

John James Audubon was an ornithologist, painter, and naturalist. He was born in 1785 as an illegitimate child in what is now the nation of Haiti. He was raised in France by his stepmother. John, who at the time was called Jean Rabin, showed an interest in birds from an early age. At the age of twelve, however, Jean Rabin was sent to military school and gained experience on ships. Jean Rabin showed little interest or skill in military matters and endeavored to study birds.

In 1803, Audubon's father arranged for him to travel to the United States to avoid being drafted in the Napoleonic Wars. Upon arrival, Jean Rabin changed his name to John James, learned English in a Quaker boarding home, and married his neighbor, Lucy Bakewell five years later. Audubon tended to a family farm near Philadelphia where he became the first person in North America to band birds. He learned that birds return to the same nesting place each year by tying yarn to the legs of an eastern phoebe. He also began to paint birds.

After business ventures failed, Audubon decided to pursue his love of painting birds. He traveled down the Mississippi River and shot birds so he could paint them. He used wires to prop them in natural positions to make the paintings as realistic as possible. Audubon apparently shot prodigious numbers of birds and angered contemporaries such as Alexander Wilson. Audubon had no success selling pictures in America but became an instant success in London, where the English saw him as the "American Woodsman." Audubon raised enough money to publish his now legendary *Birds of America* in 1827. Audubon soon published more books and returned to America, where he bought an estate on the Hudson River. In 1842, *Birds of America* was published in the United States. He also had a home in Key West, Florida. The Audubon Society was dedicated and named in his honor in 1896.

1. When did Jean Rabin Audubon change his name to John James Audubon?

- A. Upon his arrival in the United States
- B. 1785
- C. After he got married to Lucy Bakewell
- D. When he started banding birds

2. What did Audubon learn from banding birds?

- A. He learned how to tend to a farm
- B. He learned how to shoot birds and paint them
- C. He learned that birds return to the same nesting spots year after year
- D. He learned how to paint realistically

3. Why were some artists angered by Audubon's work?

- A. They believed the methods he used to paint birds were unnatural
- B. They were jealous that he had so much success
- C. They disapproved of his business practices
- D. They didn't think paintings of birds should be published in books

4. How did the reaction of people in Europe to Audubon's work contrast with the reaction of people in America?

- A. He was much more successful selling paintings in America
- B. He was initially successful in selling paintings in both America and England
- C. While his artwork was not immediately accepted in America or England, it eventually became popular in England
- D. His work was instantly well-received in England and much less successful in America

5. By 1845...

- A. Audubon returned to England, published *Birds of America*, and bought an estate.
- B. Audubon returned to America, published *Birds of America*, and had a society named after him.
- C. Audubon returned to America, built an estate, and published *Birds of America*.
- D. Audubon returned to England, published *Birds of America*, and had a society named after him.

6. What are “contemporaries” as used in the following sentence?

Audubon apparently shot prodigious numbers of birds and angered contemporaries such as Alexander Wilson.

- A. enemies
- B. fellow painters
- C. friends
- D. leaders

7. What was Audubon unsuccessful in?

- A. Painting certain kinds of birds
- B. Banding birds such as the eastern phoebe
- C. Selling his artwork in England
- D. Business