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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the Victor Gifford Audubon Collection

GEN MSS 343



by Kathryn Rawdon

March 1998

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 343

CREATOR: Audubon, Victor Gifford, 1809-1860

TITLE: Victor Gifford Audubon collection

DATES: 1845-1859

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.4 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Collection includes correspondence between Victor Gifford Audubon and Daniel Rice, a book subscription agent, regarding the production and sale of the works of John James Audubon. Also included are 22 uncolored, 8 partially tinted and 2 hand-colored lithographed plates for the octavo edition of "The Birds of North America," all by John T. Bowen after Audubon; 3 additional hand-colored plates, also by Bowen after Audubon, which may have served as colorist's proofs or models; and a group of 19 pencil and watercolor portraits and drawings by an unidentified artist.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.audv>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.audv>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased in 1993 from the William Reese Company on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Victor Gifford Audubon Collection is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Victor Gifford Audubon Collection. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Associated Materials

See also the [Morris Tyler Family Collection of John James Audubon, GEN MSS 85](#).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Victor Gifford Audubon, son of the illustrator and naturalist John James Audubon, was born on June 12, 1809. As an adult he assisted his father, along with his brother John Woodhouse Audubon, in the creation of *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*. While he did contribute some artistic work to the project, his main function was to handle the business of producing and selling the work, along with the earlier *The Birds of America*. After his father's death, Victor continued to manage the business aspects in promoting his father's work. He died in 1862.

Scope and Contents

The Victor Gifford Audubon Collection contains correspondence, lithographed plates, and drawings. The collection has been arranged into two series.

[Series I, Correspondence](#) (1845-1859), consists of letters from Victor Gifford Audubon to Daniel Rice, a book subscription agent and co-publisher of *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* by Thomas L. M'Kenney and James Hall, which is referred to in several letters. The letters concern the business relationship between Rice and Audubon regarding the printing, binding, distribution and sale of the octavo-format editions of *The Birds of America* and *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* by John James Audubon. Issues discussed include the ongoing business agreement between Audubon and Rice, sales trips taken by Rice, Audubon's efforts to convince Rice to buy a share of the volumes being produced, the supply of letterpress text, and difficulties in collecting payments from subscribers. Included is a signed agreement (Box 1, folder 1) between Audubon and Rice regarding Rice's seeking subscribers for the two books, and his commission for their sale. Also included are letters from Audubon to an H. J. Hall, A. M. Hart (Rice's partner), and one letter from Harper Brothers to Rice regarding a claim against a Mr. Mygatt, who is mentioned in several of Audubon's letters to Rice.

[Series II, Illustrations](#) (n.d.), contains lithographed plates used in the octavo version of *The Birds of America*, some hand-colored, and a group of pencil and pencil and watercolor sketches by an unidentified artist.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1845-59

0.2' (1/2 box)

LETTERS FROM VICTOR GIFFORD AUDUBON

b. 1, f. 1-13	Rice, Daniel	1845-59
b. 1, f. 14	Hall, H. J.	1851 Jul 8
b. 1, f. 15	Hart, A. M.	1856 May 17

THIRD PARTY CORRESPONDENCE

b. 1, f. 16	Harper Brothers to Daniel Rice	1853 Sep 19
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Series II: Illustrations, n.d.

0.2' (1/2 box)

LITHOGRAPHS FOR *THE BIRDS OF AMERICA*

By John T. Bowen after John James Audubon

b. 1, f. 17-18	22 uncolored lithographs	n.d.
b. 1, f. 19	8 partially colored (backgrounds only) lithographs	n.d.
b. 1, f. 20	2 finished hand-colored lithographs Possibly proofs or samples furnished to Daniel Rice	n.d.
b. 1, f. 21	3 finished hand-colored lithographs Plates may have served as colorist's proofs or models since the margins show test strokes of various water- color pigments	n.d.
OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS		
b. 1, f. 22-23	19 pencil sketches and pencil and watercolor sketches by an unidentified artist Subjects include portraits, sailing ships, and landscapes	n.d.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Genres / Formats

Drawings (visual works)

Lithographs

Watercolors (paintings)

Preferred Titles

The Birds of America

Names

Audubon, John James, 1785-1851

Audubon, Victor Gifford, 1809-1860

Bowen, John T., approximately 1801-1856?

Rice, Daniel