

NASA HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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The NASA Historical Advisory Committee held its fifth meeting on May 28, in Headquarters, performing their annual evaluation of the Historical Program. Administrator Thomas O. Paine and Associate Administrator Homer E. Newell were to meet with the Committee for the first time. The report of the Advisory Committee will be submitted to the Administrator for his guidance. Serving on the Committee are: Prof. Melvin Kranzberg, Chairman, Case Western Reserve University; Prof. Raymond Bisplinghoff, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Prof. James Lea Cate, University of Chicago; Dean Earl DeLong, American University; Prof. A. Hunter Dupree, Brown University; Prof. Joe B. Frantz, University of Texas; Prof. Louis Morton, Dartmouth College; and Mr. Robert L. Perry, RAND Corporation.

Third NASA Historians Workshop was held at Langley Research Center, March 18-19, 1969. Participation of twenty-seven NASA Headquarters, Contractor, and Center historians and monitors, as well as Professor James L. Cate and Robert L. Perry of the Advisory Committee, was adjudged by all as a complete success. Respect for mutual problems in NASA historical operations as well as improved professional communication were obvious highlights.

Historical Program Notes:

. Overall Agency History Series: NASA Historian Emme had declared it a major objective to initiate drafting of the History of NASA, Volume I, tentatively entitled "Dawn of the Space Era, 1958-May 1961." After ten years in the agency this coming November and with monographic, archival, and interview base available, this volume is required next to demonstrate the full matrix of the NASA Historical Program. It will probably require some administrative adjustments for at least twelve months, and the acceptability of the product will be a judgment of the NASA Historical Advisory Committee.

. Program History Series: Publication of the Vanguard history by Constance McL. Green and Milton Lomask has been stymied by prevention of non-GPO publication. Renewed efforts to expedite publication have been initiated. Writing continues full blower on the Gemini history by James M. Grimwood (MSC) and Barton Hacker (Univ. of Houston). Project Gemini: A Chronology (SP-4002) will appear in the next several months, as will Apollo Spacecraft Chronology, Volume I (SP-4009), by Ivan Ertel (MSC) and Mary L. Morse (Univ. of Houston). At JPL, R. Cargill Hall proceeds on the history of the Ranger program, and is defining the histories of Mariner and Surveyor.

The first phase of implementing monographs for an Apollo history is now underway: MSC-University of Houston have contracted for five monographs (e.g., spacecraft and systems development, crew selection and training, mission operations and control, etc.); MSFC-University of Alabama (Huntsville) Research Studies Institute is undertaking Saturn booster and engine development; and KSC-Florida Institute of Technology is undertaking a launch facilities volume (i.e., launch operations monograph yet to be developed). Assistant NASA Historian William Putnam continues to monitor this entire manned space flight area, and to institute all possible projects as the manned lunar landing approaches and an eight-year effort comes to its climax. Major worldwide impact of the first lunar landing by homo sapiens is anticipated.

Other program histories remained in varying state of preliminary development: communications and weather satellite development, Lunar Orbiter, sounding rockets, tracking and communications, research aircraft, and scientific satellites and probes. Further details can be supplied upon request.

. Center History Series: Histories of the Ames and Langley Research Centers, as previously reported, are slated for editing and publication during the year. Work proceeds on the histories of KSC (F. Jarrett), MSC (R. Merrifield), and MSFC (D. Akens).

. Administrative and Management History Series: Preparation of a "Preliminary History of NASA During the Administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, November 1963-January 1969" for the Johnson Presidential Library was a major project during the fall of 1968 and early 1969 (this was reported in previous Newsletter). Copies were reproduced for internal NASA reference only. Academic scholars and others are advised to consult the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin.

. Special Historical Studies Series: Astronautics and Aeronautics, 1967 (SP-4008) should be off the press very shortly, as also the Gemini and Apollo Spacecraft chronologies previously mentioned. Due to the high impact of the Apollo 8 circumlunar mission during Christmas 1968, the revision of Astronautics and Aeronautics, 1968 (SP-4010) is slightly delayed, as well as the appearance of the monthly drafts for 1969. The "NASA Historical Data Book, 1958-1968" undertaken by J. Van Nimmen (LC), R. Rosholt, and others, is now in the final phases of validation by L. Bruno (LC) for publication in 1970. It will contain all possible statistical data concerning NASA's first decade and hopefully will be a useful reference within NASA as well as to historians. "History of Aeronautics and Astronautics: A Preliminary Bibliography" drafted and revised by K. M. Dickson (formerly of the LC staff) is being reproduced for general distribution this summer as a further aid to academic scholars.

. Miscellaneous: Plans are firm for reinstituting the Summer Seminar on "History, Social Science, and Space" with best available graduate students selected from some fifty applications. Professor John Logsdon of Catholic University has completed his doctoral dissertation at NYU on the lunar landing program decision in 1961, and it is to be published as a book by the M.I.T. Press. His seminar paper on the lunar orbital rendezvous decision for the mission mode of going to the moon is being revised for possible release this fall. Bruce Byers of the University of Maryland revised his "Preliminary History of Lunar Orbiter." Edward M. Walters of the University of Georgia is now working on a doctoral dissertation extending his Seminar paper on "Australian Cooperation in Space." Mr. Ronald Weitzel of the University of Maryland completed a paper on "The Origins of the Advanced Syncom Satellite."

NASA Historian Emme is recasting selected historical essays on "Aerospace Innovation: Historical Case Studies." Authors of the L. B. Johnson Library's "Preliminary History of NASA, 1963-1969," are being encouraged to recast their chapters for separate issuance as NASA Historical Notes for general availability. Volta Torrey of the Office of Scientific and Technical Special Publications won the Lawrence Award of the Aviation Writers Association for his essay on "The Impact of NASA." It is estimated that a dozen publishers are planning to issue space-related books shortly after the lunar landing, and many of the authors have been consulting the NASA Historical Archives.

NASA Personal Papers and Interviews:

. Hugh L. Dryden: Steps have been undertaken to augment the personal papers of the former Director of NACA (1947-58) and first Deputy Administrator of NASA (1958-1965) given to the Milton Eisenhower Library of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, by Mrs. Dryden. Papers from the Bureau of Standards (1918-1947), papers from Dr. Dryden's long relationship with the National Academy of Sciences, the Cosmos Club, and the Methodist Church will be solicited. Professor Harry Woolf of Johns Hopkins is directing this project, which may hopefully include a biographer in the future.

. James E. Webb: In addition to his published McKinsey Lectures (see Biblio Notes), Mr. Webb had previously placed his personal papers in the Harry S. Truman Library, and duplicates of his recent papers in the John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson Libraries. He is assisting various scholars on research related to his interest in the National Academy of Public Administration, and NASA historical projects as required.

. Historical Interviews: In addition to continued interviews by various project historians, the following of general interest were interviewed during the past months: Edward C. Welsh, (February 20, 1969), Executive Secretary of the National Aeronautics and Space Council (1961-1969); Associate NASA Administrator Harold A. Finger (April 16, 1969); and Dr./General James H. Doolittle (April 21, 1969), former Chairman of the NACA (1955-58). The Oral History project of the Lyndon B. Johnson Library has interviewed and taped Mr. James E. Webb and present Administrator T. O. Paine. The Historical Archives intends to obtain copies of these interviews in addition to those performed by contractors (i.e., Prof. Moze Harvey, Univ. of Miami, "administrator's experience of NASA, 1961-1969") other than history projects.

Professional Notes:

. Robert H. Goddard Historical Prize Essay for 1968 was "The Life-Saving Rocket: Case-Study of 19th Century Spinoff," by Mitchell Sharpe of NASA Marshall Space Flight Center. He is the first NASA author to win this annual competition of the National Space Club, although Cargill Hall, now JPL Historian, won the first two competitions in 1962 and 1963.

. No winner was selected for the first AIAA History Award for 1968, according to I. B. Holley, Chairman, Duke University.

. The Third Annual Military History Symposium was held at the Air Force Academy on May 8-9, 1969. Its theme was "Science-Technology-Warfare." Session on "The Impact of Science-Technology on Twentieth Century Warfare" featured papers on "Operations Research" by I. B. Holley and "Action and Reaction in the Post-World War II Era" by Melvin Kranzberg. Among the discussants were Robert L. Perry and E. M. Emme.

. The Robert Goddard Memorial Library was dedicated at Clark University on May 19, 1969, the NASA Historian attending the ceremonies.

. Dr. Paul Johnston, Director of the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, is retiring on September 1, 1969. His critical talk of the neglect of the museum was front-page news in Washington (The Star, 4/23/69, p.1)

. It is understood that the U.S. Air Force is revitalizing its historical program by implementing all recommendations of a review board. No word concerning the selection of a new USAF Historian has been announced. The NASA Historian was recently consulted by the Department of Transportation concerning their historical program (now includes FAA, Coast Guard, etc.).

. The History Committee of the International Academy of Astronautics will sponsor the Third Symposium on the History of Rocketry and Astronautics, in conjunction with the I.A.F. Congress, at Mar Del Plata, Argentina, October 6-10, 1969. While emphasis is placed upon memoir papers, historians also were asked to participate, such as R. Cargill Hall, JPL, who is also shaping up an International Chronology on Astronautics. The NASA Historian was organizer of the program. Papers of this and previous symposiums will ultimately be published in English by the Smithsonian Press, edited by F. C. Durant, III, of the National Air and Space Museum.

. AIAA History Committee, chaired by Robert L. Perry of the RAND Corporation, is sponsoring sessions upon the 50th anniversary of air transportation theme of the Sixth Annual AIAA Convention, at Anaheim, California, October 20-24, 1969.

Bibliographical Notes:

. J. J. Brown, Ideas in Exile: A History of Canadian Invention, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967, 372p.

A stimulating approach to the history of technology. Mentions McGill University's gun-launched high-altitude research program (HARP), pp. 335-37.

. James W. Covington, "The Rockets Come to Florida," Tequesta: Journal of the Historical Association of South Florida (No. XXVIII 1968), pp. 37-52.

. J. G. Crowther, Science in Modern Society, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, 403p.

Sequel to his The Social Relations of Science (1939), reviewing the hundredfold expansion of science since World War II from a British perspective.

. Eugene M. Emme, "Program Report: Historical Considerations in Aviation Development," Technology and Culture, (July 1969).

. Barton C. Hacker, "The United States Army as a National Police Force, 1877-1898," Military Affairs (April 1969), pp. 255-64.

. J. J. Lankes, A Brief History of Aeronautics, Langley Field, Va.: NACA, 1946, 14p.

Original pamphlet reissued in 1968 with no change, which provides legends for 76 classic concepts and vehicles portrayed on colored four murals at the Rotunda of the Langley Research Center.

. Thomas G. Manning, Government in Science: The U.S. Geological Survey, 1867-1894, Lexington, Ky.: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1967, 257p.

. "Out There," The Economist, December 23, 1969, pp. 11-12.
Editorial critical of Apollo 8 as a technological excess.

. John R. Pierce, The Beginnings of Satellite Communications, with a preface by Arthur C. Clarke, San Francisco: San Francisco Press, 1968, 61p.

Helpful but incomplete memoir of BTL's distinguished engineer innovator. Also lists his science-fiction writings.

. Derek J. de Sola Price, "Research on Research," in Journeys in Science: Small Steps -- Great Strides, edited by D. L. Arm, Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1967, pp. 1-21.

Paper given at 12th AFOSR Science Seminar.

. John B. Rae, Climb to Greatness: A History of the American Aviation Industry, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1969.

An uneven but helpful brief history on a most neglected area.

. H. E. Ross, "The B.I.S. Spaceship," Spaceflight, Volume II (February 1969), pp. 42-47.

Reprinting of original lunar mission study of 1938 as published in B.I.S. Journal of January 1939.

. Robert C. Seamans, Jr., Action and Reaction: The 1969 Minta Martin Lecture, Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. and A.I.A.A., 1969, 106p.

Former Associate and Deputy Administrator of NASA (1960-1967) recounts his analysis of the process of decision-making and program implementation.

. Loyd S. Swenson, Jr., "The Fertile Crescent: The South's Role in the National Space Program," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume LXXI (January 1968), pp. 377-392.

Examination of economic role of Apollo program.

. Theodore von Kármán, The Wind and Beyond: The Autobiography of, with Lee Edsen, Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1967, 376p.

Outstanding autobiography by leading aerodynamicist of Cal Tech, with useful tid-bits for all aspects of aviation and space.

. James E. Webb, Space Age Management, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969, 173p.

Revision of the three McKinsey Foundation lectures delivered at the Graduate School of Business at Columbia University by the former NASA Administrator in the fall of 1968. A useful memoir source.