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# NASA HISTORY: NEWS AND NOTES

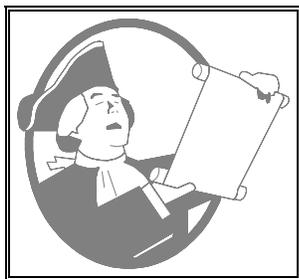
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## NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDED RESEARCH



In addition to its ongoing efforts, during 1991 the NASA History Division anticipates offering new opportunities for funded research. The first is for a history of planetary geosciences.

This history will document the development of planetary geosciences in the last 100 years, although concentrating on the more recent period. The last 30 years have seen two major revolutions in the this field: the adoption and verification of the theory of plate tectonics as the major force in shaping the Earth and the unveiling of the other planets. Both were aided immeasurably by manned orbital and lunar missions and unmanned missions to all the planets but Pluto. The development of planetary geosciences has been an especially interesting and important discipline since the period when G.K. Gilbert and his associates began to define the field in new ways near the turn of the twentieth century.

The second contract we anticipate awarding this year will be for a fourth volume of the *NASA Historical Data Book*, this one on NASA resources between 1969 and 1988. This set of books has become a fundamental reference tool for information, much of it statistical, about NASA and its work. This work will continue the multi-volume reference series.

Proposals will be accepted for all contracts during the spring of 1991. For specific details on the projects and copies of the requests for proposal, please contact Code ADA-2, History Division, NASA Headquarters, Washington, DC 20546, or call 202-453-8300.

## APPOINTMENT OF NEW NASA HISTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NASA has appointed the following six new members to the History Advisory Committee: Daniel P. Byrnes, Tom D. Crouch, Richard H. Kohn, Howard E. McCurdy, Elizabeth A. Muenger, and Merritt Roe Smith. We welcome these new members onto the committee and look forward to their advice during the next three years. The chair of the committee remains Dr. Arthur L. Norberg, Director of the Charles Babbage Institute for the History of Information Processing.

The new members of the committee represent a wide community of scholars and a divergent set of approaches toward the study of space history. Mr. Byrnes is an attorney in Los Angeles, CA, where he also serves as Professor at Pepperdine University School of Law, Malibu, teaching Commercial Space Law. He has a special interest in the preservation of historical records and the documenting of the American space program. Dr. Crouch is Chair of the Aeronautics Department, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution. He has written many books on aviation, most recently, the acclaimed *The Bishop's Boys: A Life of Wilbur and Orville Wright* (1989). Dr. Kohn is joining the history faculty of the University of North Carolina after serving as the Chief of Air Force History for nearly nine years. Among his other publications is his seminal *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America* (1975). Dr. McCurdy is Professor of Public Affairs at American University, Washington, DC. His latest book, in the "New Series in NASA History" issued by The Johns Hopkins University Press, is *The Space Station Decision: Incremental Politics and Technical Choice* (1990). Dr. Muenger is a member of the history faculty at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO. She has published, in the NASA History Series, *Searching the Horizon: A History of Ames Research Center, 1940-1976* (1985). Finally, Dr. Smith is Metcalfe Professor of Engineering and the Liberal Arts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Among his

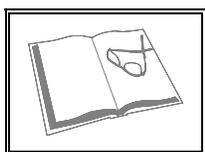
many publications is the pathbreaking work, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology* (1977), which received the 1977 Frederick Jackson Turner Award from the Organization of American Historians and the 1978 Pfizer Award from the History of Science Society.

These new members are filling the slots vacated by Daniel Kevles, Henry Lambright, Glenn Porter, David Lewis, Ruth Schwartz Cowan, William Becker, and Richard Hallion who have completed their terms on the committee. We especially want to thank the outgoing committee members for their outstanding work during the last three years.

### **NASA HISTORY SYMPOSIUM BEING PLANNED**

Last fall we sent letters to many people associated with NASA historical inquiry asking about the desirability of holding a NASA history symposium in the Washington, DC, area in the Autumn of 1991. The response was overwhelmingly favorable and we are considering a two-day meeting to be held in October 1991 at Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD. As soon as details are pinned down about dates, locations, and program we will forward that information to each of you. Anyone wishing to make a presentation at the meeting is urged to contact Roger D. Launius, NASA History Division, Code ADA-2, NASA Headquarters, Washington, DC 20546, or by telephone at 202-453-8300 as soon as possible. Further information about the meeting will be forthcoming in the next two months.

### **NEW NASA HISTORY BOOKS APPEAR**



Since our last newsletter NASA has published *Engines and Innovation: Lewis Laboratory and American Propulsion Technology*, by Virginia P. Dawson. Written under contract, this work has been issued as NASA Special Publication (SP)-4306. It appeared at the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the Lewis Research Center, which dates from January 23, 1941, when George Lewis, Director of Aeronautical Research for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, broke ground for the facility outside Cleveland, OH. It emphasizes the efforts of the center to develop technology in air and space propulsion, especially the

jet engine. This work is available from the Government Printing Office for \$16 in paperback; its order number is 033-000-01095-8.

Also appearing early in 1991 was *A Spacefaring Nation: Perspectives on American Space History and Policy*, edited by Martin J. Collins and Sylvia D. Fries, issued by the Smithsonian Institution Press. The proceedings of a 1987 scholarly conference, this work contains contributions from 14 space historians and policy scholars, nine of whom had their work substantially or wholly supported by NASA.

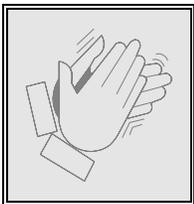
Finally, the *Aeronautics and Space Report of the President, 1988 Activities* was printed by GPO and transmitted to Congress from the White House in January 1991. It contains a synopsis of the official aerospace programs of the various federal agencies involved.

### **NASA HISTORY IN PUBLICATION**

Several additional books will be forthcoming in the next several months. In the "New Series in NASA History" from The Johns Hopkins University Press *Exploring the Sun: Solar Science Since Galileo*, by Karl Hufbauer, will be published in May 1991. This book investigates the method of studying the sun since Galileo, dealing both with observatory and satellite programs. From NASA, John E. Naugle's *First Among Equals: The Selection of NASA Space Science Experiments*, is scheduled to appear this summer. *First Among Equals* deals with the development of NASA space science experiments over the course of the organization's history. Sylvia D. Fries' book, *NASA Engineers and the Age of Apollo* will be published later this year. It analyzes the attitude, skills, and contributions of NASA engineers, focusing on their experiences in the 1960s during the Apollo era. Finally, under consideration for publication by The Johns Hopkins University Press is Howard E. McCurdy's *Organizational Culture and Crises: NASA's Changing Organizational Culture*, which uses extensive interviews and detailed management analyses to identify and trace the evolution of the organizational culture of NASA from its founding and expansion during the Apollo era through the decades of the 1970s and 1980s.

### **NASA CONTRACT HISTORIAN RECEIVES GODDARD HISTORICAL ESSAY AWARD**

Craig B. Waff, working under contract to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory to prepare a history of the Deep Space Network, was co-recipient of the 1989 Dr. Robert H. Goddard Historical Essay Award presented by the National Space Club in 1990. Dr. Waff received this award for his illuminating essay, "Planetary Exploration on the Brink: The Administration Debate over the FY 1983 NASA Budget." The co-recipient was Edward C. Aldridge, Jr., former Secretary of the Air Force and currently President of McDonnell Douglas Electronics Systems Company, for an essay entitled, "Assured Access: The Bureaucratic Space War." This prize consisted of a plaque and a cash award of \$500. Congratulations!



### **NASA HISTORY PROGRAM 1990 STATUS REPORT**

The year just past was a productive time for the NASA History Division. Established in 1959 and charged with preserving and disseminating a record of agency activities for the public good, the program's efforts continued during 1990 to be oriented toward building a significant collection of reference documents for use by both the public and NASA personnel and toward the researching and writing of NASA history.

During the year the NASA Headquarters Historical Documents Collection served over 300 on-site researchers from all types of federal, educational, and private organizations and with all manner of research interests. Ranging from senior scholars working in aerospace history to individuals seeking information on term papers, this NASA history clientele was global and diverse. Some of the exciting projects supported by the reference collection in 1990 were histories of U.S. efforts to develop a nuclear-powered space propulsion system, to study near-earth asteroids, to build international cooperation in the space program, and to ascertain some of the nuances involved in Presidential leadership in making space policy.

One ongoing effort in the office has been the creation of a computer-based inventory and finding aid of the Division's reference collection. Beforehand, the only one who knew the contents of the collection in any detail was our archivist, Lee Saegesser. This work is being done under contract in this office. With more than 120 linear feet of material now catalogued--

although still only a small amount of the total holdings in the collection--the data base is already starting to fulfill its promise as an important reference tool to historians working in the NASA collections.

The hallmark of the NASA history program continued to be in 1990, as previously, the preparation of scholarly works on the history of the American space program. During the year NASA witnessed the publication of two significant works written under contract: Howard E. McCurdy, *The Space Station Decision: Incremental Politics and Technological Choice*, issued by The Johns Hopkins University Press, and Thomas J. Lewin and V.K. Narayanan, *Keeping the Dream Alive: Managing the Space Station Program, 1982-1986* (Contractor Report 4272).

Also during the year, NASA worked toward the publication of several other histories on a wide diversity of subjects. See below for a discussion of these efforts. Although in 1990 we were unable to start any additional contracts for historical works through the NASA History Division, this is somewhat mitigated by the new opportunities for funded research being developed in 1991 as described above.

Another important part of the efforts of the NASA History Division has been the fostering of serious scholarship in aerospace history. New initiatives established in the mid-1980s have begun to yield fruit--notably through the AHA Fellowship in Aerospace History Program, the "New Series in NASA History" at The Johns Hopkins University Press, the revival of history activities at the NASA centers, and the research projects funded under contract. All have invigorated the field and led to the involvement of a growing number of first-rate historians in the field.

The History Division continues to plan for the future, and Roger Launius is developing a "roadmap" for the next few years which hopefully will guide our efforts. This activity will continue to be oriented toward the important and early-defined goals of building a quality reference collection to support those working in NASA history and supporting scholarly research and writing. We will also continue initiatives to foster interest in NASA history. In addition, we want to move into new avenues, especially in the use of information processing technology to support historical inquiry. We plan to discuss this in more detail in the fall newsletter.

### **HISTORY AT NASA CENTERS**

Many interesting historical activities are taking place at the various NASA centers these days. The Langley Research Center is in the process of relocating the Variable Density Wind Tunnel from its original area to a permanent exhibition site near the Reid Conference Center. The wind tunnel was built in 1923 and is one of the first such research tools in the United States. In addition, planning for Langley's 75th anniversary in 1992--three years after NACA'S 75th birthday--is presently underway. Dick Layman, our history program contact point at Langley, is working on many divergent activities aimed at raising historical consciousness at the center.

Ken Nail, the archivist of Kennedy Space Center, is also heavily involved in developing historical consciousness. Among his recent activities has been coordinating for the Headquarters a meeting of the NASA History Advisory Committee at the center which takes place on March 12-13, 1991. He is also continuing to build his collection of reference materials which are especially strong relating to manned flight operations.

A new point of contact for the NASA History Program has been appointed for Lewis Research Center. Sheree L. Sievert is taking over for R. Lynn Bondurant in this capacity, as Dr. Bondurant moves on to other responsibilities at the center. Ms. Sievert has been heavily involved in organizing the fiftieth anniversary celebration for the center. If you wish to contact Ms. Sievert her FTS number is 8-433-5785, and her address is Mail Stop 60-1 at Lewis Research Center.

#### **CENTER HISTORIES IN PRODUCTION**

In addition, three NASA centers are actively pursuing the preparation of histories documenting the development of their respective institutions. A history of the Langley Research Center is being written as one of the centerpieces of the 75th anniversary effort. It will continue the history of the center since 1958, the earlier years having been documented by James R. Hansen in *Engineer in Charge: A History of the Langley Aeronautical Laboratory, 1917-1958* (NASA SP-4305, 1987). Three historians from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Johanna N. Shields, Andrew J. Dunar, and Stephen P. Waring, are writing a history of the Marshall Space Flight Center from its origins as an army center through the Von Braun era and on to the present. Henry C. Dethloff, of Intaglio Inc., is

preparing a history of the Johnson Space Center from its inception to the present.

#### **DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE SPACE AGE**

The Space Policy Institute of George Washington University continues to press forward on its documentary history project. John E. Naugle, Sylvia D. Fries, W. Henry Lambright, Pamela Mack, R. Cargill Hall, and Charles Cook (former USAF Deputy Assistant Secretary for Space) have agreed to write introductory essays to various sections of the history; other essays will be written by members of the project team: John Logsdon, Ray Williamson, Janelle Warren-Findley, and Linda Lear. Over 1,000 candidate documents have been acquired and archived; the 250-300 documents to be included in the final product will be selected by the project team and the outside essayists in the coming months.

#### **SPACE STATION HISTORY PROJECT**

For several years NASA has been documenting the unfolding history of the space station project. Adam L. Gruen has been at work collecting documents, preparing chronologies, and writing a two-volume history of the program. The historical documents collection covers primarily the period from 1982 through 1988, although it also contains some documents added since that time. It is organized chronologically by subject and provenance, and represents an excellent resource for serious researchers investigating the history of the NASA space station program. The chronologies produced in this effort date from 1981 through 1989 and are available in paper format or on a database.

A most important aspect of this project is the writing of a narrative history of the space station program from early conceptualizations in the 1920s through the NASA efforts of 1987. Anyone wishing additional information or assistance concerning this historical project is invited to contact Adam Gruen at the project office, Room 409, Reporters Building, Washington, DC, 20546, or by telephone at 202-453-8757.

#### **JAMES E. WEBB ADMINISTRATIVE BIOGRAPHY UNDERWAY**

W. Henry Lambright of Syracuse University is writing of a biography of NASA Administrator James E. Webb, already having completed eight chapters. While still a biography, this work is basically a study of the public administration of Webb's long career as head of the Bureau of the Budget, Undersecretary of State, and most importantly as administrator of NASA during the Apollo era. The emphasis is on leadership style and method of management in complex organizations.

#### **HISTORY OF SPACE STATION INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

John W. Logsdon, Director of the Space Policy Institute at George Washington University, is completing a monograph entitled, *Together in Orbit: The Origins of International Participation in Space Station Freedom*, for the NASA History Division. One of the key ingredients of the ongoing space station program of NASA has been the emphasis on international involvement. This study documents the evolution of this process. It should be completed before the beginning of the Summer of 1991.

#### **DEEP SPACE NETWORK HISTORY UNDERWAY**

Craig B. Waff is working on a history of the Deep Space Network for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The Deep Space Network is a series of antenna stations spread across the globe to facilitate communications with solar system exploration spacecraft. Dr. Waff is working steadily on this project and anticipates having completed a draft of the history by the end of 1991.

#### **A CALL FOR PAPERS**

The most recent newsletter from the Society for the History of Technology issued a call for papers for the organization's upcoming meeting at Madison, WI, on October 30-November 1, 1991. All wishing to propose individual papers or complete sessions for this meeting are encouraged to submit five copies of a 150-word abstract and one-page vita by April 1, 1991, to Deborah Fitzgerald, 1225 Orchard Drive, Ames, IA 50010, telephone 515-232-5809. The areas of emphasis for this conference include the examination of relationships between science and technology, pre-

20th century topics, and non-North American, comparative, and interdisciplinary studies.

#### **A REQUEST**

If you have news or research or other items that might be interest to other scholars interested in the history of NASA, please feel free to contact the NASA History Division and ask that it be included in future issues of this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you at Code ADA-2, NASA Headquarters, Washington, DC, 20546, or call us at 202-453-8300. All the best.

Roger Launius  
Rebecca Miller  
Sarah Turner

Lee Saegesser  
Patricia Shephard  
William Skerrett