



JANUARY 1936

THE SMITHSONIAN

# TORCH

Extracts from the will of  
James Smithson

I James Smithson son to right first Duke of Northumberland  
& Elizabeth heiress of the barony of Arundel &  
niece of Charles the Bold Duke of Burgundy now  
residing in Duntreth Street Coventry Square, do this  
twenty third day of October one thousand eight  
hundred & twenty six, make this my Last will  
and Testament. ....

..... In the case of the death of my  
said nephew without leaving a child or  
children ..... I then  
bequeath the whole of my property,  
..... to the  
United States of America, to found at  
Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian  
institution, and establishment for the increase  
as diffusion of knowledge among men.

James Smithson.





January 1956

Number 11

## REGENTS MEETING

The Smithsonian's Board of Regents meets this year on Friday, January 13. As has been the custom in recent years, a dinner is held in the Great Hall of the Smithsonian Building on the evening before this annual meeting. At the dinner some of the most interesting acquisitions of the year in the Smithsonian museums are displayed. Usually several members of the research staff are invited to tell about some important part of their research in progress.

Few staff members have had a chance to meet or even see their Regents. Some have asked what the duties of the Board are and how it works. To these, the answer is that the Regents watch over the affairs of the Smithsonian and guide its policies very much as a board of trustees serves a college or a board of directors serves a corporation.

How the Smithsonian came to have a Board of Regents and how they are chosen is an interesting story.

When James Smithson left his fortune to the United States to found the Institution that bears his name, it became necessary to set up an organization to receive and administer it. After eight years of consideration, a bill creating the Smithsonian Institution was passed and signed into law by President Polk on August 10, 1846. In it the United States solemnly agreed, through its elected representatives in Congress, to act as

perpetual guardian of the Institution created to use Smithson's bequest.

Those chosen to be the Institution itself, or the Establishment, as it is also called, were the President and the Vice President of the United States, the Chief Justice, and the members of the President's Cabinet. Few institutions, public or private, in this or any other country, can claim such a distinguished membership.

Because the Institution is composed of men busy with affairs of government, the founding act also created a Board of Regents to act for them in directing the activities of the Smithsonian. Two of these Regents are members of the Institution -- the Vice President and the Chief Justice, who presides over the Board as its Chancellor.

Of the others, six are members of Congress -- three from the Senate and three from the House of Representatives -- and six are private citizens -- two from the District of Columbia and four from different States of the Union. The Senate members are nominated by the President of the Senate and those from the House of Representatives by the Speaker of the House. These nominations are confirmed by vote of the respective Houses of Congress. The six citizen members are elected for a term of six years by joint resolution of Congress. The Regents, in turn, select the Secretary, who is executive head of the Smithsonian, and who also serves as secretary of the Board of Regents.

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 \* Editorial Board \*  
 \* Paul Oehser \*  
 \* Tom Clark \*  
 \* Jack Newman \*  
 \* \*  
 \* Editor \*  
 \* Ernest Biebighauser \*  
 \* \*  
 \* Managing Editor \*  
 \* Daisy Fields \*  
 \* \*  
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 \* Contributions are encouraged from all employees of the Smithsonian \*  
 \* Institution. If you have an item for THE TORCH please type it \*  
 \* double spaced, sign it, and give it to the secretary of your depart- \*  
 \* ment or send it direct to Mrs. Fields in the personnel office. \*  
 \* \*  
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In past years many notable in science and public affairs have served on the Board of Regents, including such men as Louis J. Agassiz, James B. Angell, Chester A. Arthur, William B. Astor, George Bancroft, Alexander Graham Bell, Robert S. Brookings, Jefferson Davis, Millard E. Fillmore, James A. Garfield, Asa Gray, Charles Evans Hughes, Henry Cabot Lodge, Dwight W. Morrow, Theodore Roosevelt, William T. Sherman, Adlai E. Stevenson, and William Howard Taft.

The Board of Regents today is made up of the following:

Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the United States  
 Richard M. Nixon, Vice President of the United States  
 Clinton P. Anderson, Member of the Senate  
 Leverett Saltonstall, Member of the Senate  
 H. Alexander Smith, Member of the Senate  
 Clarence Cannon, Member of the House of Representatives  
 Overton Brooks, Member of the House of Representatives  
 John M. Vorys, Member of the House of Representatives  
 Arthur H. Compton, citizen of Missouri  
 Robert V. Fleming, citizen of Washington, D. C.  
 Jerome C. Hunsaker, citizen of Massachusetts

Three vacancies exist among the citizen members as a result of the resignation of Dr. Vannevar Bush on January 1, 1956, and the deaths of Owen J. Roberts on May 17, 1955, and Harvey N. Davis on December 3, 1952.

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#### ENCOURAGING

The following letter was received by THE TORCH from Mr. Ralph Solecki, formerly with the River Basin Surveys of the Smithsonian and now with the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University:

"I have been receiving THE TORCH regularly, for which I sincerely thank you very much.

"I hope you continue to prosper over the coming years.

"Perhaps you have not been aware of it, but Professor William Duncan Strong, of the Department of Anthropology (at Columbia) is an alumnus of the Smithsonian. I have been turning over my copies of THE TORCH to Dr. Strong, which he reads with much interest."

TORCH contributors appreciate this letter very much and are taking this opportunity to advise Mr. Solecki and the professor that Dr. Strong's name has been added to our mailing list.

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#### RICE

Margaret Brown, assistant curator of the division of civil history, will be married to Frank Klapthor on Wednesday, January 18, at 4 p.m. in Sacred Heart Church in La Plata, Md.

Miss Brown's sister, Mrs. William Moore, will be matron of honor and her nieces, Mary and Betsy Moore, will be flower girls.

Mr. Klapthor was museum aid attached to the division of civil history prior to his departure to head the D.A.R. museum last year.

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#### REDOUTE EXHIBIT

An exhibition of "Water-colors and Prints by Redouté" will be on view in the foyer of the Natural History Building from January 15 through February 2.

The exhibit, sponsored by the Luxembourg ambassador, Hugues Le Gallais, is to be circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759-1840) was official flower painter to Marie Antoinette at Trianon and to Joséphine Bonaparte at Malmaison. He specialized in the rendering of roses and lilies, and painted many other flowers and fruits with equal elegance and accuracy. Audubon called him "the flower painter par excellence."

Of the 44 works on exhibition, 8 are lent by the Luxembourg State Museum, 27 by members of the Luxembourg Society, and 5 by E. Weyhe of New York.

Redouté was born into a family of artists at St. Hubert, in a corner of the Ardennes then belonging to Luxembourg but later annexed to Belgium. As a young man he decorated churches and castles, and at eighteen he was painting portraits of the prominent citizens. His elder brother, Antoine Ferdinand, invited him to Paris and procured commissions for him at the Italian Theatre. At the Jardin des Plantes he sketched flowers and met the botanist, L'Héritier de Brutelle. Through him he came to London where he learned to print plates in color as well as new watercolor techniques.

Later Redouté came to the notice of Joséphine Bonaparte and it was under her munificent patronage that much of his work was published. Napoleon presented the painter's works in luxurious bindings to the crowned heads of Europe.

As the London TIMES wrote on the occasion of the first Redouté exhibition at the Marlborough Galleries, July 1949, "He was once known as the Raphael of the Roses, but he also grew them, and was indeed a profound student of the genus, introducing many plants to cultivation; there is a class known as Redouté roses, of a rather prim and early Victorian simplicity. As an artist Redouté was exactly suited to illustrate this genus, precise and exquisitely tidy in his execution, graceful and wholly unaffected; he would labour, evidently for hours at a time, to describe a dewdrop on a petal, and used the same power of minute discrimination to distinguish the exact character of a particular species or florist's variety."

Roger Madol, author of a volume on Redouté published in London, 1954, wrote the introduction to the Smithsonian catalog of the exhibition. He said about the artist: "In taking nature by surprise, he has recognized her elusive qualities and captured her beauty for us to gaze upon quite unashamed. Nature could hide no flaws or secrets from this untiring observer and frank admirer; her full beauty is reflected in his work. Redouté's flowers truly live, as does his fame."

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#### NEW STENO

Mrs. Alice Till has been appointed as clerk-stenographer for the division of medicine and public health. Mrs. Till transferred from the U. S. Department of Agriculture in New Jersey.

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## PHANEROGAMIST BACK

A. C. Smith, curator, division of phanerogams, returned on December 5 from a 5-week visit to Europe, where he visited botanical institutions in London, Utrecht, Leiden, and Brussels.

The primary object of Dr. Smith's trip was attendance at a week-long meeting of the Editorial Committee appointed by the Eighth International Botanical Congress. This 10-man committee is composed of representatives from the United States, Canada, England, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, and Switzerland.

Instructed by the Botanical Congress to revise the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature in accordance with decisions taken at Paris in 1954, the committee completed its work and prepared what is fondly considered a "final" draft of a new edition. Publication is expected about the middle of 1956, with parallel versions in English, French, and German.

The committee does not guarantee that the new edition will solve all the problems of plant taxonomists.

Committee members enjoyed the hospitality of their colleagues in Holland. They were guests at receptions given by the rectors and the botanical staffs of the universities at Utrecht and Leiden, and on one occasion they participated in a walk along the seacoast with the joint botanical staffs of Utrecht and Leiden, who, it is rumored, seldom associate so amicably.

It is hoped that social activities did not impair the nomenclatural judgment of the committee.

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## HEART TO HEART

Although you may be unaware of it, you have a faithful friend with you constantly. His labors could lift you, once each day of your life, to the height of the Empire State Building, or with one hour's work he could lift a 4-ton truck one foot above the ground. In one year he functions 36 million times and he continues his amazing feat, without ceasing, all of your lifetime.

If you haven't realized who he is by now, you are taking your heart for granted. Your friend, your heart, can take quite an amount of abuse but he will remain faithful for a long lifetime only if you respect his limitations and pay prompt attention to any danger signals he may give you.

Five facts you should know about heart disease: (1) Some forms of heart disease can be prevented.....a few can be cured; (2) all heart cases can be cared for best if diagnosed early; (3) almost every heart condition can be helped by proper treatment; (4) most heart patients can keep on working -- often at the same job; (5) your "symptoms" may not mean heart disease. Don't guess, don't worry. See your doctor and be sure.

For information, contact the Washington Heart Association. For consultation, see your physician.

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## HAVE YOU HEARD

One of the hardest secrets for a man to keep, is his opinion of himself.

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## MORE ABOUT DINOSAUR

In answer to last month's poem by B.L.T. on the dual-control system of the dinosaur, a Smithsonian poet contributes the following:

## THE DINOSAUR: RIPOSTE

Behold, indeed, the Dinosaur,  
That bi-cerebral beast of yore  
Who had a second brain behind  
to supplement the brain before.

So What! Like us who have  
but one,  
He ate and drank and had his  
fun  
And perished when his day was  
done.

For all his derriere-pensée  
He did not live an extra day.  
...John Alexander Pope

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## STANLEY POTTER NOW HOME

Just before Christmas, Mr. Potter of the National Air Museum staff, who was badly injured August 15 while unloading airplane parts at the NAM-Suitland facility, was given a partial release from the Naval Medical Center at Bethesda. He spent Christmas Day with his family but will be required to make regular visits to the hospital to take physical therapy treatments.

It will probably be several months yet before he can think of returning to the Museum. In the meanwhile he says it is wonderful to be home again and he appreciates the many cards, phone calls, and visits from his friends.

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## PREREQUISITES

A panel of experts listed as necessary for supervisory advancement: high frustration tolerance; self-analysis; ability to express hostility tactfully; a realistic approach to objectives; ability to accept victory with controlled emotion; lack of any tendency to be destroyed by defeat.

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## GREETINGS COME

Christmas greetings to the director and staff of the National Museum were received from the Council of Agriculture, Brisbane, Australia; the Norsk Polarinstitut, Oslo, Norway; Dr. Abelardo Moreno, Havana, Cuba; and Dr. Amir Nezam Ghaffary, Teheran, Iran. Dr. Ghaffary added, "with all my thanks and sincere gratitude for the kindness of you and your staff during my stay at the Museum."

Dr. Kellogg received seasons greetings from a correspondent in D. C., who said, "I'd like to congratulate you people on the fine new exhibits about the South American Indians. What a welcome improvement over your older exhibits about North American Indians. I have visited museums abroad, and it seems to me a shame that Uncle Sam has lagged so far behind some lesser countries in having good historical museums. We are proud of our heritage and history. Let us show it in our museums."

If anyone knows of the whereabouts of Mr. and Mrs. David Baker or Dr. Jesús de Rubens, please notify Correspondence and Records. Christmas cards have been received addressed to them in care of the Smithsonian.

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# PHILATELY TOPS MILLION

The division of philately has just completed the most active 6 month accessioning period in its history. Well over 300,000 specimens were added from major accessions alone.

Possibly the most important accession was received from former Postmaster General James A. Farley. It consisted of almost 31,000 specimens from his personal collection. There are original sketches for stamp designs by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and signed or initialed by him; full sheets --first off the presses--auto-graphed by the late President and his Postmaster General; first-day covers; and a complete collection of National Air Mail Week Covers.

A worldwide collection of approximately 70,000 varieties was received from Mrs. Theodore Sherman Palmer, widow of the late Dr. T. S. Palmer, noted Washington ornithologist. General Services Administration transferred close to 146,000 specimens from an "abandoned" collection held since World War II by the Judge Advocate General, U. S. Army.

Special donations included a 3-volume collection of Spain No. 1, Russian Locals, a 30-volume collection of Indian Feudatory States, a Swiss collection, Italian States pre-stamp covers, and scarce varieties such as inverts and imperforates.

Major donors during this period included Ernest Lowenstein, Dr. Milford Golden, John P. V. Heinmuller, Floyd T. Starr, Philip H. Ward, Jr., S. M. Weinthal, B. H. Homan, Jr., Julius Stolow, Dr. William

Winokur and Seymour Winokur, and Irvin Hermanoff.

The division of philately has now passed the million-specimen mark, having doubled its holdings in the past five years.

## NICE PLACE PERIOD

The following quotation is from "The Talk of the Town" article in the December 10 issue of THE NEW YORKER: "If kindhearted folk keep on giving the President things for his Gettysburg farm, it is eventually going to get as cluttered as the Smithsonian Institution. (The Smithsonian is a nice place to visit, but we wouldn't want to live there.)"

We guess the writer was just saying it because it's true, or perhaps because he has an inferiority complex from living in New York.

Anyway, it brings up a point. In the old days, people did live in the Smithsonian. The first Secretary, Joseph Henry, and his family occupied a two-floor apartment in the east wing of the Smithsonian from 1855 until his death in 1878. His successor, Spencer Baird, lived in the same apartment until 1883, when he moved to allow for remodeling and fireproofing of the east wing.

# REPORT OF THE TREASURER OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION EMPLOYEES FEDERAL CREDIT UNION FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1955

## BALANCE SHEET

Assets			Liabilities		
	1955	1954		1955	1954
Loans	\$128,779.11	\$113,181.18	Shares	\$133,312.35	\$125,456.76
Cash in bank	5,304.69	9,420.20	Accounts Payable	762.03	682.65
Petty cash	10.00	10.00	Reserve for		
Change fund	50.00	50.00	Bad Loans	9,293.35	8,782.61
Investments:			Undivided		
Fed. Savings &			profits	6,479.64	5,664.08
Loan Assns.	15,684.09	12,269.32	Notes		
U.S. bonds	3,815.00	5,611.00	Payable	4,000.00	- - -
Furn. & Fixt.	24.40	44.40		\$153,847.29	\$140,586.10
Prepaid Exp.	180.00	- - -			
	<u>\$153,847.29</u>	<u>\$140,586.10</u>			

## STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

Expenses			Income	
	1955	1954	1955	1954
Sty. & supplies	\$ 63.65	\$ 70.07	Interest rec'd	\$ 9,440.96
D.C. League dues	216.30	211.20		\$8,799.93
Borrower's ins.	677.09	733.11		
Life savings ins.	794.32	712.43	Income from	
Auditor's fee	278.52	245.00	Investments	618.77
Supervisory fee	42.00	38.40		577.24
Bond premium	90.00	84.22	Other Income	36.77
Bank serv. charge	16.98	34.80		29.75
Treasurer's salary	1,320.00	1,200.00		
Other salaries	260.00	225.00		
Misc. expenses	63.50	104.75		
	3,822.36	3,658.98		\$10,096.50
Profit	6,274.14	5,747.94		\$9,406.92
	\$10,096.50	\$9,406.92		

## STATISTICAL REPORT

	No.	Amount
Loans made in 1954	429	\$ 159,808.54
Loans made in 1955	418	164,051.49
Loans made since organization	6,435	1,394,597.08
Loans outstanding December 31, 1955	346	128,779.11
Loans outstanding December 31, 1954	349	113,181.18
Bad loans written off since organization	28	1,573.99
Total paid on shares since organization		274,737.72
Number of members December 31, 1955	698	
Number of members December 31, 1954	723	
Dividends paid since organization	19	31,271.73
U. S. Savings Bonds sold since organization	6,883	542,985.00

THOMAS F. CLARK, Treasurer



## SISTER OF AIR PIONEER VISITS

Ruth Mitchell, sister of the late Gen. William Mitchell, has authored an interesting biography of her brother from which excerpts have been taken for the forthcoming motion picture "The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell." On November 28, she visited the National Air Museum in order to refresh her memory about details of the General's famous World War I Spad airplane, which is exhibited in the Aircraft Building.

Miss Mitchell is much interested in the project for sculpturing a full length statue of her famous brother -- a National Air Museum project now going forward with the assistance of Dr. Carmichael, Mr. Beggs, and Mr. Garber. The sculptor is Bruce Moore.

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## HONORED AGAIN

On December 29, Dr. Herbert Friedmann, curator of birds, was honored for the second time in a month when the Secretary presented him with a certificate of service carrying a cash award.

At the presentation ceremony Dr. Carmichael commended Dr. Friedmann for his outstanding work at the Smithsonian and for the honor brought to this Institution for having been awarded the Leidy Medal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia for 1955.

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## ART WORKS EXHIBITED

Several members of the Smithsonian staff are represented by paintings and sculpture in the 10th Annual Area Exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. The exhibition opened December 4 and is scheduled to close February 5.

Jacob Kainen, associate curator of the division of graphic arts, received high praise in the press reviews, and his painting entitled "Warrior Bard" was reproduced in the front of the catalog. The judges selected this painting as one of the 22 outstanding works of art.

Benjamin Lawless, of the exhibits staff, was represented in the watercolor division. His "Working Boats" was selected to illustrate the watercolor grouping.

Other Smithsonian exhibitors included Rowland Lyon of the National Collection of Fine Arts, Fuller Griffith, division of vertebrate paleontology, and Morris Pearson, Jr., of the exhibits staff.

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## GONE TO PANAMA

Our former Secretary, Dr. Wetmore, left December 1 for the Canal Zone and Republic of Panama to continue his ornithological research for the Institution on the distribution of and variation among birds of the Isthmus. Mrs. Wetmore accompanied him in the capacity of field assistant and, probably more important, camp cook!

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## NATIONAL HEALTH FAIR

George Griffenhagen, acting curator of the division of medicine and public health, has been appointed to the technical committee for the 1956 National Health Fair. This exposition is designed as a community health education project to present information about the progress of medicine and promote better personal and family health by providing sound health information and experiences.

The Fair will be sponsored by the Medical Society for the District of Columbia, the Washington Board of Trade, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and the Health Section, United Community Services, in cooperation with official and voluntary health organizations, government and private institutions and research centers.

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## FACE LIFTED

The 1903 1-cylinder Cadillac has come home after being sent to Atlantic City for restoration by the Cadillac Division of General Motors.

It now sports a new black and red paint job and is fitted with tufted black genuine leather upholstery. Also, it is equipped with the new tires that were presented by Harvey Firestone, Jr., in 1954.

If you want to see a brand new 1903 Cadillac, be sure to visit the Automobile Hall in the Arts and Industries Building.

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## WRIGHT BROTHERS' ANNIVERSARY

December 17 marked the 52nd anniversary of the first powered and controlled flight by man in a heavier-than-air craft. On this most historic date on the aviation calendar, the flying fraternity gathered at the Sheraton-Park Hotel to honor the Wright Brothers and review another year of impressive progress. Principal speakers were the Vice President of the United States and the Ambassador of Great Britain. Decorations, including bronze sculptures of the Wright Brothers and a scale model of the "Kitty Hawk" flyer, were furnished by the National Air Museum. Secretary Carmichael and Mr. Garber represented the Smithsonian at this occasion.

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## FREER RETIREE

The staff at Freer Gallery bade good-bye on November 30 to Edward Van Leer. For the past five years Mr. Van Leer served at the sales desk of the Gallery. At a small farewell party, his fellow workers presented him with a wallet containing cash to wish him well upon his retirement. Mr. Van Leer is leaving Washington to enter the Masonic Home in Philadelphia, where he spent much of his youth.

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#### A PRAYER

"Give me the serenity  
to accept what cannot be changed;  
give me the courage to change  
what can be changed; and the  
wisdom to know one from the  
other."

Reinhold Niebuhr  
- - -

#### TIGER FLIGHTS TO EUROPE

How often have you dreamed  
of taking a trip to Europe and  
then with a shrug and a sigh  
said to yourself, "Oh what's the  
use, I'll never be able to afford  
it!"

Well, fasten your safety  
belt, we have news for you!  
The Flying Tiger Line, Inc.,  
operating under express authority  
of the Civil Aeronautics Board,  
offers year-round service for  
employee groups to fly to Europe  
on spacious 4-engine DC-4s and  
DC-6s for a cost generally less  
than \$300 round trip per passen-  
ger. The more passengers, the  
lower the cost.

Here's how it works. A  
DC-4 accommodates 68 passengers  
with 40 pounds of baggage per  
passenger. If enough employees  
are interested in making the  
flight, a plane is chartered  
from the Flying Tiger Lines at  
a cost of \$20,000 per trip  
during the period June to Sep-  
tember. Thus, if 68 passengers  
sign up for a summer trip the  
cost would be \$295 round trip  
to London, Amsterdam, Brussels,  
or Paris; or \$235 if trip is  
made from October to May to  
the same points.

The planes have comfor-  
table interiors; the seats  
recline; hot meals are served  
aloft; and two stewardesses  
accompany each flight. The  
passenger list need not be  
employees exclusively, but  
may include husbands, wives,  
and children.

Upon arrival abroad you  
may take advantage of the  
21-day tour of Europe which  
includes hotels, meals, travel,  
entrance fees, taxes on  
excursions, etc., for a total  
cost of \$238.

Because of the popularity  
of these flights arrangements  
and reservations must be made  
several months in advance.  
If you seriously contemplate  
taking advantage of these bar-  
gain rates to Europe, please  
call Mrs. Fields, ext. 277  
before January 23. If enough  
people express interest, a  
meeting will be arranged to  
present all the facts and make  
the necessary arrangements.

Let's go! All aboard!  
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#### SCHOOL DAYS COMING

You may be interested  
in taking courses at local  
colleges or universities or  
at the YWCA to further your  
education or for social or  
recreational reasons. Cata-  
logs and related announcements  
for the coming semester in  
February are available in the  
rack alongside the door of  
the Personnel Office. Help  
yourself.  
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#### AIR MAIL TALK

Back in 1918-1920 the  
present curator of the National  
Air Museum was in the Postal  
Aviation Service. That was  
when the first continuously  
scheduled public service air-  
plane mail route was established  
between Washington, Philadelphia,  
and New York.

At the request of the Hagers-  
town, Md., chapter of the Insti-  
tute of Aeronautical Sciences,  
Mr. Garber recalled those ad-  
venturous days in a talk given  
at the Hotel Alexander in that  
city on December 13. About  
100 members of the Institute  
were there, principally the  
engineering personnel of the  
nearby Fairchild Aircraft  
Company.

Starting with the use of  
carrier pigeons and trained  
geese by the ancients and in-  
cluding a reference to the  
flying gods of mythological  
lore, Mr. Garber spoke of the  
carrying of mail on early  
balloon ascents in the latter  
18th century, and then the  
outstanding instances of bal-  
loon air mail during the  
Franco-Prussian War, 1870-  
1871, when 54 balloons were  
released carrying over 12 tons  
of mail from besieged Paris  
to the outer provinces of  
France. Following the inven-  
tion of the airplane by the  
Wright Brothers, heavier-  
than-air craft were first used  
for mail carrying in 1910.

Mr. Garber reviewed the  
early temporary air mail  
services and followed this  
with personal recollections  
of the days when he helped  
to fly the mail. He told how

extension of air mail routes  
from coast to coast and the  
gradual transfer of the govern-  
mental air mail lines to private  
operations formed the basis for  
the present vast commercial air  
line system. The talk was  
illustrated by slides and motion  
pictures.  
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#### FIRST S.I. CHRISTMAS PARTY

Christmas has not always  
been celebrated at the Smith-  
sonian. Indeed, until 1948,  
the Smithsonian had no visible  
Christmas spirit. This dis-  
turbed a number of us, but it  
was a relatively new employee,  
Bob Jenkins, aid in archeology,  
who did something about it.

With the help of several  
coworkers--Eugene Greer and  
Charles Terry especially--he  
arranged for a program to be  
held at noon on Christmas Eve  
in the auditorium of the  
Natural History Building.  
Originally intended for the  
employees in that building,  
the program they planned was  
so good that all Smithsonian  
employees were invited to  
attend.

Charles Terry, aid in  
archeology (now retired) read  
the Christmas story as recorded  
in Luke's Gospel. A chorus of  
employees, directed by Mr.  
Jenkins, led the staff in  
Christmas carols. Robert  
Croggon, guard (now retired),  
played "White Christmas" as  
an accordion solo, and Dr.  
Charles G. Abbot, (retired  
Secretary) played a cello solo,



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accompanied on the piano by Loyal B. Aldrich (retired director of the Astrophysical Observatory). Mr. Jenkins sang a solo from the Messiah and Dr. Wetmore (then Secretary) gave a few words of greeting. The program closed with the singing of "Silent Night." Those present recall this as one of the nicest events that ever took place in the Natural History Building.

The program was so well received that it was repeated in 1949, with a few changes. Paul Garber sang a solo, and the stage was decorated with Christmas baskets of food contributed by employees. In 1950, appreciating a good idea, the administration made the Christmas party "official" moving it to the Great Hall of the Smithsonian Building, where it has become an annual event.

Thank you Bob, for setting a most pleasant precedent!

#### NEW APPOINTMENTS

Junior Clerk:  
Eugene C. McClain  
Clerk-Typist:  
Billie R. Hanley  
Frances Antonakos  
Clerk:  
Elaine J. Smith  
Laboratory Aid:  
Mary S. Ritter  
File Clerk:  
Donald L. Wheeling  
Laborer:  
George E. McCann

#### SEPARATIONS

Norman M. Chamberlain  
Larry G. Bolling  
William N. Garrett  
Ernest W. Godwin  
Philip F. Keith  
Marguerite E. Stallings  
JoAnn L. Sciannella  
John C. Leonard  
Philip Drucker  
Caddie L. Parker  
Isidore Raubfogel  
James Zimmerman  
Charles T. Terry  
Nancy R. Curtler  
Edmund I. Kovach  
Willie A. Greene  
David F. Stombeck  
Albert Williams  
Donald E. Trautman  
John J. Lighter Jr.  
Harold W. Draper  
Clarence M. Condrey Jr.  
John E. Camp  
Minna P. Gill  
Violet W. Moyer

#### HALF PINT

A petite young lady in one of our scientific departments recently went with a group to the blood bank to give a pint of her blood. She was much chagrined to learn that donors must weigh 110 pounds to give a pint. She weighed almost 110, but the doctor said he could accept only a half pint. But she shouldn't feel badly about it. Her half pint might save the life of a child!

#### ORIENTAL ART LECTURES

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The Freer Gallery of Art announces a series of illustrated lectures on oriental art to be held in the gallery auditorium during the winter and spring of 1956.

The programs are as follows:

"Umayyad Art, the Art of an Empire," by Dr. Oleg Grabar of the University of Michigan on Tuesday, January 17, at 8:30 p.m.

"The Art and Architecture of the Age of Solomon," by Prof. William F. Albright of The Johns Hopkins University on Tuesday, February 14, at 8:30 p.m.

"Western Scenery through Chinese Eyes," by Chiang Yee, artist and author, on Tuesday, March 13, at 8:30 p.m.

"Early Chinese Figure Painting," by Laurence Sickman of the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art on Tuesday, April 17, at 8:30 p.m.

#### SPEAKS BEFORE HISTORIANS

Dr. Clifford Evans, associate curator of the division of archeology, participated, by invitation, in the Latin American Historiography session during the annual meeting of the American Historical Association.

The session was held December 28 at the Mayflower Hotel.

Dr. Evans spoke on "Recent Trends in Archeological Research on the Indigenous Cultures of Latin America."

Anthropologist Evans hopes that the historians gained something from this exposure to another discipline, but he says that some of the discussion following the session convinced him that many historians still have various concepts of "culture."

#### VERY FRIENDLY

Specimens of some of the world's most venomous serpents have just been added to the collections of the Smithsonian Institution. They are sea snakes of the South Pacific, collected on the shore of Koror Island in the Palau group by Frederick Bayer of the division of marine invertebrates who recently returned from a field trip there.

The creatures are at least as deadly as any cobra. A bite almost certainly would be fatal to a human being. Yet native children play with these snakes with complete impunity. They pick them up and toss them from one to another, just as American children play "catch." There is no record that any child ever has been bitten. Neither has anybody else in the Palaus, and natives look upon the reptiles with complete indifference. According to another story, natives sometimes fish with sea snakes, holding them by the tail. The snake pokes about in crevices; and when it catches a fish, the fisherman pulls it out.



Personally, Bayer says, he never witnessed the snake-tossing game but it was described to him by highly reliable witnesses. The fish story is just a Palauan "fish story."

The term "sea snake," Bayer says, may be somewhat of a misnomer. Actually the creatures spend most of their days asleep among rocks on the beaches. They are excellent tree climbers and like to sun themselves in tree crotches. At dusk, however, they move out to the reefs, where, presumably, the animals spend most of the night pursuing small fishes, their principal food. They naturally are excellent swimmers, and their bodies have been somewhat modified to adapt them for sea life. They have flattened, paddle-like tails.

Fortunately, on land at least, they are sluggish and nonaggressive. They cannot be induced to bite and will suffer almost any indignity without striking back. About the only way a person would be likely to be bitten would be by stepping directly on the head of one of these snakes with bare feet. This is an unlikely event, for the sea snakes do not spend any time under shallow water where they would be a peril for bathers.

Some are quite beautiful. Those obtained by Bayer were banded with black and white. The largest was about 5 feet long. Their capture entails little difficulty, Bayer says. It is simply a matter of pinning down the head with a stick and picking up the snake by the neck.

He had hoped to bring his specimens to Washington alive for exhibit at the Zoo. Unfortunately they died in transit.

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#### LIBRARY RETIREES

Smithsonian friends recently bade Godspeed to two members of the library staff who were retiring to private life.

By optional retirement on November 30, Mrs. Ruth Wenger Dawson left the Government service after more than 36 years of which 32 had been spent in the Smithsonian Institution.

Miss Minna Gill, whose resignation became effective December 31 after 13 years of service, has the unique distinction of being doubly a Smithsonian second-generation "child." Both her father, DeLancey Gill, and her mother, Mary Wright Gill, were artists who illustrated many of the publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology. DeLancey Gill had been on the staff of the Bureau for more than 40 years when he retired in 1932.

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#### FIRST VISIT HOME

Early in December Lawrence L. Tomsyck, administrative assistant at the River Basin Surveys headquarters in Lincoln, Nebr., and Lee G. Madison, laboratory and field assistant for the Surveys, spent several days visiting the Smithsonian buildings here in Washington.

They transported a load of fragile archeological specimens, collected by Missouri Basin Project field parties last summer, from the Lincoln laboratory to the National Museum and took advantage of the opportunity to become better acquainted with "home base."

After helpful discussions with the personnel, purchasing, and finance divisions, Tomsyck returned to Lincoln with a better understanding of what makes the Smithsonian wheels go around.

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#### PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER

##### Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections:

"New Cretaceous Brachiopoda from Arizona," by G. A. Cooper (18 pages, 4 plates).

##### Proceedings of the National Museum:

"A Further Contribution to the Ornithology of Northeastern Venezuela," by Herbert Friedmann and Foster D. Smith, Jr. (62 pages, 5 figures, 4 plates).

"Modification of Pattern in the Aortic Arch System of Birds and Their Phylogenetic Significance," by Fred H. Glenny (97 pages, 12 figures).

"Three Miocene Porpoises from the Calvert Cliffs, Maryland," by Remington Kellogg (54 pages, 1 figure, 21 plates).

"Contributions to the Nomenclature, Systematics, and Morphology of the Octocorallia," by Frederick M. Bayer (14 pages, 8 plates).

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#### Contributors to this Issue

Alvin Goins	Ernie Biebighauser
Frank Bruns	Clara Swallen
John Pope	Paul Oehser
Daisy Fields	Smith Oliver
Jack Lea	Annemarie Pope
Lucile Hoyne	Mary Phillips
Burton Gilbard	Paula Stempler
Helena Weiss	Paul Garber
George McCoy	Leila Clark
Frank Roberts	Bill Crockett
Tom Clark	Emmett Holton

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#### ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Smithsonian Credit Union will be held on January 17, 1956 at 3.00 p.m. in room 43 of the Natural History Building.