

Local General
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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR TUESDAY RELEASE

MUSEUM FILM LIBRARY TO RECEIVE IMPORTANT GIFT OF ROBERT FLAHERTY MATERIAL

At a private reception in the penthouse of the Museum of Modern Art on Monday, December 3rd, at 6 p.m., Mrs. Robert Flaherty will present the creative memorabilia of her husband, who died July 23, 1951, to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. John Hay Whitney, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum and President of the Film Library, will receive the gift from Mrs. Flaherty.

The gift, to be known as the Robert Flaherty Collection, will consist of a number of Mr. Flaherty's films; of more than 10,000 film stills photographed by Mr. and Mrs. Flaherty during the making of the Flaherty films in the far North, Samoa, Tahiti, the Aran Islands, India, the United States and elsewhere; and of manuscript scenarios, diaries and other documents relating to Mr. Flaherty's forty-year career as explorer and film-maker.

The Robert Flaherty Collection will be available at the Museum to film students for research purposes. It will also serve as source material for an exhibition consisting of both film showings and gallery displays. The date of this exhibition, "The Work of Robert Flaherty," will be announced early in 1952.

Commenting on the gift, Richard Griffith, Curator of the Film Library, says:

"Mrs. Flaherty's gift represents the most important single acquisition to the collection of the Film Library since it was founded in 1935. Robert Flaherty was not alone the 'father of the documentary film' nor does his importance lie only in the grand gallery of films he has bequeathed to the world. As Iris Barry says, his 'drive to explore and disclose ethnographic and cultural patterns' by means of the camera resulted in the forging of a new instrument of education. No man of cameras understood the camera better, nor revealed to us so fundamentally its unique powers."

Already in the Film Library's collection are the pioneering documentary film, NANOOK OF THE NORTH (1922); MOANA (1926), the second Flaherty production and the first on which Mrs. Flaherty worked; TABU (1931), made in collaboration with the late F.W. Purnau; INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN (1933), made with John Grierson in 1933, and THE LAND, which Flaherty produced for the Department of Agriculture in 1942. Of the other major works of the director, the Museum plans to acquire MAN OF ARAN (1934), ELEPHANT BOY (1937), and LOUISIANA STORY (1948), as soon as they become available. In the meantime, arrangements are being made for the acquisition of the "first study" for NANOOK OF THE NORTH, consisting of footage shot by Flaherty during his 1914-19 expeditions to the Hudson Bay territory; a short film on the work of the chirographer John Benson; Flaherty's film on Manhattan, THE TWENTY-FOUR DOLLAR ISLAND (1929); and several other works not previously shown to the public, or unseen for many years.

The more than 10,000 stills which will now be added to the Film Library's collection were made by Mr. Flaherty during his explorations of Ungava and Baffinland early in the century, and by Mrs. Flaherty on all their subsequent film-making expeditions. A large proportion of these photographs are still in negative form, and will be shown to the public for the first time as part of the Roberty Flaherty Collection.

Manuscripts in the collection will include original notes for the Flaherty films, letters and other documents relating to their production, the original manuscripts of such of Mr. and Mrs. Flaherty's books as MY ESKIMO FRIENDS, WHITE MASTER, THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR, ELEPHANT DANCE and SAMOA, and Mr. Flaherty's diaries of his explorations in the far North.