



Silvio A. Bedini

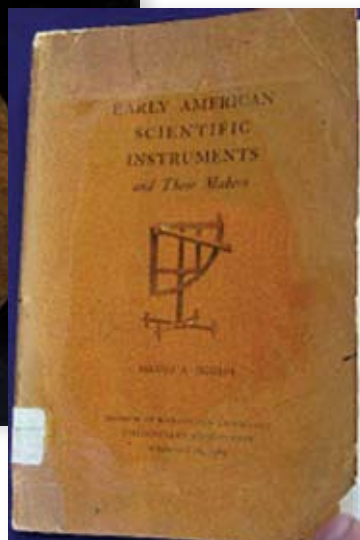
Historian Emeritus for the Smithsonian
1917-2007

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90, historian emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution and an expert on timekeeping and the history of early American scientific instruments, died of pneumonia Nov. 14 at Suburban Hospital. He lived in Washington. Silvio Bedini was born in Ridgefield, Conn., and attended Columbia University before joining the Army Air Forces during World War II. He served in Army intelligence at Fort Hunt, Va., part of a top-secret interrogation center for German prisoners of war. After the war, he returned to Connecticut to run the family's contracting and landscaping business. In his spare time, he researched and wrote stories about science and technology for elementary schools, encyclopedias, and a hobby magazine before joining the Smithsonian. Bedini was recruited to the

Smithsonian in 1961 and became assistant, then deputy, director of what was then the National Museum of History and Technology. He wrote more than 20 books, starting with "Early American Scientific Instruments and Their Makers" (1964), followed by "The Life of Benjamin Banneker" (1971), "Thinkers and Tinkers: Early American Men of Science" (1975) and "With Compass and Chain: Early American Surveyors and Their Instruments" (2001). He also wrote a number of books about Thomas Jefferson and a book on Hanno, a white elephant given to Pope Leo X in 1514 by the King of Portugal. In 1978, Mr. Bedini became the keeper of rare books at the Smithsonian's Dibner Library. He retired in 1978 but continued to work as historian emeritus until his death. From the Society



received the Abbott Payson Usher Prize in 1962 and the Leonardo da Vinci Medal in 2000. He was a member of the American Philosophical Society, the American Antiquarian Society, the Society of American Historians, the Washington Academy of Sciences, the Surveyors Historical Society, the D.C. Association of Land Surveyors, and the Cosmos Club. —By Patricia Sullivan

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