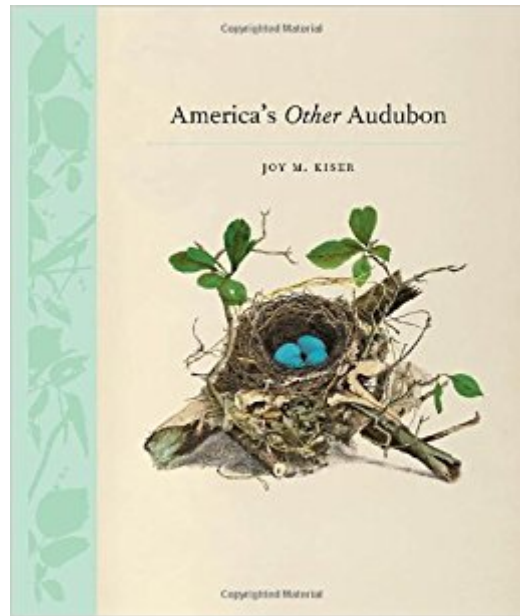




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America's Other Audubon



Synopsis

America's Other Audubon chronicles the story of Genevieve Jones, her family, and the making of an extraordinary nineteenth-century book, *Illustrations of the Nests and Eggs of Birds of Ohio*. At the age of twenty-nine, Genevieve Jones, an amateur naturalist/artist and daughter of a country doctor, visited the 1876 Centennial World's Fair in Philadelphia, where she saw Audubon's paintings in *Birds of America* on display. His artwork inspired her to undertake the production of a book illustrating the birds nests and eggs that Audubon neglected to include in his work. Her parents were reluctant to support the undertaking of such an ambitious and expensive project until Genevieve became despondent over a broken engagement. Concerned over her fragile mental state, they encouraged her to begin the book as a distraction. Her brother collected the nests and eggs, her father paid for the publishing costs, and Genevieve and her girlhood friend learned lithography and began illustrating the specimens. The book was sold by subscription in twenty-three parts. When part one of Genevieve's work was issued, leading ornithologists praised the illustrations, and Rutherford B. Hayes and Theodore Roosevelt added their names to the subscription list. One reviewer wrote: It is one of the most beautiful and desirable works that has ever appeared in the United States upon any branch of natural history and ranks with Audubon's celebrated work on birds. Then, suddenly, Genevieve died of typhoid fever after personally completing only five of the illustrations. Her family took up the completion of the work in her memory. They labored for seven years until the book was completed in 1886; collecting nests and eggs, drawing lithographs on stone, and hand coloring fifty copies of each illustration, and writing the field notes for each species of bird. Both the brother who collected the nests and eggs and wrote the field notes, and the mother who completed the drawings on stone and hand coloring, were stricken with typhoid fever two years after Genevieve's death and nearly died. In spite of serious damage to their health, they never gave up and labored until the book was finished. The father covered the publishing costs, which were higher than had been anticipated and were not covered by the subscription price, and ultimately lost his entire retirement savings completing the task in his daughter's memory. The mother lost her eyesight at the end of her life from the effects of typhoid fever and long hours of straining to draw and color the nests and eggs. But neither parent ever complained and considered their work on the book the most important accomplishment of their lives. When the mother's copy of the volume was exhibited on the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, it was awarded a bronze medal. Only 90 copies of the book were produced and fewer than 20 have been located today in libraries or in private collections. *America's Other Audubon* includes a foreword by the Curator of Natural-History Rare Books at the Smithsonian, Leslie Overstreet, a prologue and introduction by researcher and writer

Joy M. Kiser (with archival photographs of the family and original advertisements and ephemera from the publication and sale of the book), the 68 original color plates of nests and eggs, plus selected field notes, a key to the eggs, and a key to the birds scientific and current common names (which have changed since the book first published in the nineteenth century). Joy Kiser has been friends with the Jones ancestors for fourteen years and has access to family photographs and documents that the general public has never seen. The Joneses story has never been fully told and no other author is better prepared to tell it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"If Audubon -- who had plenty of help, but who lives in the mind as a solitary inventor -- is the Robinson Crusoe of nature art, then the Joneses are the Swiss Family Robinson. America's Other Audubon is a vital work of scholarly reclamation that will, I hope, introduce a wide world to the remarkable Genevieve Jones and the familial collaboration her life and death inspired. -- Jonathan Rosen, author of *The Life of the Skies: Birding at the End of Nature*" These are exceptional and heretofore almost unknown late 19th-century color paintings of birds' nests and eggs by an obscure Ohio family. Begun by Genevieve Jones, who died young, it was eventually completed by her brother Howard, mother Virginia, and friend Eliza Schulze. This book is essentially by them, a reissue of an 1886 title of which only 90 copies were printed. Kiser, a former librarian resurrected this work and contributes a compelling introduction. The nest paintings, aside from their stunning accuracy, are works of art in their own right.... These paintings charm and delight.... Highly

recommended." -- Library Journal

"The story behind these lithographs reminds us of the unsung heroines of our natural-history literature. There will likely never be a Jones Society, but [Genevieve] clearly had something of Audubon in her soul, and more besides." -- Bill McKibben, author of *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*

"The paintings are delicate and exquisite." -- Seattle Times

"The lithographs in Joy M. Kiser's *America's Other Audubon* are works of great beauty and scientific accuracy. But behind them is a tragedy -- the story of a hugely ambitious undertaking begun in heartbreak and completed in grief." -- Chicago Tribune

"Should be shelved in every birder's library next to Audubon's own paintings." -- Buffalo News

"One of the great triumphs of 19th century art and natural history.... The introduction by Kiser offers a poignant and abundantly fascinating snapshot of the Jones family." -- The Columbus Dispatch

"Not since J. A. Baker's *The Peregrine* has there been such a moving book about birds. The story of the gifted-but-doomed amateur, the passion of the undertaking shake us. The beauty of the plates and their accessibility, until now denied all except a few who owned the rare original book, make this a rich gift to all who find interest in the natural world." -- Annie Proulx, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Shipping News*

"If Emily Dickinson had been an amateur naturalist and painter, she would've been Genevieve Jones, whose life and work are lovingly resurrected here. Inspired by Audubon's *Birds of America*, Jones, the daughter of a country doctor, sought to create a book, *"Illustrations of the Nests and Eggs of Birds of Ohio,"* to complement his work. Jones died during the project -- at 32 from typhoid fever -- but her family finished it. Just 90 copies were made, but now a classic work of science and art, and a fascinating 19th-century life, have been returned to us." --- New York Times

"*America's Other Audubon* is an uncommon delight. This new volume is an opportunity to discover an essential 'lost' treasure of American natural history, as well as an invitation to deepen our own connection with a wilder, natural world." -- Lyanda Lynn Haupt, author of *Crow Planet*

"I have been enjoying simply browsing and admiring this wonderful book, for both the skill of the human artist and the intricacy of the birds' constructions. The most remarkable thing is that this work has been neglected for so long, and I'm very pleased to see it now getting the recognition it deserves." -- David Allen Sibley, author of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*

"Exquisite." -- Cleveland Plain Dealer

"*America's Other Audubon*, an appropriately lavish large-format volume full of Gennie, Virginia, and Eliza's gorgeous illustrations, captures this extraordinary story of curiosity, creativity, and entrepreneurship with the kind of rigor and passion on par with the Joneses' own." -- BrainPickings

Fewer than twenty copies of the original book have been located in U.S. libraries, in private hands, or in sales records today, but the search continues and this book may encourage unknown owners

to step forward and contact us.

If you are into well made books, this one is for you. It is a work of art. It is a tribute to a young woman, Gennie Jones, who was inspired by John James Audubon, to supplement the areas of avian life (nests and eggs) omitted in his work. That she should have a family dedicated to completing her dream after her death at a very young age, is a tribute to family love and devotion. Originally I intended to give this book to my nun sister-in-law because it looked feminine and lovely in the presentation. Yet when it arrived, I realized that what she needed was a field guide and not this. No doubt I'd have bought a second copy to keep for our personal library. This is a hard cover book, by Princeton Architectural Press, with embossed cloth binding of the spine, which is entirely robin's egg blue, as are the end papers...colorful but classic, the boards themselves appropriately "eggshell" white, and smooth enough for a cover drawing to be printed front, and descriptive writing on the outside back cover. It has no dust cover. Quality paper, the portions such as the foreword, preface and index are in white paper stock, so you understand right away that this is the current information marshalled by Joy M. Kiser. A more subtle paper in tan is used to denote the portions from the original Jones text and illustration. This helps to distinguish when you leave today and go back to the world as Gennie and her family were putting it all together. Be sure to read the Foreword by the head of the Smithsonian libraries, explaining the unique value of the original work. Not many copies of the original exist, so this effort is a real treasure to bird lovers.

I ordered this book for a gift. I had read the review in the Wall Street Journal and thought it sounded perfect for my "birdie" friend. When it arrived I wanted to see what I had bought and became so interested in reading and looking at the contents. I will still give it away and I am ordering another copy for us. SJ

This is a unique work that is certainly worth having on a bird biologist's book shelf. The color plates of bird nests with eggs are truly works of art.

Great gift for bird and nest lovers.

Many years ago I bought a beautifully print that had been expertly framed. I was overwhelmed by the work. It was a print produced by the Jones family. I had no idea of its source or other history. Recently, I began searching for more information and learned of the Jones family and their hard

work. I encourage others to pursue their natural history interests and give us more great gifts.

I bought this collection of drawings for my wife who teaches art, she enjoys it and I enjoy the variety of designs and materials birds use to make their nests. God has endowed his creation with intelligence and a sense of beauty.

It's a pleasure to know that beautiful books are still being published. There is a brief lovely storyline about the artist and her family, but the primary strength and beauty comes in the drawings of nests and eggs. Sadly, there was not the understanding that nests and eggs are best left alone rather than gathered for illustrations or museum collections in those days, but we are rewarded nonetheless with beautiful renderings of objects not normally seen.

bought as a gift as it was greatly admired at a hotel where it was on display at the Weekapaug Hotel in Rhode Island

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