Architect, Director Named for Hirshhorn

Gordon Bunshaft

New York University. He also had five years of subsequent study in various art schools. 

As curator, Bunshaft was charged with the awesome task of cataloging the 4,000 paintings and 1,500 pieces of sculpture that comprised the most valuable collection of its kind in private hands. 

Lerner’s influence and guidance on the growth of the $25 million collection is a result of both his curatorial ability and training. The native New Yorker holds a B.A. degree in art history and education from Fordham University. 

The proceeds of the symposium will be edited for publication in a single volume as the second in a series that began with the James S. Maxon Lectures last year.

The Right Honorable Jennie Lee, Minister for the Arts in Great Britain, will provide "a re-examination of the premises underlying present attitudes and methods for dealing with the physical environment," Secretary Ripley said.

He added that he hopes the symposium will give planners of the physical environment “a new sense of direction and a new structure of knowledge, derived from past experiences and able to influence present and prospective purposes.”

David B. Chase is acting as staff director for the symposium, Program Committee members are Chase, Charles Blitzer, director of the Office of Education and Training, B. H. Mandell, chairman of the Department of Civil History, and Philip Ritterbusch, special assistant to the Secretary.

General counsel Peter G. Powers is handling the committee handling arrangements for the three-day session. Working with him are B. Richard Berg, director of public information; George J. Berkley, press officer; Chase, William H. Crooker, associate curator of cultural anthropology; John Fesperman, associate curator in charge of the Division of Musical Instruments; Carl Grimsley, chief of the Protection Division; Howard Lansdown, conference assistant.

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General sessions of the symposium will be held on February 17 and 18 in the Departmental Auditorium.

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In addition to Miss Lee, speakers will be Robert McC. Adams, director of the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute; Wolfgang Brunsfeld, professor of German literature at the University of Munich, Germany; Anna Briggs, vice-chancellor of the University of Sussex, England.

(Continued on Page 2)
Neither Strike, Nor Wreck Nor Revolution Stays SAO

By John White

"Mr. Smithsonian would have been astonished if he had learned that his bequest to the Smithsonian Institution of Musical Instruments January 19, 1967 had been stolen. The theft of 10 violins, in the spring of 1965 was granted $10,000. The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Henry A. P. Blixt, in his annual report, the caption under a picture of a diorama in the Hall of Physical Sciences states that in 1972, when (L'Enfant)—originally appointed planner of the City of Washington, was discharged at the request of the city—Andrew Elliott completed the job. That little ditty was brought to our attention by John Lea of the Smithsonian Press. Mr. Lea has the awesome task of editing the Institution's annual report, the 1965 version of which will be released in a week or so... Those of us who were both amused and perturbed by the recent article, "The Smithsonian Looks Forward," which appeared in the Washington Post, had a treat awaiting our attention when the caption under a picture of a diorama in the Hall of Physical Sciences read, "So hard hit was the museum that its director, Dr. Martin Moynihan, is forced to curtail..."

Joy FOREVER—People will go to strange lengths to achieve their concepts of perfection. Those lengths are brutally illustrated in the 7 by 12 foot mural now hanging in the Hall of Physical Anthropology. Entitled "Cultural Mutilations in the Pursuit of Beauty," Alton Tobey's work depicts such quaint folk customs as Acanthus and Japonesque floral designs, bird feet, multitudinous feet of Chinese women, decorative African scars and other glamour treatments.

SYMPOSIUM (Complete from January 1)

Hiroshi Daisaku, President; 1,250,000.

MAESTRO—Janos Scholz, prominent cellist and viola da gamba, brought his own valuable instrument, made by Jacob Stainer in 1649, with him when he played in a concert staged by the Division of Musical Instruments January 19. He couldn't resist staying over to play out his favorite gamba songs, and the SAO music instrument storage room. He was delighted with the Barak Norman instrument—a 350-year-old and the finest bowed stringed instrument in the SI collection.

About SI People

 silica Bedini, assistant director of MHT, is coordinating a Smithsonian aid program to the Florence Museums Division, in one of the most ravaged small museums. Mr. Bedini has seen to it that such things as dehumidifiers and space heaters have been sent promptly and without red tape to the small museum. So hard hit was the museum that its director, Prof. Righint-Bonelli, lost all her personal belongings. Also swept away were her library and photographic laboratory... According to MHT plant specialist, Stanley Shurtleff, the Smithsonian will launch an enormous project, perhaps its largest, with the organization of the "Flora of North America." Shurtleff says that a group of botanists from the U.S. Museum and academic communities recommend that the program will attempt to catalog all vascular plants north of Mexico. Some 15 to 20 thousand species would be involved in the project estimated to last 15 years. Once produced, the 4- to 6-volume "Flora" would be the first complete work of its kind. Mr. Shurtleff is executive secretary of the editorial committee, which will meet here February 1 to launch the project formally... Who planned the City of Washington? Major Pierre L'Enfant? According to SI's annual report, the caption under a picture of a diorama in the Hall of Physical Sciences states that in 1792, when (L'Enfant)—originally appointed planner of the City of Washington, was discharged at the request of the city—Andrew Elliott completed the job. That little ditty was brought to our attention by John Lea of the Smithsonian Press. Mr. Lea has the awesome task of editing the Institution's annual report, the 1965 version of which will be released in a week or so... Those of us who were both amused and perturbed by the recent article, "The Smithsonian Looks Forward," which appeared in the Washington Post, had a treat awaiting our attention when the caption under a picture of a diorama in the Hall of Physical Sciences read, "So hard hit was the museum that its director, Dr. Martin Moynihan, is forced to curtail..."

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Carl Condit Lists 'Human Community as Mall Need'

"Human community," that, according to prominent architectural historian Carl Condit, is what the Mall is lacking. Dr. Condit is working at the Smithsonian as a visiting post-doctoral research associate, developing a course on the history of building techniques and a civil engineering that he will teach next year at Northwestern University. He distanced his work here, as well as the Mall and other aspects of Washington architecture, in an interview with The Torch.

The city has other lacks, Condit pointed out. It "lacks what a great city always has, density, power and intensity." He explained that the power referred to not was political, but the visible images of architectural power. He doubts that the city can ever gain these qualities with the height limitations imposed on buildings here.

His criticisms of the District, he hastened to add, were not out of some fear of its future or its transportation problems, or any of the other shortcomings common to all modern cities. They were aimed, he said, at "the part of the city that was most carefully planned," which turned out, ironically, to be "bland."

The Smithsonian came in for some praise, however. Asked what in Washington he would consider good architectural practice, he cited the new free flight cage at the zoo. It has a "browsing intensity," he said, that actually captures the feeling of flight.

He anticipates that the headquarters of the new Department of Housing and Urban Development, going up at 7th and D Streets, S.W., will also exemplify good contemporary design, and he praised Washington's "temecula values," such as Rock Creek Park and some of the Potomac vistas.

For the Mall, it suffers from "an excessive area of level lawn" and a "lack of spatial definition." His suggestions for improvement were similar to those advanced by other planners—kiosks, walls, "things to attract people." He also proposed pedestrian tunnels under the streets, explaining that the Mall "turned out to be made of cars."

The new Smithsonian buildings will both help, Condit thought, in defining the edges of the Mall and closing gaps. And the Mall sculpture garden that will accompany the Hirshhorn gallery is the sort of thing needed to bring the missing "human community" to the area.

Smithsonian architecture in general is "absolutely without charm," Condit said. Although the buildings represent the architecture of different periods, they are not discordant, he contends, because of their similar proportions and related silhouettes. MHT did not escape his critical eye, however. He described it as a "cold and blank wall." "It lacks articulation and definition," he explained.

Condit is a man of quite varied background and interests. His BS was in mechanical and civil engineering and his MA and PhD in English, and he has taught mathematics, mechanics, and humanities, and, currently, art and the history of science. The course he is developing here will cover bridges, tunnels, and superhighway systems, as well as buildings. He envisions these as "structures."

He is also taking advantage of his proximity to the Library of Congress, the American Institute of Architects, and the Association of American Railroads, developing his interests which exists in somewhat related form only at Columbia University.

A book may also come out of his studies here, but not in the near future. The book he does have, for which he accepted the American Building Art: the 19th Century, American Building Art: the 20th Century, and The School of Architecture (The Rise of the Skyscraper), has a volume on the history of U.S. building techniques, especially Colonial and early Republican, coming out in early spring, and he is working on another book on Chicago.

Young Viewers Of 'Smithsonian's' Send Fan Mail

The "Smithsonian's" some five million viewers are happy. Some fans of the NBC-TV series—most of them eleven-year-olds—have even written enthusiastic letters about the show. One young viewer noted that her 5th and sixth graders were disappointed when the educational show was preempted.

The ultimate compliment came from an 11-year-old boy who noted that "The show Commercial" was the best episode of the show. "I think your show will be on for ever," he said.

The NBC series might have inadvertently helped out a CBS special. Another boy from Chicago, "My favorite show was 'Dem Dry Bones.' It prepared us for 'Dr. Leakey and the Dawn of Man.'"

One young "Smithsonian" preserved for posterity. "I hope the program continues for years after I leave school, it is the only learning I can and learn as I did."

Other comments:

- "Please keep the Smithsonian on television. It is much better than cartoons."
- "My favorite program of The Smithsonian was about the prehistoric bones. In the beginning I liked the song 'The Knee Bone etc.'"
- "The only one I'll never forget is the one on 'How to Build a Better Monstro.'"

Not all the comments have come from enthusiastic school children. A Bayside, Long Island, woman wrote in exception to the show on meteorites.

"Have impression assertion was made that meteorites are never seen when they hit the ground as meteorites. --How, then, did one burn a hole in the brim of my hat? That was about 5' 10" or less above ground surface."

Roy Clarke, Jr., chemist in the Division of Meteorites, replies that such a statement is incorrect. Although large crater-forming meteorites are still hot when they reach the earth, there has not been a documented case of any small fragments retaining heat that long, he said.

by Samuel T. Suratt

In June of 1867, Mark Twain prepared to embark upon the ship Quaker City which would carry him to Europe and the Near East and on to greater fame as a comic writer when his account of the voyage was published as Accidents Abroad. On examining the passenger list he found "a gentleman who had "commissioner of the United States of America to Europe, Asia, and Africa" thundering after his name in one awful blast!"

Twin wrote on: "I state frankly that I was all unprepared for this crusader. I fell under that titular avalanche and blighted thing. I said that if that potentate must go over on our ship, why, I supposed he must, according to my thinking, when the United States considered it necessary to send a dignitary of that sort, the voyage, I was sure, would be in better taste, and safer, to take him apart and cart him over in sections, in packages, instead of as a whole.

Mark Twain was relieved later when he found thisAugust pamphlet was "only a common mortal, and that his mission had nothing more overpowering about it than foreign boundaries, and uncommon yarns and extraordinary cab-bages and peculiar fullfolds for that poor, useless, innocent, mildewed old fossil, the Smithsonian Institute."

Was this grand "Commissioner" an invention of Mark Twain's creative mind? Not quite! In April, 1867, Joseph Henry, Secretary of the Smithsonian, received a letter from William Gibson of James-town, Pennsylvania. Gibson wrote that he was leaving for an excursion up the Mediterranean on the 8th of June next. Dr. Gibson along with Twain, was a member of a five-man committee to be filed away among the papers of any kind I will cheerfully do so."

Gibson intimated that some sort of authority from the Smithsonian Institution would be welcome as it would give him "more freedom of access to facts abroad." Henry thanked him for his interest in the aims of the Smithsonian and added that "we shall be most happy to obtain by your aid any collections of minerals or other specimens."

Nowhere in his reply did Henry infer that Gibson had a commission from the Smithsonian or the United States Government. It is possible that he obtained his glorious title from some other source. Gibson mentioned that he had corresponded with the Commissioner of Agriculture who could conceivably have sent him some sort of document which gave him the official aura.

Mark Twain gives the impression that the "Commissioner" was an imposing person, but, in reality, Gibson was a representative of the small town gentry with which Washington was most familiar. William Gibson was 54 years old when he joined the company of innocents on their Mediterranean cruise in 1867. He was the only physician in Jamestown, Pennsylvania (population in 1870-572), a small town, Pennsylvania. Gibson wrote that Twain's imagination or did some other agency give him a commission? Was he was leaving to Europe, as a member of a five-man committee, Dr. Gibson along with Twain, was a member of a five-man committee to be filed away among the papers of any kind I will cheerfully do so."

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Volunteers Bringing Order To Tons of Air Documents

Most people think of a quantity of reference material in terms of number of volumes, or file drawers, or shelves. At the Air and Space Museum they’re thinking these days in terms of tons—from 100 to 200 tons of documentary material donated through the years and waiting to be sorted.

Staff limitations have so far prevented the job from being tackled on any large scale, but an unusual volunteer opera-
tion is now beginning to bring order to some 12,000 volumes of books, 4,000 to 5,000 bound volumes of periodicals, 100,000 photographs, and several mil-

lion pamphlets.

About a dozen members of the local American Aviation Historical Society, directed by NASM staffers Ernest Robis-

chon, Robert Wood and Stuart Mac-

Kenzie, have been giving their Wednes-
days and Saturdays since April to sorting and shelving for retrieval the museum’s burried treasure. In return, they earn points for the number of hours they put in and periodically are allowed to bid these points for duplicates in the col-

lection.

The duplicates, not yet accessioned or catalogued, can be utilized in this way, after being checked carefully by the curatorial staff to assure that they are surplus and can be spared. Auctions are held periodically as the duplicates accumulate and volunteers earn points. Other hours are kept for trading with institutions and individuals.

The volunteers, Robischon says, “give us better man hours than we could ever buy on the labor market.” Being avia-
tion enthusiasts, and well read on the subject, they are able to recognize espe-
cially valuable specimens as they come across them.

So far the volunteers have increased the museum’s bound book holdings by some 600 volumes, and doubled the num-
ber of bound periodicals. These volumes are organized on the shelves alphabeti-
cally by author or periodical title, but not catalogued. (Present capabilities for cataloging indicate that over 100 years would be required to process the items.)

This has created something of a space crisis in NASM’s temporary headquar-
ters in A&I, but the East North Range is being considered as a reference read-
ing room and stacks. At the present time books are stored in everything from old display cases to shelves made from wooden boxes donated by the Interna-
tional Exchange Service.

The project has turned up such di-
verse items as scrapbooks and clippings, four copies of a rare 1918 Air Service Medical Manual, which the National Library of Medicine had been unable to locate, file after file on different kinds of aircraft (NASM hopes to build a file on every plane ever constructed), and even biographies of the infamous “Red Barons.”

What treasures remain in the jumble of boxes in the basement of A&I is still unknown. Escorting the Torch reporter through the storerooms, Robischon opened a box at random and discovered volumes of the Aeronautical Annuals of 1895, 96 and 97, worth some $500. He promises it was not a put-up job.

The volunteers, who contributed 100 hours of their time in the last quarter alone, are: John S. Bath, Charles J. Bury, Jack M. Freeburger, George E. Gilberg, James H. Nichols, Robert J. Tarcza, Richard Wischnowski, Henry Orzako, J. Roger Bentley, Al Blue, Col. Samuel White (USAF retired) and fam. Sam Norris, and Frank Holz.

Radiation Lab Offers Course

The Radiation Biology Laboratory will sponsor its first course, a graduate seminar in photobiology, this spring, according to acting director Walter Shropshire.

The course will be given here in co-
operation with the Consortium of Uni-
versities of the Metropolitan Area, and is the first Smithsonian-Consortium joint effect.

Outstanding photobiologists from un-
iversities and government agencies throughout the country will lecture at the class in the MHT auditorium every Tuesday evening beginning February 2.

Dr. Shropshire will present the opening lecture, “What Is Photobiology?”

Dr. Shropshire is chairman of a com-
mission on photobiology which planned the seminar. Also on the committee from the Smithsonian are Charles Shriver, direc-
tor of the Office of Education and Training.

Lectures will be open to SI staff mem-
bers. They will begin at 7:30 p.m. and last about 90 minutes, with a question and answer session following.

Travelers Off Again for 67

There may be no place like home for the holidays, but the New Year finds researchers abroad again for the in-
crease of knowledge.

Miss Freedom, who has graced the rotunda of the Arts and Industries Build-
ing for about 75 years, was scheduled to be put into mothballs by February 1. The 1914-foot-high plaster figure used to cast the statue atop the National Capitol will be shipped to SI’s facility at Silver Hill, Md., where it will remain in storage until a suitable area is found for its display in the new Fine Arts and Portrait Gallery.

Designed in five sections, the statue was scheduled to be removed in only two, Leon Doane, of the Buildings Man-
agement Division, said. He was respon-
sible for contracting a mover to bring in a crane to take the figure down.

The statue was to be put on two pal-
lets and fork lifted onto a truck, Doane said. He called it a relatively simple moving job.

Miss Freedom was designed by sculp-
tor Thomas Crawford in Rome in 1856 and came to D.C. in 1858. She was dis-
played in the old hall of the House of Representativest until space became a problem, then banished to the Capitol basement for about 30 years. She was given to SI December 15, 1890.

A pool filled the center of the rotunda before Miss Freedom’s arrival. After she leaves, the area will be converted into a lounge where tourists can rest, according to Frank A. Taylor, Director of the U.S. National Museum.

Who Is 'Smithsonian' Owl?

Who is the owl that greets viewers of the NBC “Smithsonian” series?

He is a figure on an ancient Greek coin, the reverse design of an Athenian drachm of the late 5th century BC, according to curator of numismatics V. Chain-Stephanelli, and he travels in the best of circles.

The symbol of wisdom, the owl once belonged to the goddess Athena and now belongs to Secretaries of the Smith-
sonian Institution. He was selected by Mr. Ripley to be the central figure on the Secretary’s ceremonial badge of office.

The badge, which hangs around the neck from a cherry red ribbon, was made for the Bicentennial. It was de-
signed by English goldsmith Leslie Dur-
bin and cast in gold given to the Smith-
sonian by the Imam of Muscat.

Let There Be Sound and Light—Jean Rosenthal, who has staged the lighting for numerous Broadway hits, and John Houseman, who will write and direct the presentations, reveal their plans for sound and light on the Mall to potential contributors. The Institution hopes to begin the son et lumiere programs this summer.