

# Raised in the USA: Childhood in America

What if young students today looked back at someone who was their age and lived in their hometown, but over a century ago? What stories about school, family, community, and society would they uncover? What would those stories tell us about being an American kid today?

**Raised in the USA: Childhood in America** will take personal stories from students today and follow their quest to uncover the lives of kids who lived in their town or just down the street 50, 100, or even 150 years ago. We will explore some of the most transformative eras in American history through the eyes of young Americans.

The American youth of today and the past will come face-to-face. Together, we will uncover new and rich meanings of being *Raised in the USA*.

## Collaborators

We will work alongside partners at the National Museum of American History and National History Day representatives to structure the content and select student curators. A nationally-recognized scholar will act as our national contact and content expert. Alongside the scholar and National History Day representatives, MoMS will select five student researchers. The five chosen young scholars will represent major regions (South, North, Great Plains, West, and Alaska/Pacific).

## Creating *Raised in the USA*

Our young scholars will be selected through an essay competition and with the help of our National History Day partners. The students will conduct research on a child based on our selected themes. Our advising scholar will help guide their progress and in finding all exhibition components including: Art, photographs, diaries, literary pieces, artifacts, and music. The students will develop even greater research skills, become more invested in local history, and engage in museum exhibition practices firsthand.



Parade, 1942, Connecticut

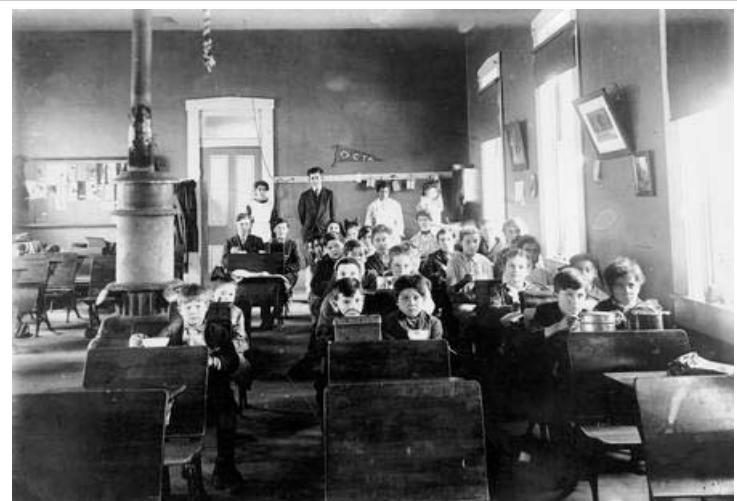


Children playing, 1941, Chicago, Illinois

## **Content**

The exhibition will be built around five themes illustrated by distinctive stories uncovered by our student scholars:

- ◆ Education – The prairie schoolhouse of the 1870s
- ◆ Family – A child of a slave family in a Southern border state, pre-Civil War
- ◆ Work – An immigrant child worker in the northern factories in the 1910s
- ◆ Community – The life of a Depression-era and World War II teenager.
- ◆ Play – The rise of teen culture in postwar America, 1950s



One room schoolhouse in Octa, Ohio. c. 1910

# Standing for Democracy

Americans place great trust in our democratic system. Yet, democracy is nothing without action, reaction, vision, and revision. Our American democracy is a paradox of obedience and rebellion; disorder and compromise; skepticism and faith. We are all a part of this imperfect, but important balancing act. Anything and anyone can tip the scale. Which way will we go?



*Standing for Democracy* will look at how we have embraced and tested core ideals of our country such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness over time. Visitors will examine the role of everyday people to enact change, consider our visions of government, and learn about the moments when we looked beyond party lines, class, and creed to reject injustice.

Americans at every end of the social spectrum still work to make those dreams a reality today. How do people in your community stand up for American democracy?

## Collaborators

Museum on Main Street will work with several Smithsonian units to develop this exhibition, including curators from the National Museum of American History (NMAH) and the collections housed at the Archives Center (NMAH). Photographs, paintings, and archival film from throughout the Smithsonian, including the African American Museum of History and Culture, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum will be used to bring the exhibit to life visually. Experts at the Library of Congress and the National Archives will also be consulted to advise us in the original context and interpretation of some of our most important governing documents. Their extensive holdings of photographs, film, recorded audio, and declassified government records will add depth. Stories from contemporary American history, gathered through interviews led by MoMS, will highlight how our democracy can still be tested and improved.



Anti-war protesters in front of the White House, 1968

## Content

The exhibition will explore historic events and pose questions for today in the following content areas:

- ◆ **Foundations of Democracy.** Examine the context and main controversies behind America's democratic system. Sort through the myth to tell the real stories of our famous founders and those who remain mostly unknown. Learn what principles inspired the writers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Just how revolutionary was our new democracy?

- ◆ **Divided We Fall.** Take a new look at challenges that have faced the democratic system throughout our history. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, regional divisions over the institution of slavery pulled at the heart of America. Re-examine how events like the Civil War affected national views of freedom and democracy. Revisit what ordinary people wrote and hoped for America during those uncertain times.
- ◆ **Living Documents.** Explore the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the amendments that keep American democracy relevant. How does change really happen? What role do people play in changing government?
- ◆ **Standing Up.** Americans are not shy about fighting injustice. Men and women of every ethnicity, class, and state shared in the revolutionary spirit of rising up and speaking out. From voting rights to education, we continue to stand up. Examine great, controversial, and inspiring moments in the struggle for civil rights and their legacy on our democracy today.



Three suffragists casting votes, c. 1917

# Eureka!

## Invention and Innovation in America

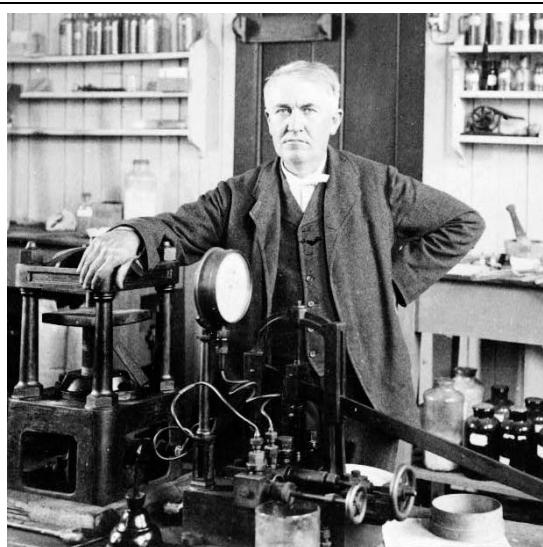
America is a fertile laboratory for spirited innovators. Since our founding, we celebrate and even compete to make the latest or greatest discovery despite hardships, resistance, or failure. There is a unique American ingenuity in everything from art and sports to science and popular culture. *Eureka! Invention and Innovation in America* will explore the stories behind some of our greatest innovators and life-changing inventions.

*Eureka!* will celebrate curiosity, uncover the incredible past behind the ‘ordinary’ inventions of today, and spark the energy and creativity of today’s youth. The exhibition will focus on making these stories personal, revealing the genius behind the inventions.

### Collaborators

MoMS will tell the human story behind great innovations through a partnership with the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. The Lemelson Center will provide curatorial and research support, as well as engage community involvement in a series of regional discussions. Host communities can focus easily on their own “firsts.” Kids will be encouraged to showcase their own inventions in fairs or local exhibits.

Additional Smithsonian resources include: Flight and space exploration collections from the National Air and Space Museum; technological, social, and cultural collections within the National Museum of American History; the social impact of invention as seen through art at the National Portrait Gallery; and the collections of the National Postal Museum.



Thomas Edison in his laboratory, c. 1901

*I do not consider myself to be a remarkable person... But I am intensely curious.*

Clarence Birdseye,  
Frozen food pioneer

### Content

Creativity knows no bounds and neither will *Eureka! Invention and Innovation in America*. We will invite an open exploration of what it means to innovate by touching on all fields, from technology to art; the famous to the unknown. Thematic subsections will include:

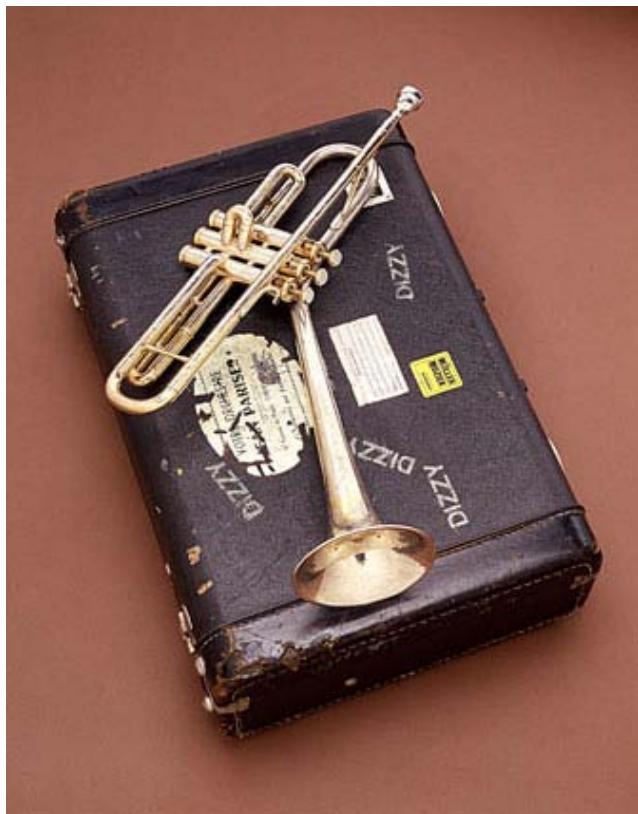
- ◆ **The Spirit of Invention.** It takes work and sometimes luck to be an inventor. We will explore some of the inventors who found fame and immediate success, those who repeatedly went back to the drawing board, and those who fought against incredible odds to realize their dreams.
- ◆ **The Best Thing since Sliced Bread.** Many of the extraordinary ‘first’ inventions are for the home and community: from quick-frozen food



Smithsonian  
Institution

to penicillin. When were these creations developed, who made them, and what didn't quite make the cut?

- ◆ **Inventions for Work.** Revolutionaries in communications (Alexander Graham Bell) and industry (Eli Whitney) irreversibly changed work. Learn how these inventions affected our work.
- ◆ **Inventions for Play.** The creative spirit drives innovations in art, literature, sports, and entertainment. Explore the contributions of artists, writers, and athletes who entertain *and* inspire.
- ◆ **The Unsung Hero.** Discover unheralded or little known thinkers and pioneers behind major contributions to our society, such as surveyor Benjamin Banneker or pioneering open-heart surgeon Daniel Hale Williams. American innovation is as diverse as its people.



Dizzy Gillespie's "bent" trumpet

# Hometown Teams: Sports in American Communities

The deep roots of sports in American culture are felt powerfully in our hometown teams. Away from the high-profile world of professional sports, thousands of Americans play on local teams for fun, community, and each other.

Sports connect us, from little leagues and school teams to company leagues and amateur ranks. Local sport creates a unique, timeless spirit.

Fantastic stories have unfolded on neighborhood fields and courts. They are stories of underdog heroics, larger-than-life legends, fierce rivalries, and gut-wrenching defeats; incredible stories of the human spirit and physical skill; and inspiring stories of how a single game helped change our nation. The American story is found in hometown teams.



## Collaborators & Featured Collections

Museum on Main Street will collaborate with a wide spectrum of sports experts and writers and draw from diverse collections to create *Hometown Teams*. The wealth of sources include: curators from the National Museum of American History; historian and author of several books on American sports Richard O. Davies (University of Nevada, Reno); and Smithsonian collections at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian American Art Museum, National Portrait Gallery, and National Museum of African American History and Culture.



Basketball game, Yuma, Arizona, 1942

We will also draw from rich sports memorabilia and history collections from around the country including the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum at Cooperstown, NY and the Heinz History Center and Sports Museum in Pittsburgh, PA.

## Content

The well of personal stories, objects, images, and interactives for sports in America is deep and rich: replica uniforms, replica sports equipment, reproduced game posters and player cards, quotes from former and current players, audio of team songs and local

radio broadcasts from amateur teams, archival film, and multimedia video experiences from state and national archives.

Exhibition themes will explore:

- ◆ The origins of popular community sports in America and their evolution to today
- ◆ The rise and significance of company-owned teams and leagues
- ◆ Young American athletes in school sports and little leagues
- ◆ The great local sports heroes, legends, and rivalries
- ◆ The role of sports in the civil rights struggle by minorities and women



Georgetown – Marine Game, 1923.



The Craig High School and Meeker High School football and basketball teams, Craig, Colorado, c. 1920

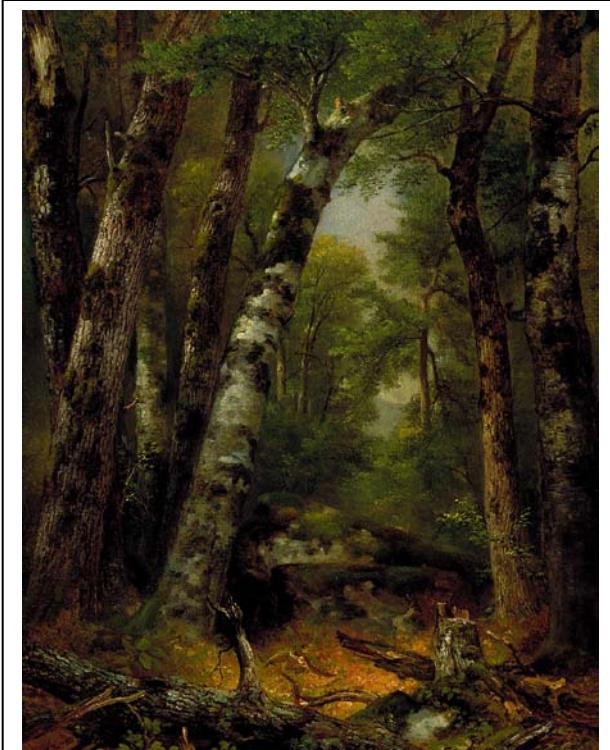
# Sense of Place: Meaning in Landscape

Americans make deep connections to the land around them. The natural and built landscape continues to leave an indelible mark on our identity, sense of community, and perceptions of the ‘outside.’ The pace of life, familiar smells, and even the sounds of winds blowing across the plains or between buildings become comforting and lasting memories of “home”. We conjure up tales of wonder and danger about the unexplored world beyond our familiar boundaries.

*Sense of Place: Meaning in Landscape* encourages exploration of our environment. Explore the many interpretations of the land around you and how you live upon it. Each small prairie town, coastal village, or large city conjures up different, personal, and transformative stories.

## Collaborators

MoMS will work with a consortium of advisors drawn from across the Smithsonian to develop *Sense of Place*. These collaborations and collections include: music, photographs, and imagery representing exploration from the National Museum of American History; Native American depictions of wilderness and creation stories from the National Museum of the American Indian; featured stories from *Power of Place*, an exhibition developed for the new National Museum of African American History and Culture; art from the National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian American Art Museum; and imagery of the changing American natural landscape with the help of experts at the National Museum of Natural History.



Woodland Glen by Asher B. Durand



A sod house in Montana

## Content

The exhibition will focus on literature, folklore, stories, music and art that show how Americans incorporate the spirit of a place into the stories that they tell.

- ◆ **Encounters on the Landscape.** Fear; greed; reverence. These are all reactions to new landscapes and to the people who lived there first. What were the early encounters like for explorers, what did pre-contact America look like, and how has folklore of these encounters affected our popular conscience?

- ◆ **There's No Place Like Home.** The physical buildings, sights, smells, and rhythms of home imprint community and personal memory. We have many definitions of home too. Whether as founders of a town or emigrants to established towns, our sense of home is created from both the physical and social landscapes. We celebrate our unique regional characteristics and cultural distinctions.
- ◆ **Wonder in the Land.** Writers, poets, journalists, artists, explorers, and adventurers find awe and inspiration in the landscape. What are the origins of the legends and folklore that have entered our popular conscience and color how we talk about America. The exhibition will explore some of the great stories that lend character to every region of the country, like myths and tales of the American West.
- ◆ **Preserving Our Land.** The destruction of nature also alters our memories and a part of our American identity. We want future generations to experience the same wonders. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Americans began taking steps to protect the environment, including founding the National Park Service, state and local parks, and nature preserves.



Badlands National Park, South Dakota



# Exhibition Proposal Survey

Thank you for reviewing these five exhibition proposals. Your feedback will help us select a new Museum on Main Street exhibition that will begin traveling in 2013. Please rank the exhibition proposals from one to five, with one being your favorite and five being your least favorite. *We value your opinions.* Additional comments are greatly appreciated. Please attach another sheet if necessary.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Museum/Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City and State: \_\_\_\_\_

## Ranking

### Eureka! Invention and Innovation in America

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sense of Place: Meaning in Landscape

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Hometown Teams: Sports in American Communities

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Standing for Democracy

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Raised in the USA: Childhood in America

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the survey form and any additional comments by **November 15, 2010** to the MoMS office by fax at 202-633-5344 or by mail using the postage paid envelope to:

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