From the Editors: The Role of the Registrar

For several years, the desire on the part of museum registrars to be considered a professional group has been growing. If we are to be considered specialists, we must strive to adopt standard levels of job competence; we must also develop regular channels of communication through which we can learn more about our areas of responsibility. Our decisions often involve the expenditure of substantial amounts of money, or affect the care and handling of valuable objects. It is essential that we have as much information as possible upon which we can base our decisions.

REGISTRARS’ REPORT grows out of an educational need. At present, there are only two other publications which deal exclusively with registration functions (see Bibliography). The most well known, Dudley and Wilkinson’s MUSEUM REGISTRATION METHODS, has been re-edited twice over a period of nearly twenty years, and is a standard in the field. Registrars deal with numerous changing and developing businesses: records management, transportation, packing and insurance to name a few. A single publication does not have the capacity, flexibility, or regularity of publication to keep abreast of these rapid changes. We intend this newspaper to provide regular, current and in-depth information to aid those who perform registration functions.

Each issue of REGISTRARS’ REPORT will focus on a different topic. Our approach will be to establish a basic level of understanding and then build upon it. In an upcoming issue, for example, the movement of heavy stone objects will be examined. We will begin with a description of the formation of stone, leading to an examination of its inherent strengths and weaknesses, and then discuss appropriate approaches to handling and equipment. Our policy will be to consult with specialists in the areas we examine. Topic selection will be based upon our readers’ expression of interest and need.

Our first issue deals with an old, but still pressing question: “What do registrars do?” In some situations, the registrar is exclusively a file clerk, in others an administrator, in others anything in between. We sought a perspective on museum registrars, what they do, how they view themselves and how others view them. By logical extension, upcoming issues will define what registrars may be doing in the future. Knowledge of these issues is essential to growing expertise in the field.

We hope you will find REGISTRARS’ REPORT useful and stimulating. Format and paper quality selections were based upon the intention that the newspaper will provide lasting information which you will want to keep in a notebook or file. We wish to maintain an open dialogue with our readers, covering topics relevant to your interests. In sharing REGISTRARS’ REPORT, don’t forget that many issues will be valuable to a number of people in your museum experience, and that an intangible part of professionalism depends upon how others in related fields perceive your work.

Views on Museum Registration

The editors surveyed a variety of professionals in the museum field to ascertain their perceptions of the museum registrar. Our questionnaire asked respondents to identify three role functions which they most associated with the registrar and to rank the registrarial role in relation to other professionals in the museum world in terms of prestige, influence, money and satisfaction. Those surveyed were also invited to pose questions related to registrars or to make additional comments.

WILLIAM T. ALDERTON has been the director of the American Association for State and Local History since 1964. He was a member of the American Association of Museums Accreditation Committee from 1968 to 1970 and served as the first chairman of the Accreditation Commission from 1970 to 1973.

Accensioning, registration and cataloguing were the role-functions Alderson associated with registrars. He ranked the registrarial role as moderate in prestige, influence and money, but stated that he believed satisfaction levels to be dependent upon the individual.

A specialist in fine arts insurance for museums, collectors and special exhibitions, CARL G. ALLEN has been an insurance broker in California since 1948. He is president of American Insurance Managers which is associated with F. & P. S. James & Company, a major international risk management firm.

Noting that the role functions of registrars vary among museums almost as much as the activities and professional characteristics of the museums themselves, Allen identified the major responsibilities of the registrar as supervision, maintenance and control of inventory records of the museum’s collections; loan

An Interview with IRMA BEZOLD WILKINSON

Currently residing in Connecticut, Irma Bezold-Wilkinson is widely known for her co-authorship of the standard reference for registrars, MUSEUM REGISTRATION METHODS. Wilkinson’s experience as a mu
arrangements with lenders and borrowers, including condition reporting, transit arrangements and loss control; insurance valuations and costs; general management of the part of the museum's business related to record-keeping, valuation, safeguarding and insurance of the museum's collections and loans. In performing these management duties, he believes the registrar's office is, or should be, the nerve center of museum operations.

Allen also believes there is variation among different museums in the registrar's prestige, influence, compensation and job satisfaction. In general, he believes these factors are not as high as they should be, not as high as they are going to be, especially as a result of increased inter-communication between registrars, and their exchange of ideas and methods to improve the mechanics with which registrars are concerned.

Mr. Allen asks: "How do the registrars themselves respond to these same questions?" "What support do registrars need to accomplish their recognized objectives?" He believes the key questions are not what registrars' prestige, influence, compensation and job satisfaction are now, but rather what are they going to be five years from now.

ARTHUR BEALE, the head conservator of the Center for Conservation and Technical Studies of the Fogg Art Museum, replied briefly and succinctly to our inquiry: "I cannot answer these questions in the abstract. I believe the individual abilities and experience of the museum registrar, like any museum professional, are key factors in his or her prestige, influence and salary. The range of the registrar's functions is in large part a matter of the size of the museum, and again a matter of ability and experience."

HUNTINGTON T. BLOCK, president of Huntington T. Block Insurance, has specialized in fine arts insurance for the past 17 years. Block is currently a member of the American Association of Museums' Shipping, Packing and Insurance Committee.

Like several other respondents, Block chose to reply to our questions with a letter: "Your questions are not easy to answer — 'record keeping' immediately comes to mind as a role function, and so does 'coordinating exhibitions.' But then a myriad of other role functions come to mind — like communicating with lenders and borrowers, acting as go-between in sometimes difficult inter-museum departmental problems, putting out a never-ending array of brush fires, negotiating the best possible arrangements for shipping and insurance, helping in the adjustment of losses, being able to talk to truck drivers and trillionaires all in the same day and in their own special language, learning to influence important decisions when authority is sometimes limited, being able to spend all day in an unheated warehouse yet show up at a museum opening that evening looking shower fresh, enduring the frustration of having an orderly mind in an environment not devoid of people with special sensibilities and their own way of doing things, caring enough about your job to be generally overworked and often underpaid... My answers to your second question would have to be 'medium' in the overall, although I can think of exceptions in every category. If I were checking on a registrar, I would want to know where and under whom he or she received their training."

A nationally known art historian and educator, RUTH BOWMAN is currently museum consultant and visiting curator at the Newark Museum. Bowman was director of education at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from 1974 through 1975. She is vice-president and member of the Council of the American Association of Museums.

Keeping track of all the works in the museum as well as incoming and outgoing loans, keeping accurate records of all objects and attending to every detail of shipping and receiving of all museum property, loans and gifts were the role functions Bowman associated with the registrar. In her experience, registrars had medium prestige, influence and pay; satisfaction was ranked high to medium. She posed four questions: "Are there any new areas of training opening up for registrars (conservation, statistics, computers) subsidized by NEH, NEA, Smithsonian?" "What are the major problems for registrars?" "What is the ideal training for registrars?" "What are the hazards and liabilities (professionally) for registrars?"

PETER C. BUNNELL is the director of the Art Museum, Princeton University, in Princeton, New Jersey.

Bunnell stated that the registrar should be responsible for collections records and documentation, the handling of in/out loans, etc., and preliminary condition evaluation of works in the collections and those being received on loan. He rated the job as having medium prestige, high influence, high salary and...
Our advice column has been designed to accommodate specific reader questions. We may either solicit responses to the inquiry from informed sources and then print both the question and the responses, or print the question alone to elicit general responses from the field. The responses will then appear in the issue following their receipt.

Can you suggest recent information on simple techniques for small collections?

S.C.

The registration procedure used at the Museum of the American China Trade in Milion, Massachusetts, although trimmed for the use of a relatively small collection, was structured upon that of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Our registration forms, our accessioning of objects, our files, and our cataloguing system were all modeled after those of the larger institution. All have been simplified and tailored to suit the peculiarities of our collection.

As Robert Chenhall points out in his book, MUSEUM CATALOGUING IN THE COMPUTER AGE, registration should not be confused with cataloguing, the former being the assignment of an object to an individual place in a list of items in the collection so that it is not confused with any other piece, and the latter involving the assignment of the object to one or more categories within a classification system whereby that object is associated with other objects similar or related to it. The registration of objects at the China Trade Museum is under one of the two categories: GIFTS OR LOANS. These are the only two registration listings and the only two labelling systems so that all exceptions are included under one or the other. Under gifts are included all purchases, bequests, etc., and under loans are all temporary loans for identification or photography purposes, for special exhibitions, as well as all "permanent" loans (objects to be given to the museum at a later date). The exceptions then, weren't sufficient enough to warrant a separate registration listing.

Therefore, for every file in the museum there are two separate sections: one for gifts and one for loans. These files include: 1) a master card file which contains all known information as well as "hearsay" about each object; 2) a location file which gives a location code for each object's present location; 3) a donor file listed alphabetically by the last name of the donor including the objects given or lent to the museum in each year, and 4) a master folder file, one for gifts and one for loans, listed alphabetically by last name of the donor or lender which includes all receipt forms, insurance information, photographs, etc., on the objects given or lent.

In cataloguing objects, the simplest method is probably that of the "card catalogue," with a major category card and cross reference cards for each object in the collection. The smallest, simplest museum, like any library, needs as many cross reference cards as are necessary for any particular object. Thus a beaded shell need a separate card for TEXTILES; CLOTHING; AND BEADWORK. With a small collection however, this card catalogue system with 3-4 cards per object is the simplest and can be done manually. Robert Chenhall also mentions using a file cabinet for small collections which contains complete documentation on each object, the card catalogue being considered as an index to it.

The China Trade Museum has developed its own methods of registration, those which are briefly described here. They are methods which have been found to be the easiest and most efficient way in which to work well in most completely registering and cataloguing the collection. However, each institution must develop techniques which complement its specific needs and most efficiently deal with its collection. The following is a selected bibliography of books and pamphlets on museum registration procedures and other related areas which would perhaps benefit the registrar in a small museum:


HARRISON, RAYMOND O., THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS OF SMALL MUSEUMS.


NEAL, ARMITA, HELP FOR THE SMALL MUSEUM, Nashville, American Association for State and Local History, 1969.


The following technical leaflets published through the American Association for State and Local History, 1315 Eighth Avenue So., Nashville, Tennessee 37203/Telephone: 242-5583.

COLLECTING HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS: AN AID FOR SMALL MUSEUMS by Eugene F. Kramer

DOCUMENTING COLLECTIONS: MUSEUM REGISTRATION AND RECORDS by Carl E. Guthrie

KARREN KORDER Registrar Museum of the American China Trade

Is an organization for museum registrars already in operation?

J.M.

During the June 1976 meeting of the American Association of Museums in Wash-ington, D.C., the initial foundation was laid for the formation of an AAM standing professional committee of registrars. At that meeting, a chairperson, Kay Faris of the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, and vice chairpersons, Ellen M. Myette of the Renwick Gallery and David Parrish of the Wadsworth Atheneum, were elected. These three selected regional chairpersons. The committee was formed to encourage professional and educational programs within the registration field.

For further information, contact your regional chairperson. Regional chairpeople are as follows: Joan Friedland of the Connecticut Historical Society (New England), L. Carol Murray of the Baltimore Museum of Art (Northeast), Charles Mo of the New Orleans Museum of Art (Southeast), Mary Edgar Patton of the St. Louis Art Museum (Midwest), Kay Morris of the Colorado Springs Fine Art Center (Mountain-Plains), and Patricia Nauert of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (West).
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Insurance Specialists for
Museums, Exhibitions, Collectors, Dealers

CARL G. ALLEN
associated with
Fred S. James & Co.
3435 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90010
IRMA BEZOLD WILKINSON

(continued from page 2)

I stayed there about eight years and took various courses at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. I was then promoted to be in charge of the central catalogue.

As the term "central catalogue" is sometimes misunderstood, I shall explain that this was, and still is, the central records department for the entire Metropolitan Museum collections. After about six years as the head of this department, Francis Henry Taylor asked me to combine the central catalogue and the registrar's department, as it was thought by the business executives that there was a duplication of effort.

It seemed impossible to explain that the registrar's record is quite different from the record of a fully catalogued object. Also, some curators never liked the idea of cataloguing being done in the central catalogue. I must state here, however, that no cataloguing was ever done without the cooperation of the curatorial department concerned. The object, and what was recorded about it, was at all times the full responsibility of the curatorial departments. In a sense, the girls in the central catalogue gathered up all available information from the registration record and from the curatorial department and shaped it into a system which applied to all objects and presented the work to the curator for his approval.

What were your primary duties? Did they change over time?

My primary duties as registrar consisted pretty much as those described in our book MUSEUM REGISTRATION METHODS (Dudley and Bezold-Wilkinson). This book has been out of print and the American Association of Museums is now publishing the third edition.

The basic responsibility of the registrar was the recording of all objects that entered and left the museum, for their safe handling and storage while they were being recorded, for their unpacking and packing, and transportation in this country as well as abroad, including custom clearance. This also included keeping track of their movements at all times.

The question of storage after registration had been accomplished was not the responsibility of the registrar at the Metropolitan Museum, but rather that of the curatorial departments. In smaller museums it often is the registrar's entire responsibility.

The taking of condition notes on incoming and outgoing objects also depends on how a museum is set up. When I became registrar at the Met,

(continued on page 10)
A Survey: Registrars Identify Their Responsibilities

Webster defines professional as "characteristic of or conforming to the standards of a profession." Those who perform registration duties consider themselves professionals. We wondered if standards actually existed. Are there duties which are always the responsibility of the registrar? Is there now a basic level of expertise which is expected? With these questions in mind, the editors of REGISTRARS' REPORT decided to ask registrars themselves what duties they performed.

An initial mailing of 70 survey forms occurred nine months ago to people who had participated in the Los Angeles County Museum's Art seminar on registration held in September 1974. A second mailing of 30 forms went to selected registrars throughout the country. All 100 forms were returned.

In tallying the results, we encountered several problems. It became apparent that some respondents handled registration duties in addition to other tasks. In order to achieve meaningful results, the survey tabulations of those with titles other than registrar (approximately one-third of the respondents) were differentiated from the responses of those having the title of registrar.

We found that in a majority of cases responsibilities are shared by several staff members. When partial or shared responsibility was indicated, the task was tabulated as a registration duty. In like manner, supervisory tasks, such as supervision of packers or photographers, were counted as direct registration responsibilities.

A failure of the survey was its inability to differentiate according to museum size. We were unable to solve this problem, although we are aware that museum size has a direct link to the amount of responsibilities placed on the registrar's shoulders.

Despite such problems, we found the results both fascinating and illuminating, a succinct means of discovering what registrars do.

The results of this survey offer, we think, a representative picture of what a registrar actually does. In order to develop this picture, we included all tasks which more than half the respondents (51%) indicated as a responsibility.

We found that the average registrar keeps the records; performs condition inspections; writes condition reports upon entry, exit, cataloging of and damage to the object; measures; supplies identification numbering; determines strengths and weaknesses of objects relative to handling; determines handling methods; initiates object conservation; plans shipping; determines packing procedures; selects packing materials; physically packs objects; is responsible for physical and environmental security of the objects, for insurance forms and claims and for general housekeeping; selects storage locations and devices; labels storage areas and containers; is responsible for general storage maintenance and evaluation of object safety in installation.

The registrar, in other words, performs tasks vital to the museum's operation.

1. The registrar performs the routine of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record keeping</td>
<td>97 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition inspection</td>
<td>87 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>76 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition photography</td>
<td>44 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification photography</td>
<td>50 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification numbering</td>
<td>79 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. During the life of an object within an institution, condition reports are written

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon entry</td>
<td>79 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon exit</td>
<td>80 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When damage occurs</td>
<td>80 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon cataloging</td>
<td>56 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The following are involved in deciding whether an object may leave the museum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>78 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>57 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>37 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservator</td>
<td>31 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. With respect to object transport, the registrar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plans shipping</td>
<td>85 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determines packing procedures</td>
<td>70 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selects packing materials</td>
<td>64 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically packs and wraps objects</td>
<td>54 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. With respect to the care of the objects, the registrar is responsible for determining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>65 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling methods</td>
<td>67 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for basic cleaning</td>
<td>47 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for conservation</td>
<td>57 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The registrar is responsible for object insurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forms</td>
<td>81 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims</td>
<td>81 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. In storing objects, it is the registrar's duty to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select storage locations</td>
<td>63 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select storage devices</td>
<td>55 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Label storage areas/devices</td>
<td>65 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide general maintenance</td>
<td>59 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Routine inspections of the collection are performed by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>48 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>44 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservator</td>
<td>20 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. The registrar has responsibility for object security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>75 out of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>60 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. The registrar monitors the following environmental factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th>34 out of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>36 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere (humidity)</td>
<td>36 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air conditioning</td>
<td>28 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General housekeeping</td>
<td>63 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. When objects are installed, the registrar is involved in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>36 out of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>44 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of object safety</td>
<td>60 out of 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22 out of 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GENERAL COMMENTS:

"An assumed, rather than specific, responsibility. The entire staff shares a sense of responsibility."

"When an art object is affected by any diverse condition, it is a problem of this office, especially temporary exhibits."

"Any or all of the answers are applicable if a special loan request exists. I work with the conservator to plan and improve and monitor storage."

"Though not an assigned responsibility, I do watch all of these matters."

"I am expected to be aware of these and report a condition or problem to the proper person."

"Depending upon the type of installation this can be expensive or nonexistent."

"I work with the staff involved in planning the schedule and help with label information."

"None."

"The registrar schedules the work of art crew and supervises the crew; the curator supervises placement. The work of art crew and the curator attempts to get together as to the possibility of placement through the registrar."

"I make it responsibility, sometimes over the objection of the installation staff — always if an item was a condition of a loan."

"I feel this responsibility but my comments are not always welcome. If I feel something is insecure, an ‘aesthetics over security’ policy is hard to fight."

"I wash the white gloves."

"Actually, since ................ is rather a large museum, each department functions separately — yet in harmony — with the registrar always being somehow involved, i.e., curatorial, preparation, conservation."

"One area that this questionnaire does not touch on is personal responsibility to the museum. Although I am not responsible for determining storage, security, handling procedures, or insurance, I do handle and store objects and arrange for insurance coverage when objects leave the museum. I consider it my personal responsibility to do everything possible to protect any object I work with."

"Most of these answers could be expanded almost ad infinitum."

"The last line in the job description is “Other duties as necessary,” so we conduct tours, participate in docent training, select and install exhibits, etc........."
The Registrar and Ollendorff

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In a further attempt to isolate the registrar’s task, the editors of Registrars’ Report asked six registrars to describe their jobs. Marcia Anderson, Anita Manning, David M. Parrish, Laurence I. Shopmaker and Diane Taylor perform their tasks for large and small institutions ranging from a state historical society to a university art museum. Therefore, their own analyses of their jobs offer insights into what various types of institutions require from their registrars.

MARCIA ANDERSON is the registrar for the ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY in Tucson. The society, founded in 1884, includes historical, documentary collections of more than 30,000 non-library items. One of a staff of 29, Anderson has been employed by the Society for three years.

Records/Registration
Participation in policy decisions regarding registration
Verification of information supplied by donor
Responsibility for researching objects in collection to provide full, up-to-date research data
Institution of new cataloguing system
Inventory of museum’s collections

Loans/Shipping
Participation in decisions regarding loan policies
Selection and retrieval of objects for exhibitions and loans in conjunction with exhibitions staff and/or special consultants
Responsibility for loans into and out of museum
Responsibility for handling, packing, shipping, insured art and artifacts
Responsibility for safety and security of all loan materials and insurance coverage.

Management of school loan program available to teachers for classroom use

Storage
Participation in policy decisions regarding storage of artifacts
Planning of artifact storage, arrangement and location in conjunction with preserver and museum curator.
Assistance in planning and execution of storage facilities
Disbursement of artifacts no longer relevant as a member of Museum Accessions Committee

Maintenance/Conservation
Detection of deterioration in newly donated items

Records/Registration
Maintenance of proper insurance coverage
Handling of claims when artifacts are damaged, lost, or stolen

Education
Initial training and supervision of registration procedures in branch museums
Consultation services on registration to all affiliate staffs when requested, training of volunteers twice yearly in conjunction with chief curator, in decent techniques and museum locations

Supervision of college-age youth in museum work

ANITA MANNING has been the registrar at the BERNICE P. BISHOP MUSEUM in Honolulu, Hawaii, for five years. She is one of 180 staff members at the 85-year-old cultural and natural science museum.

Records/Registration
Collection, storage, retrieval and conservation of accession, loan, and records
Development of forms and systems for recording all material entering or leaving museum
Storage of original records pertaining to ownership of accessions and status of loans and exchanges made to or by museum

Loans/Shipping
Creation of guidelines on packing, shipping, importing and receiving collections (actual work carried out by departmental staff)

Inspection, exportation of collections and implementation along with curators of museum’s ethics of acquisition policy
Cooperation with curators in carrying out museum’s policy in regard to accessions, exchanges and loans made to or by museum (in assistance in formation of policy)

Storage
Provision of temporary secure storage for items in transition

Maintenance/Conservation
Provision with assistance of conservation staff for proper physical environment and care of records, including preventive and corrective measures

Insurance
Assistance in creation of guidelines for purchase of insurance for collection

Other
Administration of tax-free alcohol — ordering, disbursement, maintenance of federally required records, monthly inventory and secure storage

DAVID M. PARRISH, registrar for five years at the WADSWORTH ATHENEUM in Hartford, Connecticut, is in charge of registration duties for the 134-year-old institution. He has a staff of two. The Atheneum collection consists of approximately 40,000 items of painting, sculpture, decorative art, costumes and textiles. Its staff numbers 120.

Records/Registration
Maintenance and updating of all records, receipts, documentation relating to works of art
Registration of all objects, including identifying, cataloguing and examining for condition

Loans/Shipping
Supervision of all handling and moving of objects
Arrangement of all loans to other institutions
Arrangement for all shipping for objects and exhibitions

Computation of bills for loan activity

Storage
Supervision of all storage of objects

Maintenance/Conservation
Supervision of object maintenance

Insurance
Maintenance of insurance records on loan objects

Monthly schedules and reports to insurance broker

LAURENCE I. SHOPMAKER is the registrar for the UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS MUSEUM OF ART at Lawrence. The 48-year-old museum features 50,000 objects of Eastern and Western art. Shopmaker, one of seven staff members, has been the registrar for three years.

Records/Registration
Registration of accessions
Coordination of on-going effort to record inadequately catalogued artworks

Registration of loan objects for exhibitions

Loans/Shipping
Coordination of arrangements for internal and external movements of objects in collection

Supervision of Carpenter staff for packing and shipment of works of art

Supervision of on-and off-campus loan program

Storage
Responsibility for storage of objects not on exhibition

Supervision of carpenter staff for storage of art objects

Insurance
Maintenance of insurance records and coverage on collection

Responsibility for monthly insurance reports

Other
Coordination of installations

DIANE TAYLOR, registrar of the nine-year-old WINDEALD INN of the University of Texas at Austin, controls 3,500 objects of 19th-century decorative arts. Taylor, one of 16 staff members, has been registrar for six years and oversees a part-time staff of two.

Records/Registration
Registration of accessions in collection, exhibitions, loans — numbering, measuring, measuring, assigning catalogue designation and index headings; similar documentation for original collection

Reorganization of catalogue
Establishment of regular inventories
Responsibility for initiating procedures, forms and files for record keeping on artifacts, for having all legal documents on artifacts signed, for maintaining files

Loans/Shipping
Supervision and labor in transportation of artifacts

Storage
Responsibility for storage of objects not on exhibition

Establishment of organized storage area and regular pest control

Maintenance/Conservation
Monitoring damage and/or deterioration in collection, correct household practices fumigation and weather condition likely to precipitate problems in collection

Monitoring, supervision and labor in regular upkeep and cleaning of fumigation

Emergency conservation and condition reports

Maintenance of emergency conservation supplies on hand

Preliminary survey and cost estimation of needed conservation

Security
Organization of security check information during times of heavy visitation

Education
Lecturing to Windeald Inn Seminar in fall, architectural survey class in summer

Other
Maintenance of library, arboretum, general photographic, folklife documentation and architectural survey registers, research files, maps

Assistance in setting up, arranging, dismantling exhibitions

Continuation of photography on old photograph collection

Assistance anywhere needed at peak tourist times
medium to low job satisfaction; his comments were qualified: "I really have no idea about how others feel, I can only record my own feelings and observations."

President of Joseph M. Chapman, Inc., JOSEPH CHAPMAN is an experienced consultant in the area of museum security. Chapman is co-author of A PRIMER ON MUSEUM SECURITY, published by the New York State Historical Society.

Chapman identified the registrar as the keeper of the keys to art storage, the uncompromising setter of professional standards and a keeper of accurate records of art objects on a scholarly level. He felt that the registrar should rank with the conservator, but, in reality, experienced medium prestige, medium influence, medium satisfaction and low pay. Chapman had several comments: "Why do some registrars not insist on a true level of professional training, responsibility, recognition and position?" "Why does the profession of museum registrar accept in its ranks bookkeepers, clerks and sweepers lacking training?"

"A museum should be advised against appointing an available person as registrar until an internship of training has been completed under the instruction of a professional."

Previously director of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, JAMES ELLIOTT last summer assumed directorship of the University Art Museum in Berkeley, California.

Elliott connected maintenance of collection records, location and movement of works in the museum and transportation and insurance with the role of the registrar. Within the professional museum world, he placed registrars at a medium level in terms of prestige, influence, salary and satisfaction. He commented, "This is where I perceive them to be, not where they could or should be."

MARSHA KAUFMAN is the curator of the Armand Hammer Collection. She has coordinated major exhibitions of the collection in Venezuela, Peru, Japan, France, Mexico and the United States.

For Kaufman, chief functions of the registrar include physically cataloguing all collections, handling all incoming and outgoing exhibitions and handling information on the condition of all works of art in the collection. In relation to other museum professionals, she ranked registrars at medium prestige, but felt they have low influence, salary and satisfaction. She expressed concern for the skills and background of the individual as it relates to the job and felt an important question might be "Does the individual have the facility for handling many projects at one time?"

Since 1958, SHERMAN E. LEE has been the director of the Cleveland Museum of Art. He was vice-chairman of the National Council for the Humanities and is a trustee of the J. D. R. III Fund. Lee is also the editor of the recent volume, ON UNDERSTANDING ART MUSEUMS.

Record keeping, transportation and insurance and storage control are the role functions Lee most associates with the registrar. He sees the registrar as ranking high in prestige, pay and satisfaction, and medium in influence. He asks registrars, "How is it possible for one to maintain cordial relations and good disposition when dealing with so many different characters?"

As chief curator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, CHARLES W. MILLARD has been closely involved with the establishment of museum procedures and staff inter-relationships.

Millard responded to our questions with a most interesting letter: "If I had to isolate major registrarial functions, I suppose I'd name cataloguing, in the sense of knowing at every moment where every work of art is located, shipping and insurance — the logistical control of the movement of works of art — and general record keeping. These stand out at once in my mind, which is not to say that there aren't an unlimited number of other functions. As to what questions I'd ask, I guess I'd always want to know how efficiently and carefully — compulsively might not be too strong a word — a registrar does his or her job. In ranking registrars in the categories you list, I'd probably give them a 'medium' in each category. As you may know, I'm persuaded that, in a very real sense, registrars run museums. Theirs is the most pressured and demanding job, requiring accuracy and scrupulousness in the face of a pace of work not common elsewhere in such institutions. The registrar's office is the nerve center of any museum. For all of that, it seems to me that they are often insufficiently recognized, too easily mentally relegated to some vague service staff of the museum rather than associated with its professional staff. This seems to me particularly so in terms of your categories 'prestige' and 'influence'. I'm uncertain about 'money', since I don't know the general level of registrarial pay. My sus-

(continued from page 2)

(continued from page 5)

the conservation department was very new and it was thought then that all work on the condition of an object should be undertaken by that department. Actually, the conservation department was very anxious to do this work, as they were in the process of building up their new department. I was very happy with this arrangement and things went along very well until the conservation department decided they were too busy and tried to hand it back to the registrar. I fought this as I believed the more a person knew about the condition of an object, the better he would be at the job of recording condition. We arrived at an agreement, but it was always the curator who had to be informed and who made the decision along with the conservator as to the treatment of the object.

From time to time there were new suggestions by the staff — some good and others a complete waste of time and money. There were outside companies who called themselves efficiency experts who came and studied the workings of the museum and were supposed to come up with ways to expedite one's work and save money for the museum. Volume after volume appeared, out of which not one concrete idea ever came that was helpful to my department. Doubtless, the reason was that these people had no real understanding of how a museum functioned or should function. I am sure it was the first time some of these men were ever inside a museum—and also the last.

From where you are now, what changes do you see in the profession today?

Some of the changes that I shall mention are in quite a few museums that I know of today. To put it briefly, a lot of the work concerning the function of a registrar's department has been taken away from the receiving end of the museum and placed along "Executive Row". This naturally means new executive jobs with assistants and secretaries who in turn need typists, etc. In other words, Parkinson's Law works very well. My personal theory why this has happened is, I believe, that sometime ago Harvard Business School and maybe lots of other business schools had the same idea, and graduated their people with one goal in mind: to go out and spread the word that they — only those with business training — could administer ANYTHING. There is no question about the value of a good business background, but from my particular point of view, the big mistake made by many of these administrative executives was in not having any knowledge of the function,
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picion is that it tends to be on the low side in relation to duties performed. 'Satisfaction' is much too personal a category for me to judge. I'd hope that the work of any decent registrar corresponded to a set of personal needs and desires in such a way that he or she liked his or her work and found it productive and satisfying.'

PETER OLLENDORFF is vice-president of Ollendorff Fine Arts, a major fine arts packing and shipping company, where he has worked since 1966.

Ollendorff expects the registrar's primary duties to be keeping records and inventory, making condition reports and making arrangements for travelling shows and shipments. He ranked registrars as high in prestige, influence and job satisfaction.

IRVING PFEFFER is the director of the Museum Insurance Survey Project for the Association of Art Museum Directors. A professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Pfeffer has written numerous articles and books on the subject of insurance.

In responding to our survey, Pfeffer associated the functions of collection control and management, loans and research, with the registrar. He felt that registrars enjoyed medium levels of prestige, influence and satisfaction, and low salaries. He asked, "What can be done to insure that the registrar has sufficient authority within the museum to perform the assigned responsibilities in a professionally competent manner?" Along the same lines, Pfeffer commented, "The registrar must be perceived with a line manager with potential for rising to the top of the organization. Managerial skills must be systematically developed. The registrar must become both business manager and art historian - if that is possible.'

Accessions, loans and cataloguing of objects and arranging for the maintenance of staff and volunteers to receive training in handling works of art were the main functions listed by LISA TAYLOR. Taylor is the director of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in New York. She rated the registrar's position as high in prestige and medium in influence, money and satisfaction.

HENRY TRUBNER is the associate director of the Seattle Art Museum in Seattle, Washington. Trubner listed maintenance of all museum records pertaining to the permanent collection and all loans, including the recording of all incoming and outgoing shipments and condition reporting and checking of all shipments, as the role functions he associated with the registrar. In his experience he saw the registrar's work as high in prestige and satisfaction and medium in influence and pay. He asked of registrars: "How do you maintain museum records (accessions, loans, etc.)?" He felt that registrar's duties also include preparation of exhibition budgets (shipping, insurance).

Deputy director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, STEPHEN E. WEIL is also co-author of ART WORKS: LAW, POLICY, PRACTICE. He is considered an important authority on museum policy and legal procedure.

Well defined three areas of responsibility for the registrar: recording and maintaining collection records, controlling internal and external movement of art works and safeguarding the collection and loans to the collection through the establishment of proper handling procedures, the making of condition reports, etc. He ranked the registrar's prestige as high, and influence, money and satisfaction as medium. Well identified two problems for registrars: "how best to train new entrants into the field and give ongoing training once into it."

ROBERT A. WHYTE, supervisor of the Education Department at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, prefaced his responses with a short letter: "Enclosed you will find your very intriguing questionnaire. I found the first two questions fairly easy to answer. The two super-long boxes requesting questions, questions, questions stumped me - and made me realize that I do not often think about the registrar's position and never thought that it would be a job I would want to do (or, interestingly enough, would do with any degree of efficiency). I also became aware that probably there is a need to inform people more about the profession and to raise the general level of esteem. By the way, museum educators suffer the same problems!"

In responding to the questionnaire, Whyte associated condition reports, responsibility for the safety of objects, insurance and transportation with the functions of the registrar. He had very precise rankings for the registrar in relation to other professionals in the museum world: high medium prestige, influence and job satisfaction and medium medium salary. He asked, "What can be done to make the jobs more interesting (satisfying)?" and "How can registrars cause the lines in the four boxes above (registrar role rankings) to move up to high?"
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## Bibliography


A report in response to governmental inquiries on the state of museums prior to the consideration of federal funding. Report includes a section on present conditions in museums. Overall perspective on problems encountered in the museum world.


A book based on a series of lectures given at the University of Idaho. Called by the author “a supplement to the available publications...” A general examination of museums, museum work and museum theory, with a chapter on “Registration and Cataloguing.”


The standard reference work for registrars, dealing with registration, cataloguing, preservation and related matters. Essential in-depth information, soon to be reprinted.


A small manual which deals with problems of documentation in a small history museum.


A workbook for a seminar in museum registration techniques offered at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in September, 1974. A practical guide to a variety of registration problems.


A presentation given at the annual conference of the Museums Association of Great Britain. Though dealing with problems of a national system substantially different from that of American museums, interesting in its approach to the need for management training.


A general handbook for history museums, containing chapters devoted to “Handling Museum Collections,” The Problem of Specimen Records,” etc. Not an in-depth reference for registrars, but basic suggestions are offered.


A small pamphlet describing the duties of the registrar in a major museum.

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