Holiday Greetings

As I write this I have just come back to my office from one of my regular quick walks through our great museum buildings. Today, as always, I watched the eager faces of our many visitors with delight. Almost everyone who comes to the Smithsonian finds in our national treasure house some special objects that amaze and delight him. In this way the Smithsonian museums provide millions of our visitors with something like the thrill of receiving Christmas gifts every day in the year.

As custodians of the nation’s perpetual Christmas tree, it seems only appropriate that those of us who work at the Smithsonian should celebrate the Christmas season itself with real happiness. On December 23 at 3:00 p.m. we are going to have this year’s fine Christmas party. There will be singing of carols and an opportunity for each of us to exchange Christmas greetings with our friends.

Personally the Carmichael family sends warmest Christmas and New Year’s greetings to everyone who is concerned in any way with the truly constructive work of the old and almost hallowed Smithsonian Institution. . . . LEONARD CARMICHAEL

World of Mammals

The Hall of the World of Mammals, which opened November 24, affords a new concept in museum exhibit techniques.

Instead of conventional habitat groups gazing stiffly over their glass-encased environs and flanked by labels offering little more than bold identification, the new hall demonstrates the evolutionary processes by which species are formed and variations become fixed, the locomotion of animals, their coloration, their adaptation to climate and environment, and their economic relationship to man. Represented are familiar animals such as cats, dogs, bears, and pigs as well as little known or rare beasts.

The habitat groups range from the realistic to the impressionistic to convey knowledge in the most aesthetic setting possible. A mural on one wall depicts some of the animals man has worshiped and whose likenesses he has carved and painted.

Dr. Henry W. Setzer was the curator in charge of the hall; Rolland Hower supervised the exhibits staff of the Natural History laboratory; and Thomas Baker was the designer. The Torch congratulates these and all the other members of the staff whose joint efforts made possible the “World of Mammals.”

New Publication for History and Technology

The history of science, invention, and technology is featured in the new Smithsonian publication titled “Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology.” Recently issued as National Museum Bulletin 218, the initial volume contains 11 research articles covering a wide range of interests.

An article by Edward Kendall, associate curator of agriculture and wood products, sketches the history of a steel plow made in 1838 by John Deere—one of the many inventions that have made American farmers the most productive in the world.

Another article, by Jacob Kainen, curator of graphic arts, is a historical evaluation of Thomas Bewick, an immensely popular 18th-century English artist whose wood-engraving techniques were later adopted for illustrating periodicals and had much to do with the popularity and growth of such publications.

Alexander Graham Bell’s part in making the phonograph a workable device is the subject of an article by Leslie Newville, former MHT staff member. Based on records in the Smithsonian collections, the article describes the work done by Charles Sumner Tainter and other associates of Bell in the laboratory he set up in Washington, D. C., in 1880.

The Conestoga wagon and prairie schooner are descendants from the type of Pennsylvania farm wagon Braddock used during his ill-fated campaign against the French at Fort Duquesne in 1753. Model-builders will find a comparison of these wagons in an article by Donald Berkobil. This article also contains plans drawn by Donald Holst, a fellow exhibits worker, of a freight-carrying wagon of the early 1800’s.

An article by George Grifffenhagen, former curator of medical science, and James Young tells of the introduction of English patent medicines in colonial America. Edward Battison, associate curator of mechanical and civil engineering, writes on the failure of an early attempt to make a dollar watch. Philip Bishop, head curator of arts and manufactures, examines the battle between Bessemer and certain of his contemporaries, barely a hundred years ago, over patent rights to the process of producing cheap steel.
Robert Multhauf, acting head curator of science and technology, writes on mine pumping in Agricola's "tiles, tells of the Scholfield wool carding machine that is a feature exhibit in her new textile hall. James King, acting curator of electricity, discusses the natural philosophy of William Gilbert and his predecessors; is a feature exhibit in her new textile hall. Grace Rogers, acting curator of technology, writes on mine pumping in Agricola's "tiles, tells of the Scholfield wool carding machine that is a feature exhibit in her new textile hall. James King, acting curator of electricity, discusses the natural philosophy of William Gilbert and his predecessors; is a feature exhibit in her new textile hall.

A limited supply of separates of the individual articles is available at the Smithsonian publications office for the official use of staff members.

Space-Ship Bumpers

To a considerable extent, "bumpers" on space craft would protect the vehicles from meteor crashes, says Dr. Fred L. Whipple, Director of the Astrophysical Observatory.

Collisions with meteors have been pictured as a major peril of flight outside the earth's atmosphere, where there are millions of these bodies. Some are seen as shooting stars when they collide with the earth. Actually, says Dr. Whipple, the meteors may not be as dangerous as some astronomers have calculated, and they will not, for the most part, constitute a major danger.

"Outside whatever skin the vehicle has," says Dr. Whipple in a recent report to the Office of Naval Research, "place another one approximately a tenth of its thickness in front of the inner skin. The meteor, striking the outer skin, will explode there and only the gas vapor will strike the inner skin. The gas vapor does not possess the crater-producing power of the original body and will not cause punctures. I think this method, used judiciously, can cut down the hazard of meteors in space by a factor of about 100." Although there probably is no complete solution for the problem, says Dr. Whipple, risk of a sizable explosion is probably not much greater than that of being struck by lightning on earth. There is, of course, no known protection against being struck by a large meteor, he points out. If it is large enough to shoot through the ship there will not be any ship left.

"Simply striking the skin," Dr. Whipple says, "will produce a violent explosion, and any object that still remains intact enough to go through and strike the other wall will have expanded and be quite different. The space-ship bumpers, he predicts, probably will not cost more than automobile bumpers; relatively, that is.

Rescues Dangling Workman

The quick thinking and long legs of an exhibits technician recently averted what might have been a painful accident at the exhibits laboratory on 24th Street.

Contractors were installing a ceiling grille that required considerable electric drilling through concrete. They were using a roll-around scaffold for the job. Atop this wriggly rig, at 14 feet, one of the workmen reached a little too far. The ensemble teetered to a noisy crash ... but held on! Probably accustomed to quick thinking, the workman latched onto some electric conduit that yielded slowly to his weight.

Ragby, athletic Elmer Fink, who witnessed the incident along with more-hypnotized members of the staff, cleared the intervening 30 feet and somehow ended up with a 10-foot stepladder at just the right time and place. No casualties, but plenty of action.

One staff member there says he can hardly wait to report for work each day.

SI Receives Bronze of General Doolittle

The Smithsonian has received a head-and-shoulders sculpture in bronze of Gen. James H. Doolittle as a gift from the Shell Oil Company.

Formal presentation was made by H. S. M. Burns, president of Shell Oil, at a luncheon on December 16 at the Washington Hotel. Secretary Carmichael accepted the gift for the National Air Museum. Other guests at the luncheon included General Doolittle and several of his former associates in aviation and military ventures.

The bronze sculpture is the work of Madame Suzanna Silvercruys, wife of Lt. Col. Edward F. Steven­ son, daughter of the late Baron Silvercruys who was president of the Supreme Court of Belgium, and the sister of the Baron Silvercruys who recently retired as Belgian Ambassador to the United States. Madame Silvercruys is a graduate of the Yale School of Fine Arts and has produced nearly a hundred likenesses of prominent persons. She is also an author and lecturer.

The bronze sculpture is now exhibited in the Arts and Industries Building. When ultimately displayed, it will form the central unit of an exhibit outlining some of General Doolittle's more important accom­ plishments in aeronautics, including his record trans­ continental flights, his winning of the Schneider, Bendix, and Thompson trophies, his precision flight and landing in 1929 that were guided by instruments alone, and his leading of the Tokyo raid and other vital air offenses in World War II.

Mechanical Sewing

Recently renovated exhibits on the development of the sewing machine were opened to the public on December 9 in the Arts and Industries Building. The display is located on the south balcony of the Hall of Textiles.

Early family-type treadle machines produced in the 1850's and 1860's are shown along with the less expensive hand-turned machines of the same period. The latter were sold under such poetic names as "Com­ mon Sense," "Fairy," "Monitor," "Boudoir," and others.

Many attempts to produce a "different" machine to avoid the payment of a royalty to the Sewing Machine Combination resulted in a bevy of strange and decorative types. Sewing machines in the form of a cherub, a dolphin and a horse are exhibited with sewing boxes and a single-strip-of-metal machine of 1863. Two motorized machines of the 1870's are shown, as well as a treadle-operated device for fanning the seam­ rent to keep her cool.

The exhibition was designed by Paul C. Batto following a plan outlined by Grace Rogers, acting curator of the division of textiles.

River Basin News

Dr. Robert L. Stephenson, chief of the Missouri Basin Project, recently addressed employees of Lincoln Home Stores at a dinner meeting of the group in Lincoln, Neb. His subject was "Columbus and the Indians." A few weeks ago he spoke before the Science Club of Lincoln High School on the work of the Mis­ soula Basin Project.

Dr. Wallace Chafe, Bureau of American Ethnology linguist, visited the laboratory on November 3 and consulted with Dr. Preston Hoffer of the University of Nebraska and Mr. Lee Madison of the Missouri Basin Project staff. Dr. Chafe visited in North Dakota and Oklahoma before returning to Washington on November 23.

Archaeologist G. Hubert Smith spent the week of November 9 at Fort Berthold in North Dakota, and then traveled outside before returning to Washington on November 23.

Archaeologist Harold A. Hascher attended the meet­ ings of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference at Macon, Ga., November 15, 14.

Dr. Frank H. Roberts, Jr., Director of River Basin Surveys, arrived in Lincoln on November 23 to consult with Dr. Stephenson on administrative matters and to attend the 17th Plains Conference, held No­ vember 26-28. On November 24 they met in Omaha with National Park Service representatives, personnel of the Corps of Engineers, and the superintendent of the State Historical Society of North Dakota relative to archeological work at the Huff Indian Village. Participants in the 17th Plains Conference from the Missouri Basin Project included Dr. Stephenson, gen­ eral chairman; Dr. Warren Caldwell, chairman of the session on field reports; Charles H. McNutt; Robert W. Neuman; Mr. Smith; and Mr. Hascher.

Questions Answered

In its last two issues, THE TORCH has printed ques­ tions and answers pertaining to eligibility and the types of plans available under the new law providing health benefits for Federal employees. The questions and answers listed below have to do with the benefits offered by the plans.

Q. What benefits will each of the plans offer? A. The law does not spell out the exact benefits for any of the plans. However, all options of the Government-wide plans? B. Other than the other. However, all options of the Government-wide plans must include both "basic health" and "catastrophic" coverage.
Q. What is meant by "basic health" coverage?  
A. This is the kind of coverage most people now have. It gives some protection against the more common kinds of hospital and surgical expenses.

Q. What is meant by "catastrophic" coverage?  
A. Catastrophic coverage gives some protection against the more unusual and heavy expense of a serious or prolonged illness. It often includes items such as long periods of hospitalization, expensive operations, private nurses, medical care received at home, drugs and medicines, medical supplies and equipment, etc.

Q. Will the employee-organization plans and the group- and individual-practice prepaid plans include catastrophic coverage?  
A. Many of these plans may very well do so but, unlike the Government-wide plans, the law does not require them to include catastrophic coverage.

Q. What is meant by having various plans and options?  
A. There are two main reasons. First, it allows employees free choice of the kind of plan they prefer; for example, service benefits or indemnity benefits. Second, some employers may feel that they do not need as much protection and should not have to pay for coverage they do not want. With the various plans and options you will be able to choose one which best fits your needs.

Q. How will I be able to decide which option or plan is best for me?  
A. Before the law becomes effective, you will be given literature explaining the benefits of each plan and each option. You will then be able to select the plan or option you like best.

Opportunity's Knocking  
Many of us have become complacent with our present professional knowledge. We are prone to drift along rather than troubleshooting to educate ourselves. Since self-development is essential for career-development, we should consider taking some night courses at local schools and colleges. Registration for courses at the U. S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School will begin at the end of January, and local colleges will begin registration at the same time. You've probably thought about it before, but let's start the new decade off right by acting on the thought.

Catalogs for USDA's spring semester will appear on our bulletin boards after New Year's. You may get further information by calling the personnel division, extension 277.

SI Artist Wins Award  
Don Fredette, of the exhibits staff, has won the award for silver in the Corcoran Gallery of Art's "14th Annual Area Exhibition." His winning work is a silver and rosewood chalice with a silver paten. Another example of Mr. Fredette's work, a silver and rosewood canape dish, is also in the exhibition.

Three other members of the exhibits staff have paintings in the exhibition—Peters De Anna, with "Seated Boy"; Arthur Smith, with "Auroras of Autumn"; and Thea Winger, with "Landscape No. 3." Mr. Smith's painting has been purchased by the Corcoran Gallery of Art for its permanent collection.

The special exhibition opened on November 21; it will continue through December 20.

New Cultural Historian  
John Peace recently joined the staff as an assistant curator in the division of cultural history. He comes to the Smithsonian Institution from the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and the University of Delaware, where he completed a two-year fellowship program leading to a master of arts degree.

Mr. Peace earned his bachelor of arts degree in 1956 at Yale, where he majored in American studies and history of art. He has done graduate work at Johns Hopkins University, and has served as editorial assistant in "city planning" at the Yale School of Architecture and Design.

More New Talent  
Although the MHT exhibits staff as originally planned was to be BIG, there has been such a rash of incoming talent that the space on the tally board (the third one, incidentally) cannot accommodate three new names—Jamee Hitchcock, Dorothy Briggs, and Clarence Stedle.

Jamee's a girl, but, more remarkable, she's a quiet Texan. She's a graduate of Baylor, and has done commercial art work.

Dorothy's a girl, too. She's remarkable because she's a fairly long-time resident of D. C. She hails from Springfield, Mass.

Clarence comes from Seattle via the Bureau of Reclamation.

Dorothy and Clarence are accomplished ceramists. Dorothy has done major mosaic work, so ceramics is more of a vocation with her. Clarence, an oil's teacher, confines his ceramic activities to home beautification.

Published in November  
SPECIAL PUBLICATION—The Smithsonian Institution, revised edition.

SMITHSONIAN MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS—Genera of Tertiary and Recent Rhynchonellid Brachiopoda by the Editors. The Anatomical Life of the Mosquito, by R. E. Snodgrass.


Norwegian Art Exhibit  
An exhibition of 115 rare and beautiful examples of Norwegian tapestries, carved and painted wooden furniture, and other objects of Norse folk art will be on view at the Natural History Building through January 10. Considered the most important collection of Norwegian folk art ever presented in this country, the exhibition was organized in cooperation with the Norwegian Government and is being circulated to major American museums by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

The exhibition consists of two sections. The first is devoted to 60 outstanding examples of Norwegian tapestry from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. The golden age of Norwegian tapestry weaving shows in essence the best ingredients of the Northern European Renaissance blended with old native traditions in which a firm decor and a predilection for strong, bright colors can be traced to the Viking Age.

The tapestries reveal a pictorial language which is unique. Three-dimensional scenes are translated into delightful, flat patterns, particularly important to modern designers who frequently turn to such past styles for inspiration. Among the favorite scenes are representatives of the New Testament parable of the Five Wise and the Five Foolish Virgins, King Solomon receiving the Queen of Sheba, the Magi and the Adoration, and the Feast of Herod.

The second section, devoted to folk art other than tapestry, includes carved and painted wooden cupboards, chests, and chairs; beer bowls, cups, and tankards in animal shapes; and other household objects. Many of these utensils, dating from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, were used in ceremonial functions. As in the tapestries, the representations on the furniture and other woodwork are bold and schematic, with the objects usually painted in bright, contrasting colors.

Biblical scenes, animals, geometrical and architectural designs, and the acanthus leaf were favorite motifs.

Selections for the exhibition were made by a committee of Norwegian museum directors and curators headed by Dr. Thorvald Krohn-Hansen, director of the Arts and Crafts Museum in Trondheim. The exhibition was first shown in this country at the Brooklyn Museum, where it was formally opened by the Norwegian minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Halvard Lange, and Norwegian Ambassador Paul Kahl.

The Washington presentation was formally opened by Ambassador Kahl on December 12. Dr. Krohn-Hansen, who attended the opening, gave a lecture on "Norwegian Folk Art" on December 14 at 8:30 p.m. in the Natural History Building.

Staff Members on Program for Annual AAAS Meeting  
Several members of the Smithsonian staff are to present papers or serve as presiding officers at the 126th Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science to be held at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago from December 26 to 31.

Those taking part are the following: Dr. A. C. Smith, Director of the Museum of Natural History; Dr. Herbert Friedmann, head curator of the department of zoology (MNH); Dr. Robert P. Mulhaun, acting head curator of the department of science and technology (MHT); and Dr. Richard S. Cowan and Dr. Velva E. Rudd, associate curators in the National Herbarium's division of phycology.

Since its aggregate membership exceeds two million, the AAAS is by far the largest and most influential group of related scientific organizations in the world. Consequently, its annual meetings attract world-wide attention.

Contributors to this Issue  
Contributions to The Torch are encouraged from all employees. Items may be sent to Mrs. Fields in the personnel division.

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HARRY DAVIES  
FRANK SMITH  
HARRY FIELDS  
Vladimir RYASNOV  

The Anatomical Life of the Mosquito, by R. E. Snodgrass.