Meetings

History of Technology

Technology has been one of the dominant factors in shaping civilization, and it seems almost incredible that in the United States—the most technologically minded of all nations in history—there had been no organized group or scholarly periodical specifically devoted to the study of the development of technology and its relations with society and culture prior to the formation in 1958 of the Society for the History of Technology and the publication of its journal. Although the name of the organization (a recent affiliate of the AAAS) might indicate that it is concerned solely with history, the relations of technology with society and culture is such a broad topic that the society is interdisciplinary in scope, bringing together the engineer, the scientist, the industrialist, the social scientist, and the "humanist" to promote the study of developments which have influenced the civilizations of the past and which are creating the world of the future.

Technology and Culture, the international quarterly of the society, made its first appearance in January 1960. It contains articles by Roger Burlingame, Peter F. Drucker, Howard Mumford Jones, and Francis R. Allen, dealing, respectively, with the literature of the history of technology, economic problems in the study of technology, the position of technological history in general intellectual history, and the relations between technology and social change. Of particular interest to the readers of *Science* are Robert P. Multhauf's article on the scientist and the "improver" of technology, Cyril S. Smith's metallographic study on methods of making chain mail, John Geise's inquiry into what a railway is, and Carl W. Condit's treatment of Louis Sullivan's skyscrapers as expressions of 19th-century technology. The spring 1960 issue of *Technology and Culture* will contain A. P. Usher's investigation of the industrialization of modern Britain, M. N. Boyer's remarks about the notion that the pivoted axle, known to antiquity, disappeared during the Middle Ages and had to be reinvented, and John Rae's discussion of the "know-how" tradition in American technology, as well as research notes by Nathan Reingold on the U.S. Patent Office records as sources for the history of invention and P. Federico's essay on the records of Eli Whitney's cotton-gin patent. In addition there are book reviews by Leonard Carmichael, Dorothea Waley Singer, Trevor I. Williams, and others.

The interdisciplinary nature of the society and its publication will be shown further in the third issue of *Technology and Culture*, which will contain a "con-

troversy" section wherein I. Jordan Kunik (patent attorney) and Jacob Schmookler (economist) argue against the attempt of S. Colum Gilfillan (sociologist) to measure the rate of American invention and the decline of patenting. That issue will also contain Robert S. Woodbury's "Eli Whitney and the legend of interchangeable parts." Also planned is an issue devoted exclusively to a critique of the monumental five-volume *History of Technology*, edited by Charles Singer and others; this issue will contain articles by Lewis Mumford, Lynn White, and others.

Programs of the society reflect the same interdisciplinary approach. To date the society has met jointly with the American Society for Engineering Education, the American Historical Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Its programs normally consist of three sessions, one devoted to the general social and cultural relations of technology, a second devoted to the substantive history of technology, and a third dealing with interpretive discussions of technological developments in the past and present.

William Fielding Ogburn, the famed sociologist, served as president of the society until his untimely death early in 1959. He was succeeded as president by David B. Steinman, civil engineer and master bridge-builder, who is responsible for the construction of over 400 bridges on five continents, among them the recently completed Mackinac Bridge, and who has received many awards for his numerous research papers on the aerodynamics of bridge structure and the application of metallurgical developments to bridge construction. First vice president is Lynn White, Jr., professor of medieval history at the University of California (Los Angeles) and former president of Mills College. Mervin J. Kelly, recently retired as president of the Bell Telephone Laboratories and one of the nation's leaders in the field of industrial research, is second vice president. The secretary of the society and editor-in-chief of *Technology and Culture* is Melvin Kranzberg of Case Institute of Technology, and the treasurer is Robert S. Woodbury of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Among the members of the society's executive and advisory councils are John E. Burchard, Leonard Carmichael, Ralph E. Flanders, Philippe Le Corbeiller, David Riesman, Cyril S. Smith, Richard H. Shryock, Herbert Hoover, I. Bernard Cohen, and Charles W. Cole.

Information regarding membership in the society, which includes subscription to the journal, may be obtained from the secretary, Dr. Melvin Kranzberg, Room 311, Main Building, Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland 6.

MELVIN KRANZBERG
Case Institute of Technology, Cleveland, Ohio