

I. Editorial

The Smithsonian Institution has long been one of the most important arenas for archaeological research in the United States and around the world. Through the Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology and later through its Department of Anthropology, the science of anthropology and archaeology have made great strides over these many years. However, it seems, the role of the Smithsonian Institution as a leader in the anthropological sciences is now being threatened by a planned reorganization program of Secretary Small, the new head of the Smithsonian Institution. Horror stories concerning the reorganization of the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology, the future of its collections and archives, and the scientists there attending to anthropological and archaeological research are filtering out each day. There is the prospect that some of the research thrusts of the Department of Anthropology will be dramatically affected. There is the possibility that private funding sources and support will be solicited thus making the future of Smithsonian anthropological science beholden to the private sector rather than being supported by the Federal government which was one of its responsibilities. Colleagues have written and called about this eventuality. It is my hope that all will take this as a warning of the possibility that the anthropological sciences are now under attack by Smithsonian bean counters. I urge the readership of the BHA to write Secretary Small directly (Smithsonian Institution, Washington D. C. 20560) to indicate your opposition to the impending changes now expected.

Douglas R. Givens, Editor

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II. Discourse on the History of Archaeology

The Man Who Came to Dinner, or, Hooray for Mr. Spaulding: A Peek at Historical Imagination Running Rampant.

by

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Dorothy Pond (nee Long, 1900-1987) married anthropologist Alonzo W. Pond (1894-1986) in July of 1926, little more than a month after they met. In the early years of their marriage she accompanied him into the field on excavations and helped him with his archaeological manuscripts (Pond 1930, Pond et al. 1928, 1937). Lonnie, after participating in the Rainbow Bridge-Monument Valley Expedition of 1933, and working at Jamestown and Mammoth Cave, left archaeology, as a livelihood, in 1935 for a series of other jobs. The Ponds retired to northern Wisconsin in 1958. There, Alonzo, with Dorothy's help, turned out several popular natural history books (Pond 1962, 1965, 1969a, 1969b, 1972).

Although the Ponds married shortly after they met, they had been corresponding steadily for ten months before this meeting; Lonnie traveling in Europe and Algeria, Dorothy in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Mutual acquaintances knew them both by their letters and thought - astutely in light of the sixty-year marriage that followed from their matchmaking—that the two might make good pen pals...or more (For this story and further details on Alonzo Pond's career to 1931, see Tarabulski and Teicher 1986, Breitborde 1992, and White 1992).

From the first, in this exchange of letters (now in the Alonzo and Dorothy Pond papers in the Manuscripts Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin) each was impressed with the others writing. Dorothy, looking back in an undated manuscript entitled "I Married a Plaid Pig," makes plain Lonnie's letters bespoke the adventurous life she had long dreamt of. Lonnie, in a letter to his parents, written in Algeria and dated September 27, 1925, remarks: "Say, that little playmate [the Cordells] have picked out for me is just about the best little letter writer I've run into in the line of girls. Guess I ought to know what is what in that line because I have had enough of them in my day... [T]hat girl can type the most vivid letters I ever got. They are just chuck full of interesting descriptions of what she is doing...."

The letter below, reproduced here with the kind permission of the Ponds' two children, Chomingwen and Arthur, is an example of the writing style - the vivid descriptions—that so impressed Lonnie. Written in 1932, when Lonnie had returned to the University of Chicago for further work on a Ph.D. in anthropology (never completed), it tells the tale of a dinner with a certain Mr. Spaulding. A fantastic archaeologist in the strict sense of the term "fantastic," Mr. Spaulding had a few tales of his own to tell, and a rare talent telling them. Dorothy and Alonzo Pond were both spellbinding storytellers. All of Mr. Spaulding's remarkable claims, as related breathlessly by Dorothy Pond in this letter to her parents, were surely false, but it is remarkable that he ensorcelled even so skeptical a pair of dinner companions as the Ponds. Should any BHA readers have further information about this curious character, please contact me.

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Chicago, Illinois
April 2, 1932

Dear Mamma and Papa,

We have had the most interesting weekend that I want to write to you right away about it. Several weeks ago Lonnie heard through the anthropology department that a man by the name of Spaulding was representing himself as a Gobi Desert Explorer and was lecturing around here and trying to raise money. No one seemed to know very much about him and so Lonnie wrote to Walter Granger asking information about him. However, he hadn't had any reply and we kept hearing more about Mr. Spaulding. Well, Saturday noon the telephone rang and it was a Mr. Garnette in Evanston who was asking Lonnie and me to Sunday night supper to meet Mr. Spaulding. We accepted with alacrity.

He mentioned that the Logans had asked him to invite us and afterwards we found out that he was a nephew of the Logans. Mrs. Garnette writes poetry and plays by the way. Have you ever heard of her? Louise Ayers Garnette.

The department down here [was] firmly convinced that Mr. Spaulding was a fake and we called Dr. Cole to see if they were invited but they were not. Dr. Cole said by all means go and find out what we could.

So Sunday evening we started out and reached the Garnette home a little before seven. We were ushered into a little upstairs room where we met Mr. Spaulding, a most unprepossessing man, the Pettitts, artists and Mr. Spaulding's hosts, two Albert boys, one of whom had been Paul Nesbitt's room mate here at Chicago and had been in Palestine with Breasted expeditions. A young professor named Phelps from Northwestern and a Miss Walsh. That comprised our party with Mr. and Mrs.

Garnette. We were served bullion with lemon in it and bread sticks (this is for Mammias' enjoyment) and as soon as we had finished it we went down to dinner, or rather supper, in the dining room on the first floor. Again to digress and tell about the table. It was a round table and had a black cloth over it, very dull and reminded me of a camera cloth. In the center was a small white luncheon cloth with silhouettes in cross stitch and at each place were white Madeira napkins. The service plates were placed right on the black table cloth.

Well we sat down at the table and by asking a few questions got Mr. Spaulding talking. We sat down at the table at eight o'clock and were still there at 11:30. We, Lonnie and I went, firmly believing that he was a crook. Now here is the tale he told in that 4 1/2 hours.

His great grandfather was much in sympathy with the colonies and so was asked to leave England so he went to India where he established the John Company which was later the British East India Company and is now the Pacific and Oriental Steamship Co. His great-grandfather became very well acquainted with some old Indian families. These people showed him three books, the pages of which are gold leaf and the covers solid gold. The last three pages of these books were maps showing the locations of cities built in Cambrian times, 200,000 years ago. It tells of a large tidal wave 2100 feet high which came in from the Pacific and destroyed this ancient civilization. However, his great-grandfather became interested and figured out that this old city was in the Gobi desert and so made a trip there and by the ancient longitude found a place, sunk a test shaft and struck a library sealed in a vault. The great-grandfather came back out of the desert and decided to excavate but of course it must take money. Well, somewhere in here his father or grandfather, I don't know which, was up in the Klondike region and saw that there was gold so he staked out the best claims and when the rush came he had the best mine sites. This along with mines in South Africa produced enough money to continue work.

At the age of four Mr. Spaulding was sent to India to learn Sanskrit as by that time his father and grandfather had excavated enough of the city to need someone to translate. This is what they found.

They erred twelve miles in their calculations and instead of striking the main library, they struck one of the twelve sub-libraries placed around this main library as the spokes of a wheel. The sub-libraries being twelve miles from the main library. Here they found scrolls of silk, treatises, written in ink of liquid gold, some hermetically sealed and placed in blocks of concrete six feet square. These treatises are written in Sanskrit and they have been able to read them. They contain formulae, 18 of which have been sold to the Germans. Many others are being worked out in his laboratory in Calcutta. For instance they can project power through the air for eight miles without any loss of the power. They send the power from a five horsepower motor eight miles and can run a five horsepower motor with it. Another thing they have worked out is a metal lighter than air. A ball of it, when bounced, goes to the ceiling and stays there. They have catalogued 30,000 of these volumes and still have 18,000 to catalogue from this sub-library.

One of the most interesting things is that these treatises plainly state that they are merely copies the originals of which are located in a city, or cities, which according to their longitude and latitude are now beneath the surface of Knoxville, Tenn., and Binghamton, New York.

They have photographs taken of the polar system from somewhere in South America where a 144-inch lens was used.

Nothing has been brought out however as it was too difficult, the camel journey to[o] long. For

instance they have found a huge golden bowl, the gold so pure that when a little piece is taken off you can mold it in your hands. This bowl 3 feet high is supported by twelve human figures six feet high of solid gold. It is estimated to weigh seven tons. Another find is a vase 8 feet tall of fused quark crystal cut into diamond shaped pieces and fastened together with gold wire which will still hold water.

The lama gave his grandfather a lamp, a blown glass ball 8 inches in diameter which gives a steady light of more than 200 candle power and for 60 years or so has never diminished in intensity. There are only four white men there, the rest are natives which they brought with them. And one of their workmen they absolutely know to be 552 years old the second of last December.

He goes on to talk of Hindu magic, the Mahatmas who are so very psychic. For instance when one of the men go out exploring he takes a mahatma with him. When the party wants to communicate with base camp he merely writes a message, hands it to the mahatma, the mahatma disappears and in a minute is back again with the answer written out with authentic hand writing.

Of course, he says, everyone knows that China has made four attempts to recapture Tibet but every time some calamity has befallen the army at the border. One time in July a blizzard descended and froze the army. Another time they just died and he has seen 14,000 bodies piled up like cordwood and not a mark on them.

Of course, many people have taken pictures of the Hindu fakirs and the camera records nothing but he has a picture of seven men walking on the water. He has submitted the negative to 40 photographers and they all say the negative is genuine.

Another thing he has done is to drop a very bright light down on the floor of the Mediterranean and then with a telescope in the bottom of the boat they can see the outlines of various walled cities. This is just off the coast of France in 400 feet of water. When Lonnie mentioned that De Prorok had done the same off of the Tunisian coast, Mr. Spaulding said that yes, he financed De Prorok.

He has found a paved highway, 100 feet wide in South America and again it comes to light in Madagascar and into the African jungles.

Before the Colorado River cut through the Grand Canyon there was a large lake. The people needed water in Old Mexico and so large a ditch was dug and the water carried across Arizona into Old Mexico and there is no doubt that there is a buried city which outcrops into the Grand Canyon. He has seen it.

He says, No, he is not publishing it. He is not ready to and besides they are not ready for anyone else to come into the desert yet.

Of course, all this story was brought out thru questions. At the beginning when Lonnie asked who financed him, he said "My family" and explained that the profits from the mines and smelters were huge.

I forgot to tell you that these people had flexible glass in those days, made of a cellulose, probably like our cellophane.

Well, we left the house at 11:30 saying were we crazy or was he. Of course, no one believed Marco

Polo but again we know a great deal more of the world than was known in Marco Polo's time.

Monday morning we telephoned the Coles and invited them over to hear all about it and they came Monday night. In the meantime we got out maps of Asia and could nowhere find a place that was 1300 miles from anywhere by camel journey. He had told us that he was working with permission of the Tibetan government. But we knew that Outer Mongolia is nominally under the control of Russia.

He knew everyone. In fact Roy Andrews had been within 600 miles of him at one time. He knew Mr. Osborn and Roy so well and they had spoken of Lonnie to him.

Just now he was here looking after his interests and was trying to perfect an aeroplane which would fly without fuel. For he could not carry in fuel for the return trip.

Monday Lonnie had lunch with Sidney Hull of the Western Electric and found out that these experiments are all being tried out in the Western Electric laboratories, most of them successfully but still too costly to market. Mr. Hull's secretary had heard Mr. Spaulding twice. She said that everyone on the north side was wild over him. That he hated public lectures and shunned publicity but that these little evening gatherings were just what he likes to do. (By the way, Lonnie says that he didn't say these experiments were being carried on by Western Electric. Mr. Hull had seen two of them work, the projection of power and the suspension of an iron bar, which Mr. Spaulding also mentioned, by use of an electric current.)

Well, of course, just reading it you will say that perhaps we were the crazy ones to even try to believe it. But he told things so straight forward and was so modest, didn't boast, merely told things when questioned that I'm sure we must have been partially hypnotized.

By Monday night we were firmly convinced that he was insane and living in an imaginary world. It is quite true that he, himself, believes everything he says. That much we can readily believe but that is the only thing. In talking it over with Dr. and Mrs. Cole the thing sounded more weird and absurd every minute.

Dr. and Mrs. Cole are very anxious to meet him and I think it will be arranged.

The general consensus of opinion is that he wants money but by pretending not to want it, it will be offered to him. Several north shore people are on the verge of loaning it to him.

Well, all in all, we had a most entertaining evening and felt well repaid for going. However, I do feel foolish even thinking that it might be so at the time he was telling it.

Unfortunately I forgot to keep a carbon of this and would like it as a record so when you are through with it will you return it. There is no rush and you can show the letter to Mr. Holman or anybody you think would like a good yarn.

[Dorothy]