

Blackfeet Indian Mountain Chief. 3332



Sound Studies as a Museum Decolonization Methodology

Dr John Kannenberg, MFA, PhD
Director & Chief Curator
Museum of Portable Sound

Decolonizing Sonic Heritage Spaces
City, University of London
19 June 2023



Museum Of Portable Sound

CITY
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
— EST 1894 —

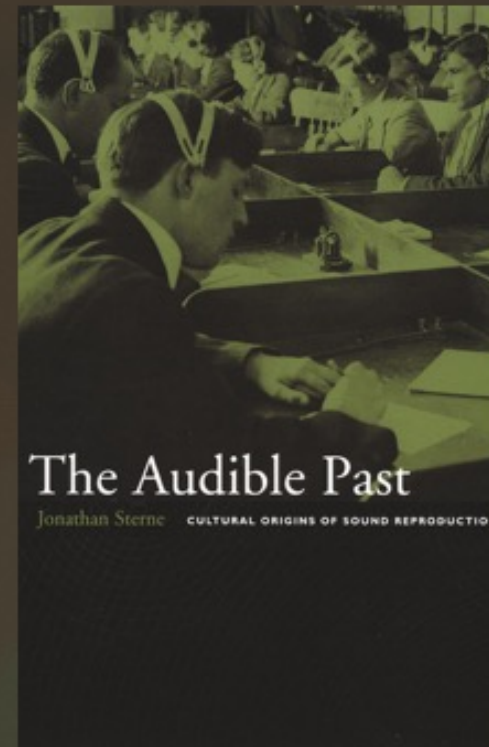
What is Sound Studies?

- An academic discipline beginning in the early 2000s analogous to 'visual culture'
- Distinct from musicology
- Founded to interrogate the so-called 'history of sound' as a wider cultural study of **'sound beyond music'**

Mansell, J. (2021) 'Historical Acoustemology: Past, Present, and Future', *Music Research Annual*, (2), pp. 1–19.



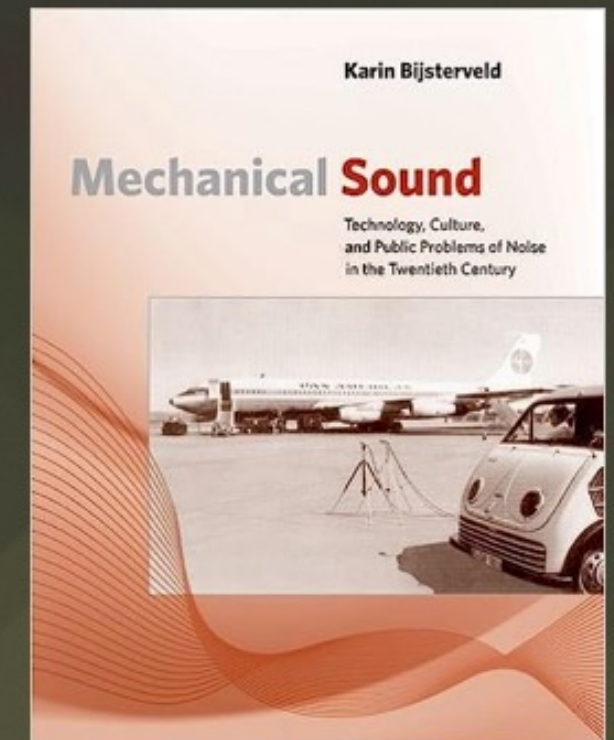
Jonathan Sterne



2003

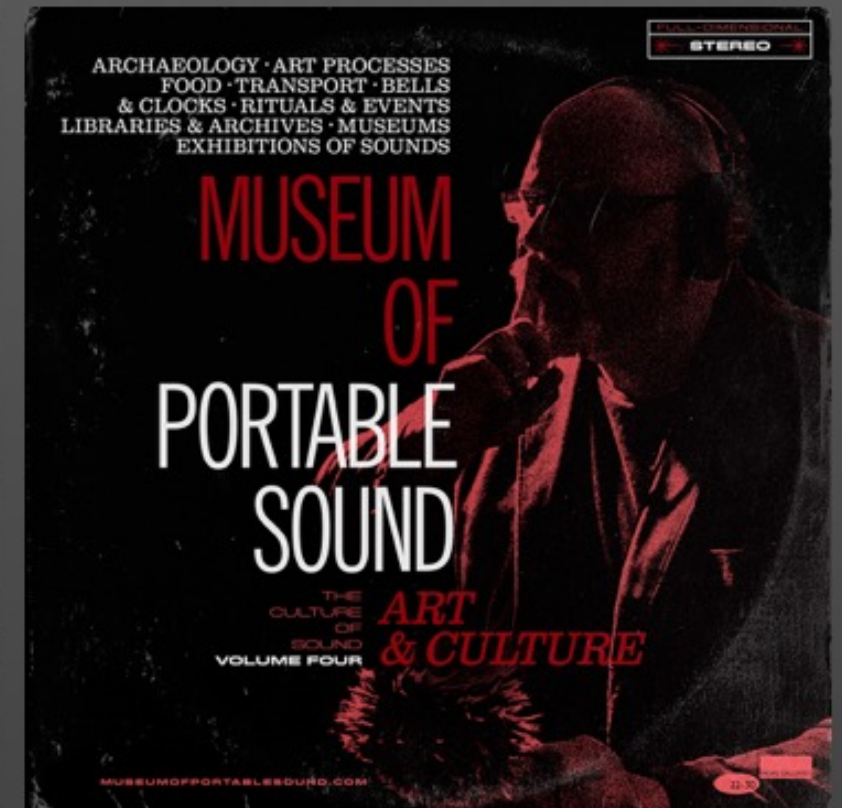
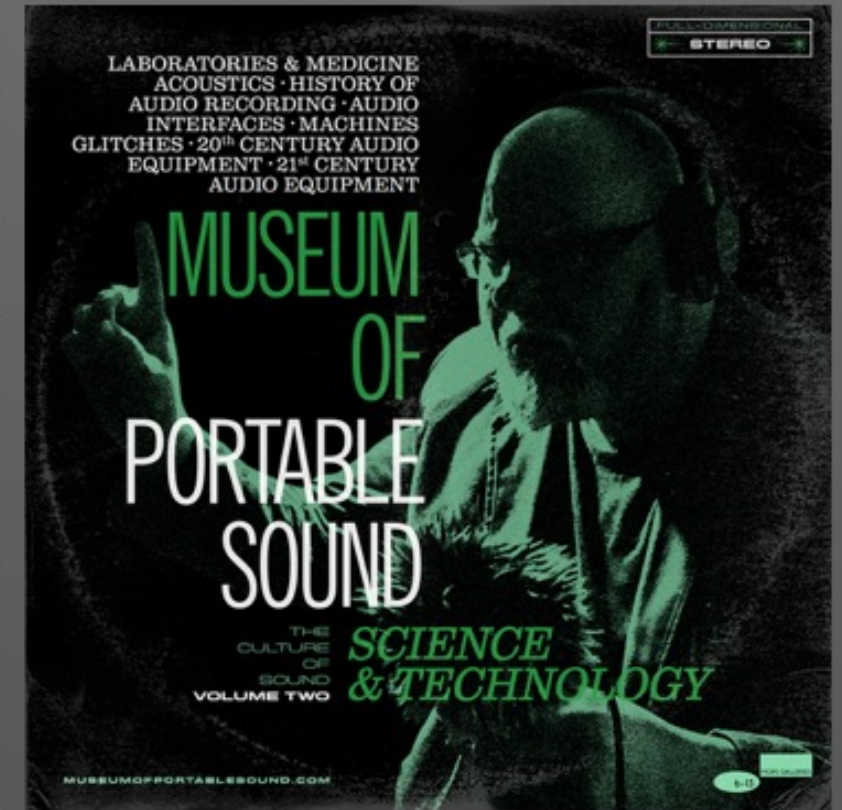
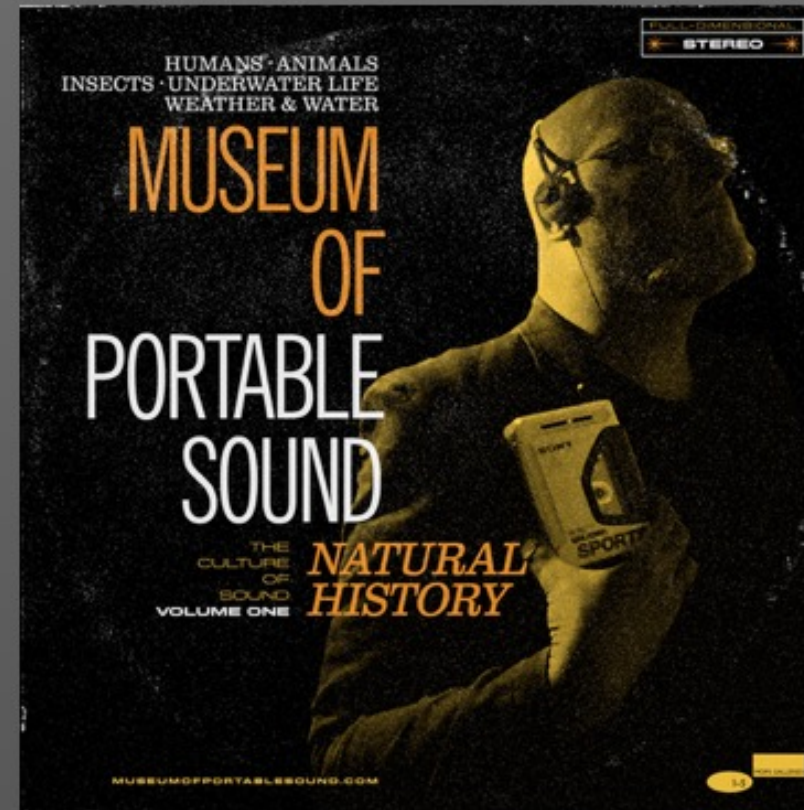


Karin Bijsterveld



2008

How does the Museum of Portable Sound (try to) use (old-school) Sound Studies as a Decolonization Methodology?



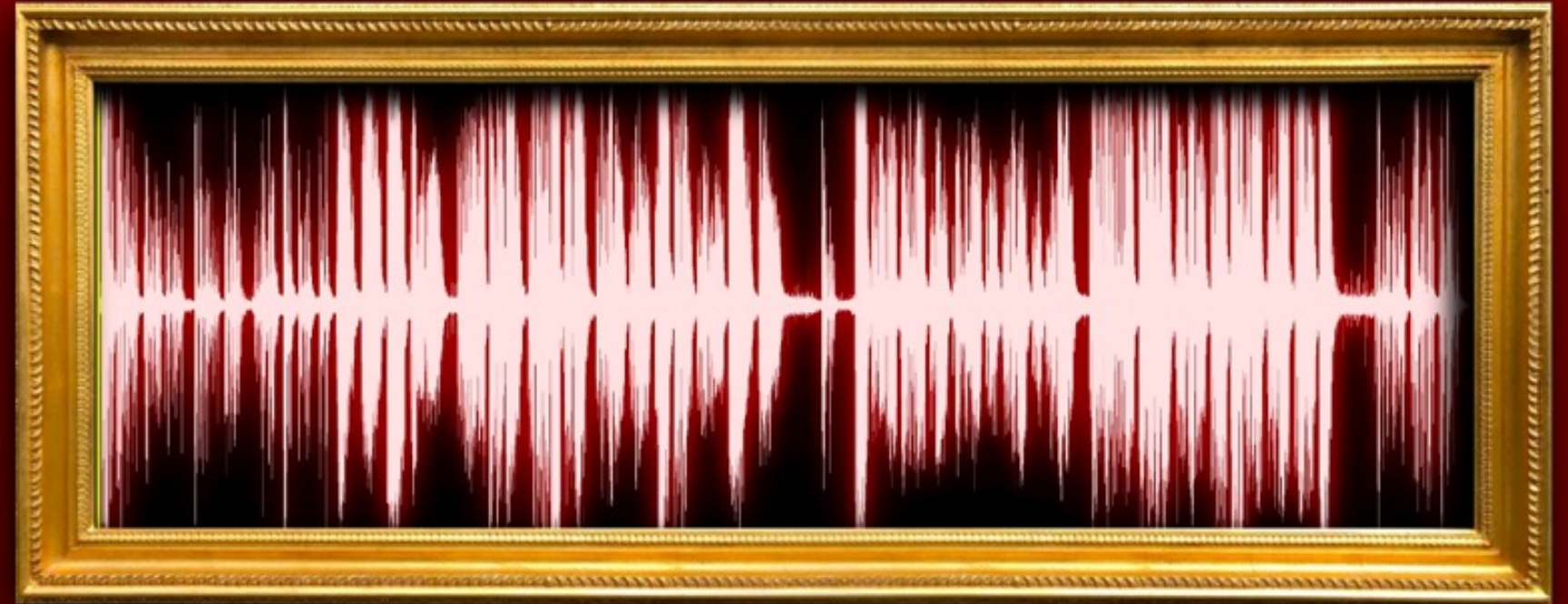


Trumpet and wooden stopper, from the Tomb of Tutankhamun
(c.1370-1352 BC) New Kingdom (bronze or copper with gold overlay)
Bolton Picture Library

Museum Of Portable Sound

4th Floor
Art & Culture

GALLERY 22
Archaeology



King Tutankhamun's trumpets played for the first time in 3,000 years

BBC Radio broadcast
Egyptian Museum, Cairo • 16 April 1939

**British Bandsman
James Tappern**



King Tut
played for
BBC Radio
Egyptian

**British Radio
Announcer
Rex Keating**



Trumpet and wooden stopper, from the Tomb of Tutankhamun
(c.1370-1352 BC) New Kingdom (bronze or copper with gold overlay)
Bolton Picture Library

The “Tin Can” Telephone



Illustration adapted from
Blackwood, P.E. (1961) *The How and Why Wonder
Book of Sound*. New York: Wonder Books.

The “Tin Can” Telephone



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who invented the tin can telephone



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Robert Hooke

Robert Hooke undertakes first serious experiments using cans and string. The “Tin Can Telephone” or “String Telephone” is the first, and most basic telephone that has ever existed. It was essentially an acoustic, non-electrical speech-transmitting device made of two twin cans. 26 Apr 2017



ITS Limited

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✓ The History of Telephony | History of the Telephone - ITS Limited



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The “Tin Can” Telephone



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Tin can tele

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From Wikipedia, the free

A **tin can phone** is a type of device made up of two cans attached to either end of a string.

It is a particular case of

the British physicist. From 1664 to 1665, he found that sound could be sent over a taut distended wire. [4] 1667.

mechanical telephones. The earliest experiments were made in 1685. [1][2] From 1664 to 1665, he found that sound could be sent over a taut distended wire. [4] 1667.

AT LAST! AT LAST!

A Perfectly Reliable Acoustic Telephone.



History



Mitel
Powering connections

1672: Robert Hooke created the first acoustic telephone in 1672. Very much like the two-soup-can toys you made as a child, Hooke found that sound could be sent over a wire or string from a mouthpiece on one side to an earpiece on the other.

We ph...
we...
normal speed...
string. One o...
ducted by the...
be made by h...
says “I have, ...
siderable dist...
their can whi...
travel throug...
that can to vi...



The History of the Telephone

centuries. It connects two c...
mechanical vibrations from...
current). The classic exam...
paper cups, metal cans, or plastic bottles with tautly held string.

The “Tin Can” Telephone



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ele

A tin can phone is a type of device made of two cans attached to a string. It is a particularly simple example of an acoustic string phone.

From 1664 to 1665, the English physicist Robert Boyle described a device that could transmit sound over a distance of 1667.

earliest experiments were made in 1685.^{[1][2]} From 1664 to 1665, the English physicist Robert Boyle described a device that could transmit sound over a distance of 1667.

AT LAST! AT LAST!
A Perfectly Reliable Acoustic Telephone.



travel through
that can to vi

centuries. It connects two cans by means of mechanical vibrations from one can to the other (the classic example is a string). The classic example is a string. The classic example is a string.

The History of the Telephone

The “Tin Can” Telephone

Griffonage-Dot-Com

Patrick Feaster's Explorations in Historical Media

Home About Published Elsewhere

The Non-Western Roots of Modern Audio Technology

Patrick Feaster / June 13, 2015

I've never been into the debates over who invented the telephone. It's not that I don't have an opinion. It's just a question of credit for the invention all that interesting, especially when it turns into a zero-sum game, a picking competition where making a case for one inventor means branding someone else a charlatan or thief. I'm quite pinpointing the “firsts” themselves—who first came up with the various ideas that underlie the telephone, whose ideas were first put into practice—but that's because I want to gain a better sense of the intellectual and technical involved in those moments, and not because I want to make a case for putting someone's picture on a postage stamp. For all the ink that's been spilled in the controversy over who really invented the telephone, there's been surprisingly little effort to spell out any significant implications one might have for the cultural history of sound. It's been all about bragging rights: my guy versus your guy. I'd like

Let me be more specific about what I mean by “significant implications.” In his influential book *The Audible Past*, Richard Dyer has argued that sound transduction technologies such as the telephone arose out of specific nineteenth-century European theories and practices associated with hearing. Of particular importance here was the “tympenic principle” hypothesis that the eardrum—and by analogy any thin, taut membrane—can faithfully transduce aerial sound frequencies, including the complex waves that constitute the sounds of spoken language, distinctive timbres,

I find that this hypothesis was less widely accepted among experts at the time than Sterne suggests, and in fact, as of an academic article I've had in the works for several years now. I'll be sharing some of my findings at a workshop in Knowledge in the Arts at Georgetown University this September, but here's a sneak preview of the most relevant. The tympenic principle was first formally set forth by Félix Savart in 1822 and was widely embraced until 1860, when Justin Bourget and Félix Bernard—based on a study of resonant frequencies and nodal patterns—led to a general principle among experts that it had been discredited. European inventions based on the tympenic principle, such as the phonautograph and Reis telephone, weren't yet able to offer compelling evidence in its favor; to the contrary, the Bourget-Bernard position was cited to “explain” their apparent shortcomings. As of the mid-1870s, the consensus among leading acousticians was that proponents of the tympenic principle were hopelessly naive, and that instruments such as the telephone and phonautograph were doomed to failure.

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Patrick Feaster

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MILWAUKEE, Wisconsin 1876CE

CLEVELAND, Ohio 1876CE

LIMA, Peru 1875CE

Open Source EQUAL EARTH PROJECTION via <https://equal-earth.com>

The “Tin Can” Telephone



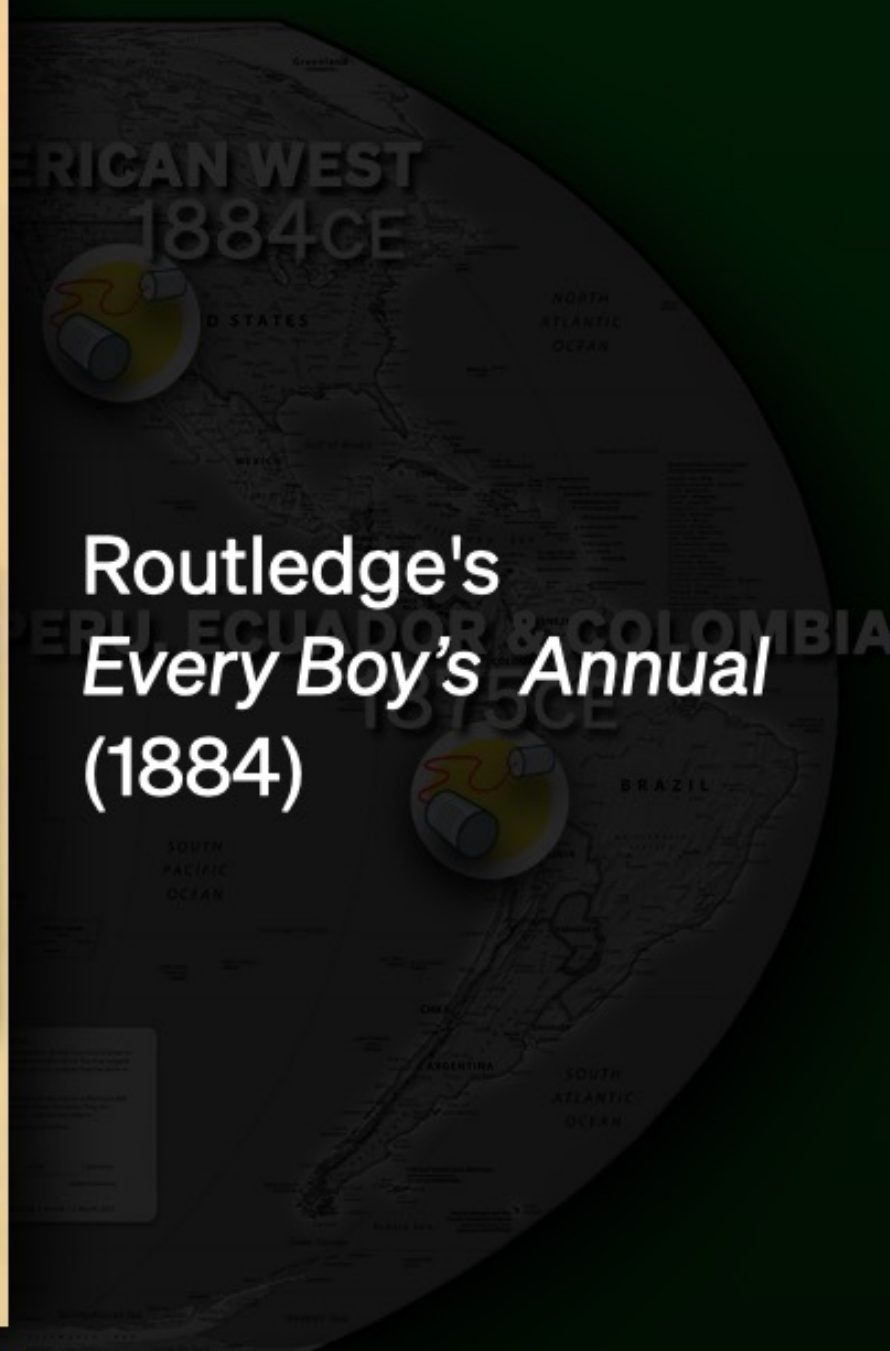
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The "Tin Can" Telephone

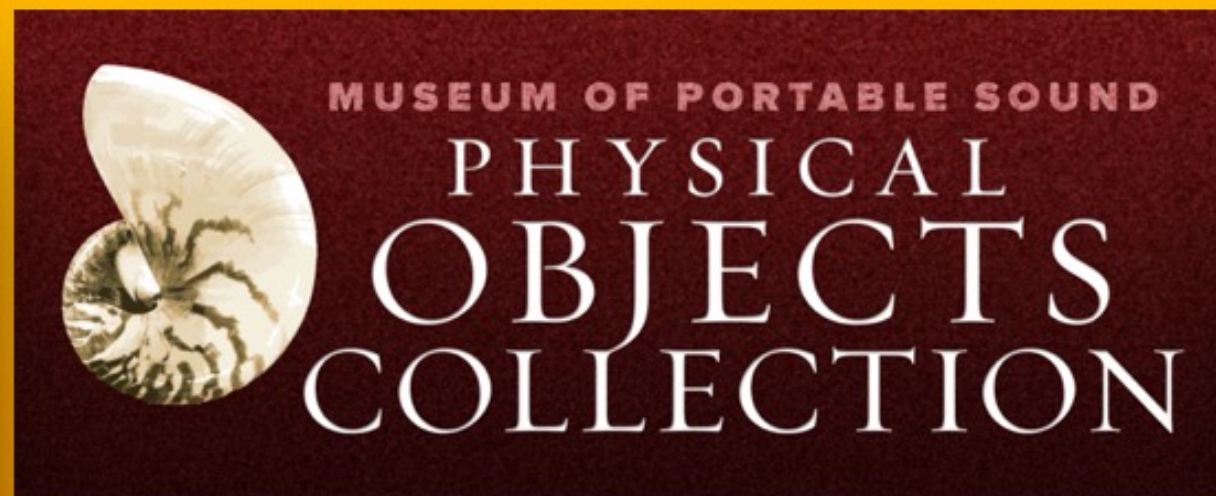
has several bends.

This simple apparatus might have rendered good service to mankind since the period of its invention; but it has merely been employed as a toy for children or a medium for the conversations of lovers; and further, has only been recently used in Europe, although it has long been utilized by imperfectly civilised races, and is met with among the American Indians in the far west.

We saw it used in the Pyrenees in a way that is worth describing. Two isard hun-



Routledge's
Every Boy's Annual
(1884)



ACME®

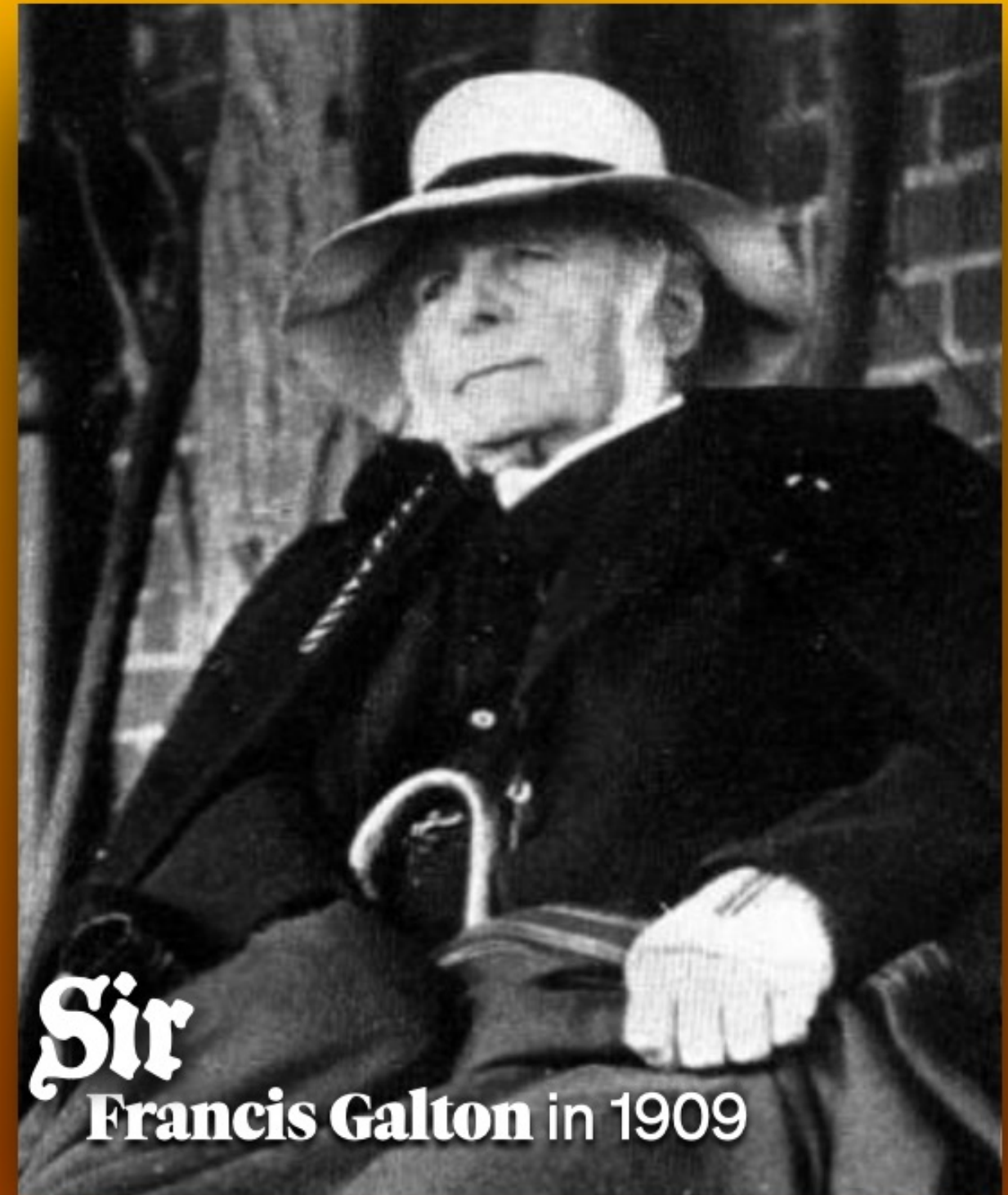
'Silent' Dog Whistle

Modern Version of Original Whistle



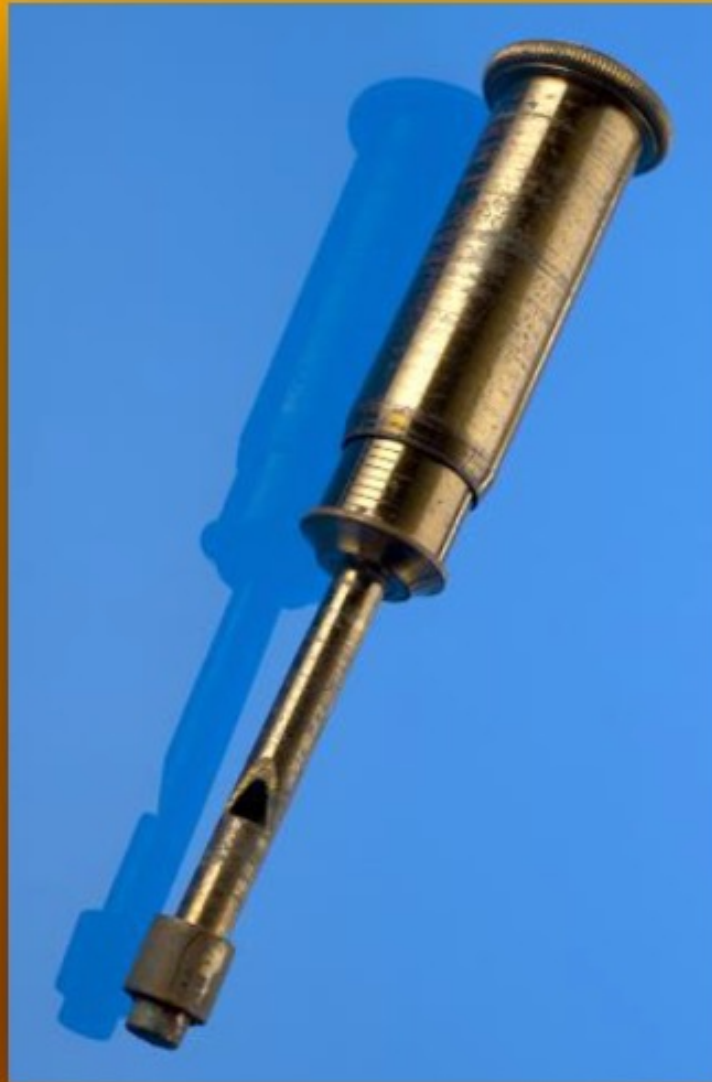
Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911)

- Researcher & Cousin of Charles Darwin
- Invented the Dog Whistle in 1876...
- ...to test the limits of human hearing
(he later adapted it for animal hearing)
- Oh, BTW: Invented the term *Eugenics* in 1883(!)
- Established a Research Fellowship in Eugenics and the Eugenics Record Office at University College London (UCL), 1904(!!)
- Knighted in 1909

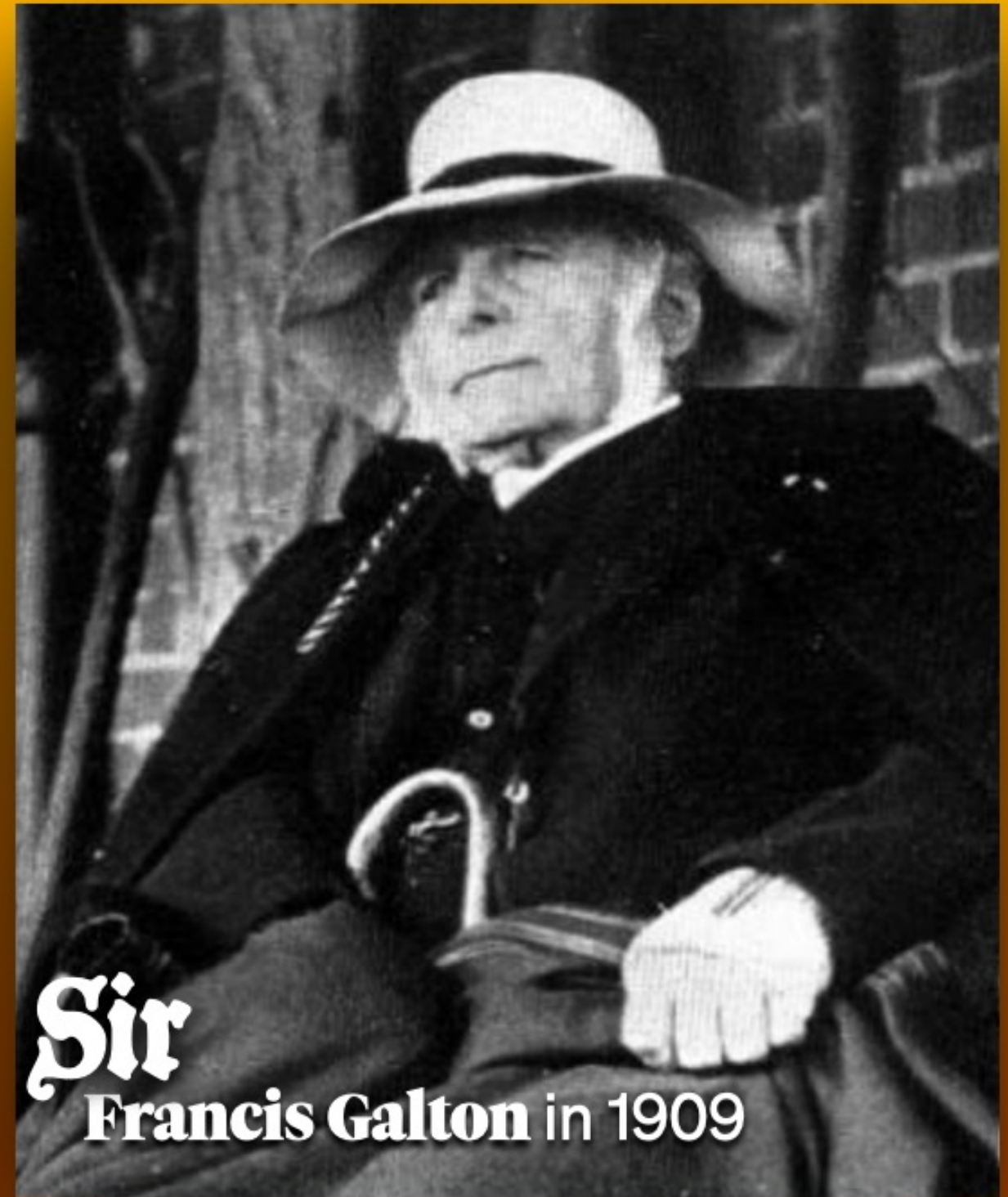


Sir
Francis Galton in 1909

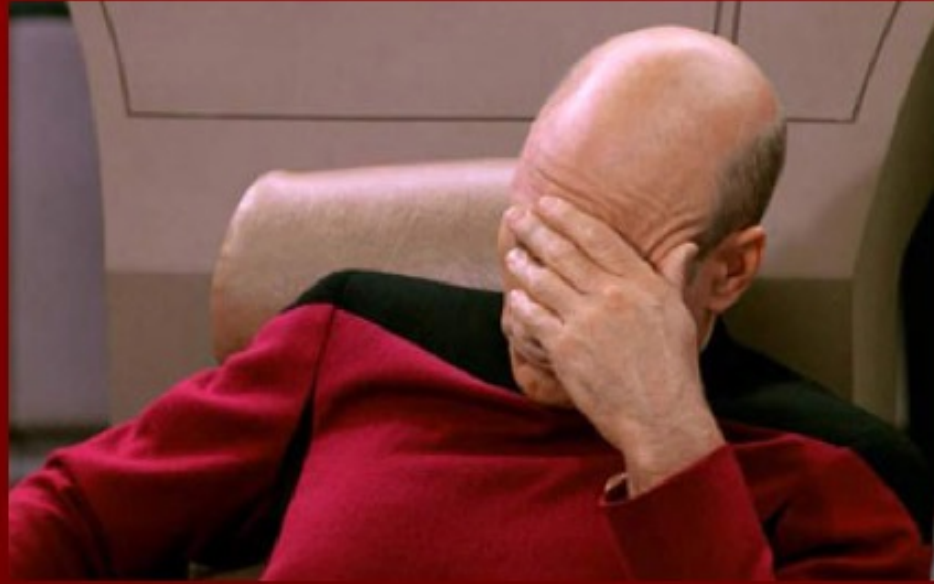
Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911)



Galton's brass human auditory whistle, Europe (1876-1920) (Science Museum, 1996-277/2; Courtesy of the Science Museum, London)



Sir Francis Galton in 1909



Getting it Wrong:

Frances Densmore & Mountain Chief

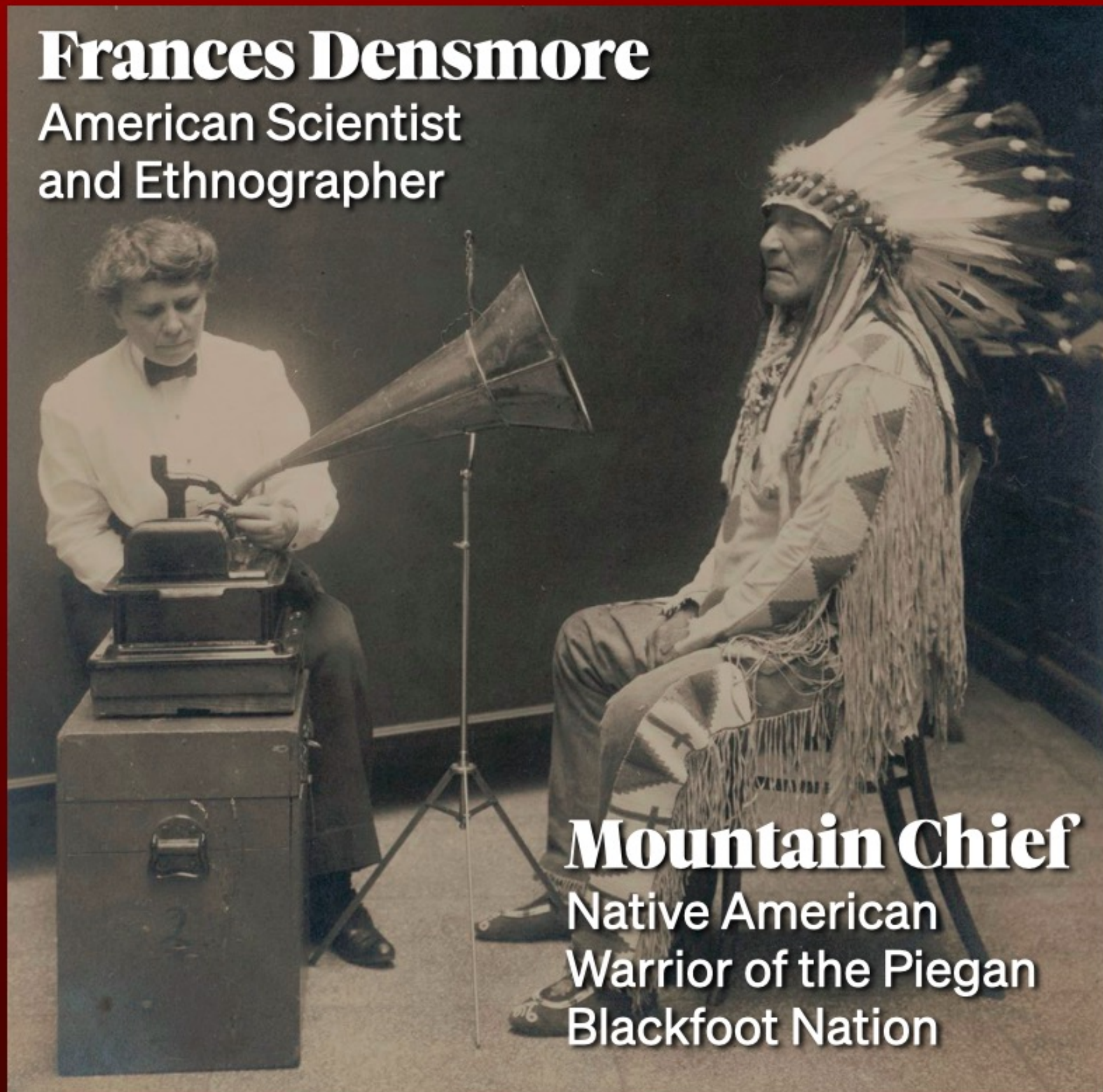
Bureau of American Ethnology
Smithsonian Institution
1916

Blackfeet Indian Mountain Chief. 3332



Frances Densmore

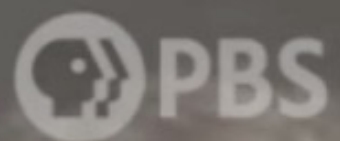
American Scientist
and Ethnographer



Mountain Chief

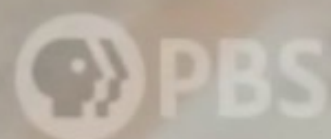
Native American
Warrior of the Piegan
Blackfoot Nation

“Frances Densmore
recording
Mountain Chief”



If she was recording,
it would be a much narrower horn,





RECORDING MADE

New York City

July 13, 1899

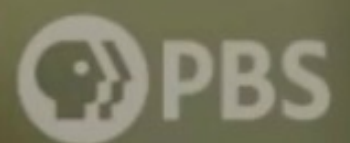
of the Smithsonian Institution, Recording
Studio, Washington, D. C.



- Yeah, he's not recording,
he's interpreting

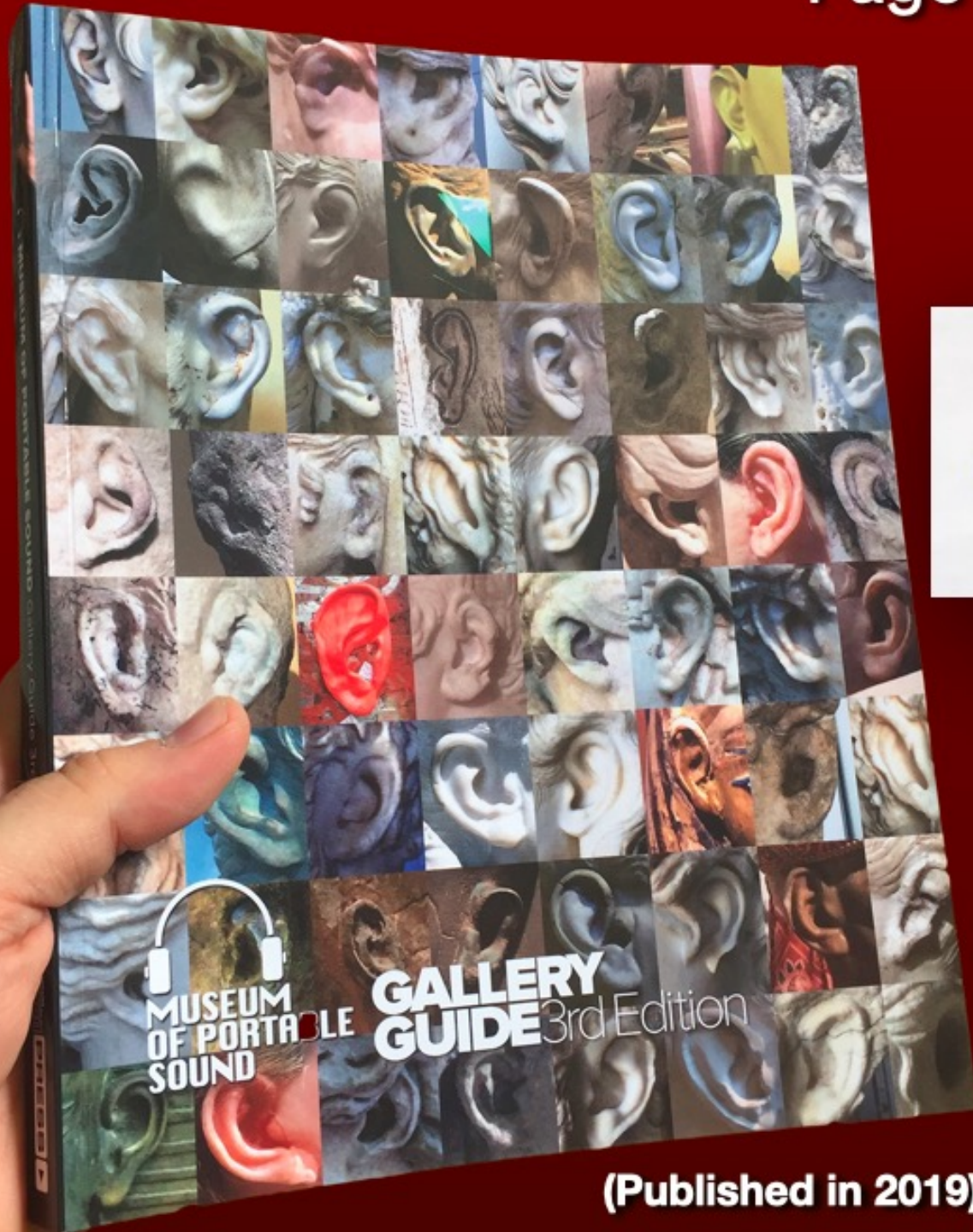


the whole meaning
of the photo changes.



He's an autonomous person
in this with his own agenda.

Page 18



(Published in 2019)

Piegian Indian, Mountain Chief, making
a recording with Smithsonian Institution
ethnologist Frances Densmore
9 February 1916

Photograph courtesy US Library of Congress
Digital access item number
LC-DIG-npcc-20061

Piegian Indian, Mountain Chief, making
a recording with Smithsonian Institution
ethnologist Frances Densmore



We All Need To Do Better.

Thanks for listening.



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