THE SMITHSONIAN IN BOSTON

The Smithsonian stands alone in its capacity and commitment to spark discovery, tell America’s story, inspire lifelong learning and reach people everywhere. It began with a gift from James Smithson, an English scientist to a new nation in 1846. No other resource inspires such wonder through its treasures and knowledge. And it belongs to you.

This unrivaled American museum and research complex has a strong presence in Boston and the surrounding region through the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, longstanding partnerships with affiliates, scholarly collaborations, loans of objects, traveling exhibitions, educational outreach and relationships with volunteers.

The Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory

The Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory is one of the largest and most diverse astrophysical institutions in the world. Founded in 1890, its mission is to advance understanding of the universe through research in astronomy and astrophysics and in related areas of fundamental physics and geophysics.

It also hosts an array of educational programs, such as the free monthly Observatory Night—an informal lecture and telescope viewing—and provides curricula for classrooms.

In 1973, the Observatory and Harvard University joined together to create an alliance of preeminent scientists positioned to plumb virtually every aspect of space. These scientists develop some of the most sophisticated astronomical instruments, operate telescopes in Chile, Arizona, Hawaii and Massachusetts and play leading roles in several NASA missions.

They now will employ a powerful new tool, the Giant Magellan Telescope, under construction at the Las Campanas Observatory in Chile, to further their investigation of the universe and pursue this century’s greatest quest—to find life elsewhere in the cosmos.

cfa.harvard.edu/sao

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Boston, Massachusetts Owney tag, 1888-1897, National Postal Museum. Owney was a stray terrier, adopted as the first unofficial postal mascot in 1888. He made several trips to Boston and received this tag from the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Company. Top, a rendering of the Giant Magellan Telescope, a marvel of engineering, which will be more powerful than the Hubble Space Telescope.

Smithsonian Science

The Smithsonian partners with several Boston-area institutions to examine the world’s most complex and pressing scientific and environmental challenges.

The Smithsonian is preserving and restoring native orchids and their habitats with the New England Wildflower Society. They are creating a national seed bank and a living collection of the fungi on which orchids depend.

At Harvard University, the Smithsonian maintains a forest plot to monitor the survival of trees and long-term effects of climate change. With Harvard, the Marine Biological Laboratory and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Smithsonian created the Encyclopedia of Life (eol.org), Biodiversity Heritage Library (biodiversitylibrary.org) and Barcode of Life (barcodeoflife.org), free resources that digitally document life forms.

Scientists at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the U.S. Coast Guard track invasive species brought in the Boston Harbor by commercial ships. These non-native species include the common rough periwinkle, the green crab, sea lace and codium seaweed.

In Springfield, Mass., scientists with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center teach citizen scientists about birds in their backyards, how to monitor nests and record observations to the Neighborhood Nestwatch. The Smithsonian bands and counts birds in the White Mountains, focusing on the black-throated blue warbler.

Smithsonian Education

Since its founding, education has been at the core of the Smithsonian’s mission for “the increase and diffusion of knowledge.”

At the Boston Library, for example, scholars are able to view the entire collection of the Archives of American Art on microfilm. Each year, teachers from the Boston area attend Summer Institutes at the Smithsonian American Art Museum to learn about teaching humanities through art. Many scholars from the region work as fellows and interns at the Smithsonian.

The Smithsonian Science Center is building awareness among educational leaders and potential partners such as the Boston Museum of Science for the center’s Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform Model. This is one of the most widely recognized science reform models in the United States, designed to promote high-quality, inquiry-oriented science instruction for K-8 classrooms.

The Smithsonian Collection

The Smithsonian shares the nation’s collection of 138 million treasures with Boston institutions through traveling exhibitions and loans of objects to special exhibitions.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum will loan *Rocking Pot* by Peter Voulkos and *Black/White Hanging* by Lore Lindenfeld to the exhibition *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College, 1933-1957* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, October 10, 2015 through August 21, 2016.


The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum has the National Air and Space Museum’s space capsule, Mercury, Freedom 7 and Astronaut Alan Shepard’s pressure suit and helmet.

BOSTON IN THE SMITHSONIAN

Boston’s art, history and culture are found throughout the Smithsonian’s vast collection—from vintage photographs to sports memorabilia at the National Museum of American History, from portraits of President John F. Kennedy at the National Portrait Gallery to works by Boston artists such as John Singleton Copley, James Abbott McNeill Whistler, Nancy Graves and Frank Stella at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Freer and Sackler Galleries.

Julia Child, who introduced Americans to French cooking, donated her Cambridge kitchen, including the cabinets, appliances, cookbooks, kitchen table and hundreds of utensils and gadgets to the National Museum of American History. It is showcased in the exhibition, Food: Transforming the American Table 1950–2000.

Lowell will be a featured story on an interactive map in Places of Invention, slated to open this summer in the Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Hall of Invention at the National Museum of American History. The new exhibition, with an online component, will examine the places where invention thrived in the United States. In addition, the American Textile History Museum in Lowell is a Smithsonian Affiliate.

SMITHSONIAN AFFILIATES

Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program that develops long-term, collaborative partnerships with museums and educational and cultural organizations.

American Textile History Museum
491 DUTTON STREET | LOWELL, MA | ATHM.ORG

The American Textile History Museum has the world’s largest collection of tools, spinning wheels, handlooms, early production machines and more than 5 million prints, fabric samples, rolled coverlets and costumes.

Lowell National Historical Park
246 MARKET STREET | LOWELL, MA | NPS.GOV/LOWE

The Lowell National Historic Park is a replica of a planned textile mill city with a dam and nearly six miles of canals along the Merrimack River.

Plimouth Plantation
137 WARREN AVENUE | PLYMOUTH, MA | PLIMOUTH.ORG

Plimouth Plantation is a reproduction of a 17th-century walled English farming and maritime village along Plymouth Harbor. There is a Wampanoag Native village and a reproduction the Mayflower.

USS Constitution Museum
CHARLESTOWN NAVY YARD | BUILDING 22 | CHARLESTOWN, MA
USHCONSTITUTIONMUSEUM.ORG

The restored ship and museum features the exhibition All Hands on Deck: A Sailor’s Life in 1812, based on the museum’s ongoing historical research into lives of sailors and officers who served aboard the USS Constitution during the War of 1812.

Berkshire Museum
39 SOUTH STREET | PITTSFIELD, MA | BERKSHIREMUSEUM.ORG

The museum’s collection includes Hudson River School, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Edwin Church, fossils, an Egyptian mummy, shards of Babylonian cuneiform tablets, early Mediterranean jewelry, objects from Robert E. Peary and Matthew Henson expedition to the North Pole and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s writing desk.

BOSTON LEADERSHIP

Volunteers from around the nation provide vital leadership and support. These members of Smithsonian boards reside in the Boston metropolitan area.

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The Smithsonian’s financial foundation is provided by Congress, the American people and generous donors who are willing to invest in ideas. Last fall, the Smithsonian launched its first-ever fundraising campaign. The Smithsonian Campaign will spur our 19 museums, nine research centers and the National Zoo to spark discovery, tell America’s story, inspire lifelong learning and reach people everywhere.

Make a gift today. Your tax-deductible gift helps make possible a world of learning and discovery shared with millions. Investments in the Smithsonian Campaign will transform fields of research and inspire the next generation of thinkers. Visit smithsoniancampaign.org

Become a member. With annual dues of $2,500 or more, you become a member of the James Smithson Society, or any giving circle of your choice at one of our 19 museums. Members are invited to join Smithsonian experts for events throughout the year, including the Annual Smithsonian Weekend.

Learn more. Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at enews.si.edu.

For more information, contact the Office of Advancement, 202.633.4300 or visit si.edu/giving.