

ROBERT FLAHERTY FOUNDATION, INC.

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film list

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NEW FILM FOUNDATION ANNOUNCED

The establishment of the Robert Flaherty Foundation, Inc. was announced today by Mrs. Robert Flaherty, widow of the famous pioneer film maker who died in 1951. Its purpose is to encourage the production of motion pictures which, "in the Robert Flaherty tradition, illuminate the ways of life and of peoples and cultures throughout the world," and to help distribute in all media motion pictures made by Robert Flaherty and other film makers that will increase international understanding among the different peoples and cultures of the world.

The Foundation has been organized by Mrs. Ellsworth Bunker, wife of the former Ambassador to Argentina and Italy; Richard Griffith, Director of the Museum of Modern Art's Film Library; Charles Siepmann of New York University; Edward Sammis, Editor of "The Lamp"; Mrs. Robert Flaherty; David Flaherty, Secretary of the Foundation; Arthur Knight, writer and film critic; and Jean Benoit-Levy, noted director and first head of the United Nations Film Board. Its headquarters are at 21 West 53 Street, in the Museum of Modern Art, to whose Film Library Mrs. Flaherty in 1951 presented the Robert Flaherty Collection of film stills, manuscripts and other memorabilia.

The Robert Flaherty Foundation will make grants to film makers for preliminary surveys of the locale and subject of proposed films as this was considered by Mr. Flaherty one of the most important steps in film making and one particularly difficult for many filmmakers to finance.

The Foundation will not engage directly in the production of films but will use its influence to secure financial backing for those films which seem promising on the basis of the preliminary exploration. Film makers will be invited to submit film projects to the Foundation's Advisory Committee, consisting of René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum of Modern Art; J. Donald Adams, New York Times critic, James Agee, critic and screen writer; and Edward Steichen, Director of the Department of Photography, Museum of Modern Art.

The Foundation will also sponsor annual Film Festivals in several countries where not only the films of Robert Flaherty will be shown but also films made by other film makers. The first of these festivals will be held at Albuquerque and Los Alamos, New Mexico, in October.

Similar foundations are being organized in England and France. In England the members of the British Committee for a Robert Flaherty Foundation are John Grierson, Paul Rotha, Basil Wright, Edgar Anstey, Sir Arthur Elton, Denis Forman, Norman Wilson, Forsyth Hardy and Henri Storck. In France, under the leadership of Jean Benoit-Levy, a Robert Flaherty Foundation of France has been organized consisting of four organizations, the Cinémathèque Française, the Musée de l'Homme, the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques, and the Comité du Film Ethnographique. The officers of the French Foundation are: President, M. Benoit-Levy; 1st Vice-President, Pierre Morel; Treasurer, Jean Riboud; Executive Secretary, Henry Reynaud.

In announcing the establishment of the Foundation, which has been a year in forming, Mrs. Flaherty said: "When Edward Sammis suggested to me that there should be a Flaherty Foundation to perpetuate my

husband's name and spirit, I tried to think of what, all these years, he had most wanted for the motion picture medium. I remembered that he had always said that the motion picture was still an unknown continent, that no one had yet scratched the surface of its potentialities, that even his own best loved films were only sketches, first studies for the great films of the future that might be made by the young men of the future. It seemed to me then and seems to me now that his name and spirit can best be perpetuated - can only be perpetuated as he would wish it - by an institution whose prime purpose is to help new talent to explore further and further into the possibilities of a medium so immense and so unknown."

In its first year the Flaherty Foundation aims to accomplish the following projects:

1. Finance a preliminary survey for a new film in the Flaherty tradition selected by the Foundation's Advisory Committee from applications submitted by film makers.
2. Secure rights to additional Flaherty films which the Foundation does not yet have, although Flaherty's heirs have transferred their rights in all of his films to the Flaherty Foundation.
3. Sponsor several Film Festivals of Flaherty films and films in the Flaherty tradition.
4. Begin a long-term systematic study of the Flaherty films and Flaherty method, to be carried out by film workers and by artists in other fields as well.