



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian Institution Archives

Proceedings of the Board of Regents Meeting held on September 20, 1982

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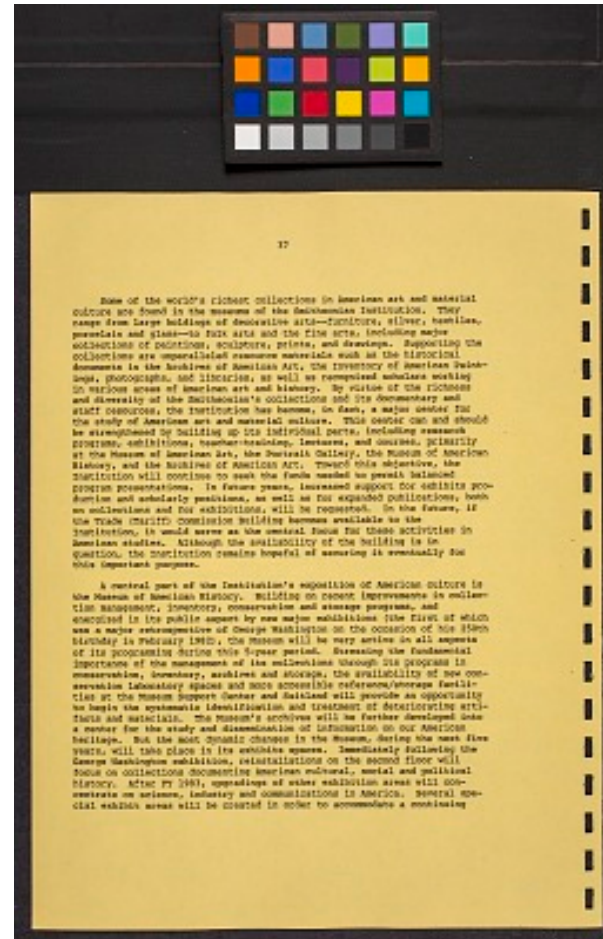
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Some of the world's richest collections in American art and material culture are found in the museums of the Smithsonian Institution. They range from large holdings of decorative arts--furniture, silver, textiles, porcelain and glass--to folk arts and the fine arts, including major collections of paintings, sculpture, prints, and drawings. Supporting the collections are unparalleled resource materials such as the historical documents in the Archives of American Art, the Inventory of American Paintings, photographs, and libraries, as well as recognized scholars working in various areas of American art and history. By virtue of the richness and diversity of the Smithsonian's collections and its documentary and staff resources, the Institution has become, in fact, a major center for the study of American art and material culture. This center can and should be strengthened by building up its individual parts, including research programs, exhibitions, teacher-training, lectures, and courses, primarily at the Museum of American Art, the Museum of American History, and the Archives of American Art. Towards this objective, the Institution will continue to seek the funds needed to permit balanced program presentations. In future years, increased support for exhibits production and scholarly positions, as well as for expanded publications, both on collections and for exhibitions, will be requested. In the future, if the Trade (Tariff) Commission Building becomes available to the Institution, it would serve as the central focus for these activities in American studies. Although the availability of the building is in question, the Institution remains hopeful of securing it eventually for this important purpose.

A central part of the Institution's exposition of American culture is the Museum of American History. Building on recent improvements in collection management, inventory, conservation and storage programs, and energized in its public aspect by new major exhibitions (the first of which was a major retrospective of George Washington in the occasion of his 250th birthday in February 1982), the Museum will be very active in all aspects of its programming during this 5-year period. Stressing the fundamental importance of the management of its collections through its programs in conservation, inventory, archives and storage, the availability of new conservation laboratory spaces and more accessible reference/storage facilities at the Museum Support Center and Suitland will provide an opportunity to begin the systematic identification and treatment of deteriorating artifacts and materials. The Museum's archives will be further developed into a center for the study and dissemination of information on our American heritage. But the most dynamic changes in the Museum, during the next five years, will take place in its exhibits spaces. Immediately following the George Washington exhibition, reinstallations on the second floor will focus on collections documenting American cultural, social and political history. After FY 1983, upgradings of other exhibition areas will concentrate on science, industry and communications in America. Several special exhibit areas will be created in order to accommodate a continuing



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The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

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