



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

Headquarters at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington 25, D. C. METropolitan 8 - 4202

March 24, 1959

To: Museum Trustees

The rapid growth of museums in this country of late has posed many problems. Our interests are now more varied, our common problems more pressing. One question that concerns us all is how can we be well informed on all current national and international museum events and trends.

Meeting this primary need is the major concern of a new program that has been approved by the Council of the American Association of Museums after an extensive study by our new Director.

The redesigned MUSEUM NEWS, which has been mailed to you under separate cover, highlights a program focused on establishing high professional standards and providing greater service to museums and the museum profession.

1. Through the Association's new MUSEUM NEWS, publications, and publicity services, the public will be acquainted with the accomplishments of museums and their value to the community.
2. Through the establishment of its Documentation Center, the Association will serve as a clearing house for museum information. It is reported that the two nations having the poorest representation in the UNESCO museum center are the USSR and the USA. This situation will be corrected and a national source of museum information will be provided. The Documentation Center will also facilitate the compilation of an annual comprehensive Museums Directory.

A wide trustee readership of MUSEUM NEWS is important to every museum. It will keep trustees informed of developments taking place in museums throughout the nation. They will be aware of the accomplishments of other museums and of their methods of operation.

I hope that a careful reading of the enclosed brochure will persuade you to become a member of the Association. The success of the new program and the welfare and interests of the entire museum field depend upon your support.

Edward P. Alexander
President

[Enclosure. 1959 Mar 24]

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**AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION
OF
MUSEUMS**

Membership

for

Individuals

and

Institutions



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS dedicated to the service of all museums and the museum profession and intent on furthering the interests and standing of the museum profession throughout the country **OFFERS A NEW PROGRAM** of greater membership benefits. A newly designed *Museum News*, Documentation Center, an expanded Employment Service, Retirement and Insurance plan continue its tradition of service **TO ITS MEMBERS.**



MUSEUM NEWS

offers pertinent and timely articles by authorities in the museum and other related fields, an expanded coverage of national and international current museum events, staff changes, employment opportunities, reviews of publications and other regular features.

THE BULLETIN PROGRAM

New titles are being added to the publications—*So You Want a Good Museum* and *Museum Security*. Titles selected for the Bulletin Series will include subjects such as film programs, building, conservation, museum lighting and education, and others of specific or general interest to the entire museum field.

THE DOCUMENTATION CENTER

will maintain a comprehensive current file of all museums in the United States and Canada. Information on location, founding date, type of museum, collections, specialization, administrative and curatorial staff, publications, hours, programs, attendance and other reference data will be available to the Association's members and to the public.

MUSEUMS DIRECTORY

to be published annually, will list all American and Canadian museums, historic houses and preservation projects, and will include important information relevant to each. Museums of art, history, technology, science and industry as well as children's museums, industrial museums and house museums, zoological and botanical gardens will be included. Individual Association members will be listed and identified.

RETIREMENT AND INSURANCE PLAN

The Executive Committee of the Council is preparing a retirement and insurance plan for the approval of the membership at its annual meeting. The plan, which offers a retirement plan with optional life insurance, hospitalization and medical insurance for the profession, includes even small museums and historic houses having only a one-man staff.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

For many years the Association has conducted, on an informal basis, the only nation-wide museum employment service. This service is being expanded to give prompt and efficient handling of all employment inquiries from museums and individuals in the museum profession.

MEETINGS

Annual Meeting:

The Association annual meeting is held in the spring of each year in different cities of the United States and Canada and includes a three-day program of general meetings and special forums. Group sessions are held to discuss specific topics of interest to each type of museum represented in the Association. These include history, art, and science museums, college and university museums, children's museums, national and state park museums, planetariums and industrial museums. Sessions are also held for museum librarians, registrars, preparators, superintendents and other specialists within the museum profession.

Regional Conferences:

Regional Conferences of museums are held, usually in the fall of each year, in New England, the Midwest, the West, the Northeast, the Southeast and the Mountain-Plains.

The meetings of the Association give both Institution and Individual Members the advantage of participation, on the broad regional and national level, in significant and timely meetings with their colleagues.

PUBLICATIONS

A few of the leaflets, monographs and books available to Members are listed below:

AAM Institution Members. United States and Canada. October 1, 1957. (Being revised.)

AAM Professional and Lay Members. Directory. May 1, 1953. (Being revised.)

List of Publications of the AAM. Complete to 1958.

Index to Special Articles. April 15, 1953.

So You Want a Good Museum, a Guide to the Management of Small Museums. By Carl E. Guthe. 1957, paper, iii and 37 pages.

Museum Security. By Richard Foster Howard. 1958, paper, ii and 12 pages.

College and University Museums. By Laurence Vail Coleman. 1942, quarter cloth, viii and 73 pages, indexed, 26 halftone illustrations and 12 floor plans. Price, \$1.25; Members' price, \$1.00.

Museum Buildings: A Planning Study. By Laurence Vail Coleman. Volume I, 1950, cloth, vii and 298 pages, indexed, 194 illustrations. Price \$12.50; Members' price, \$10.00.

Museum Registration Methods. By Dorothy H. Dudley, Irma Bezold, and others. 1958, cloth, xv and 225 pages, indexed, 53 figures. Price, \$7.50; Members' price, \$6.00.

MEMBERSHIP

Institution Membership

All museums are invited to join the AAM, their national organization. Payments are from \$25.00 to \$250.00. A museum may join at \$25.00, but after the first year it is asked to adopt the regular scale calling for \$1.00 to be paid for each \$1,000 of the museum's own operating budget, within the indicated limits.

Institution Members receive:

MUSEUM NEWS—10 copies annually
Publications of the Bulletin Series (4 new titles proposed for 1959-60)

The annual MUSEUMS DIRECTORY (scheduled for January 1960)

One copy of each publication (additional copies at a reduced rate)

Documentation Center service

Employment service

Regional and national representation

Individual Membership

All members of the museum profession and individuals interested in the museum field are eligible for Regular Membership.

Regular Individual Members receive:

MUSEUM NEWS

Publications of the Bulletin Series (one free copy and additional copies at a reduced rate)

The annual MUSEUMS DIRECTORY (which lists all members) at a reduced rate

Copies of all publications at a reduced rate

Documentation Center service

Employment service

Regional and national representation

Associate Members receive in addition to the above:

The Bulletin Series (one free copy and additional copies at a reduced rate)

The annual MUSEUMS DIRECTORY

Contributing Members receive in addition to the above:

One copy of each publication (additional copies at a reduced rate)

Members who contribute over and above membership dues are not only supporting the aims and services of the Association, but also furthering the work of museums throughout the nation.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

Headquarters • Smithsonian Institution • Washington 25, D.C.

Application for Institution Membership

Name of Institution: _____

Address: _____

Director or officer in charge and title: _____

Institution Members pay from \$25.00 to \$250.00 a year. Any museum may join at the \$25.00 rate, but museums with operating income over \$25,000 yearly are asked to adopt the regular scale calling for \$1.00 for each \$1000 of income within the indicated limits. A check drawn to the American Association of Museums may be sent with this slip.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

Headquarters • Smithsonian Institution • Washington 25, D.C.

Application for Individual Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

- ☐ \$10.00 for Regular Membership
- ☐ \$25.00 for Associate Membership
- ☐ \$100.00 for Contributing Membership

Professional museum workers may deduct these dues on income tax returns of the federal government and of most states. A check drawn to the American Association of Museums may be sent with this slip.

THE WASHINGTON POST and TIMES HERALD

Sunday, December 28, 1958

Thayer's Tell-a-Scope

Mushrooming Museums Are Under His Microscope

By Mary V. R. Thayer

EVER HEAR of the American Association of Museums? It's headquartered here in Washington and has a smart, new, 36-year-old Director named Joseph A. Patterson, who speaks pretty good Mandarin. He's fresh from Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art where he worked at promotion with special emphasis on developing a program for industry. And before that, he made quite a splash in artistic circles by collecting and financially finagling a jumbo exhibition of Near East student art which toured the United States for two years.



Mrs. Thayer

Basic purpose of the American Association of Museums is to serve as sort of an information clearing house—employment bureau, and to put member museums in touch with each other's needs through the medium of a monthly sheet, The Museum News. But the annoying fly-in-the-ointment is that no one knows how many museums are scattered across the country (Patterson guesses there are 3000 to 5000), nor what many of our smaller museums actually contain. This not only proves an embarrassment when foreign museums request information, but also a frequent handicap here where museum building is booming and museum business has become very big business.

SO THE NEW Director is planning to catalogue the whole museum field and set up a Washington documentation center. By tapping known museums and state historical societies in every area of the United States and Canada, he'll ferret information not only about each art, science, history and children's museum but also about historic houses, resto-

ration projects like Williamsburg and Old Salem, and industrial museums similar to the Corning Glass Center and the Duponts' newly opened Hagley Museum near Wilmington.

Once the answers are assembled, there'll be a follow-up questionnaire printed on punch cards, so that the resulting data can be processed by mechanical means. Thus, for the first time, and at the flip of a card, information about collections, exhibits, attendance and community programs will be available. For the first time, too, the AA of M will bring out an annual museum directory.

Next the Patterson spotlight will be turned on the 10,000 or so known museum personnel. They're mostly a dedicated lot, grossly underpaid (salaries run under those of school teachers) except in key museums, and minus pension privileges.

Patterson, through the Association, will launch a campaign to raise salaries and form a group insurance and pension plan which will make museuming a more secure career. A committee has also been formed to devise a training program in museum techniques which will raise personnel standards. All these efforts will be publicized through a more glamorous magazine format of the Museum News, which will also branch out into articles of interest to the whole museum field.

PATTERSON reports that museums are booming like mad. They're mushrooming everywhere, each with a shiny new look which pulls in a new public: a constantly increasing number of youngsters, plus oldsters with time now to indulge in the fun of learning. Twenty-four new museums have been projected for 1959, while this year 56 buildings, 34 wings, 26 newly restored houses and five planetariums were opened.

Backing the building boom is a sensational upsurge in attendance. Nowadays three million more persons pile into Washington's Smithsonian-plus-Zoo annually than in 1946. Upstate New York's Corning Glass Museum and Center rolled up a 55 per cent increase in five years, with visitors trekking from every state and 44 foreign countries. In New York City the Modern Art Museum has doubled its paid attendance in a decade; while at the American Museum of Natural History, growing public demand has caused a doubling of the educational program for children and, as down-to-earth corollary, a tripling of comfort station service!

WHAT'S the new museum building like? Well, most of the more important buildings are ultra modern in design and contain complete facilities for community programs. Out at the St. Louis Art Museum, for instance, a million dollar addition, financed by a city bond issue, will contain a 475-seat auditorium, a 100-seat lecture

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THAYER—From Page F1

Museums Are Booming

room, shop space and other such practical items.

Nearby in Wilmington, Harry Dupont is building an addition to his famous Winterthur Museum which will contain a 200 seat auditorium, a "touch it" room for school children, a period dining and sitting room for visitors. Up at Blue Mountain Lake, New York, the brand new Adirondacks Museum, whose theme is the relationship of man to the Adirondacks, includes 10 buildings and two outdoor exhibits. The main building style is modern log cabin; the rest, period pieces; and the whole financed by New Yorkers who have spent their summers in the locality.

History museums are bursting out in other areas, too. Just finished in Oklahoma is the very plush National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Museum. One of its merrier features is a set of chimes which imitate the tunes early cowboys strummed on their guitars out on the lonely range! Even gay Palm Springs has been bitten by the museum bug in this movie star retreat. A Desert Museum's been started, each of its bevy of buildings costing \$150,000 to erect.

Down in New Bern, N. C., there's a Fireman's Museum with a batch of fascinating exhibits gifted by its namesake city, Berne, Switzerland, and presented last summer by Swiss Ambassador de Torrente. Out in Cleveland, where an \$8 million building program is redoing the Art Museum and an \$800,000 unit is being added to the Natural History Museum, their Health Museum has prospered too. The Dental Health Room is being developed, and among its features (guaranteed to ease childish dentistry phobia) is a Talking Transparent Tooth!

SCIENCE and industrial Museums are coming along just dandy, too. Out in Los Angeles the Museum of Science & Industry just opened a \$350,000 Horticultural Hall. It's scaled for outsized exhibitions with handy removable tile floors to ease large display installation; glass panel walls; cantilevered stairways and overhead catwalks to ease suspending exhibit objects.



By Vic Casamento, Staff Photographer

JOSEPH A. PATTERSON

... a splash in artistic circles

The Boston Science Museum's new \$1,650,000 central unit is equally sensational. It includes a 150 seat demonstration auditorium; a science shop, a glassed-in lunch room (with a splendid view of the Charles River!) and a topknot of radar antenna, weather exhibit and micro-wave equipment. These two plush spots almost make the Smithsonian's new Hall of Power Machinery, very small potatoes indeed.

Surprise quirk is the popularity of planetariums. Everybody's intrigued by stars, it seems. Twelve years ago there were 5, now there are 180, with other astral peekeries popping up all over.

And at opposite ends of last year's building pole were the American Museum of Atomic Energy at Oak Ridge and a Visitor Center Building at Utah's Dinosaur Quarry. Here, from a 180 foot long gallery, sightseers can kibitz while museum men toil on the quarry wall's exposed fossil-bearing strata!

BECAUSE there are so many new museums, there simply aren't enough objects to fill them . . . So, to jack up public interest, keep local citizens coming back for more, a new form of traveling exhibit has been evolved. The Smithsonian started the trend in 1951 with a single show which journeyed to a few states. This year the Smithsonian Travelling Exchange Service circulated 96 exhibitions to 264 museums in 43 states plus Canada and Hawaii. They've managed such stellar attractions as Sir Winston Churchill's paintings, put on a show of American Folk Art at the Brussels Fair. Other big museums are beginning to get into the act and culture with a capital "C", is spreading like wild fire.

In the museums themselves, the exhibits have changed immensely these past few years. They're more selective, better planned, altogether more exciting. Leonard Carmichael,

Secretary of the Smithsonian, explains the change this way: "The public's increased understanding as to the instructional function of museums led to the development of exhibitions which are no longer merely visual storage of objects, but rather a great means of instructing people in the fields of history, science and art."

What's behind this flood tide of culture? Museum professionals claim there's no parallel to it in either Europe or the USSR. It's an American coming of age which combines several factors, they believe: a new sophistication; a desire for prestige (especially in privately financed museums); a more vivid interest in history and science and, of course, our schools, which avail themselves increasingly of opportunities offered by our up-and-coming community centers, the new look museums. The whole movement, museumers think, was sparked a bit by the old WPA which first combined lectures and concerts with art in community programs.

Anyway, in a few months when the Patterson documentation is complete, we'll know a great deal more about our museums and how they tick!