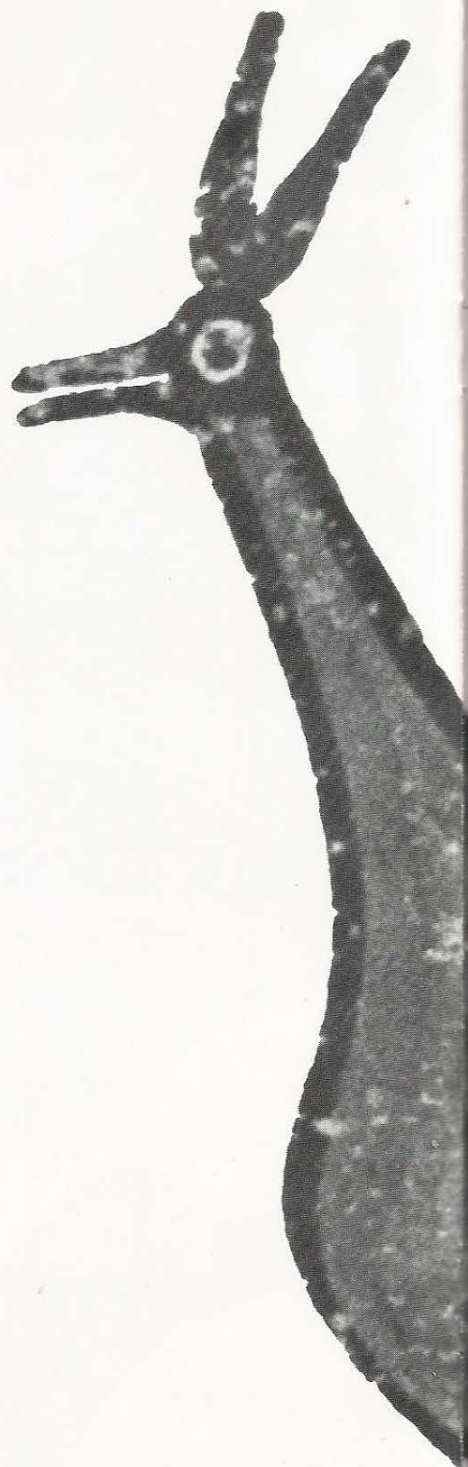
The owl, on the other hand, even though a successful bird of prey and certainly not a weak or timid creature, is frequently looked upon with dread. Its nocturnal habits, unearthly cry, silence in flight, and unfortunate appearance have given it, generally, a bad name — a messenger of bad tidings or death.

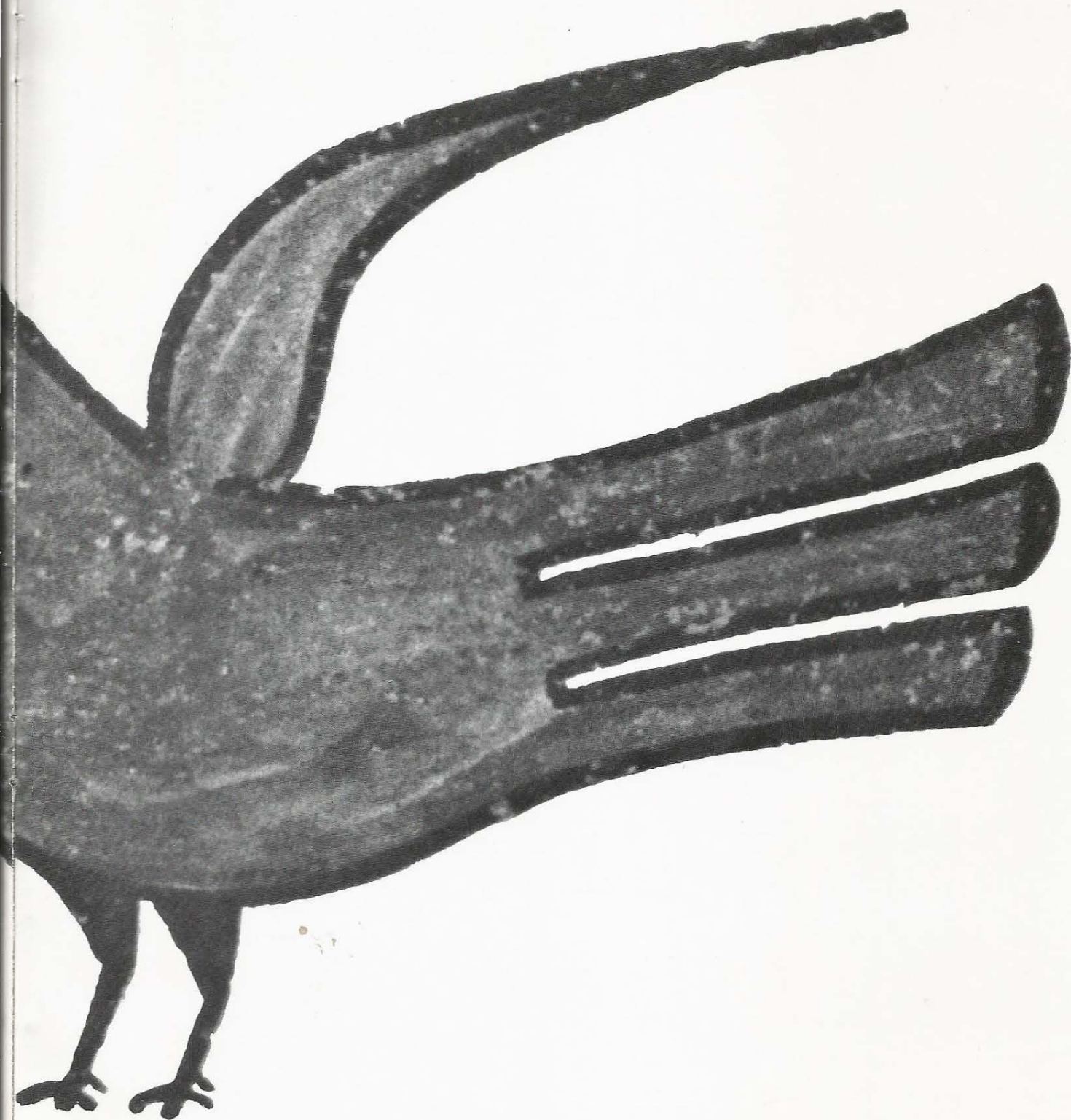
The first birds would, unquestionably, not have excited the raptures of men as have their later relatives. To begin with they didn't fly. Their feathers, which are extensively evolved scales (like those of the fish), were designed by nature as insulation, not as airfoils.

The transition from the early stage to the birdform as we know it today occurred, however, long before man came into being. It is the flying feathered form of today that man encountered long ago, and which has, since then, provided a constant source of interest and inspiration for all men everywhere. Birds have, consequently through the ages, been subjected to nearly every conceivable type of treatment, from adoration to annihilation.

Birds have played a large part in our lives from prehistoric time to the present. The biggest problem to be faced today is with the preservation of many of the species. Some have already become extinct. Through efforts of the Audubon and other conservation societies, however, threatened species are being protected and some are even beginning to increase in numbers again.

The artifact collection of the Gilcrease Museum testifies to the attention paid artistically to the form of the bird. The small sampling included here suggests the depth of concern on the part of the Indian artist.







Ground and polished "bird-stones," often of banded slate, were possibly used as decoration supported on head bands or as weights on throwing sticks with which darts were propelled. Other bird-stones, sometimes called "pop-eyed," have large round projections that have led some people to believe they are not avian — yet the other areas of the body do imply the artist considered them to represent birds.

Made by Indians living in the Northeastern forests of the United States during the last half of the Archaic period, c. 3000 B.C.-1000 B.C.



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