

NASA HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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July 20, 1969, may come to be regarded as the day of the greatest single human event of the twentieth century, the day when man first set foot upon an extraterrestrial body. While the impact of man's first landing upon the surface of the moon may also be of high interest to historians after the year 2001, the voyage of Apollo 11 was at least the most visible and vicarious event to date in world history. Over a half-billion people around the world were estimated to have witnessed the lunar walk of Astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin live via television. Americans who did not witness this event as it happened now appear reluctant even to admit it. The full consequences of this instant historical experience remain in the domain of prophets and posterity.

This moment in NASA's twelfth year offers a challenging perspective from which to view the contemporary history of science, technology, and public policy. The dynamic and detailed story of the recent past deserves in-depth attention to seminal documentation, timely interviews of the key people, and dispassionate scholarship. Disciplined attention to this important chapter in the full history of mankind must proceed, be it noted, during a challenging era of great problems as well as of visions of unlimited future prospects. Many of these visions are notable consequences of the swift and wholesale impact of space exploration and exploitation. Ready explanations of limited depth and breadth have quickly appeared; the flood of beautifully-illustrated publications with caption-style chronology has just started. Spokesmen of thought and action rooted in traditional assumptions regarding science, technology, and all echelons of political and social affairs have been critically vocal. The aerospace-minded community in our pluralistic society, preoccupied with the next decades of technological opportunities, is yet assessing the scientific harvest and utilitarian payoffs of the past decade. It appears even more clear that there are but few workers in the historical vineyard of the history of astronautics and aeronautics.

Without dwelling upon the intellectual discipline of history as it is challenged by man's first step beyond his planetary homeland, by the concept of "spaceship Earth," of the "global village," this Newsletter offers recent notes upon what has so far been done under the aegis of NASA. It covers items not covered in previous Newsletters.

NASA Historical Advisory Committee:

. The Committee's Fifth Report went forward to the Administrator, T. O. Paine. A basic recommendation was that NASA consider the full historical requirement of the past dozen years despite present fiscal and future program uncertainties for the 1970's. Since its founding by Administrator Webb in 1963, the Advisory Committee has been a stabilizing professional influence for whatever success the NASA Historical Program may have achieved to date. In November, Professor James A. Cate, a charter member, reluctantly resigned from the Committee for reasons of health. He will be sorely missed. Other members of the Advisory Committee are: Professor Melvin Kranzberg, Chairman, Case Western Reserve University; Professor Raymond Bisplinghoff, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Dean Earl DeLong, American University; Professor A. Hunter Dupree, Brown University; Professor Joe B. Frantz, University of Texas; Professor Louis Morton, Dartmouth College; and Mr. Robert L. Perry, RAND Corporation. Administrator Paine will presently appoint the members of the Historical Advisory Committee for 1970.

NASA Program Notes:

. The historic flight of Apollo 11, the culmination of eight years of priority effort, created an immediate impetus throughout NASA to get going on the full Apollo story. The first phase of the Apollo history—the research and writing of a monographic historical data base—had been previously instituted and was reported in the preceeding Newsletter. The full-fledged integrated history of Apollo must await definition after the monograph phase, with additional perspective thereby being available as well as having more detailed documentation of this complex story in hand. There seems little doubt that posterity may have curiosity concerning man's first venturing away from planet Earth beyond a well-concerned and well-presented official history of Apollo. Such needs as the impact of Apollo 11—world wide are not being ignored by NASA Archivist Lee Saegesser, in

addition to his support of the on-going research effort.

. While inevitably skewed to manned space flight at this time, the NASA Historical Program has attempted to institute effective treatment of space science and technology, aeronautics, and all the other salient aspects of NASA's first decade. The annual Astronautics and Aeronautics chronologies, unmanned program and center histories, and the sequential overall histories of NASA are in progress or are being instituted as reported in the previous Newsletter.

. Astronautics and Aeronautics, 1967 (SP-4008) came off the presses in August. Project Gemini: A Chronology (SP-4002) by James Grimwood (MSC) and Barton Hacker (Univ. of Houston) also appeared in August. The Apollo Spacecraft Chronology (SP-4009), the first of four volumes, appeared shortly thereafter. It was prepared by Ivan Ertel (MSC) and Mary L. Morse (Univ. of Houston). By the end of the year, Vanguard-A History by Constance McLaughlin Green and Milton Lomask, Adventures in Research by Edwin Hartman on the twenty-five years of the Ames Research Center, and Astronautics and Aeronautics, 1968 had gone to press. "History of Aeronautics and Astronautics: A Preliminary Bibliography" by K. M. Dickson (formerly of the Library of Congress staff) was issued to select scholars and libraries in Fall 1969. Mrs. Carrie Karegeannes continues her able editing duties on all publications.

. The 1969 Summer Seminar on "History, Social Science, and Space" included Professor John M. Logsdon of Catholic University, Shelia Bylica (Case Western Reserve), James A. Dewar (Kansas State University), Elisabeth Jones (Montgomery County (Md.) School System), Theodore Just (VPI), and Barbara Wood (Smith College). All completed NASA Historical Notes as part of their seminar participation, with Miss Bylica and Mr. Dewar staking out possible doctoral dissertation topics thereby. Bruce Byers (Univ. of Maryland) continued his labor of previous summers on the history of Lunar Orbiter as a summer employee of the Office of Manned Space Flight. It is hoped that the Summer Seminar for 1970 may be instituted for recommended graduate students.

Professional Notes:

. With the resignation of William Putnam in July to join the RAND Corporation, Thomas Ray was selected as the Assistant NASA Historian for Manned Space Flight. Mr. Ray has been a Federal Historian for 14 years with the JCS, Air Defense Command, Navy Material Command, and, the

last four years, the Defense Communications Agency. In his last post, he prepared histories of the defense communications satellites. He is completing his doctorate at the University of Colorado, and is the author of several articles in the U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings. He is thus one of the three professional historians in NASA, Deputy NASA Historian Frank W. Anderson carrying special responsibility for the publication program.

. Completing 10 years as NASA Historian in November, Gene Emme, also continued missionary labor despite protestations to the contrary. On the historic day of July 20, he appeared briefly on NBC-TV concerning the background of the Apollo program before an estimated audience of 20 million viewers. He addressed the following audiences subsequently: "Impact of Apollo 11," Rotary, Front Royal, Virginia (August 10); "Problems of Aerospace History," AIAA Historians, Seal Beach, California (October 20); "Early History of the Space Age," Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa (October 24); Dedication of Carl Lawrence Library, Southern State College, South Dakota (October 27); "NASA Oral History," Oral History Symposium, Airlie House, Virginia (November 7).

. JPL Historian, R. Cargill Hall, has undertaken to compile an international chronology on rocketry and astronautics, a project of the History Committee at the International Academy of Astronautics (I.A.A.). He will integrate inputs by various national designees. This is an off-duty chore as he continues full-time on the Ranger program history.

. Historical programs were held by the AIAA at Anaheim, California, and I.A.A. at Mar del Plata, Argentina, in October. Summaries of these and related AAHS and SHOT programs will be contained in future issues of Technology and Culture.

. Both the Goddard Historical Essay Competition (\$500) sponsored by the National Space Club, and the AIAA History Award (\$500), are open for 1970 at this time. Judging of both competitions for 1969 is in progress at this writing.

. Because of the increased interest in contemporary history of science, technology, and public policy, encouraged perhaps by the voyage of the Apollo 11 as well as various critical schools of thought, the NASA Historical Division repeats its offer of suggesting potential masters and doctoral theses. These could be supported by accessible documentations, and by oral history interviews. Scholars interested in the history of rocketry, aeronautics, and astronautics are welcome to make queries at any time.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ITEMS OF INTEREST:

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- . A Hunter Dupree, Asa Gray, New York: Atheneum, 1969.
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