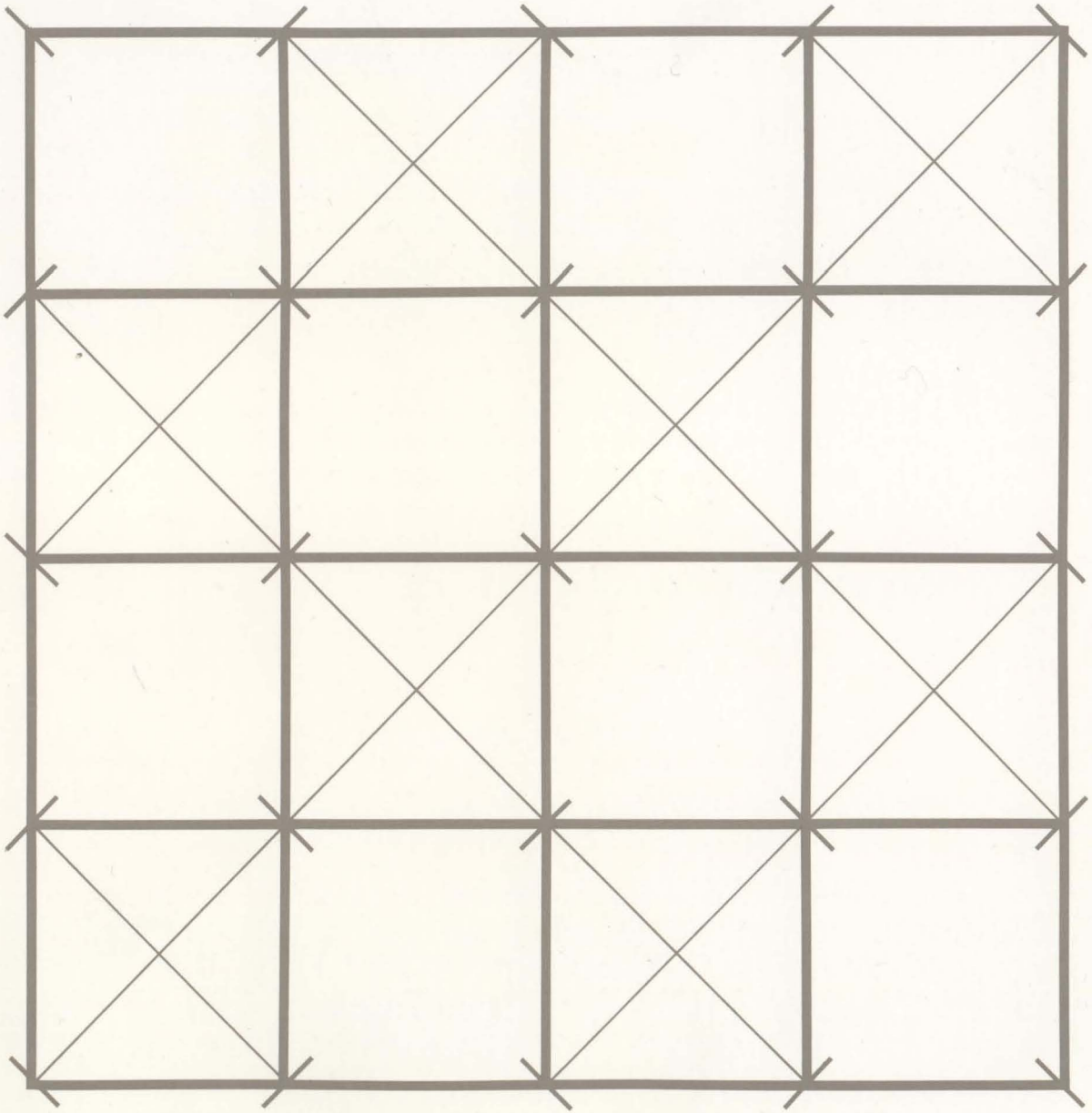
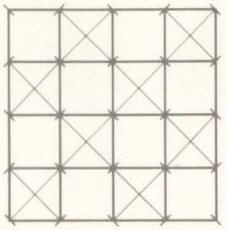
The Computer Museum





The Computer Museum's symbol is a core memory. Core memories provided computers with the first random access, high speed, reliable storage. This allowed computers to meet their potential as tools for amplifying the abilities of human beings. Many inventions spurred the Information Revolution, but none with the same profound effect.

The Computer Museum
Museum Wharf
300 Congress Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02210
(617) 426-2800

The Computer Museum

an international museum for the history of information processing

The Computer Museum is the only institution of its kind in the world, chronicling the evolution of information processing through exhibitions, publications, archives, historical research and programs.

It covers the ideas and inventions leading to the Information Revolution. It explores the Information Age—an age where computers spawn discoveries in the sciences, the arts and the humanities. It collects and exhibits original artifacts from exquisite, hand-made 17th century calculators to modern computers, software and applications.

The Museum's goal is to educate, inspire and inform—to share the history of information processing with the millions who are playing a role in making computer history.

Through its explorations of the past, the Museum offers a glimpse of the future. The exhibits, programs, publications and archives provide an international resource for learning about and interpreting the Information Age.

In 1971, we decided to start a museum to house the still available, but fast disappearing artifacts from the still young computer industry, and from that much older history of computing. Our main motivation was to prevent these artifacts from getting lost to posterity. For a number of years, we accomplished little more. Then in 1979, Gwen and Gordon Bell developed a staff and created a real museum in one of our buildings in Marlboro, Massachusetts.

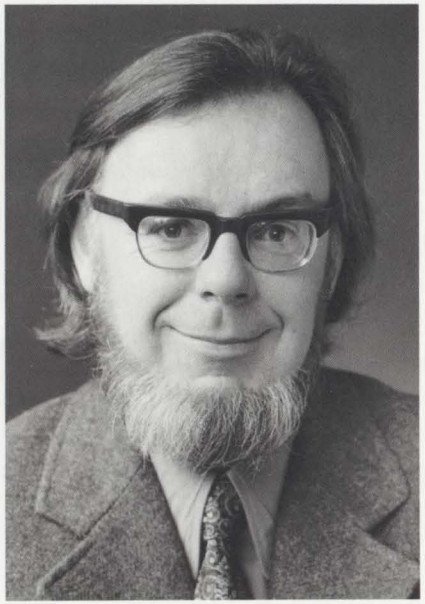
The response was great. It was clear we really had a need for a computer museum to allow for charitable gifts. In order to broaden the organizational participation, we made it a non-profit organization with a broad-based board of directors. We changed the name from the Digital Computer Museum to The Computer Museum so that it was clear it was not a company museum, but an industry-wide museum. The interest, growth, and enthusiasm about the exhibits have been very satisfying.

"We look forward to broad participation in the funding of the new facilities in the same way that we have enjoyed broad participation in the management of the Museum. . . ."

The next step for the growth of the Museum was to separate it from our facilities and any hint of control by one corporation. We also had to think about moving it to the center of a large city that already attracts large numbers of people because of its historic interest and museums. Museum Wharf, in downtown Boston, was chosen for the Museum's new quarters following a comprehensive feasibility study.

We are in the midst of gathering funds to finance the future of the Museum. We look forward to broad participation in the funding of the new facilities in the same way that we have enjoyed broad participation in the management of the Museum, and in the collection of historically significant and interesting artifacts.

Kenneth H. Olsen
First Chairman of the Board, The Computer Museum
President and Chief Executive Officer, Digital Equipment Corporation



"The computer industry is of such size, interest and importance that it deserves its own museum . . . one of the scope and quality that The Computer Museum will ultimately provide."

The present world of computers and information processing cannot be properly appreciated, leave alone understood, without at least some knowledge of how things came to be the way they are. The story of the events, the people, the organizations, and the technical achievements involved in the invention and the development of the computer is truly a fascinating one. Happily, The Computer Museum now exists to preserve and portray the history of information processing, both to the general public and to people actively involved in the computer industry.

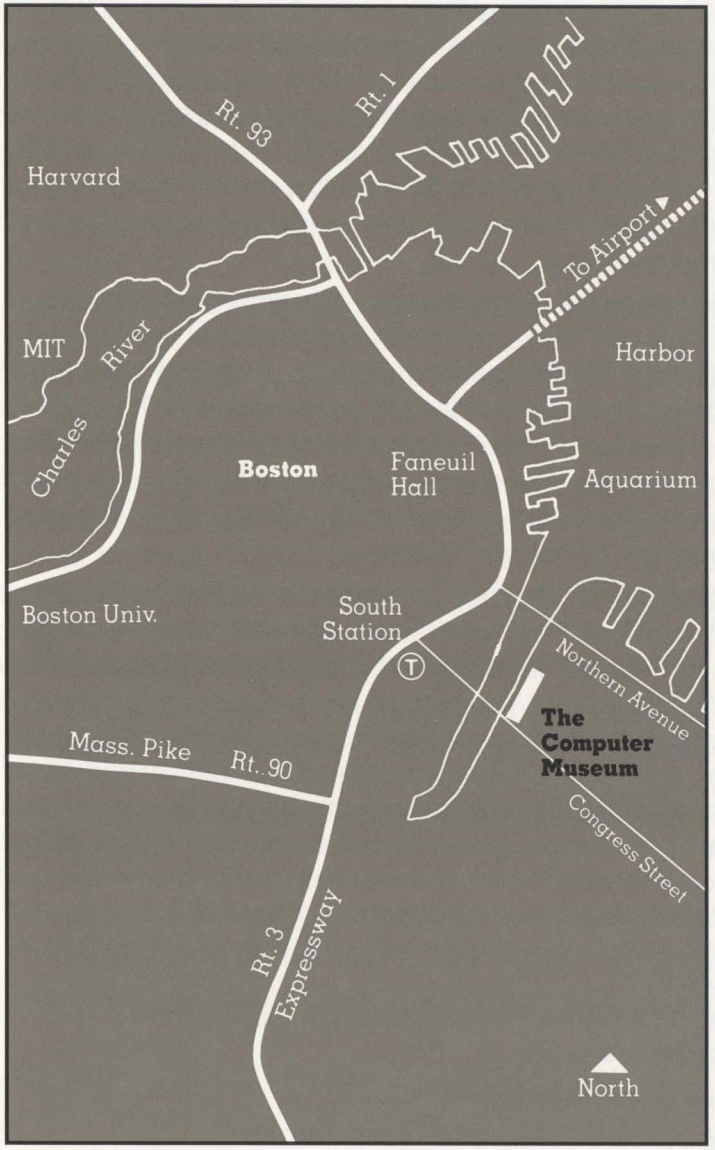
Through the assistance and generosity of many individuals and organizations, the Museum's international collection already contains a large number of items of great historical significance, ranging from complete computer mainframes to tiny electronic components, and also includes many early calculating machines and other pre-computer devices. Moreover, it portrays the work of organizations both large and small, and of individuals, from many places around the world—not for The Computer Museum is history merely "the propaganda of the victorious."

Even in its initial temporary location the Museum provided its many visitors with an unparalleled collection of expertly presented exhibits. However, the Museum's collection is expanding rapidly, and the work involved in conservation, cataloging and the preparation of exhibits is immense. The funds necessary to complete the establishment of this international Museum in its new home on Boston's Museum Wharf are estimated to total some $10 million. The end result will, it is already clear, be worth every penny. The computer industry is of such size, interest and importance that it deserves its own museum, and in particular it deserves one of the scope and quality that The Computer Museum will ultimately provide.

Brian Randell
Chairman, Exhibitions and Collection Committee
The Computer Museum

Professor of Computer Science
University of Newcastle upon Tyne, England

Boston: an accessible location for an international museum



Logan International Airport, the gateway to Boston, is only minutes from Museum Wharf.

Its close proximity to an international airport will make the Museum easily accessible to residents and the 5.1 million visitors that tour Boston yearly.

Museum Wharf is conveniently located in downtown Boston.

It is just a short walk from Boston's financial district and such historic landmarks as Faneuil Hall and the Freedom Trail. Only two blocks from the Museum is South Station, Boston's transportation center that provides visitors with subways, buses and trains.

The Museum will also share its resources with audiences far beyond New England through its photographic archives, publications, and collection lending program.

Museum Wharf

Museum Wharf was built as a wool warehouse in 1888 and renovated in 1979 to house two museums. The picturesque, six-story brick building sits on a quarter-acre waterfront park that overlooks downtown Boston and Fort Point Channel. The Computer Museum will be a joint tenant in the 144,000-square-foot facility with the Boston Children's Museum.

The building is structurally-sound with spacious, adaptable rooms ideally suited for exhibits. For example, the Children's Museum has reconstructed a 16th-century Japanese house with special humidity and climate controls for its preservation.

Centralized facilities and established services provide economical management of the entire building. The building is three-times more energy efficient than the average office building according to a 1983 energy audit.

More than 100,000 visitors are expected to visit The Computer Museum in its first year at Museum Wharf, and the facility can handle triple that number. The neighboring Children's Museum receives 400,000 visitors per year.

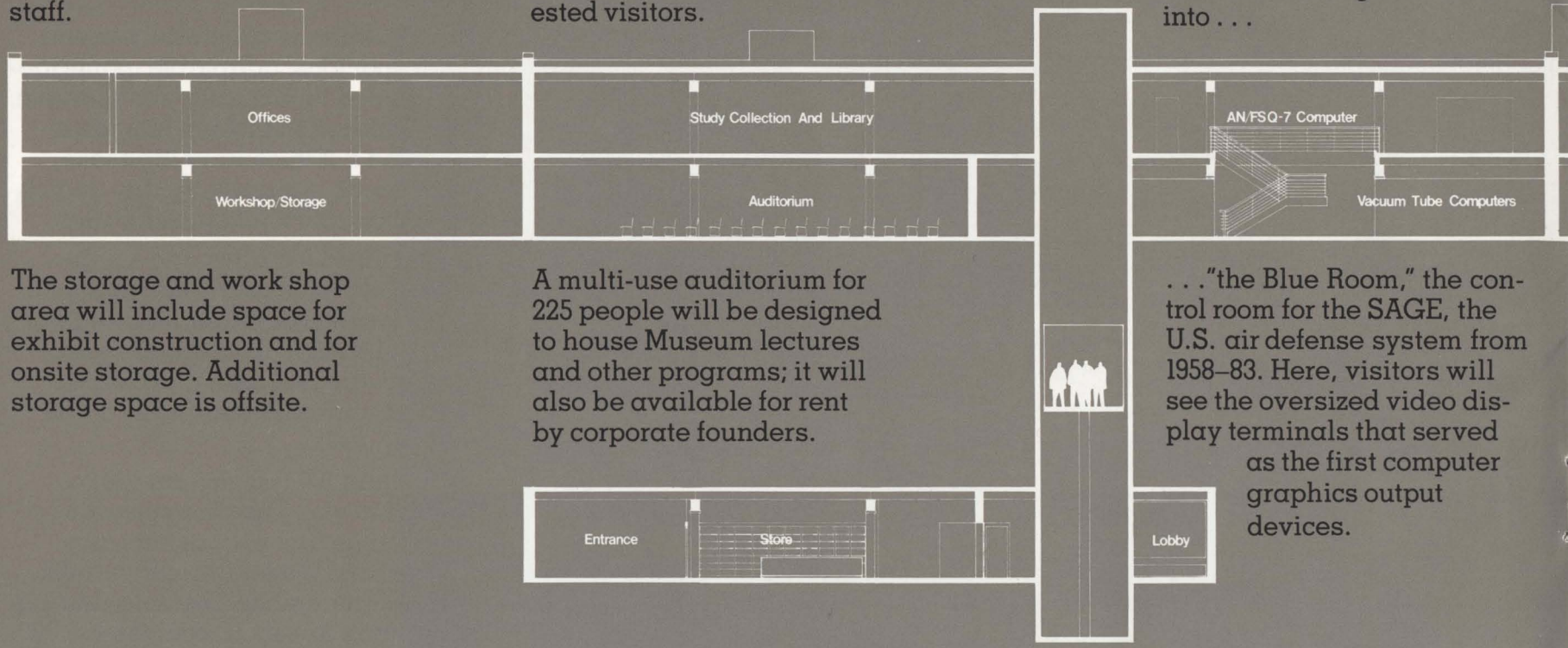
Exhibitions

The Computer Museum is designing exhibits that will dramatically illustrate the story of the Information Revolution and its roots. Through videotapes, interactive displays, and recreations of vintage computer installations, the Museum will bring its priceless collection to life.

The first exhibit will be a reconstruction of the AN/FSQ-7, a 55,000 vacuum tube computer. It will illustrate the fundamental components of computation and introduce the vacuum tube technology era. Museum visitors will be able to walk through sections of this giant machine and see its eight-foot high arithmetic units and room-sized operator's console. Then they will walk down a flight of stairs into . . .

The Museum offices for the exhibit, program, membership and administrative staff.

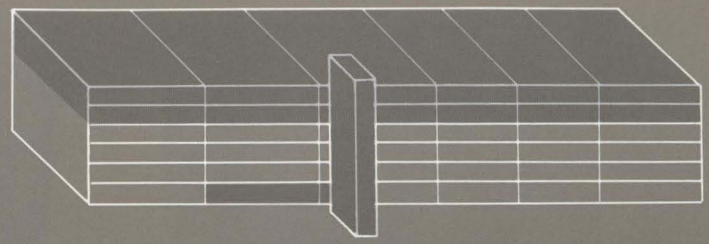
The study/storage and library room will provide a quiet area where archival materials and part of the collection will be accessible to scholars and interested visitors.



The storage and work shop area will include space for exhibit construction and for onsite storage. Additional storage space is offsite.

A multi-use auditorium for 225 people will be designed to house Museum lectures and other programs; it will also be available for rent by corporate founders.

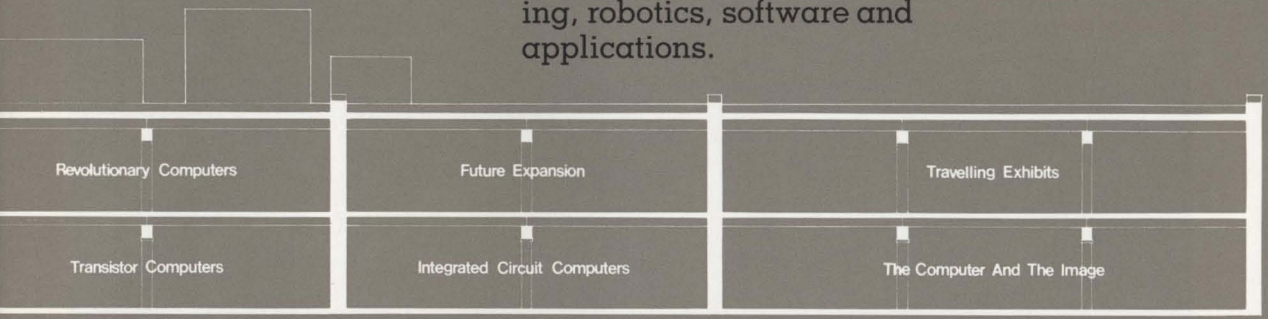
. . ."the Blue Room," the control room for the SAGE, the U.S. air defense system from 1958–83. Here, visitors will see the oversized video display terminals that served as the first computer graphics output devices.



The Computer Museum

The Revolutionary Computers exhibit will feature one-of-a-kind machines, from Atanasoff's ABC to England's Pilot Ace and the ENIAC, that each played a role in creating the computer era.

A variety of groupings from the collection suggest themes for this area. New exhibits in this area could include pre-computing calculating devices, memory components, card computing, robotics, software and applications.



This 4,000-square-foot exhibition hall will be designed to present a variety of travelling exhibitions from computer art shows to science and technology exhibits on information processing.

The Computer and the Image will focus on the evolution and contemporary processing of pictorial material through computer graphics. Visitors will be able to create, enhance and manipulate computer images through interactive, operational exhibits.

The exhibition on the transistor computer era will feature mainframes through a life-like exhibit of a 1965 business computer center; minicomputers through an operational computer that explains its own software code; and supercomputers through an exhibit on renowned supercomputer designer Seymour Cray.

The Integrated Circuit exhibit will trace the making of a modern computer from sand to silicon to board manufacture and final product. The evolution of personal computers (pc's) will be represented by a "mountain" of outmoded pc's including the Altair, the Xerox Alto and the Apple I, surrounded by state-of-the-art operational machines.

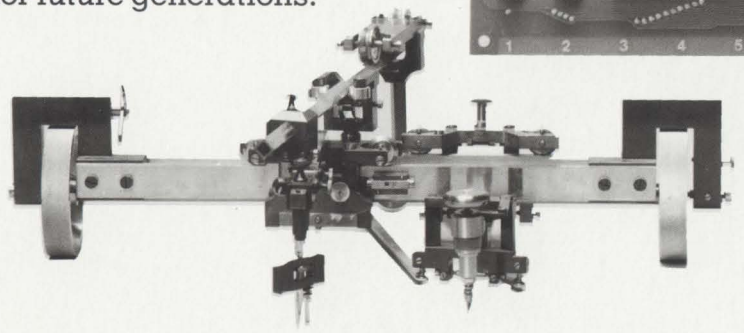
The Museum selected the architectural firm of Crissman and Solomon to design its new exhibits and other spaces in conjunction with Museum staff. Stuart Solomon is chief architect; his other projects have included renovation of Ames Courtroom at Harvard Law School and design of the award-winning Charleston Museum in South Carolina.

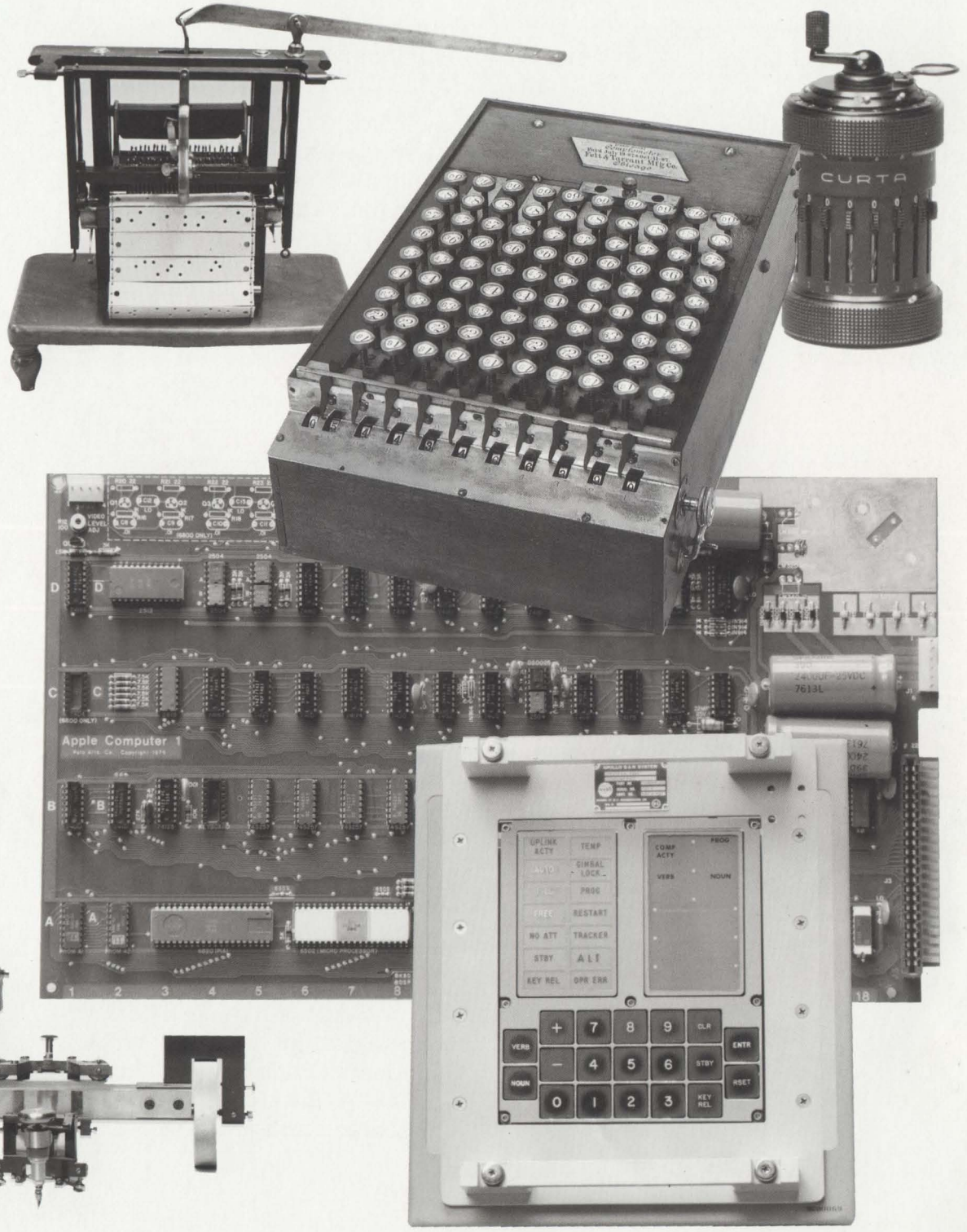
The collection is the Museum's treasure.

The Museum's collection of more than 700 priceless artifacts ranges from tiny integrated circuits to room-sized computers with hundreds of separate components. Original artifacts include Napier's Bones, a pocket-sized calculating device (1617); Whirlwind, the first computer with core memory (1953); and Shakey, the first computer-controlled robot built to test artificial intelligence (1969).

An international committee selects artifacts to be preserved by the Museum, saving both whole computers and components. It chooses innovative software such as SPACEWAR!, the first interactive video game; it collects standard products of an era such as the IBM 1401, and it saves technological dead-ends such as the Altair, one of the first personal computers.

Only part of the collection will be on display at any one time; the remainder will be stored. Because computer history is continually being made, the Museum needs to continue collecting and cataloging artifacts to help preserve computer history for future generations.





Historical research lies behind exhibit development.

The Museum sponsors research to create historically accurate exhibits and other educational materials. Present research focuses on completing the inventory and specifications of all vacuum tube computers. In addition, work continues on the revolutionary computers and is starting on the role of women in programming.

The archives enable historical research.

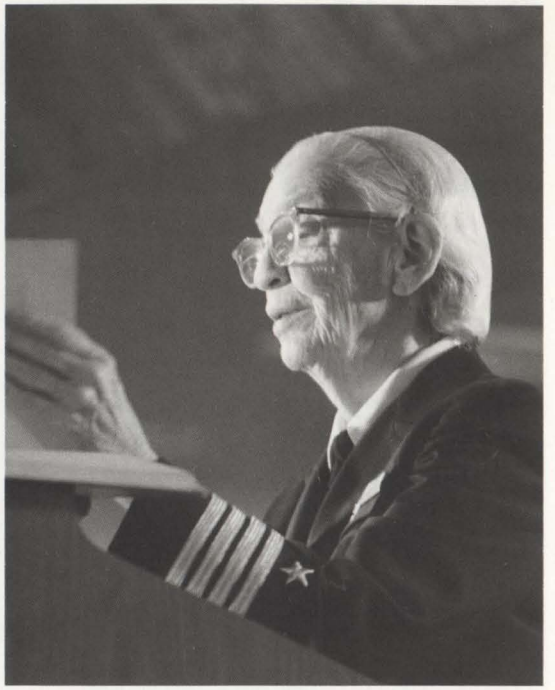
Each artifact is supplemented with the records that pertain to it: manuals, design drawings, software, documentation about use, articles, books, photographs and films. The machine only tells part of the story —the records reveal another part of the scenerio. Together, they provide a comprehensive resource for historians, scholars and curators.

Publications reach an international audience.

The quarterly magazine, **The Computer Museum Report,** chronicles the activities of the Museum, providing transcripts of historic lectures, and articles on programs, exhibitions and research activities. It is distributed to subscribers in 14 countries and 47 states.

The Computer Museum Store and its catalog are a service.

The Museum Store was established as a retail and mail-order store for educational materials. Its goals are to offer the world's most complete collection of computing history books and to develop a profitable business that will generate income for the Museum. Original computer components, video materials and computer-related gifts will also be distributed through the store.



Programs bring out the human element.

Museum visitors will be able to hear lively reminiscences by the inventors, programmers and entrepreneurs who sparked the Information Revolution. A new auditorium and video-terminals in the galleries will allow the Museum to bring such oral history programs to a larger audience. The lectures and gallery talks are taped for future reference and stored in the Museum's archives.

$10,000,000 is needed for:

The Building

$3,000,000 to purchase one-half interest in Museum Wharf, which includes 75,000 square-feet of superb exhibition space and half of a picturesque quarter-acre park on Fort Point Channel.

"The building is a good buy in every sense."

John William Poduska, Sr.
Apollo Computer

Exhibitions

$3,000,000 to build the exhibitions and public spaces.

The funds will be used to create a library, an auditorium and 30,000 square-feet of involving, explanatory, interactive exhibitions.

"Exhibitions need to reflect the quality of the industry."

Patrick J. McGovern
CW Communications, Inc.

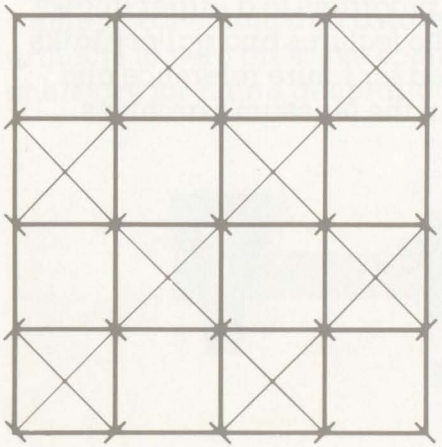
Endowment

$4,000,000 to create an endowment fund.

To fulfill our fundamental goal of preserving the history of information processing, an endowment is essential to ensure the future of this new institution. It will help underwrite ongoing research, collection and archival programs.

"It is never too soon to have an endowment."

Ivan Sutherland
Sutherland, Sproull and Associates, Inc.

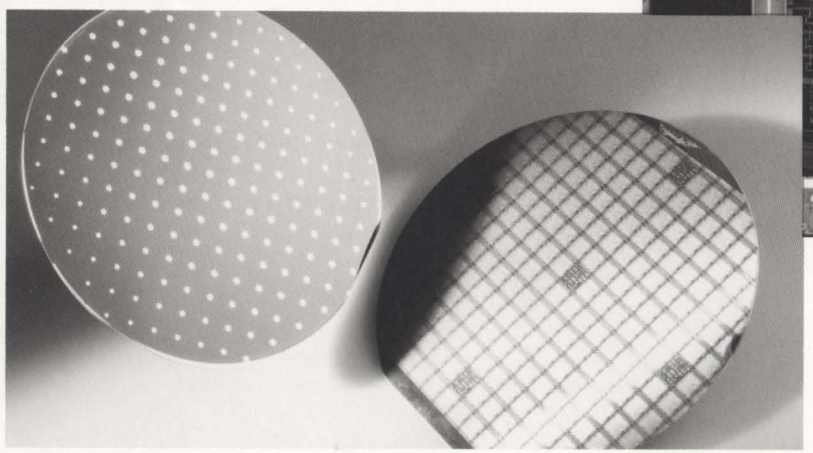


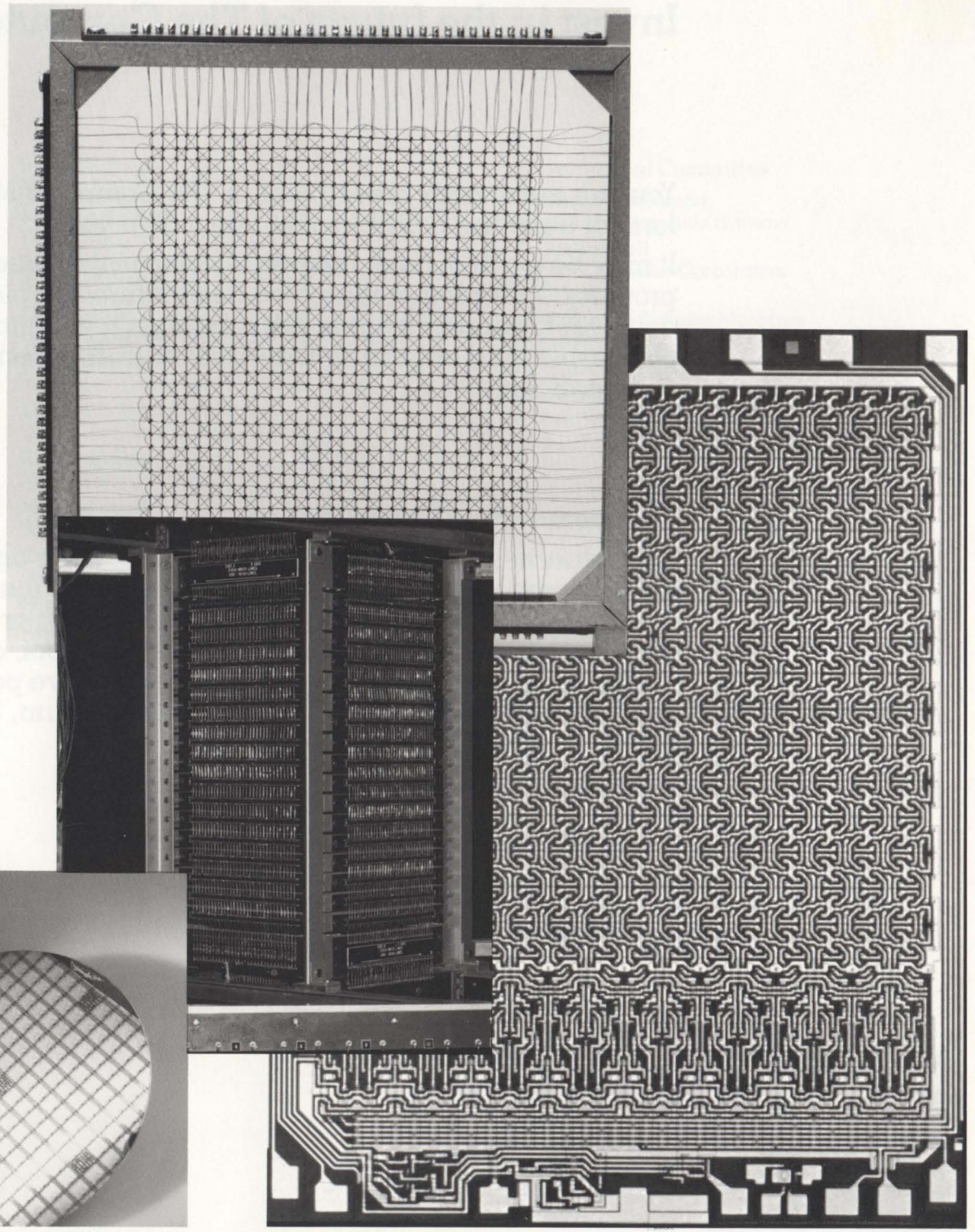
Become a Core Member

Individuals, corporations, and foundations are asked to join our core support groups at the appropriate level. All who participate in the capital campaign will be recognized at the Museum and given a suitably preserved core memory.

The "core" provides the minimum levels for giving based on the standard industry memory units: 4K ($4,096), 8K, 16K, 32K, 64K . . . . 256K.

Consider your own history—your own memory—and think of what this industry has done for you. Now you have an opportunity to help preserve and tell the story of the great advances in this age of information by investing in the future: The Computer Museum.





Invest in the future of The Computer Museum

You can make your investment in The Computer Museum in the form of a pledge payable over one to five years.

It may be a gift of cash, negotiable securities, bequests or personal property. Your pledge may also be met through planned giving—a unitrust, annuity trust or gift annuity. Or you may establish a charitable lead or grantor lead trust with The Computer Museum as beneficiary.

Commemorative Opportunities

Opportunities are also available to underwrite and name specific exhibits, programs and research fellowships. You may commemorate an individual or a corporation. The exhibit or program of your choice could be named after a favorite professor, a friend or a relative. For information about commemorative possibilities, contact Gwen Bell, Director, The Computer Museum, 300 Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210.

The Computer Museum