

MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

Newsletter of the Museum Archives Section

Society of American Archivists

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In This Issue...

From the Chair

Section Business

News, Notes, & Announcements

Reports

Special Topic Papers: Art Restitution

Late Breaking News

From the Chair&

As archivists, we have all lived through a series of odd and unusual situations. In the course of my own career, I have viewed row-upon-row of the squid collection at the Natural History Museum in Washington, D.C.; sat cross-legged on the floor of a remote stack area in the National Archives, poring over General Custers reports from the field; surveyed records in an un-airconditioned, underground vault of a nuclear weapons production facility in Georgia; and gazed down at the Coors Brewery from a mountaintop in Colorado while conducting yet another records inventory project. At times, being an archivist can be downright surreal.

I had another vividly surreal experience just this past February. I found myself sitting in a hot tub with Sarah Demb, archivist from Harvards Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, and Deborah Wythe, archivist of the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The tub was outside, on a deck attached to a solidly built wood cabin, under a star-filled sky somewhere in the foothills of Vermont. The outdoor temperature was about 17 degrees; the water temperature hovered somewhere in the area of 100 degrees. We would never have been there if we hadnt volunteered to be on an editorial committee formed to plan a new publication on museum archives. SAA had generously provided a small stipend for the committee to meet in Vermont to develop a publication prospectus.

Now, before you fire off an angry message about valuable archival resources being irresponsibly squandered on luxuries, let me explain. The soak in the hot tub was a well-deserved five-minute

interval embedded at the end of an intense, extremely verbal weekend (we were still muttering vaguely about EAD and electronic records access as we stepped into the steaming water). The tub--and the cabin itself--were provided gratis by Deb Wythes sister and brother-in-law, and we cooked all of our own meals (o.k., we did grab some soup and sandwiches at a diner up the road, but that was it). And, believe it or not, Vermont is centrally located for archivists traveling from Cleveland, Boston, and New York City.

Most importantly, in terms of our main purpose for being there--to hammer out a viable proposal--the trip was an unqualified success. The crisp, pine-scented air of Vermont must have been very conducive to clear thinking. I came back to Cleveland with my head full of ideas and a rough outline and frantically typed notes on my laptops hard drive. The committee submitted the final draft of the prospectus to SAAs Publications Board on March 1, 1999, and the board sent back its official endorsement before the end of the same month.

Essentially, we proposed to produce a publication that will be an informational manual directed towards new or non-archivists who are concerned with implementing an archival program in a museum. The publication will address each of the basic archival functions and problematic formats. At the same time, it will be written in language and include issues that are unique to museum archivists. It will therefore introduce archival basics to museum staff lacking archival training and alert experienced archivists new to the museum field to issues specific to museum archives. As agreed at the section meeting in Orlando, this publication will actually be an update of Bill Deiss's Museum Archives: An Introduction, published by SAA in 1984 as part of the Basic Manual Series. In contrast to the 1984 manual, however, it will be an edited work that will show the variety of experiences and situations confronting museum archivists.

With our proposed publication in mind, I would like to use this years working group at SAAs annual conference to highlight our varied concerns and experiences, from the mundane to the surreal. If you are a working museum archivist interested in hearing more about the prospectus and contributing to what promises to be a valuable resource for our colleagues, please come to this years working group, which will be held on Wednesday, August 25, from 1-5:00 p.m. at the Andy Warhol Museum. An invitation and RSVP form are included in this edition of the newsletter.

The proposal also will be presented at the section meeting on Thursday, August 26, 8:00-10:00 a.m. See you in Pittsburgh!

Ann Marie Pryzbyla

Cleveland Museum of Art

MUSEUM ARCHIVIST is issued twice a year by the Museum Archives Section of SAA.

News items, letters to the editor, & comments from the archives community are welcome.

Next deadline: December 15, 1999

Send submissions to Paula Stewart

Chair&&&&&&....&.Ann Marie Przybyla

Cleveland Museum of Art

11150 East Blvd, Cleveland, OH 44106

216-421-7340

email: przybyla@cma-oh.org

Recording Secretary.&&.....&&Laura Graedel

Museum of Science and Industry

57th St and Lake Shore Dr, Chicago, IL 60637-2093

773-684-9844; fax: 773-684-0026

email: laura.graedel@msichicago.org

Editor.....&&..&&.Paula Stewart

Amon Carter Museum

3501 Camp Bowie, Ft Worth, TX 76107

817-738-1933 x267

email: paula.stewart@cartermuseum.org

Newsletter Publisher.&&&.....Bart Ryckbosch

The Art Institute of Chicago

111 S Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60603

312-443-4777

email: bryckbos@artic.edu

Program/Education&&&...&.&...Sarah Demb

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology

Harvard University

11 Divinity Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138

617-496-2994; fax 617-495-7535

email: sdemb@fas.harvard.edu

Additional contributors: Kristina S. Klepacz, Deborah Wythe

SECTION BUSINESS

From the Editor

I've just completed a challenging six months. By the time you receive this newsletter, the Carter will have completed a move to a new locale where we will reside until the expansion project at our permanent location is complete. Needless to say, this project has taken most of my time, leaving very little to spare for the newsletter. However, as usual, section members contributions have produced another informative issue. The special focus articles on art restitution begin on page 5. This is a hot topic that raises some interesting issues for all museums.

This newsletter also boasts the efforts of our new assistant editors, Kristina S. Klepacz, Dayton Art Institute, and Sharon A. Pullen, Rockefeller Archive Center. My sincere thanks go out to Kristina and Sharon for providing invaluable assistance sending reminders and proofreading!

Paula Stewart

Amon Carter Museum

Join the Museum Archives Listserv by sending a message to . The message in the body of the email should read: subscribe SAAMUS-LIST [your email address]. To post a message to the listserv, send email to

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NEWS, NOTES, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Section Members Speak at Workshop

Sarah R. Demb (Peabody Museum Archives, Harvard University) and Donna Longo DiMichele (Mashantucket Pequot Archives & Special Collections) were on the faculty for Field Records at the Millennium: Managing Anthropological Records, given at the Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ, May 3-5. Sarah presented a session on Informed Consent and Personal Papers. Donna spoke on the topic of When to Gather and Manage Sensitive Information and participated in a panel titled Special Issues of Project Records. The program was presented by the University of Nevada, Reno's Heritage Resources Management Program, organized by the National Park Service (NPS) Museum Management Program, and sponsored by the NPS Cultural Resources Training Initiative. Workshop participants included museum staff, tribal cultural resource managers, and both archivists and anthropologists from the public and private sectors.

Archivist for Movius Papers Project Hired

Anthony Reed will be Project Archivist for the Hallam L. Movius Papers Processing Project at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, June-August 1999. Anthony has been Project Archivist at the Chancery of the Catholic

Archdiocese of Seattle (WA), Microsoft Corporation (WA), the Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum (MA), and Boston University. Most recently, he completed a yearlong project for the Town Clerk's Office in Burlington, MA. Anthony holds the BA in Women's Studies and Sociology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the MLS with a concentration in Archives Management from Simmons College in Boston. The Movius Papers Processing Project is funded by grant monies from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the American School of Prehistoric Research, and the Peabody Museum.

Sarah R. Demb

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University

REPORTS

The Dayton Art Institute Archives Program

The Dayton Art Institute has recently been awarded a National Historical Publications and Records Commission grant to help formalize our archival program. The timing is great for this project. The Art Institute celebrates its 80th anniversary this year and has successfully completed a \$17 million renovation of its gallery and education spaces in 1997. With both the anniversary and renovation, there is a renewed interest in our history and a renewed commitment to the preservation of our records.

There have been several attempts to process and preserve the museums history. Beginning in 1978, an intern from Wright State University's Public History program processed materials and wrote finding aids for the collection. Although a great deal was accomplished during this time, the project was put on hold pending funding and appropriate allocation of space. This effort demonstrated the importance of preserving our permanent records, and documents began to be transferred to an archives room.

A renewed interest in the project came with a new director in 1992 and our 75th anniversary. At this time, the museum librarian was charged with putting together a committee of staff members to make recommendations for the archival material. Upon this committee's suggestion, records were moved into a more secure room.

Robert Smith, Head of the Wright State University Special Collections and Archives made two on-site visits to the Art Institute. He provided the museum with basic suggestions and an estimate on processing the backlog of materials. The importance of a retention schedule and guidelines was also stressed. A records survey of all departments in the museum was conducted in 1994/95 by an intern from the Wright State University Public History program. Guidelines were prepared which outline the documentation, management, life span and disposition of all records generated by the Art Institute.

More progress came in 1996/97. The librarian obtained funding for compact shelving and additional space for a permanent archival repository. Also, a library position was filled by an individual with an MA in Public History and experience in archival management.

In late 1998, the museum decided a further commitment to the archival program was necessary and a part-time archivist position was created.

The Art Institute Archives holds a variety of materials, in addition to our institutional records. There is a unique slide collection of stained glass windows that were photographed throughout Europe by Robert M. Metcalf. Metcalf was a stained glass artist, researcher, teacher, and author who was head of the Decorative Arts Department at the School of the Dayton Art Institute. Commissioned by Mrs. Harrie G. Carnell, Metcalf conducted a two-year study of European stained glass just prior to World War II in 1938 and 1939. He made a complete record of all the windows at Mont St. Michel, LeMans and Chartres, as well as others in France, Switzerland and Germany. Some windows were photographed as they were being removed in order to try to save them from anticipated wartime bombing.

Despite the fact that escalation of the war brought Metcalf home after only fourteen months, 14,000 35mm color slides were produced. The Art Institute is the only repository to own the entire collection. Given proper cataloging and conservation, this collection would be a tremendous asset to researchers in the field of stained glass art. One of our long-range projects is to make these slides available through the Art Institutes web site.

Other materials in our collection include records from The Circulating Gallery of the Dayton Art Institute, an art-lending program that attracted international attention, and materials from pictorialist photographer Jane Reece.

The NHPRC grant has enabled us to hire a temporary archivist to assist with processing our materials. This will help us establish physical and intellectual control over our permanent records through processing and the creation of accurate finding aids. We will also update and clearly outline all policies and procedures in a formal manual to insure consistency in the program. This is a truly exciting project for the Dayton Art Institute.

Kristina S. Klepacz

Dayton Art Institute

PAPERS

Report of the Association of Art Museum Directors [AAMD] Task Force on the Spoliation of Art during the Nazi/World War II Era (1933-1945), June 4, 1998

AAMD Statement of Purpose: "The purpose of the AAMD is to aid its members in establishing and maintaining the highest professional standards for themselves and the museums they represent, thereby exerting leadership in increasing the contribution of art museums to society."

I. Statement of Principles

A. AAMD recognizes and deplores the unlawful confiscation of art that constituted one of the many horrors of the Holocaust and World War II.

B. American museums are proud of the role they, and members of their staffs, played during and after World War II, assisting with the preservation and restitution of hundreds of thousands of works of art through the U.S. Military's Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives section.

C. AAMD reaffirms the commitment of its members to weigh, promptly and thoroughly, claims of title to specific works in their collections.

D. AAMD urges the prompt creation of mechanisms to coordinate full access to all documentation concerning this spoliation of art, especially newly available information. To this end, the AAMD encourages the creation of databases by third parties, essential to research in this area, which will aid in the identification of any works of art which were unlawfully confiscated and which of these were restituted. Such an effort will complement long-standing American museum policy of exhibiting, publishing and researching works of art in museum collections in order to make them widely available to scholars and to the general public. (See III. below.)

E. AAMD endorses a process of reviewing, reporting, and researching the issue of unlawfully confiscated art which respects the dignity of all parties and the complexity of the issue. Each claim presents a unique situation which must be thoroughly reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

II. Guidelines

AAMD has developed the following guidelines to assist museums in resolving claims, reconciling the interests of individuals who were dispossessed of works of art or their heirs together with the fiduciary and legal obligations and responsibilities of art museums and their trustees to the public for whom they hold works of art in trust.

A. Research Regarding Existing Collections

1. As part of the standard research on each work of art in their collections, members of the AAMD, if they have not already done so, should begin immediately to review the provenance of works in their collections to attempt to ascertain whether any were unlawfully confiscated during the Nazi/World War II era and never restituted.

2. Member museums should search their own records thoroughly and, in addition, should take all reasonable steps to contact established archives, databases, art dealers, auction houses, donors, art historians and other scholars and researchers who may be able to provide Nazi/World War II era provenance information.

3. AAMD recognizes that research regarding Nazi/World War II era provenance may take years to complete, may be inconclusive and may require additional funding. The AAMD Art Issues Committee will address the matter of such research and how to facilitate it.

B. Future Gifts, Bequests, and Purchases

1. As part of the standard research on each work of art:

(a) member museums should ask donors of works of art (or executors in the case of bequests) to provide as much provenance information as possible with regard to the Nazi/World War II era and

(b) member museums should ask sellers of works of art to provide as much provenance information as possible with regard to the Nazi/World War II era.

2. Where the Nazi/World War II era provenance is incomplete for a gift, bequest, or purchase, the museum should search available records and consult appropriate databases of unlawfully confiscated art (see III below).

(a) In the absence of evidence of unlawful confiscation, the work is presumed not to have been confiscated and the acquisition may proceed.

(b) If there is evidence of unlawful confiscation, and there is no evidence of restitution, the museum should not proceed to acquire the object and should take appropriate further action.

3. Consistent with current museum practice, member museums should publish, display or otherwise make accessible all recent gifts, bequests, and purchases thereby making them available for further research, examination and study.

4. When purchasing works of art, museums should seek representations and warranties from the seller that the seller has valid title and that the work of art is free from any claims.

C. Access to Museum Records

1. Member museums should facilitate access to the Nazi/World War II era provenance information of all works of art in their collections.

2. Although a linked database of all museum holdings throughout the United States does not exist at this time, individual museums are establishing web sites with collections information and others are making their holdings accessible through printed publications or archives. AAMD is exploring the linkage of existing sites which contain collection information so as to assist research.

D. Discovery of Unlawfully Confiscated Works of Art

1. If a member museum should determine that a work of art in its collection was illegally confiscated during the Nazi/World War II era and not restituted, the museum should make such information public.

2. In the event that a legitimate claimant comes forward, the museum should offer to resolve the matter in an equitable, appropriate, and mutually agreeable manner.

3. In the event that no legitimate claimant comes forward, the museum should acknowledge the history of the work of art on labels and publications referring to such a work.

E. Response to Claims Against the Museum

1. If a member museum receives a claim against a work of art in its collection related to an illegal confiscation during the Nazi/World War II era, it should seek to review such a claim promptly and thoroughly. The museum should request evidence of ownership from the claimant in order to assist in determining the provenance of the work of art.
2. If after working with the claimant to determine the provenance, a member museum should determine that a work of art in its collection was illegally confiscated during the Nazi/World War II era and not restituted, the museum should offer to resolve the matter in an equitable, appropriate, and mutually agreeable manner.
3. AAMD recommends that member museums consider using mediation wherever reasonably practical to help resolve claims regarding art illegally confiscated during the Nazi/World War II era and not restituted.

F. Incoming Loans

1. In preparing for exhibitions, member museums should endeavor to review provenance information regarding incoming loans.
2. Member museums should not borrow works of art known to have been illegally confiscated during the Nazi/World War II era and not restituted unless the matter has been otherwise resolved (e.g., II.D.3 above).

III. Database Recommendations

A. As stated in I.D. (above), AAMD encourages the creation of databases by third parties, essential to research in this area. AAMD recommends that the databases being formed include the following information (not necessarily all in a single database):

1. claims and claimants
2. works of art illegally confiscated during the Nazi/World War II era
3. works of art later restituted

B. AAMD suggests that the entity or entities creating databases establish professional advisory boards that could provide insight on the needs of various users of the database. AAMD encourages member museums to participate in the work of such boards.

Recordkeeping in Museums

This paper was presented during the Archival Sources for Researching Holocaust-Era Looted Art panel at the Holocaust-Era Assets Symposium sponsored by the National Archives & Records Administration, December 4, 1998. Other papers may be found at .

Greg Bradsher asked me to participate in today's panel as a representative of the Museum Archives Section of the Society of American Archivists. I was chair of the Section in 1997-98, when I first heard Greg speak about the efforts here at the National Archives to

assist researchers working on Holocaust-era assets. It was immediately clear that the Section had a role to play in the process. Museum archivists would be intimately involved in the search for lost works of art and we needed to get up to speed quickly. In that interest, the Section invited representatives from the Commission for Art Recovery and the Holocaust Art Restitution Project to participate in our working group at the 1998 SAA annual meeting. Evie Joselow and Marc Masurovsky represented those organizations, joining twelve museum archivists and NARA's Greg Bradsher to discuss what researchers need and how best we can work together.

The clearest outcome of our working group was realizing that without a clear understanding of what information is held by museums, in which departments, and under whose control, research efforts will be seriously hampered. My focus today, therefore, will be on recordkeeping in museums, in hope of smoothing your paths to the information you need. I will also try to suggest some ideas for using museum records to trace works of art that are not in museum collections.

The most critical issue to understand in museums is that some permanent or archival records are also permanently active and may well never physically reside in the archives. When a work of art is accepted into the permanent collection, a body of records is created: these records will be consulted, revised, and added to as long as the object remains in the collection. Documents in the permanent record of a museum object may include donor agreements; accession forms; trustee approvals; cataloging data; releases and receipts; conservation reports; letters from the artist, donor or vendor; research, exhibition and publication history; and installation data. If it were as simple as this--a single "case file" on each work of art--your job would be easy. It is very likely a core file with basic data will exist, but it is also likely that other information about that object may also be found elsewhere in the museum. In order to find all the records -- one of which may contain that one crucial bit of information that you need -- you need to first understand the functions of several museum departments and find a way to gain access to records in some or all of them.

The second issue first: you will need a guide--who should you call? Some museums will probably be establishing an office or task force to deal with Holocaust-era assets issues; if one exists, that is obviously where you will start. If such a body is not in place, I would maintain that the museum archivist may well be your best contact. Most museum archivists manage institutional archives and are involved in managing both active and inactive records. The museum archives may not have the records that you need, but we have probably surveyed all records in the museum and know what is where and whom to call. Think of us as "Info central."

After some of this morning's questions, I think it's important to add some comments about open access to my presentation. My experience as a researcher in both the U.S. and Europe is that U.S. archives are much more likely to be both open and to be consistent in their access policies, especially if a professional archivist is in charge. In museums, the degree of openness may vary, depending on whether the institution is public or private, but you should expect and receive equitable treatment from any professional archivist.

You can find out whether a museum has an archivist by simply calling, or you can check in the Official Museum Directory of the American Association of Museums, or contact the Society of American Archivists, which has a website at . The Museum Archives Section newsletter is available online in the Resources section of the Canadian Heritage Information Network's website at . There has been a strong museum archives initiative, in the last fifteen or so years, supported by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and I would venture that many, if not most, sizable art museums now have an archival program.

As you begin to approach museums, it is important to keep in mind that the Association of Art Museum Directors calls for members to "facilitate access to provenance information on works of art in their collections." Finding the information may be laborious--as most archival research is--but the will to cooperate is in place. I have found that provenance questions are just about the most difficult queries that I handle in the archives of the Brooklyn Museum of Art. First, you are searching for information about the object prior to its presence in the museum; if the curators did not inquire, it probably was not volunteered and will not be in the files. Second, any information on file may be found in a variety of places in the archives. For a Print Department project a few years ago, I created a worksheet that identified fifteen possible sources to check for each object. We will all have to hone our detective skills.

What kind of information do you need to approach a museum to do research on an object? As in most research efforts, the more, and the more specific, the better. If you are interested in an object that you know or suspect is in the museum collection, it is important to know the artist and title and the year when it was acquired. It is helpful to provide the archivist with any names that may be connected with the work of art, since works are occasionally donated or sold through a third party. How can you find this information?

It would, of course, be helpful if museum collections were all documented in databases and on the Internet so that you could do some of the legwork before approaching a particular museum. Unfortunately, the path to automating museum collections has been a long and winding one, and many collections databases are still in the early stages of being built. You may be able to find some published collection catalogs--even if outdated--and should be able to research parts of a particular museum's collection by consulting the catalogs of retrospective or topical exhibitions. This preliminary library work is essential and will save time in the long run.

In some museums, an accession file may contain core information about an object--when and how it was acquired, from whom, any restrictions on the acquisition, conservation, exhibition and publication history, and provenance. This would be the ideal situation for researchers of looted Holocaust-era art. However, even if such a file exists, you should not assume that it contains all the information about an object.

Several job functions in museums deal with works of art; these functions may be performed in different departments, or, in smaller museums, by a single individual. Each results in different types of records, which may remain in the office or be transferred to

the museum archives. Each museum will divide the work pie slightly differently, so doing effective research will require that you gain an understanding of the particular museum.

Curators select and acquire works of art, do research on them, and create exhibitions and installations. They may well be the caretakers of accession files on objects, but additional information is likely to be found in other record series. Curatorial files often contain correspondence with donors and vendors about works offered as gifts, for purchase, or in exchange. These records may be as simple as a two-line letter offering or accepting an object, but may also contain extensive background on the work. Unfortunately, in my experience, the former is more likely than the latter. Often, a curator develops a long-term relationship with an individual or a dealer, so that information about a particular transaction may be found some time before it actually occurs and may be followed up years later. The museum in question may not have purchased the object in question, but another museum may have. Since this correspondence does not deal directly with the acquisition of a specific object, it may never find its way into the accession file. It may be filed under the donor or dealer's name, within general correspondence, in a category such as "objects offered," or even under the country and city within a geographical correspondence series.

Some of the most important work that curators do happens in conjunction with an exhibition or the publication of a catalog. At that time, they focus on research about the objects and may seek information from a variety of sources inside and outside of the institution. The results of the research may be published in the exhibition or collection catalog, or they may remain as notes in the files of that project. As a result, some of your most important work must be done first in the museum library, finding and studying these publications and then approaching the archivist to see if there are any working files with further information.

In a similar method of following the information trail, you may want to follow up on the exhibition record of a work of art, which you will find in the work's core record. When an object is loaned to another institution, the curator at that museum may do in depth research that will reveal important details of its provenance.

Executive administration often overlaps curatorial functions somewhat, in the areas of donor contact and acquisition approval. The acquisition process always includes some level of approval by the museum director or trustees. In many cases, the curator must present an argument for acquiring the work, including an analysis of its importance and perhaps some history. Sometimes these presentations are in writing, sometimes not. It is worth inquiring. Legal records, such as bequest, donation, and legal action files, may reside in executive or legal counsel offices and can provide valuable information on ownership.

The museum Registrar is responsible for recording or registering an object whenever it enters or leaves the museum and for the physical handling of the objects as they move into, within, and outside of the museum. The registrar's office assigns each object a unique accession number, facilitating management of the collection.

Core accession records may well reside with the Registrar instead of the curator, depending on the organizational structure of the museum. Formal cataloging or description of the objects in a collection requires a joint effort between curatorial and registrar's departments; the information may be managed by either department or by a separate catalog department.

Registrarial records include deeds of gift or purchase receipts, incoming and outgoing loan forms, formal acquisition records such as trustee approvals, exhibition loan records, insurance records. These records will provide crucial data on the owner of a work at the time of accession; they may also, however, reveal earlier ownership, if a work of art was loaned to the institution at an earlier date. This is not uncommon: curators are often aware of works long before they acquire them and may well have borrowed them for examination or inclusion in an exhibition.

The collections management function involves maintaining identification and location information and managing daily movements of the objects within the building. This function may be carried out by a separate department or may be part of either the curatorial or registrar's offices. While it is not likely that collections managers will have records documenting the provenance of an object, they may well be responsible for the museum's collections database and as such a valuable resource for quickly determining an object's acquisition date and donor or vendor; they may also be able to perform broad searches to create lists of objects acquired during a particular time period or from a particular dealer.

Just as the collections management function may reside in various places in the institution's organizational structure, other functions may be divided or combined. In some museums, a separate exhibitions department handles that function. Curatorial responsibilities are divided by medium, period, or geographical area. Photographs of a work of art may be found in curatorial or registrar's files, or they may fall under a photography studio or rights and reproductions division. In order to find what you need, you have to know where to look and where best to look first. The archivist may be your best guide in understanding all of the interactions.

Any or all of the records described above may reside in the museum archives. However, it is most likely that basic information about objects is maintained in active offices, but that backup information may be found by searching through inactive correspondence and exhibition files in the archives.

What other museum resources might be helpful in tracking objects that are not in the museum's collections? The most important one that comes to mind is exhibitions. Most museum exhibitions contain a mixture of objects in the collection and objects on loan. If a work is important, it may have been loaned to several museums over a period of decades. The published catalogs of these shows will reveal a timeline of ownership. If the work is listed as "anonymous loan," you may find it more difficult to establish ownership, since owner identification is considered restricted in such cases. Most museums will have a procedure in place to deal with such requests.

How to find exhibition data? Some museums and art organizations have published union catalogs of exhibition series; others have created or are creating databases for easy access to exhibition checklists.

The one thing that is common to all of the information and approaches that I have described is the need to focus on a particular work of art. Access to curatorial and registrar's record is generally by artist, date of acquisition, and (possibly) donor or vendor. If you are looking at a specific work, this may be sufficient. If you are looking for all transactions involving a specific dealer, it may be doable, although you would miss some in which a donor bought from a vendor and immediately donated the work to the museum. If you are trying to trace a specific collection that was broken up, the task is Herculean. While the provenance information may be in the object record, it will probably not be traced in any of the registrar's indexes. Collection databases may or may not be advanced enough to help.

Which brings me to my final topic: the two different approaches of HARP and the Commission for Art Recovery, as I understand them from our Section working group in Orlando. HARP is gathering any and all information about looted art, to be placed in a database. The Commission for Art Recovery is assisting claimants searching for specific works of art. The latter is easier for museum archivists to deal with, with one problem: my understanding is that the actual list of claims is restricted. We are therefore limited to helping if staff approach us, rather than being able to review the list and make a quick search to see if we might have any information that could help, directly or indirectly. The HARP approach is extremely broad and, once the database is constructed, may provide a useful resource. However, gathering information for the database will require a significant amount of fieldwork. Besides the cost of a traditional directory, the speed with which it would go out of date made the idea of doing an online directory seem very reasonable.

In one of those conference-inspired fits of cooperation and optimism, I actually volunteered to take on this project and see if I could either convince my administration to host the directory on their web page or find another location that would host the project. Sally Brazil of the Frick Art Reference Library graciously volunteered to help with this project, and I left Orlando certain this would take no time at all.

The first step - finding a host site - actually was quite simple. I presented the idea to Milwaukee Public Museum Administration and to the Information Services Department (the keepers of the MPM Web site), and everybody said yes, great idea. Then things slowed due to the usual reasons. By mid-March, though, after consultation with Sally and with Section Chair Ann Marie Przybyla, a message with a form to return was distributed via the Archives and Museum Archives Listservs.

Over the next six weeks, I received 30 completed forms. I had hoped to have something together by now, but we're in the midst of conducting a collection analysis as the first step in updating MPM's Collections Policy. (You know you've worked someplace too long when you wind up on the second or third editions of a collections policy.)

Currently I am editing the entries I received for consistency. I've been giving myself a crash course in HTML, and, with the assistance of my computer-savvy teenage son, I expect to turn over a file that IS can mount on the MPM Web page in the next few weeks. As soon as the file is available, I'll ask the institutions that submitted entries to review their information. Then we will make the web page public and encourage additional entries since there are a lot more than 30 museums represented among the Section's membership. Our intention is to include as many museum archives as possible from around the world in order to make this directory truly useful for researchers, archivists, and museum professionals.

If you do not subscribe to either Archives List or SAA-MUS List and would like to receive a form to fill out and return via email, email me and I'll get the form to you. I currently cannot accept handwritten or typed forms, because I don't have any staff to spare to do the data entry this would require. Perhaps this will change by the time of the next newsletter -- if so I'll include a form in there that can be copied and mailed back.

Once I'm over the learning curve, I will train the volunteers and work-study employees here at the MPM Library and Archives, and they can help with the editing and formatting work so things will progress much more quickly in the future. Besides an additional posting to Archives and SAA-MUS listservs, NHColl and Museum List are among places where more participation will be sought. Once the directory is up and running, there will be a lot of interest in participating.

Please feel free to contact me at 414-278-2730 or <jat@mpm.edu> or .

Judy Turner

Milwaukee Public Museum

WPAIR Report and Invitation

The Women's Professional Archival Issues Roundtable (WPAIR) held its first meeting on September 3, 1998. The twenty-five individuals present accepted, with minor revisions, the bylaws that the Committee on the Status of Women had developed prior to its dissolution.

Once the roundtable was officially formed, a five member Steering Committee was elected:

Lucinda Manning, American Federation of Teachers (New York); Tanya Zanish-Belcher, Iowa State University; Jill Jackson, University of Texas at San Antonio; Katherine Fleming, University of Charleston (South Carolina); and Debbie King, Chicago Historical Society (Illinois). The elected co-chairs were Cristina Favretto, Duke University (North Carolina), and Judy Turner, Milwaukee Public Museum (Wisconsin).

Roundtable activity during 1998-99 included communicating between meetings via an email list, planning for the roundtable's meeting at the 1999 Annual Conference, participating in the SAA Navigator Program, exploring joint activities with the Women's Caucus, planning for a reception at SAA 2000 to recognize the contributions of the

Committee on the Status of Women, providing information for the Women's Caucus Newsletter, identifying issues of concern for roundtable members to guide future activities, and recruiting new roundtable members

The roundtable is scheduled to meet at SAA Pittsburgh on Saturday, August 28 from 8:45-10:15 a.m. We will review our first years progress, develop activities for the second year, and plan for an upcoming conference on women's collections to be sponsored by Duke University. Please join us for some lively discussion and the opportunity to network with archivists from a variety of repositories.

If you are unable to attend the WPAIR meeting but are interested in keeping posted, send me a note at and I will add you to the electronic discussion group I host to keep roundtable members in contact between the annual meetings.

Judy Turner

Milwaukee Public Museum

Book Reviewer Sought

Museum Archivist has received a review copy of *Museums and the Future of Collecting* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1999). Edited by Simon Knell, Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, England, the volume contains essays by more than twenty authors from England, Scotland, Canada, Croatia, South Africa, Australia, Sweden, and Spain under the subheadings of "Collecting in Context," "Omissions and Dilemmas," and "Collecting Futures." The volume developed out of "Carry on Collecting," a conference organized by the Department of Museum Studies of the University of Leicester. If you are interested in reviewing this book for the next issue of *Museum Archivist*, please contact the Editor (contact information on page 2).