



# THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

THE LATHAM  
FOUNDATION  
STORY SERVICE  
FOR THE PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS



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## JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

Compiled by DOLORES WILKENS KENT

OVER a hundred years ago on April 26, 1875, a tiny baby boy was born in Mandeville, Louisiana. His father was French and his mother Spanish. They named the baby—John James Audubon.

When the child was only a few months old Captain Audubon and his wife and little John James went far, far away to an island in the Caribbean Sea, named San Domingo, now called Haiti. If you look on the map you will find it down near Cuba.

This island was covered with a wealth of green trees and plants. The scent of tropical flowers filled the air, and beautiful birds, with feathers colored in every hue of the rainbow, flew from tree to tree. Their sweet songs were a lullaby at evening for the little Audubon and awakened him at dawn to another happy day.

The beauty about him may have been responsible for his great love of nature and an incident when he was about three years of age that led him to particularly care for birds.

His mother had a pet monkey and a beautiful parrot named Mignonne—the latter a favorite of John James. One morning the monkey became angry at the parrot who had been calling for her breakfast and, rushing furiously at the bird, killed her. The child entered the room just in time to see the cruel deed. He shrieked wildly for help, but it was too late, poor Mignonne was dead.



When John James was four years old the family moved to France, making their home in the old town of Nantes. Here, during his boyhood and early youth, Audubon used to spend hours in the large garden surrounding the house watching the birds—nightingales, mocking birds, blue jays, red birds, orioles, woodpeckers and countless other species, watching their habits and learning how they built their nests, get their food and care for their young. He noticed the color of their feathers, listened to their songs and after a while began to paint them. Even as a little boy his paintings were unusually lifelike and good.

As John James grew into manhood he cared little for studies other than natural history and wild life. Finally, not knowing how to place his son in the business world, Captain

Audubon gave him a large farm in Pennsylvania, America, and young Audubon went there to live. The property covered over 300 acres of woodland, the home of thousands of birds. Overjoyed at the promise of working in the one love of his life, Audubon lived in a big rock cave, making a home of it. He furnished it with bed, table and chair, and shelves for dishes and cooking utensils.

He soon made friends with the birds and they went about their busy little lives, mating and raising their birdlings all around him. Here his serious study of bird-life began. He learned to paint the birds in their natural

background with wonderful skill, and to become the greatest bird authority in America.

He married a year or two later, and his wife, Lucy Bakewell, was a true and loving helpmate, teaching to support their two sons, when Audubon lost his fortune, and in every way aided him to achieve his great ambition to paint and write the "History of American Birds." He traveled, sometimes enduring many hardships, hundreds of miles through swamps and over mountains, to find new birds.

His collection of pictures, called "Birds of America," was published in England with the "History of the Birds." There are now about 70 of these books left in America, located in libraries and museums where they are guarded against fire and where the public may study them.

There are now thousands of Audubon Societies in the United States. The first one was founded in 1886 by George Bird Grinnell, who when he was a tiny lad had been a pupil of Mrs. Audubon. So you see through John James Audubon we have grown to understand the great value of birds to the farmer and to love and protect the beautiful wild birds of our country.

John James Audubon lived to be an old man, having had the joy of success in his chosen work. He died and was buried in New York City. In the book, "Heroes and Greathearts," by John Dale, is the following description:

"It is said that the trees near Audubon's grave are a favorite place for hundreds of swallows that gather there on warm summer evenings. It is very impressive to see the timid, graceful creatures circling above the grave of the gentle Audubon, who did more than any other man to protect them from harm."

#### REFERENCES

Audacious Audubon. By Edward A. Muschamp.  
John James Audubon. By John Burroughs.  
Audubon. By John T. Dale, in "Heroes and Greathearts."

#### QUESTIONS

1. Where was John James Audubon born?
2. Where did he go to when a tiny boy?
3. Show the island where he lived for some years on the map.
4. Was it a beautiful place?
5. What happened to make John James fond of birds and wish to protect them?
6. Where did the boy live in France?
7. What did he love best to do?
8. What did his father give him when he grew up?
9. What became his life's work?
10. What was his great ambition?
11. Where are his paintings and books today?
12. What societies are named after him, and what is their purpose?

## WHAT WE CAN DO FOR OUR WILD BIRD LIFE

Our debt of gratitude toward birds is so much greater than most people ever realize. Not only is the world a more beautiful place, filled with their grace and colorful plumage, their sweet and cheerful songs, but our life itself depends upon their service to agriculture.

Those who have made a study of the subject tell us that without the birds no farming could be carried on. Every year one-tenth of all the products of agriculture is destroyed by insects. It is said that there are over one hundred thousand kinds of insects in the United States, the majority of which are injurious, and that one insect-eating bird destroys 2,400 insects in a year. Many believe that if birds had been allowed to multiply instead of being destroyed, there would be no necessity to spend thousands of dollars every year for insect poisons. Mr. Frank Chapman says that "If we were deprived of the services of birds the earth would soon become uninhabitable."

The farmers do not begrudge their cows and horses the food they eat, then why should they feel so bitter over the little grain or fruit taken by their other faithful servants the birds? If people would plant the trees and bushes that supply the berries birds eat, and place water here and there in the fields and orchards, the birds would not touch the fruit. Toyon berries, wild bramble berry, elderberries, evergreen trees and all native wild berries should be placed along the roads and fences wherever possible.

All gardens should have water available to the little feathered visitors who help to care for our flowers and cheer our days with their sweet songs. Here again we should plant berry bushes and evergreen trees. The brilliant berries of the toyon tree will prove a gay spot of color against the dull house, or dark green of a hedge.

The most common of our California birds in this bay region are the finch, purple finch, Pregon common blackbird, common sparrow, gambel sparrow, vesper sparrow, robin, American gold finch, greenback gold finch, Lawrence gold finch, blue jay, mocking bird, woodpecker, meadow lark, California and Stella jays. Let us learn to know these birds, study their habits and enjoy these little friends, caring for them as they deserve to be cared for.



## KIND DEEDS CLUB PLEDGE

"I will try to be kind to every living creature and to cultivate a spirit of protection toward all who are weaker than myself, and I will try to treat animals as I would wish to be treated if I were in their place."

## A MESSAGE TO BOYS AND GIRLS

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS EVERYWHERE:

We are looking forward to again being with you now that the lovely summer vacation is no more than a happy memory and you are once more at your school desks, wondering about your new lessons in grades one higher than before, with other teachers and in other classrooms. And while so much is different surrounding you, you will see from your schoolroom window some lovely morning in the near future a face that is not different, that of one who is truly your friend, no matter which grade you are in—the face of Mrs. Gwyn Tebault.

We know this is always a joyful looking-forward-to event. How do we know it? We know it by every bright little face turned expectantly toward the door and by the strong boys among you who rush out to help carry in all the baggage that goes along with humane education, the storyboard, the posters and innumerable other things. We know it by the welcoming smile of your teacher and then once more we are together again with the work which never changes in itself although it always has some surprises, some new means of winning you all over again.

And now I must tell you that first of all we have a storyboard that will delight you as never before, lovely colors of the fall season, a bewitching, secret path into the deep, shady forest with mystery beyond, where there are little friends whom you will not forget, truly living friends whom that great writer, Thornton Burgess, has made you love, and you will find little Sammy Jay who is acting watchful policeman for Lightfoot the Deer, Paddy the Beaver, who is perched on the roof to his honest-to-goodness house ready to slap down his broad, funny tail as a signal of warning to Lightfoot, and then, best of all, Farmer Kindheart who will never let anything happen to any of the Little People of the Woods when he can help it.

We think this is the very best and most beautiful of all the boards we have ever had and it won't take much guessing to know that it was made by Mrs. John T. Lemos and you will see what a real work of art it is.

Ye, we have the essay contest again, which will begin in January, the poster contest of which Mr. Lemos, whom you all know so well, is director, and because there are many who cannot make posters and many others who don't write essays, we have this year a new project which is intended just for the schools of Alameda County and which will call to every boy who is mechanical and to every boy who is fond of his tools—and what boy isn't?—and here it is right now, directions and all, enclosed with each copy that is being sent to the Alameda County schools with this issue of THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER, and we want everybody to help make it a grand success—the BIRD HOUSE CONTEST.

Read, too, very carefully, all we have to say about birds and their protection and try to understand what wonderful little friends they are to us. Those of you who have farms, do take home to your fathers the names of the trees and bushes they should plant to call birds away from the fruit which they will eat, especially if they find no water about. Your teachers will help you from this month's KIND DEEDS MESSENGER. When we understand the great service of these valuable allies we shall

be so ashamed of ourselves that we could ever have thought of killing them. Let us be their friends as they are ours.

Now, last of all, I wish to speak of the KIND DEEDS CLUBS. We expect a greater number to be formed this year than ever before in our history; indeed, we are looking for as many clubs as there are classrooms in the schools which we visit. These are real service clubs to stimulate good citizenship and to lend a helping hand wherever needed and spreading kindness and good cheer everywhere. One of its functions is to befriend lost and abandoned animals who would otherwise die wretchedly of wounds and starvation, and whose pathetic fate can be changed by ringing up the Berkeley Humane Society, telephone BERkeley 8223. See how easy it is. Just ring up this number.

One of the 1935 slogans of the Kind Deeds Clubs is "SNAPSHOTS—NOT GUNSHOTS." No true member would want to go forth to kill. And now in closing I am going to make you a wonderful offer. THOSE OF YOU WHO USE MISSILE THROWING GUNS, BRING THEM TO OUR OFFICE IN THE LATHAM SQUARE BUILDING AND I WILL GIVE YOU IN EXCHANGE FOR EACH GUN WE RECEIVE A KODAK OR CAMERA, WHICH WILL PROVE A REAL JOY TO YOU AND A SORROW TO NO LIVING CREATURE.

EDITH LATHAM.

### WHY I LIKE MRS. TEBAULT'S STORIES

When Mrs. Tebault comes and tells us some of her stories we are all happy. We like her stories and the beautiful storyboard that Mrs. Lemos makes.

When she tells her stories it makes me go out and be kind to all creatures. I try to remember the stories that she tells us, so that I can go home and tell my parents so they will be kind too. I tell all the children that go over to play with me.

Whenever I see a stray dog or cat it makes me think of Mrs. Tebault's stories and I am kind to them.

DELORES VARGAS, age 10 years.

4th Grade, Warm Springs School, Warm Springs, Calif.

### TO THE CANARY \*

Sweet little bird with your beautiful voice,

Pleasing the morning air;

How I wish I could give you your choice,

And open your cage with care,

But everyone loves you such a great deal,

I'm really afraid to try.

It's funny though that we do not feel,

Through love we should bid you goodbye!

By HERBERT LORDEN,

6A Grade, Marshall School, San Francisco.

\* This is a fine sentiment but remember that canaries released from the cage cannot take care of themselves.

## A TRUE STORY OF FEATHERED LITTLE FOLK

By ROSA FISCHER-SCHIEBER



One morning I heard a most jubilant song outside. Going to my window I saw two little birds perched high up on the electric wires of the street—one all gray, the other gray with a red breast. They were a pair of linnets. How they sang and sang, pouring out their little hearts in happy praise of the springtime and the beautiful sunny day!

In a few moments they flew over to the house and there in the vines above my bedroom window they had a nest, securely built where nothing could harm it. They sat on its edge, twittering merrily, then the little ladybird, in her plain, gray dress, entered the nest and cuddled down until only the tips of her tail feathers could be seen, while her redbreasted mate flew back to the wires to continue his song.

Every morning his cheerful singing awakened me, and all day long he flitted about, singing or bringing choice bits of food to the little ladybird. She sat patiently upon her nest, hatching the eggs which would soon become tiny birdlings.

Then one morning when I woke up, I missed something. It seemed strangely still! There was no sweet song! No merry twittering!

I went to the window and looked out. No pretty redbreast perched upon the wires overhead. No busy little mate near the nest. The motherbird anxiously raised her head over the edge of the nest every few minutes, as though saying, "Where, oh, where has he gone?" But there was no answer. Feeling depressed I went about my household duties, occasionally glancing at the lonely little bird.

Finally some hours later, she flew away and came back after a while with another gray ladybird. They perched on the edge of the nest, looked at the eggs and twittered quietly for some time, then the little mother entered her nest again and cuddled down while her visitor flew away.

Late that afternoon another bird came and sat upon the wires in the street. He, too, was gray with a redbreast, but he did not sing. After a while he flew over to the nest and he and the poor little motherbird sat on the edge of the nest looking into it, and she twittered very softly as though saying, "This is my own home and in a short time, my husband must have been killed and I need someone to help me to take care of my family; will you?"

He must have said "yes," for he stayed by her, bringing food, but there were no sweet songs to greet the morning, or cheer the day. He saw his duty and faithfully fulfilled it—that was all. When in a week or so, the baby birds arrived, both birds cared for them.

And then one bright summer morning the little ones were ready for their first flight into the world. Timidly they flew from nest to vines, encouraged by the twitterings of their mother and stepfather, until at last with one graceful swoop they glided down to the lawns of the yard below, there to hop about gleefully, or flit about in the trees, fully fledged, ready to lead a regular bird life.

The little mother sat and sang a soft, low song of thanks, and the faithful redbreast, soaring high above the wires, flew out of sight. His work was done.

## DON'T BLAME THE CAT

By HENRIETTA LATHAM

A group of terribly excited people stood in Madison Square Park, New York City. As I always fear that some animal may be involved in such crowds, I quickened my step and inquired of a bystander what the fuss was about. "Oh," she said, "a cat has killed a bird and these people are discussing ways and means of lynching the cat."

At that moment a poor, bedraggled cat, emaciated literally to a skeleton, with a mangy fur drawn over it, disappeared around a distant corner.

I stepped up to the excited throng and I said, "Friends, please look opposite at that long row of houses boarded up for the summer. Do you realize that cats are almost always the victims of long summer absences and that they are driven by the cruel neglect of owners and consequent starvation to use their own resources for food, which I admit are not always of the gentlest? But is there anyone here who is never guilty of eating birds?" I paused and surveyed each face and in all my life I have never seen such a bewildered expression. "We don't blame even well-fed men and boys," I continued, "when they go out to kill all they can get. So why hold the starving cat up to a higher ethical standard than we are willing to exercise ourselves?"

Silently the crowd began to melt away but not before I had shot this final bolt. "Personally, I am very sorry that cats like to hunt, but I am far sorer that we human beings are not a bit better."