MUSEUMS: A FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Museums are important institutions of culture and education in every modern society. However, both museums themselves and external researchers have often considered as important only those records that pertain directly to the acquisition, meaning and provenance of the objects in museum collections. In recent years many types of historical and scientific scholars have discovered the value of many classes of museum records to their research. This, combined with an increased demand for public accountability, has brought attention to the potential value of all classes of museum records. This thesis considers the value of the full range of museum records through an understanding of museum functions, activities and organizational structure.

Museums have evolved from collections, which have been a part of human culture for thousands of years. Collections have been embodied in the institutions called museums, and separated from their original practical, religious, or personal purposes, only in the modern era. Throughout their history museums have had the same common functions of collecting objects, preserving objects, educating the public, and sustaining themselves.

Museum records are created by museum offices, or officers, as they carry out their mandated functions and activities. To appraise museum records it is necessary to understand the activities that comprise the basic museum functions, which classes of records are created by those activities, and which museum positions typically perform those activities and functions. This analysis enables us to see the functional genesis and nature of museum records, no matter what types of museum officers perform the activities, and no matter how
the work is organized in any particular museum. The records can be evaluated, not in relation to some abstract idea of value, but in relation to their documentation of the functions and activities of an institution.

Museum records need to be appraised in relation to their primary value to the creating institutions as well as their secondary value to external users. The full range of museum activities require documentation to enable museums to carry out their assigned functions, and for external users to satisfy a variety of cultural, historical, scientific, legal and personal research needs.

Museum records have some unique characteristics. The records with the highest primary value are those that document the acquisition, provenance, use and meaning of museum collections. These records remain permanently active for ongoing museum activities and, at the same time, have the highest secondary value for external users. Museum records are also unusual in that these collections-related records, with the highest primary and secondary value, are created at the middle or lower organizational levels of curators, registrars, conservators, and their technical assistants.
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INTRODUCTION

Entrusted by society with complex duties in the preservation of material culture and the transmission of the values inherent in those materials, museums have high status as cultural institutions. They are inventions of Western Civilization, with roots extending back to ancient Greece and Rome, but it is fair to say that there are few states that do not see them as central elements in the cultural life of the nation. Some writers regard museums, of whatever nature, as the inheritors of the primeval human instinct to collect objects, an instinct that they view as coexistent with human culture itself.¹

It is not surprising then that museum collections, and the documentation necessary for understanding the objects in collections, have long been subjects of study. More recently, historians and social scientists have turned their attention to museums as social institutions, to their place and meaning in society, and to the question of how societal values are reflected or made apparent in museum collections and exhibits. Such interests serve to inform or remind archivists that the institutional records of museums have value to the public at large as well as to the institutions themselves. There is a need to understand the nature, organization and informational content of museum records so that users of all kinds can make better use of them. The institutions, as creators of records, need them in order to carry out their chosen or assigned

tasks, or to provide accountability for their actions. At the same time other users will approach museum archives from a variety of points of view, some of which are unpredictable. Therefore the application of archival science is required to provide efficient access to museum records as well as to preserve the context of the creation and use of those records.

The purpose of this thesis is to facilitate appraisal of museum records through an understanding of museums using the archival concepts of function, competence, and juridical persons in the North American context. This type of study, referred to as a functional analysis, will look at the history and development of museums in regard to their functions and activities. From this will be developed a model of the functions and activities, the class of records generated as each function is carried out, and the various officers who perform activities aimed at accomplishing the identified functions. This approach, of looking at museums in the ideal, can serve to understand any particular institution. It will facilitate the application of modern appraisal theory and methodology to develop guidelines for the appraisal of museum records.

Before the analysis of the nature of museums and museum records can begin, it is necessary to define the meaning and application of the basic archival principles and concepts that will be used. The starting point for any such discussion is an understanding of the nature of archives. To begin with, archives consist of documents, which are information recorded on any medium, whether it be on paper, film or any magnetic medium. According to Michel Duchtein, in a definition that has been adopted by Canadian archivists, archives are:
"the whole of the documents of any nature that every administrative body, every physical or corporate body automatically and organically collects by reason of its activity...and which are kept for reference." 2

For present purposes, archives are defined as:

"The whole of the documents made and received by a juridical or physical person or organization in the conduct of affairs, and preserved."3

Both of these definitions are based upon the long standing recognition that archival documents are accumulated in the course of practical activities by persons or organizations in order to accomplish their ends or purposes. Such an organic whole of documents accumulated and preserved by a particular physical or juridical person is called a fonds. The documents within a fonds possess ties that derive from the natural relationships between them. Each document in such a body of documents is linked to the others in a particular way that is defined by its order within the body. No document can be removed from its original order without destroying an important part of its meaning. Documents removed from the context of their accumulation lose a vital part of their archival nature. It follows from this that the documents accumulated by one physical or juridical body cannot be mixed with those of another without destroying the context of their creation and the full meaning of the documents. This principle is

3 This definition, and one or two other definitions, are drawn from the unpublished "Select List of Archival Terminology", 3, issued to archival studies students by the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia. The definition of archives is used here because no other definition so succinctly presents the essential concepts necessary to adequate definition of archives, and in particular the concepts of juridical and physical persons. Similar justification occurs in the other instances where the "Select List" has been used.
referred to as respect des fonds. Therefore the term "museum archives" is used here to mean the official records of museums that naturally accumulate through their proper functions and activities. The term does not refer to any other fonds acquired by such institutions from other sources.

Each fonds then, is created by a particular body, be it a physical or juridical person. In archival theory a physical person is an individual human being who acts in his or her own personal interests in relations with other persons.4 The term juridical person is used here in the sense defined by Luciana Duranti as "an entity having the capacity or potential to act legally and constituted either by a collection or succession of physical persons or a collection of properties."5 Such entities are any entity with the legal will to act, such as states, corporations, associations, committees, partnerships, or estates of deceased or bankrupt persons.6 As Duranti notes, the concepts of physical and juridical persons are similar to the common law concepts of natural persons and artificial persons. Physical or natural persons are simply human beings, whereas artificial persons are defined, similarly to juridical persons, as persons "created and devised by human laws for the purposes of society and government as distinguished from natural persons. Corporations are examples of artificial persons."7

The importance of the concept of juridical persons is that only they are the subjects of rights and duties; only they are recognized by the legal and juridical

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4"Select List", 19.
6ibid., 19.
system "as capable of or having the potential to act legally."²⁸ A human being without rights and duties within a juridical system is not a person. A juridical system is also taken here, in the sense described by Duranti, as "a social group founded on an organizational principle which gives its institution the capacity of making compulsory rules." Therefore a juridical system can be the legal system of society at large or a compulsory set of rules set for the operation of an organization.²⁹

Physical or juridical persons have functions that are determined by their purposes and nature. While it is often extremely difficult to document the motives or purposes behind an action in society, within a defined or specific juridical system it is possible to discover a juridical person's functions through its mandate, and through looking at what it actually does. In a legal sense function is the "nature and proper action of anything; activity appropriate to any business or profession ...the occupation of an office."¹¹ For archivists the concept of function is taken at a very broad level as "all of the activities aimed to accomplish one purpose, considered abstractly."¹² David Bearman and Richard Lytle have argued for the importance of understanding archives through the functions of organizations.¹³ Because "archival records are the consequence of activities defined by organizational structure",¹⁴ a functional analysis can reveal much about an organization's archives without need to examine the materials

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¹² "Select List", 8.
¹⁴ Ibid.
themselves. This is the beginning point for understanding the archives of any
organization, as well as preparing for their arrangement and description.
Organizational change constantly adds to the complexity of archives and adds to
the difficulty in understanding them. A functional analysis can be of great value
to archivists by acting as a guide as they tackle the problems of organizational
change.

Archival theorists such as Muller, Feith and Fruin in 1898, Margaret Cross
Norton and Peter Scott have all addressed the problem of administrative change
and the relationship of records to functions.15 It is the activities of an
organization that create archival documents. This is true because of the nature
of archives itself. As Muller, Feith and Fruin have said, the "organization of the
archival collection was not created arbitrarily; it is not the result of chance, but
the logical consequence of the organization of the administrative body, of whose
functions the archival collection is a product. That body built up as it were, its
archival collection and in doing so took into account its own organization and its
own needs."16 Both activities and archives are therefore related to the functions
of the organization. As functions change or move from one organizational unit to
another, archival records change or follow the functions. While a function is an
abstract idea, a competence is connected to a person or office. It is the area of
responsibility that an office or officer has within a function. As Duranti expresses
it,

15S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives,
Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archives and Records Management (Carbondale:
Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 110-113; P.J. Scott et. al., "Archives and
16Muller, Feith and Fruin, Manual, 57. (The word "collection" used here is a translation of the
Dutch word "archief" which is more properly translated as fonds. Using "collection" was an
American translator's choice to make the text understandable to an audience having no concept
of fonds d'archives.)
"competence is the authority and capacity of carrying out a
determined sphere of activities within one function, attributed to a
given office or an individual."\textsuperscript{17} For example, one of the abstract functions of a museum may be to educate the public. A particular museum may assign responsibility for activities falling under that function to different administrative offices over time. Each of these offices then has the competence to carry out certain defined activities that comprise portions of the function of educating the public.

A functional analysis is useful when records are defined as documents produced by transactions whose effects are recognized by a social group and the system of rules that controls the conduct of its affairs, that is, by a juridical system.\textsuperscript{18} Records are only those documents that result from juridically relevant acts, that is those acts whose results are recognized by the juridical system.\textsuperscript{19} Put another way, archives include only those documents that are connected to transactions, which are acts that change or affect the relations between the persons involved.\textsuperscript{20} Such acts are aimed at accomplishing definable functions within the juridical system that are set out in a mandate for the juridical person under consideration. A museum is such a juridical person with a mandate recognized within a larger juridical system. At the same time various officers within a museum are assigned the competency or authority to carry out various activities aimed at accomplishing one or more functions. It is these activities that produce records.

\textsuperscript{17}Duranti, "Diplomatics: Part III," 19, n.10.
\textsuperscript{18}Duranti, "Diplomatics: Part II," 5.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{20}"Select List," 7.
As will be seen in Chapter One, museums as juridical persons did not exist until they had mandates authorizing them to carry out their proper functions. Before that occurred, we can say only that there existed collections of objects whose functions are difficult or even impossible to define with any certainty. It is for social scientists to study what purposes these collections served in the minds of their collectors, but an archivist cannot determine clearly what functions those "pre-museum" collections or the documentation arising from them might have served. It can only be stated that modern museums with definable mandates have certain common functions, and that earlier collections appear to have been brought together for both similar and different purposes. Chapter II examines the various activities within museum functions, and which records are created by those activities. Chapter III discusses which persons have the competency to perform various activities and functions, and how they are organized within museum structures. Chapter IV discusses and makes recommendations for the appraisal for selection of museum records. That is, it discusses the value of the records to the creating organization, as well as to external users, and makes recommendations about which should be considered for permanent retention.

Museums then are particular kinds of cultural organizations with definable common functions and activities. The nature of museum archives is determined

by their functions and activities, by the organizational structures of particular institutions, and by the functional competencies of various officers within those organizational structures. Such an analysis and resulting knowledge is a necessary basis for the arrangement and description of museum archives. The physical and intellectual form of documents, the kinds of information they contain, their importance for retention and how they are arranged within the fonds are all determined by the museum functions and activities, and how the competencies for museum activities are distributed and organized within the institution. A functional analysis will also enable museums to organize their own records so as to make the information they contain more accessible to themselves and to others.
Museums are among the most visible of all cultural institutions. They exist in nearly every community in a confusing abundance of types covering everything from archaeology, history and art to flora, fauna, and practically any aspect of human and natural history. Though important in the cultural life of society, museums have always played an important economic role, never more so than today when public and private museums serve as major tourist attractions. There is a large literature on museums and museology that addresses the history and functions of museums, descriptions and guides to various institutions, and practical manuals on how to organize and operate them. However, very little has been written about museum records, particularly in the light of archival theory. Most works touching on museum records consider only those that document museum collections, that is the various ways of registering, cataloguing and accessing information about objects in museum collections. Moreover, many archivists working in museum environments have often viewed their responsibilities as pertaining to documentary materials about persons and things acquired from outside their own institutions. Given the importance of museums as cultural, scientific and educational institutions, museum archives need to be understood within the context of archival theory that can clarify the functions, activities, and documentary processes of museums.
While each institution needs to be understood individually, it is possible and desirable to study museums in the abstract, to provide a means of understanding any such institution. As with the records of any person or corporate body, the records of museums are determined by the mandate, functions and organizational structure of any particular museum. This means that there will necessarily be differences between the archives of various museums, and that only a study of an individual institution can reveal the true nature of its records. It is nevertheless true that all museums have common functions and certain common records that spring from those common functions and activities.

A good beginning point is the definition of what a museum is. One very simple definition from a UNESCO publication on museums states that "a museum in its simplest form consists of a building to house collections of objects for inspection, study and enjoyment." 22

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says much the same thing with more words "...the museum is an institution that assembles, studies, and conserves objects representative of nature and man in order to set them before the public for the sake of information, education, and enjoyment." 23

The American Association of Museums defines a museum as

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"an organized and permanent non-profit institution, essentially educational or aesthetic in purpose, with professional staff, which owns and utilizes tangible objects, cares for them, and exhibits them to the public on some regular schedule." 24

The Canadian Museums Association characterizes museums as existing "for the purpose of conserving and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment objects and specimens of educational and cultural value, including artistic, scientific, historical, and technological material." 25

The International Council of Museums defines a Museum as: "a non-profit, permanent institution, in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment." 26

In still another definition of a museum, the British Museologist, Timothy Ambrose quotes the Scottish Museums Council that says a museum is:

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24 E.P. Alexander, Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979), 5.
"an institution which collects, documents, preserves, and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit."²⁷

These general and very similar definitions apply to a wide variety of institutions including historical museums, art galleries, zoological gardens, botanical gardens, aquaria, planeteria, historical houses and sites, and even theme parks. All writers on museums take a functional approach in their attempts to define what is a museum and, when seen from the broad functional point of view, all of the above-mentioned types of institutions are museums by virtue of their functions. They are museums because of what they do, not because of what they collect and exhibit. Museologists recognize the need to understand museums in the light of their functions, but they usually consider museum functions, and their evolution, in order to discuss how, or how well, museums have carried out their roles in society over time or at a particular time or place. An archivist however, is interested in understanding how museums and their functions have evolved, in order to make museum records understandable within their proper context of creation. Only then can museum records tell their own kind of truth about the institutions, people, and actions that created them.

The various definitions quoted above mention five functions: collecting objects, preserving objects, studying objects and subjects, exhibiting objects, and educating the public. However, since "function" is defined as "all of the activities aimed to accomplish one purpose, considered abstractly", these five functions need to be revised. Museum activities, like those of any organization,

²⁷Ibid.
are inter-dependent and two of the functions (studying and exhibiting objects) are actually sub-functions of others. Their activities are not aimed at the single purpose as stated but, rather, are aimed at supporting one or more of the other functions. Studying objects (research) is seldom undertaken in museums in order to expand the sum of human knowledge, that is, to conduct basic research for its own sake. In the nineteenth century many large museums did conduct basic research, particularly in the fields of anthropology, paleontology, and archaeology. In this century research of this type has been taken over more and more by university departments and it has atrophied in museums. Museum research is carried out in order to provide support for the other museum functions. Research is required for the collecting, preserving, educating and self-sustaining functions of museums, making the studying of objects and subjects a sub-function of all of them. In the same way, the activities comprising "exhibiting objects" are not aimed at exhibition as a purpose in its own right. Rather, objects are exhibited in order to educate the public, which makes "exhibiting objects" a sub-function of the function "educating the public."

This makes for three substantive museum functions: collecting objects, preserving objects, and educating the public. To this list can be added a fourth function, sustaining itself, which encompasses all of the familiar activities required to keep an institution running. These activities include: setting policy, planning, communicating with the public, and other facilitative or housekeeping activities. A study of the history of museums shows that their functions have remained constant, and even collections that predate the creation of museums as we know them had at least some similar characteristics.

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HISTORY OF MUSEUMS

Museums of course centre around the creation, use and maintenance of collections of meaningful objects. If collecting such objects is not basic to human nature it nevertheless has an intimate connection with human culture. As one writer has noted, museums represent the inheritance of one of the oldest behaviors of human kind. While societies create collections of objects, those collections have helped to create human cultures. From earliest times people have collected objects for a variety of practical and symbolic purposes. However, these objects had some practical or other role that kept them in use or in circulation. The long trail that leads to the development of museums begins with the removal of objects from everyday use or circulation and their elevation to some kind of special status.

In his useful discussion of the nature of collections, Krzysztof Pomian defines a "collection" (as opposed to any other group of objects) as "a set of natural or artificial objects, kept temporarily or permanently out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection in enclosed places adapted specifically for that purpose and put on display." This definition of a collection will apply to the use of the word hereafter in this paper. Seen in this manner, collections as such date back to Neolithic times when the widespread custom of burying the dead with their possessions began. People of high status in particular were buried

31Ibid., 11.
with valuable possessions that helped to confer or maintain their status even after death. As Pomian points out, burial collections were removed from economic circulation in perpetuity, were given special protection in tombs (with elaborate means of hiding and protecting the treasures inside), and were placed on display, not for the living, but for the dead. It can be seen then, that even in the early stages of civilization collections of this sort have some of the characteristics of what came to be museums.\(^{32}\)

Collections were also associated with temples where, particularly for ancient Greek and Roman civilization, objects were offered to the gods and put on display. It is from the Greek that our word museum has evolved. In classical Greece a "museion" was a temple or place dedicated to the muses, the nine goddesses of epic poetry, music, love poetry, oratory, tragedy, comedy, the dance, and astronomy.\(^{33}\) The Latin word for this is "museum". More than just collections of objects, these were places or institutions of research, scholarship, and education. Plato's academy in the fourth century B.C. and Aristotle's Lyceum, with its own buildings, senior scholars, and junior fellows, were such museums.\(^{34}\) They were both precursors to the famous museum at Alexandria founded in the third century B.C. by Ptolemy and destroyed in the third century A.D. This institution had collections for display and study (statues of thinkers, astronomical and surgical instruments, natural history collections, and a botanical and zoological garden), but it was primarily an institute of philosophical study, which attracted prominent scholars who lived and worked there at state expense.\(^{35}\) So, with the Greeks, collections took on added significance for their

\(^{32}\)Ibid., 12,13.
\(^{33}\)Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 6.
\(^{35}\)Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 6.
research and educational value. The museum at Alexandria also represented the encyclopedic scope that we associate with the modern museum. Research and lectures ranged from philosophy, to medicine, myths, zoology, and geography.36

Other Greek and Roman temples also served as repositories for collections. Objects valued for their aesthetic qualities, historical or religious associations, or magical properties were offered or dedicated to the gods and stored in temples.37 These objects were often made of valuable metals like gold, silver, or bronze and could be statuettes, vessels, paintings, or even bullion. The paintings were made on planks of wood, in Greek "pinas". So a collection of paintings, or the place in which they were stored and exhibited, was called a "pinakotheke".

Another aspect of collections in the ancient world was the display of loot taken from defeated cities or peoples by victorious leaders. The Romans in particular displayed booty in victory processions and in temples. Sometimes the collections became too large for the temples, and special storage and exhibit buildings were erected for them, or they were displayed in public forums, gardens, theatres, or baths. Wealthy generals, patricians, or emperors often developed their own private collections of objects taken from throughout the empire.38 As Pomian points out, the possession and display of collections somehow bestowed the properties that they possessed upon the owner of the collection. The city or individual owner of a collection would be exhibiting its

37 Alexander, Museums in Motion, 7.
38 Ibid.
glory, wealth, taste, holiness, generosity, or prestige through its collections. The very fact that these objects were removed from their original functional place in society heightened their prestige and value. Roman collectors would go to great expense and would compete with one another to acquire the most prestigious objects. Collections of objects in temples and other public places also played an economic role as people often travelled, either as ancient versions of tourists or as pilgrims, to view the sacred items or wonders of other cities. For the powerful and wealthy, private collections served to confirm their position and to impress courtiers, visitors, and other rulers.

The end of the ancient world saw the end of the study and educational features of collections. An encyclopedic museum like that at Alexandria would not appear again until the modern era. However, collections, in the sense being discussed here, continued to exist in the West throughout the medieval period. The Church acquired collections with both prestigious and sacred values. Most prominent were sacred relics associated with saints, the most important of which were parts of saints' bodies. Often relics were encased in containers called reliquaries that were made from precious materials or decorated with them. One of the great ironies of the history of collecting in the West is that in our time the sacred relics are no longer considered valuable or desirable, but the reliquaries are. As various churches became wealthier they acquired other precious or curious objects, or ones made from precious materials, all to the greater glory of the Church and of God. Churches with particularly sacred or valuable collections became destinations for pilgrims from far and wide, and these valued objects bestowed prestige and economic benefits upon the cities and regions in

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40 Ibid., 16.
which they were located. When holy relics were displayed in processions on the
saint's day with which they were associated, viewing them was an edifying and
spiritual experience.\(^{41}\) Again, we can see the connections between these
medieval collections and those in a modern museum. Objects were collected
and removed from the economic circuit, cared for, stored in specially constructed
places, and were exhibited for the edification of the public.

The other type of collection that existed was royal collections. Royal
treasures, which included jewellery, regalia, dishes, clothing, armour, natural
curiosities, and peculiar instruments, had a largely ceremonial purpose, but were
nonetheless rarely used. These objects were put on public display during state
occasions such as coronations and funerals.\(^{42}\) It seems apparent that, similar to
private collections of the wealthy and powerful in Classical times, such medieval
royal collections were meant to display the status, power and glory of the ruler.
As Pomian mentions, "it is social hierarchy that leads to the birth of collections,
those sets of objects kept out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection
and put on display."\(^{43}\)

Our modern concept of the museum began to develop with private
collections accumulated during the Renaissance period. New secular and
scientific attitudes, beginning in the second half of the fourteenth century, and
the birth of a new kind of scholarship, called humanism, led to the development
of new types of private collections. Humanist scholars, with a profound respect
for the art and learning of the classical Greek and Roman civilizations, and an

\(^{41}\text{Ibid.}, 18.\)
\(^{42}\text{Ibid.}\)
\(^{43}\text{Ibid.}, 32.\)
avid curiosity about the natural world, collected ancient manuscripts, art works, and curiosities of nature. As these new attitudes spread throughout society, wealthy individuals and royalty also put together similar collections that not only served the familiar functions of displaying the status of the collector, but also served as the source of study and edification of the collector, as well as for scholars who were afforded access to the collections. In this way an ancient function of such collections, study (or research) had been revived. As travel increased, and as European explorers returned from the "new world", Asia, and Africa, collections of "rarities" and "oddities" began to appear.

At the same time new words appeared to express the new kinds of collections. The Italian word "galleria" was applied to a long hall, or gallery, with lighting from the side, that was used to exhibit sculptures and pictures. Another word, cabinet (in Italian "gabinetto") was used for a usually square-shaped room that contained a wide variety of objects such as stuffed animals, natural curiosities (hence the expression "cabinet of curiosities"), works of art, coins, medallions, and a host of artifacts of human culture. The Germans called such rooms "Wunderkammer". Universities also acquired collections for study, in particular botanical gardens, which were were also created by physicians, apothecaries, and herbalists. The specimens in the gardens were employed for scientific study and for medicinal uses.

Even the word museum re-appeared in the Renaissance period. In fifteenth century Florence, Cosimo de Medici's collection of codices and curios

\[^{44}\text{Alexander, }\textit{Museums in Motion, }8.\]
\[^{45}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{46}\text{Ibid.}\]
was referred to as a museum.\textsuperscript{47} By the early modern period the word museum took on the meaning of encyclopedic knowledge of a subject, or a "complete circle of learning."\textsuperscript{48} All these new collections had common functions. They were all collections of objects that were kept, studied, and exhibited for their aesthetic and scientific values. These collections were responsible for much scientific advancement in Europe, particularly in the field of taxonomy. The modern public museum owes its origins to these private collections and museums of the early modern period, whether they were accumulated by royalty, scholars, or by individuals wealthy enough to indulge their interests and aesthetic tastes.

At this point the question can be asked, what is the difference between a collection and a museum? If we are using Pomian's definition of a collection ("a set of natural or artificial objects, kept temporarily or permanently out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection in enclosed places adapted specifically for that purpose and put on display") there appears to be little, if any, difference between it and a museum as defined at the beginning of this chapter. It is true that the purposes of the two are much the same, but there are important differences. While a museum requires a collection, a collection alone does not make a museum. People amass collections of objects for a variety of reasons: to establish or display status, to glorify themselves, the state or god, to satisfy some inner psychological urge, or for some other purpose. These collections may be displayed and may edify those with access to them but, whatever the reasons for building the collection, the activities of collection, preservation or display were incidental to their functions. The objects were not collected,

\textsuperscript{47}Wittlin, \textit{Museums: In Search of a Useable Future}, 223.
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid.
preserved, studied or displayed for their own sake. Rather, these activities were part of some other political, social, or personal purpose of the collection.

However, once collecting objects, preserving objects, and public education are pursued for their own sakes, absent or removed from spiritual or other concerns, and these collections are institutionalized, museums as we know them exist. It is then that museums, as institutions embodying these functions come into existence as legal personalities, that is juridical or artificial persons. Museums may be public institutions created by the sovereign or state, and endowed with the power to carry out certain functions. There may also be museums that, while open to the public and operating for the public benefit, are creations of private organizations or corporate bodies. Even these private museums are incorporated as juridical persons to operate within the legal system.

Turning to how collections became museums and how their functions developed, Pomian mentions four patterns of museum formation. The first pattern, which he calls traditional, refers to collections belonging to institutions that acquired them in the course of their normal activities. This pattern encompasses the treasure houses of churches, royal palaces and teaching establishments. Churches for centuries acquired treasures that were often on display to the public at specified times during the year, or to certain privileged individuals. An example that he gives is that of St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice which from the thirteenth century displayed the contents of its treasure house on the main altar five times during the year. Churches that accumulated paintings,

49Pomian, Collectors and Curiosities, 261.
sculptures and other art objects constantly displayed them to all who entered. Princes and kings, apart from their own love of luxury, felt that their position required them to acquire treasures and to show them off to the world. This conspicuous consumption of treasures and art continued even when the ruler had no personal interest in them. The collections were often exhibited to the public, to those who attended court and to guests of the ruler.

The collections of churches and sovereigns often developed into museums through an evolutionary and subtle change in purpose. Where once the collections served the purpose of glorifying the collector, demonstrating the power of the state, or serving some religious or spiritual purpose, eventually they became no longer useful for the purpose for which they were originally collected. At this point the collections were often institutionalized, seen as objects from the past with a particular history, but existing now in a different realm and serving a different purpose. In this way many obsolete collections evolved into museum collections. Universities and other teaching institutions also acquired collections for scientific and educational purposes that were exhibited to, and studied by, students and scholars. As the collections became extensive, and were seen as having educational value to the general public, they were institutionalized into museum collections as well. Examples of these evolutionary museums are the Vatican museums, countless churches, crown collections of Great Britain, the Uffizi in Florence, and the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg (which opened to the public in 1852).\footnote{Ibid., 263.}
The second pattern Pomian calls "revolutionary", in that the museum was founded by public decree from collections seized by the state from the homes and palaces of their owners, and then displayed to the public in converted or specially constructed buildings. The best example of this pattern is the Louvre in Paris, converted as a result of the revolution from a royal palace to a state institution. One public authority or sovereign (the revolutionary government), acting in the name of the people, supplanted another (the king). Henceforth the Louvre became a state institution mandated in law to act as a museum, confirming in the minds of the revolutionaries that what was the king's was the state's, not the king's private property. This process was emulated in other French cities and by those countries affected by the ideas of the French Revolution. Such museums also exist in those countries where revolutions of the twentieth century have occurred. With this pattern the functions of the museum are usually laid out in the decree or law that founded it. Some examples are the decree of 12 February 1807 that instituted the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, and the Prado in Madrid, founded through a decree of Joseph Bonaparte in 1809.

The third pattern for the creation of museums Pomian calls "evergetic" from the name given in ancient times to people who were benefactors of cities. By this he refers to the practise of wealthy individuals donating their private collections to the community. Such a donation is usually recorded, along with the functions that the donated collection is to serve, in some kind of legal document or legal act. Examples of this are drawn from as early as the sixteenth century.

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51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 264.
53 Ibid.
century with donations to the Archaeological Museum in Venice as set out in "statuario publico" in 1523, 1587 and succeeding legacies. This kind of museum creation is the rule in the United States, beginning with the Peale Museum in Philadelphia in 1794 that began as the private collection of Charles Wilson Peale. The Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C., was created in 1846 as the result of the bequest of Englishman James Smithson. In the case of the Smithsonian an act of Congress was also required to set up the institution, which has evolved into a conglomerate of museums. This benefaction of museums by wealthy (and not so wealthy) individuals increased through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Pomian calls his fourth pattern of public museum formation the "commercial model", which refers to the purchase of private collections for museum purposes. Sometimes such purchases constitute the initial collection of a museum but, no matter how the museum was begun, purchase of artifacts is practiced by all museums at some time. However, this commercial model of creation implies that the museum was already legally in existence before the purchase took place. Only a legal entity can carryout such transactions. The best example of this is the British Museum, which was created by an act of Parliament in 1753 to purchase the collection of Sir Hans Sloane. Since then, this first great national museum has grown through donation, purchase and by collecting expeditions, but its evolution has been through legislated and legal mandate.

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^Ibid., 265.
55 Alexander, Museums in Motion, 11.
56 Pomian, Collectors and Curiosities, 266.
How are these patterns of museum creation played out in the context of Canadian society and the Canadian legal system? The history of museums in Canada is a microcosm of the history of museums generally. To some degree many of the characteristics of the development of museums already discussed are present in the much younger society of Canada. For instance, the long history of church collections in Europe is reflected in the collections of religious institutions in Quebec. In the eighteenth century Quebec priests used natural history collections as educational visual aids, and churches acquired religious relics. Laval University had a geology and mineralogy collection by the 1790s that was institutionalized as a museum in 1852.57

Other early developments in Canadian museums took place in the Maritimes where collections were closely associated with educational institutions and purposes. They have their lineage in the Mechanics Institutes that began with George Birkbeck in Glasgow, Scotland in 1799. Birkbeck's intent was to educate workers through lectures, and other educational and social activities. His institutes spread throughout Britain in the early nineteenth century. They commonly had reading rooms that were often supplemented by exhibition of objects related to the educational activities of the institute.58 This type of institution had a strong influence in the Maritimes where educational collections were associated with academies in Nova Scotia in the early nineteenth century. The first Mechanics Institute Museum was founded in Halifax in 1831. Its collection was moved to Dalhousie University in 1833, where it remained until the creation of a Provincial Museum.

58 Ibid., 42.
In Newfoundland a cabinet of curiosities was exhibited to the public in St. John's in the early 1800's, and the St. John's Museum was founded in 1849. In New Brunswick the natural history collection of Dr. Abraham Gesner, which he exhibited to the public beginning in 1840, became part of the St. John Mechanics Institute in 1846. This pattern of a private collection developing into a public museum was common in Canada. The first state operated museum in Canada began in Montreal. Originating as a collection of art that was opened as a privately owned museum in 1826, it was purchased by the Government of Quebec in 1836. This is also a common pattern in Canada, in that governments at all three levels (federal, provincial and municipal) have been involved in the establishment of museums to a far greater extent than in the United States.

Canada's national museum developed from the Geological Survey of Canada, which was founded in Montreal by the government of Lower Canada in 1842, after lobbying by two influential societies, the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, and the Natural History Society of Montreal. The Survey established a museum in 1853 and in 1880 both were transferred to Ottawa. In 1901 the Department of the Interior was given authority over the national museum. A year later parliament passed an act for the National Gallery, whose origins go back to 1880. Though there was no act specific to the national museum until 1927, the museum was governed throughout by various pieces of legislation.  

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59 Ibid., 109.
60 Ibid., 110, 124-128.
In Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) developed through the provincial government's concern for education, dating back to the establishment of a museum by the government of Upper Canada under the Public School Act in 1853. Originally attached to the Toronto Normal School to help educate teachers, and later to the University of Toronto, the museum was also open to the general public.\(^{61}\) The University Act of 1906 confirmed that a museum was necessarily part of the educational responsibilities of the province and of the university.\(^{62}\) The Royal Ontario Museum was formally established by an act of the Ontario legislature in 1912.

In western Canada, museums were established in a similar manner by societies, universities and governments. The Universities of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon and Alberta all established natural history and science collections early in this century, and the City of Calgary founded a municipal museum and art gallery in 1911.\(^{63}\) In British Columbia, the provincial museum was begun by Orders-In-Council of the provincial cabinet in 1886 as the result of a petition from the public. This petition stated "that a provincial museum should be established in order to preserve specimens of the natural products and Indian antiquities and manufactures of the province and to classify and exhibit the same for the information of the public." This petition and the order-in-council may be taken to express the mandate of the provincial museum until the passing of the first museum act by the legislature in 1913.\(^{64}\)


\(^{62}\)Ibid., 12.

\(^{63}\)Key, Beyond Four Walls, 152-157.

MUSEUM MANDATES AND FUNCTIONS

Museums, like all formally constituted organizations, have mandates that are laid out in some formal legal or policy instrument. A mandate is "the authority vested in an agency, i.e., its mission," and it is understood, to administer a matter, usually stating the functions that the organization or agency is to perform. The instrument conveying the mandate will vary. A public museum may have its own act, although the activities might have been carried on for some time before the act was passed. Alternatively, its establishment might simply be and remain a matter of internal administrative policy of the organization in which it exists as an agency ("an administrative body having the delegated authority to act competently as an agent of a higher body"). Usually, museums fall into the class of organization or agency (public ones are both) called institution ("a firmly established organization devoted to the promotion of a particular object, especially one of a public, educational, or charitable character."). To be firmly established, public institutions are usually given their own act. Private institutions would likely incorporate, and the articles of incorporation or constitution and by-laws of the organization would establish its mandate and functions. In order to look more deeply into this question, the historical evolution of the mandates and functions of three Canadian museums will now be examined. These museums are at the federal, provincial, and local

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67 Ibid., 10.
Canada's national museum, now called The Canadian Museum of Civilization, began under the Geological Survey of Canada. In the legislative act governing the Geological Survey the maintenance of a museum is specifically mentioned, and the functions of the Survey and of its museum are combined. In the 1877 statutes the act is entitled "An act to make better provision respecting the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada and for the maintenance of the Museum in connection therewith."68 The act states that:

"The objects and purposes of the Survey and the Museum in connection therewith shall be, to elucidate the geology and mineralogy of Canada and make a full scientific examination of the various strata, soils, coals, oils and mineral waters, and of its fauna and flora, so as to afford to the mining, metallurgical and other interests of the country, correct and full information as to its character and resources."69

Even this very general outline of "objects and purposes" of the Geological Survey and of its Museum makes plain the basic educational purpose of the museum, requiring both research and the dissemination of knowledge. The Act goes on to state specifically how the Survey and the museum are to carry out their objectives. Section 3 states:

68 Statutes of Canada, 1877, 40 Victoria, ch.29.
69 Ibid., section 2.
"The persons in charge of the said survey shall -

(a) collect, classify and arrange such specimens as necessary to insure a complete and exact knowledge of the mineralogical resources of the several Provinces and Territories of Canada; carry on palaeontological investigations, study and report upon the fauna and flora of Canada, and make such other researches as will best tend to ensure the carrying into effect the objects and purposes of this act.

(b) collect the necessary materials for a Canadian museum of natural history, mineralogy and geology."

Section 8 of the Act makes it clear that the functions of the museum and of the Survey are inseparable.

"The museum shall be open to the public... and shall be furnished with such books, instruments and apparatus as are necessary for scientific reference and for the prosecution of the survey..."

The Survey's museum was given the authority to collect, preserve, and exhibit certain specimens to further knowledge (that is, educate) of Canadian natural history, mineralogy, and geology. Collection is specifically mentioned in the duties of the head of the survey. Classification and arrangement are part of the activities of the function of preservation. Exhibition is implied in the statement that the museum "shall be open to the public." Finally, the function of education is clear in the exhortation to "insure a complete and exact knowledge...to afford...correct and full information."

70 ibid., section 3.
71 ibid., section 8.
In 1907 the Survey and its museum came under the Department of Mines and legislation instructed the Department "to collect and prepare, for exhibition in the Museum, specimens of the different ores and associated rocks and minerals of Canada, and other such materials as are necessary to afford an accurate exhibition of the mining and metallurgical resources and industries of Canada."\(^{72}\)

In 1927 the Geological Survey of Canada was dissolved. Its technical and geological functions were retained by the Department of Mines, while its functions of collecting and preserving objects for the purpose of public education were transferred to the newly named National Museum of Canada (which remained responsible to the Minister of Mines). The National Museum was now an agency with its own mandate separate from that of any other. In 1966 the legislation stated that:

"the secretary of State of Canada has the control, management and administration of the National Museum of Canada and shall acquire, collect, classify, conserve, display, store and be generally responsible for the safe custody of such objects as are necessary to acquire and disseminate knowledge of human history, natural history, science, technology, and other such subjects and shall conduct and promote research and other activities designed to further these objectives."\(^{73}\)

Again, we can see the three functions within the legislation.

\(^{72}\)Statutes of Canada, 1907, ch.29, s.6(e) and Revised Statutes of Canada, s.10(e).
\(^{73}\)Statutes of Canada, 1966-1967, ch.34, s.2.
1. collecting - "acquire, collect"
2. preserving - "classify... conserve... store and be generally responsible for the safe custody of such objects..."
3. educating - "disseminate knowledge..." Its sub-functions of studying and exhibiting are mentioned as well, "to acquire... knowledge... conduct and promote research...", and to "display."

In 1970 legislation established the National Museums of Canada Corporation to manage the National Gallery of Canada, a museum of human history, a museum of natural history and a museum of science and technology. This legislation serves to point out the general applicability of the three functions of museums discussed in this paper. Using similar language, subsequent legislation re-stated the familiar functions. By 1990 the Museums Act established the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Canadian Museum of Nature and the National Museum of Science and Technology as separate agencies of the Government of Canada. However, all are mandated the same functions in similar language. As well as mandating activities comprising the three functions, the Act specifically mentions some that comprise the fourth function of sustaining itself. For example, for the function of collecting the institutions can "acquire property by gift, bequest or otherwise." In the category of sustaining itself, they are also permitted to "operate restaurants, lounges, parking facilities, shops and other facilities for the use of the public." This discussion should be sufficient to demonstrate that

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74 Revised Statutes of Canada, 1970, ch.N-12, s.6.
75 Statutes of Canada, 1990, ch.3.
76 Ibid., section 6(1), (a) and (l).
77 Ibid., section 9(n).
throughout its history the national museum (or museums) has carried out the same functions even though its activities have varied over time.

As with the national museum, the impetus for the Royal British Columbia Museum came at the urging of a group of prominent citizens who presented a petition to the provincial government in January of 1886. The petition stated:

"It has long been felt desirable that a provincial Museum should be established in order to preserve specimens of the natural products and Indian Antiquities and Manufactures of the Province and to classify and exhibit the same for the information of the public...It is a source of general regret that objects connected with the ethnology of the country are being yearly taken away in great numbers to the enrichment of other museums and private collections while no adequate means are provided for their retention in the province." The Cabinet responded positively to the petition, and later that year announced the opening of the provincial museum.

Initially, because the museum had only one curator, who was also the director, supporters of the museum found it necessary to form an auxiliary named the Natural History Society of British Columbia. The constitution of the society stated that "the object of the society shall be to acquire and promote a more extended knowledge of the natural history of the province and to act as an independent auxiliary to the provincial museum." Since its inception in 1890

78Peter Corley Smith, *White Bears and Other Curiosities*, 142.
80Ibid., *White Bears and Other Curiosities*, 26.
81Ibid.
the society, now named The Friends of the Royal British Columbia Museum, has helped the museum to fulfill its mandate by holding lectures, publishing papers, conducting research and by amassing collections for the benefit of the museum.

One of the ways by which the functions and activities of a museum, or any other institution, can be ascertained is through the study of its annual reports. The British Columbia provincial museum began publishing annual reports in 1913, which it was directed to do by the first museum act passed by the legislature and promulgated that same year. The act states in section 4 that the purposes of the museum shall be:

"(a.) to secure and preserve specimens illustrating the natural history of the province:
(b.) to collect anthropological material relating to the aboriginal races of the province:
(c.) to obtain information respecting natural sciences relating particularly to the natural history of the province, and to increase and diffuse knowledge regarding the same."  

This section outlines all three of the functions of a museum: collecting, preserving, and educating (diffuse knowledge), and the sub-function of studying (to obtain information, and to increase...knowledge). Section B refers to another sub-function of educating, displaying, when it says "The Provincial Museum...shall be open to the public."  

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^Statutes of British Columbia, 1913, ch.50, s.4
^Ibid., section 8.
The mandated functions of the provincial museum have not changed in succeeding legislation. The 1967 and 1979 museum acts changed the wording slightly but not the intention.

"The objects of the Provincial Museum shall be
(a.) to secure and preserve specimens and other objects which illustrate the natural history and human history of the Province; and
(b.) to increase and diffuse knowledge in these fields by research, exhibits, publications and other means."\(^{84}\)

As with the previous investigation of the mandate of the national museum, this should be sufficient to illustrate the point that museums have common basic functions.

A very common origin for museums, and for community museums in particular, is for a group of private citizens to form a society with the purpose of founding and operating a museum. Such a society is then recognized under the legal system of the state through a legal instrument or act, and the society typically then operates under a constitution and set of by-laws. In Canada community associations are incorporated under provincial statute, and in the province of British Columbia they are incorporated under the Societies Act.\(^{85}\) Incorporation under the act permits the society to act as a legal person and to carry out its functions under the law. The Societies Act regulates how the society must operate in many details from financial reporting and auditing, to the duties and powers of officers. It even stipulates many of the items to be included in a constitution and by-laws.

\(^{84}\)Revised Statutes of British Columbia, 1979, ch.293, s.3.
\(^{85}\)Revised Statutes of British Columbia, 1979, ch.390.
Museums that are founded and operated by private societies follow one of three patterns. They may remain under the operation of a private society (though they may be funded by grants from a government body, or through a combination of private and public funding), or they may evolve into government-run institutions, or they may be governed by a combination of a private society and government. This latter type can be rather complex and can result in some areas of overlap or "grey" areas of jurisdiction. The museum in Kamloops is a good example of this pattern of development.

The museum in Kamloops had its origins in the Thompson Valley District Museum and Historical Association, which was formed in 1936 by a group of citizens who were interested in the natural and human history of the region. In its constitution the society noted that it was duly incorporated under the Societies Act of British Columbia, and stated its objects as:

"the collection of data relating to the history of the district with a view to preserving same for the use of present and future generations; also the gathering and preservation of relics, photos and any material which may be of interest for the purpose of a museum."87

In this section the functions of the association that are clearly enunciated are collecting and preserving. The function of educating is more hinted at than stated with the words "for the use of present and future generations." In section 4 the powers of the organization include purchase or rental of property for

86 Thompson Valley District Museum and Historical Association. Constitution and By-laws, 1936, article 1, section 1.
87 Ibid., article 1, section 2.
storage and display of museum articles, and that a complete record of such articles shall be kept. This article then includes the sub-functions of displaying and studying.

In 1939 the association changed its name to the Kamloops Museum Association but did not otherwise change its constitution and stated functions. Succeeding revisions of the constitution remained somewhat unclear at points; the 1952 version did not mention displaying artifacts, even though the museum was open to the public and indeed was displaying artifacts. As revised in 1966, the constitution stated the functions as to "collect all things that shall or may pertain to or illustrate the history of the area; to catalogue, index and display such collections; and to promote interest in and information about local history, the natural resources and human interests of the area."88 The latest constitution, revised in 1981 and 1987, states:

"The purposes of the Association are:
(a) To gather, preserve, catalogue and index information, records and objects concerning the natural resources, wildlife and all phases of human history relating to the Thompson River drainage basin, in accordance with the Kamloops Museum Association's collections policy.
(b) to maintain and develop a museum or museums and an archives for preserving, recording and displaying such material for public enjoyment and education."89
From the various versions of its constitution, it can be seen that the Kamloops Museum throughout its history has had the three functions that have been addressed throughout this chapter - collecting objects, preserving objects, and educating the public. These functions remained constant as the institution evolved over the decades. Initially the museum was operated entirely by volunteers, and funding was from private sources as well as from a small municipal grant. The amount of public funding grew over time with the city covering most of the cost of a new museum/library building in 1956. The entirely volunteer position of curator became a paid one in 1966 when the curator became an employee of the municipality. In 1977 an Assistant Archivist position was added and a third position of Museum Technician was created in 1979. These three full time staff members were all direct employees of the city while a half dozen or so part time workers, called attendants, were paid out of a yearly operating grant from the city to the museum association. The association has continued to be involved in the operation of the museum even though its control has been lessened over time.

By 1989 all employees of the museum were direct employees of the city and members of the civic union. In that same year the city and the association drew up an agreement with the intent of clearly stating the relationship between them. In this agreement the Kamloops Museum Association is given responsibility for the Kamloops Museum and Archives, a title mentioned in the mandate for the first time. Since its inception in 1937, the museum was also the repository for archival and library materials on the history of the Kamloops region. Beginning in the 1970s, the institution was referred to in its publicity, and on its letterhead, as the Kamloops Museum and Archives. The 1989 agreement formalized this name and indicated that it was jointly operated by the
Kamloops Museum Association and the City of Kamloops. The agreement stated:

"It is hereby understood and agreed that the Kamloops Museum Association has sole rights to and custody of the collection of artifacts and archives held in the Kamloops Museum and Archives in the City of Kamloops for the purpose of preservation, research and display for public enjoyment and education.

The collection is controlled and maintained by the curator/archivist and staff hired by the City of Kamloops.

It is further understood and agreed that the Kamloops Museum Association will lease the aforesaid collection, for a sum of $10.00 per annum, to the City of Kamloops on an annual basis.

The policies of the Museum shall be the responsibility of the Association, including the custody and care of all association properties and records. The general operation of the museum shall be conducted by a curator/archivist in accord with the policies of the Association".

The functions stated here correspond exactly with the three functions of museums discussed in this paper. The statement of the museum's functions is clearer even than the association's constitution and, significantly, its revised by-laws are attached to the agreement. The agreement goes on to state that the collection will be controlled and maintained by the curator/archivist and staff of the museum, and that the association shall maintain a board of directors to

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90 "An Agreement between the Kamloops Museum Association and the City of Kamloops Re: The Collection of the Kamloops Museum and Archives", 1989.
"oversee the acquisition management and display of artifacts and archives."\(^9\)

As with the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Royal British Columbia Museum, the Kamloops Museum and Archives well illustrates the fact that all museums have basic common functions that are mandated to them through the legal system of society.

**SUMMARY**

The practical museum functions have remained constant since the inception of modern collections and museums in the Renaissance period. For earlier collections, in the sense described by Krysztof Pomian and adopted in this discussion, the functions can never be ascertained with absolute certainty, and only indirectly. This is because for most of those collections there exists no mandate or documents that record the activities that surrounded them. They did not exist because the collections belonged to individuals and institutions whose primary functions and activities did not involve the collections. The best that can be said for these "pre-museum" collections is that they would logically involve their collectors and owners in activities similar to those of modern museums. Obviously, anyone who wishes to amass a group of objects must carry out collecting activities and, if he or she wishes that collection to last for any length of time, he or she must take steps, however rudimentary, to prevent theft, dispersal or deterioration. It is also apparent from the history of collections and museums that all collections have had some kind of educational or edifying effect upon their viewers.

\(^9\)Ibid.
The history of museums shows that their functions have not changed over time even though their activities have varied. At various times and places museums have emphasized different aspects of study, exhibit and education, or have conducted them in different ways, but the basic functions have remained constant. The functions and activities of any organization determine the nature of that organization's archives, and it is the task of a functional analysis to study and demonstrate the functions and activities of a particular institution or type of institution. Every modern museum has a legal mandate that states the museum's functions and gives it authority to carry them out. The examples of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Royal British Columbia Museum, and the Kamloops Museum and Archives show that it is possible to distinguish three abstract functions of museums. Each function constitutes a grouping of activities aimed to a single purpose. The next chapter will look at specific activities and records from each of the functions.
The study of the history and functions of museums has established that museum records are created by museum offices, agencies or persons as they carry out the proper functions and activities of the institutions. The next step is to outline the specific activities that comprise each museum function and the records that relate to them. This part of the functional analysis enables us to see the functional genesis and nature of museum records, no matter which types of museum officers perform the activities, and no matter how the work is organized in any particular museum. Ultimately, this will facilitate decisions of value in the appraisal of museum records. They can be seen, not in relation to some abstract idea of value, but in relation to their documentation of the functions and activities of an institution.

A function has already been defined as all the activities aimed at accomplishing one purpose, considered abstractly. An activity is "a specific deed, action,...or sphere of activity," or a specific physical or mental act. The four museum functions are: collecting objects, preserving objects, educating the public, and maintaining or sustaining itself. The first three, taken as a whole, define the unique nature of museums while the fourth, sustaining itself, is common to the lives of all organizations. The functions will be approached separately as if they follow one another in a logical or even chronological order. Even though this may often be true (for instance acquisition of an object will

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1The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, College Edition (1968), s.v. "activity".
logically take place before its exhibition), many of these functions are carried out simultaneously, or in close conjunction or relationship with other functions.

Throughout this chapter the concept of a record "series" will be used. A record series has been defined in a number of ways; it is used here to mean:

"File units or documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they result from the same accumulation or filing process, the same function, or the same activity; have a particular form; or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use." \(^2\)

The emphasis here is on the relationship between functions and records. A functional analysis, such as this study of museums, discovers and defines the functions and activities of an organization, and then identifies what records are created or accumulated by the organization as it carries out its proper functions and activities. Looking at the definition of series, it can be seen that there is a direct correlation between a function or activity of an organization and its records.

As with any corporate body, museum activities are very interdependent, each to a greater or lesser degree relating to or supporting the others in order to fulfill an institution's mandate. Nevertheless, it remains possible to group those activities aimed at a single purpose into three substantive functions, plus the facilitative function of sustaining itself. Each of these functions can be broken into sub-groups that, while forming coherent wholes, are not ends in themselves. They are, rather, parts of or support a larger conglomerate of activities that

constitute a single larger purpose or function. These smaller sub-groups are sub-functions of one or more functions. In Museums there are two problematic sub-functions whose activities support or serve a range of functions. These sub-functions are called here "describing objects" and "studying objects and subjects" (research).

The activities that comprise "describing objects" are aimed at bringing objects under physical and intellectual control. Such control is necessary for the performance of many other activities in the education and preservation functions, and even for facilitative activities such as planning. However, the main purpose for describing objects is to further the purpose of maintaining holdings, which makes these activities a sub-function of "preserving holdings". describing objects is a piece of museum business related primarily to preservation of the collections even though it also supports other functions.

The problems concerning the sub-function of "studying objects and subjects" are more difficult to resolve, since research is required for the performance of all museum functions. Study or research can begin even prior to the acquisition of an object as a museum seeks to expand its collections, and continues throughout a museum's functions of acquiring and preserving objects and educating the public. Research is also required for a number of facilitative activities such as budgeting, planning and various kinds of information services. Since studying cannot be readily slotted into any one particular function, it must be studied in relation to each museum function in turn.

Even though each museum has its own system or way of organizing its functions and activities, which will be reflected in its records, what is being
described here are activities and categories of records that are integral to the life of any museum. However, at certain points it may be necessary, for the sake of clarity, to give examples from actual museums. The ones employed here for that purpose, are the Royal British Columbia Museum and the Kamloops Museum and Archives.

1. Collecting Objects

The dictionary definition of "collect" is "to gather together; assemble; to accumulate; make a collection of."\(^3\) The idea of collecting for a museum goes beyond this basic definition and refers to all those activities necessary for the acquisition of objects. The discussion of the history of museums in the previous chapter has shown that the function of collecting objects is the origin of any museum. Most museums begin with a private collection that has been sold, donated or bequeathed to a community or institution. These collections are then added to by further donations, bequests and purchases, by field collecting activities undertaken by museum staff or by expeditions sponsored by the museum, by loans, or by exchange of objects with other museums. All of these methods involve legal acts that require documentation.

Collection or acquisition of an object can begin long before any formal offer is made to the museum, or before a museum begins negotiations for acquisition of the object. Museums often keep track of potential sources of objects that they may wish to acquire. This activity can be called "tracking sources of objects". The documents relating this activity are kept in files.

\(^3\)The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, s.v. "collect".
called "source files", that are files by name of the owner or subject or type of object.

If a person or institution offers an object for sale, donation, exchange or loan, or leaves it by bequest, the museum will first consider whether or not it wishes to accept the offer. The first activity then is consideration of an offer. In common practice, the museum makes out a temporary receipt recording the museum's assumption of physical custody of the object. Although this act does not transfer ownership, it is a legal document that makes the museum responsible for the safe custody of the object. The temporary receipt identifies the current owner, the nature of the object and its provenance, and records the terms of the offer to the museum. If the object is not accepted by the museum, it is returned. The temporary receipt (or a return form) and/or a rejection letter will record the return of the object to the owner.

If the object and the conditions of its offer are accepted by the museum, a legal agreement between the owner and the museum is drawn up according to the requirements of the relevant legal system. This is the accessioning activity that transfers legal ownership of the object to the museum. This essential activity permits a museum to legally carry out its other functions in relation to its collection. At this point the object is often given an accession number to identify it. An accession is any object or group of objects, from the same source that has been acquired, or enters into the museum's legal custody, at the same time. Accession documents, such as acquisition agreements, related correspondedence, return forms and temporary receipts will often be kept in files, one for each accession, often referred to as artifact files.
Objects may also be acquired through active field gathering activities such as exhumation and excavation. Field activities may produce correspondence, permits, surveys, maps, inventories, field notes and photographs. These records are often kept separately as project files, as is the case at the Royal British Columbia Museum.4

The terminal activity for any object in the museum’s collection is deaccession, which is to remove the object from the collection. This activity is usually recorded in a deaccession register. Other documents are also created which record the alienation of the object through sale or other legal means.

Acquisition activities and related records are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. tracking sources of objects</td>
<td>source files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. consideration of offer</td>
<td>temporary receipt or other document (i.e. a letter) offering object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. rejection of offer</td>
<td>letter of rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. return of object</td>
<td>temporary receipt or return form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. acceptance of offer</td>
<td>agreement to acquire (by sale, donation, loan, bequest or exchange)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. field gathering or excavation</td>
<td>correspondence, permits, surveys, maps, inventories, field notes, photographs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. deaccession</td>
<td>deaccession register, agreement to transfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. **Preserving Objects**

"Preserve" is defined in the dictionary as "to keep safe from harm or injury; save; to keep up: maintain."[^5] For a museum, preserve refers to all the activities necessary to maintain the objects in its collection. This includes three sub-functions which are: describing objects (maintaining physical and intellectual control), preventing physical deterioration of objects, and restoring and repairing objects. Of course every function must be managed, and there are records of planning, developing and implementing activities in each area. These include various studies, plans, treatment standards, program and project files. These records are essentially administrative in nature and are related to each of the functions rather than being operational records. For instance, the head of a museum division assigned a particular functional responsibility might create program planning records related to it.

The first sub-function of preserving objects is *describing objects*, which refers to all the activities involved in the intellectual and physical control or management of museum collections. The activities in this sub-function are necessary to maintain museum collections, because such maintenance requires that objects be given a place in the institution's holdings, stored properly, and retrieved when necessary. This sub-function can be further sub-divided into three parts: registering objects, cataloguing objects, and maintaining inventory.

*Registering objects* means to assign an object to "an individual place in a list or register of the materials in the collection in such a manner that it cannot be

confused with any other object listed. In registration the object is given a
unique identifying registration number (which some museums call an accession
or catalogue number) that is physically applied or attached to it. This number is
taken from a list or register so that the object receives the next available number.
Next the object is entered into the accession register, which is a list of
accessions in numerical order describing and identifying each object (or group of
objects within the accession) acquired by the museum. The museum will also
likely keep a series of accession files (called artifact files at the Royal B.C.
Museum) which contain legal documentation of the acquisition of the objects in
the museum's collection, as well as other materials that document their
provenance. These files are arranged most reasonably by registration number.
Since loans do not give the museum full legal rights of ownership over the
object, many museums record loan accessions in a separate registration system.
This would include a loan register and loan artifact files. For both loans and
materials acquired permanently, registration is the basic identification activity
upon which all other management activities depend.

The next group of activities comprising the describing objects sub-function
is known as cataloguing objects. To catalogue an object is to assign it to one or
more categories of an organized classification system so that it and its records
may be associated with other objects similar or related to it. In cataloguing, a
museum (much like a library) exercises intellectual control over its collection by
cross-referencing (or indexing) it by various categories of data, such as donors'
names, areas of provenance (e.g., artist name, date or origin or manufacture,

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6Robert G. Chenhall, Museum Cataloguing in the Computer Age, (Nashville: American
Association for State and Local History, 1975), 8.
7Ibid., 8.
place of origin or manufacture, etc.), taxonomic classification and elements of
descriptive data. This classification process involves a certain amount of
research, though much of the identifying information will have been gathered
while pursuing acquisition activities. This is all done so that information about
artifacts can be easily retrieved, and so that they can be found, or retrieved, by
any of the chosen categories.

Cataloguing can be seen as a system of integrated activities and records,
rather than as a single activity or record. Many museums, especially small ones,
do not have a catalogue record beyond a donor file and, as Robert Chenhall has
noted, most museums do not have any cataloguing system at all. By this he
means that they do not have an integrated system that encompasses the entire
collection in all departments. A museum catalogue then can be as simple as a
single card file (usually a donor file), or a more elaborate system of two or more
separate card files for different modes of classification and retrieval (by
department or a unified catalogue for all departments), or it can be a complex
system of computer files by department or for the entire museum organization.

Museum objects will often be photographed (for the purpose of identification)
during the cataloguing process and the photographs may be attached to artifact
catalogue cards, filed with artifact files, or arranged in separate artifact
photograph files.

The Kamloops Museum and Archives has a simple system for identifying
objects, consisting of three separate card files. The first card file identifies
objects in order of registration number, the second identifies them in order of

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8 Ibid., 9. 9 Ibid., 8.
donor, and the third does so by subject and type of object. It also has another card file often found in museums that converts old catalogue numbers (from the old system of separate catalogues for natural history, aboriginal artifacts, and modern history materials) to new numbers in the present central registry system. This is commonly called a conversion file. The Royal British Columbia Museum has a much more complex registration and catalogue system that it is divided by department.

The previous two parts of describing objects constitute intellectual control of collections. The third part of the sub-function is administrative or physical control of the collection, also referred to as location control. This means to assign each object to a physical location in the museum, and then to keep track of where it is located at any given time (in storage, on exhibition, in the conservation laboratory, out on loan, etc.). This requires lists of what is stored in each storage area and location lists or indices for each object or class of objects. Every time the object is moved, a new document is created, or an existing document is amended or updated. In some small museums this location information is written onto the registration or catalogue card. In others it requires the maintenance of a location list or file, manual or automated.

Activities and related records for the describing objects sub-function are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. register</td>
<td>registration form or card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. record number and</td>
<td>artifact files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptive information</td>
<td>loan register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loan artifact files</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. catalogue
   a. index artifacts
      source file (donor file)
      card index (or indices)
      computer index file or files
      catalogue conversion file
   b. photograph artifacts
      photographs of artifacts
3. physical control
   a. store objects
      storage lists
   b. maintain inventory
      location file, list or register

The second sub-function of preserving objects is preventing physical deterioration. This refers to those activities aimed at providing care to collections as a whole, to protect them from external conditions, their own internal physical structure and chemical composition, and the hazards of human handling.\(^\text{10}\) This protection stops short of attempting to repair or rehabilitate individual objects.

Preventing physical deterioration involves, first of all, three kinds of research or study. One is studying the physical condition of individual objects so as to know how each is best stored and handled. This results in a condition report or form. The second type of study is monitoring the museum's environmental conditions of temperature, humidity, light, vibration, dust, chemical pollution and so on. This is done to establish and maintain conditions conducive to preservation of museum collections. These monitoring activities produce monitoring charts, graphs and floor plans indicating conditions in

\(^{10}\text{The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, s.v. "museum", 651.}\)
various parts of the museum, and survey reports. Part of maintaining proper conditions in a museum is controlling insect and other pests that can attack the artifacts. This involves the third type of study which is studying pests and how to control them (fumigation and cleaning), and inspecting the objects and physical premises for infestations of pests. The records for these activities include library materials, research notes and files, pest control inspection reports and treatment records.

Preventing deterioration also includes research on the structure and physical and chemical composition of the materials in the collection, so that the museum can maintain conditions best suited to the preservation of those materials. For this purpose most museums maintain a library or vertical file of published research materials, as well as files for research notes organized by subject. In small community museums, such as the one at Kamloops, these materials are integrated into a central filing system or into one museum library system. Larger museums will most likely have one central library, but each department, or a specialized conservation department, may have its own resources files.

Activities and related records for the preventing physical deterioration sub-function are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. establishing condition of artifacts</td>
<td>condition reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. studying proper environmental conditions</td>
<td>research library materials and files,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>research notes, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. monitoring and maintaining environmental</td>
<td>floor plans, charts, graphs, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. studying insect pests  
research library materials and files, 
research notes, reports

5. inspecting for and controlling pests  
pest control inspection reports, 
treatment records

6. studying composition of objects  
research library materials and files, notes, reports

The third sub-function of preserving objects is restoring or repairing objects, which consists of activities required to repair, recondition or restore objects that have been subjected to deterioration or damage. The interdependence of museum activities is very apparent here. Since knowing the condition of each object is essential for restoring or repairing it, the condition report completed under the previous sub-function is required for this sub-function as well. It may also be added to or amended with further examination. Restoration and repair also require knowledge of the composition of objects obtained in the previous sub-function of preventing physical deterioration.

The first new activity in restoring and repairing artifacts is studying techniques and processes for carrying out repair and restoration. Again, this requires library research materials and files, and may create research notes and reports. This is followed by a very complex array of activities to carry out repair or treatment, which are recorded in treatment records. These can include treatment forms and reports, photographs, and drawings. In large museums treatment procedures often include the assigning of a job number for each repair or restoration job.

11ibid.
Activities and related records for the restoring or repairing objects sub-function are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. examining and recording condition of artifacts</td>
<td>condition reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. studying repair and restoration techniques and processes</td>
<td>research library materials or files, notes and reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. assigning treatment job number</td>
<td>job number register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. repairing or treating artifacts</td>
<td>treatment files (treatment forms, reports, photographs, drawings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Educating the Public

One dictionary definition of "educate" is to develop the faculties and powers of a person by teaching, instruction or schooling. Education has always been a central museum function. Museums have amassed collections for the ultimate purpose of educating people, though the means chosen to accomplish this have changed over time. Museums then, disseminate knowledge through the display of objects, and through activities that interpret their collections. This can be in the form of publications, lectures, class room lessons, guided tours or demonstrations. Education also refers to cultural and educational activities not directly related to the collection itself, as contemporary museums are seen, or see themselves, as general educational resources for their communities.

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Educational activities in a museum can be grouped into three sub-functions, which are: exhibiting objects, interpreting objects and exhibits, and organizing community educational events. All of these sub-functions involve research of one kind or another, particularly the first two.

The main educational tool employed by museums is exhibiting objects. To exhibit is "to present for inspection...to present for public view."\textsuperscript{13} The end product of museum activities, as far as the public is concerned, is the exhibit or display of museum collections. For museums, to exhibit means all the activities required to conceive, plan, design and build displays, to assign objects from the collection to them, and to maintain the exhibits once assembled. It can also refer to the activities necessary to bring in temporary exhibits from other museums, and to produce travelling exhibits of their own to send to other museums. The exhibiting sub-function can be further sub-divided into three parts, which are to plan and design exhibits, to construct exhibits, and to maintain exhibits.

The planning and designing of an exhibit begins with the intellectual activities involved in conceptualizing ideas and setting priorities, and recording them in proposals and plans. From there ideas take shape as a story line, which is the story or idea that the exhibit will relate. It is a detailed description of the ideas, story and flow of the exhibit. This involves studying objects in the collection and related subjects, and writing, editing and approving the story line. These activities create research notes and various drafts, memos, approved

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., s.v. "exhibit".
scripts, exhibit labels and captions. The design and planning process also involves production of floor plans, and drawings of the exhibit, design and construction of models, and design of mounts for artifacts. Other design work is required for graphics and art work. Records related to this sub-function will either be arranged into exhibit planning files (arranged by name of exhibit), included as part of general exhibit files (by name of the exhibit), or divided into files for exhibit design and separate files for design and construction of models and mounts (also arranged by name of exhibit). This latter situation exists at the Royal British Columbia Museum. At the Kamloops Museum and Archives there are separate working files for story line and captions, and another for design activities. Once the exhibit is completed, these records are combined into one exhibit file by name of the exhibit.

Activities and related records for these activities are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. conceptualize and set priorities</td>
<td>proposals and plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. research and write story line</td>
<td>notes, drafts and final manuscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. design exhibit</td>
<td>drawings, floor plans, photographs, lists and samples of materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. design and construct models</td>
<td>drawings of models, specifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. assign artifacts to exhibit</td>
<td>artifact lists, drawings, photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. write captions or labels</td>
<td>drafts and final versions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. design mounts</td>
<td>drawings, specifications, standards, lists of materials, samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. design artwork and graphics</td>
<td>sketches, drawings, layouts, camera ready artwork, final artwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The construction of exhibits requires construction planning and scheduling as well as physical construction work. It also includes the manufacture of mounts for artifacts, production of artwork and graphics, and the installation of artifacts, artwork, photographs and graphics. Records produced include: plans, schedules, drawings, specifications, lists of materials and samples, and photographs. The installation of artifacts in an exhibit also requires that existing records, such as, catalogues, location lists and artifact files, be amended or added to.

Activities and related records for construction are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. plan and schedule</td>
<td>plans and schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. construct displays and mounts</td>
<td>drawings, material lists and samples, specifications, calculations, photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. produce artwork and graphics</td>
<td>drawings, layouts, material lists and samples, camera ready work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. install mounts and artifacts</td>
<td>installation photographs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third part of the exhibiting sub-function is maintaining exhibits. This sub-function involves monitoring and inspection of exhibits, and cleaning and repair of the artifacts, sets, artwork and mounts. Records produced include inspection reports, and cleaning and repair documents. Cleaning and repair of artifacts also require amendments or additions to existing artifact files and creation of conservation records.

Activities and related records for maintaining exhibits are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. monitor and inspect inspection reports, incident reports
2. clean and repair condition reports, conservation records, additions to artifact and conservation records

The activities and records described above apply to both permanent and temporary exhibits produced in-house. For exhibits produced in-house, but intended to travel to other institutions, there are additional activities: arranging for venues, packing and shipping, and arranging for special insurance. They produce records such as correspondence, schedules, shipping documents and additional insurance documents. For temporary exhibits that originate with other institutions, there are no design or construction activities and records, but the museum must still install the exhibit and maintain it. Additional activities involve scheduling, arranging for and booking the exhibits, arranging for insurance, unpacking, packing, and shipping. Records include correspondence, schedules, insurance records, and condition reports. Most museums will keep files for travelling exhibits in separate series, one for in-house and another for ones from other museums. The files are arranged by exhibit name.

The second sub-function of educating the public is *interpreting objects and exhibits*. Writing on modern museums, E.P. Alexander mentions "the museum as interpretation," by which he means all those educational activities that are object-based, or interpret the museum's collections and exhibits. From very early in their history museums have offered educational activities beyond what can be learned by simply observing objects in exhibits. Additional

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interpretive activities may be as simple as a short talk by museum staff, or a guided tour of the museum's exhibits. They may also involve a whole complex of activities carried out by a well-organized museum department.

Even a fairly small community museum such as the Kamloops Museum and Archives (the City of Kamloops has a population in 1995 of 70 to 75 thousand, and the museum has a full time staff of three with about six part time employees) carries out a surprising number and variety of educational and outreach activities. The museum has guided and self-guided tours of its exhibits, as well as walking tours of heritage buildings and historical sites in the city. It offers a variety of lectures and lessons to school classes of all ages as well as to the general public, both within and outside the museum building. Its staff has developed materials related to school curricula, and has written articles, booklets and books on various aspects of local natural and human history. The museum has also helped to educate staff from other community museums in various aspects of museum work. These educational activities are similar to those carried out by a large museum such as the Royal British Columbia Museum, the main difference being a matter of scale not kind.

Records for interpretation activities consist of research notes, drafts and completed products for tours, demonstrations, lectures, audio-visual presentations, pamphlets, articles, books, class room instructional materials and other published and unpublished materials. They may also include memoranda and correspondence created by these activities. Records of this sort are logically and normally organized by subject or activity, such as school programs, tours and lectures (or lecture series). Typically, within those categories are case or project files arranged by name of specific case or project. For such activities
as lectures, tours, and school programs it is necessary to devise schedules and to make bookings. Records related to management activities of planning, coordination, and evaluation are administrative in nature, and properly belong under the function of sustaining itself.

The activities and related records for interpreting objects and exhibits are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. researching objects and subjects correspondence, memoranda, notes, lists</td>
<td>correspondence, memoranda, drafts and completed materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. prepare and edit materials</td>
<td>correspondence, memoranda, drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. organize and schedule programs</td>
<td>correspondence, memoranda, notes, biographies, schedules and bookings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third sub-function of educating the public is organizing community educational events. This is referred to by E.P. Alexander as "museum as cultural centre,"¹⁵ by which he means cultural, educational, and special events sponsored and organized by museums that are not specifically related to museum collections. Since museums are community educational resources, over time museum mandates to educate have been interpreted to encompass almost any special event imaginable. These include cultural performances such as concerts, plays, dance programs and festival events, as well as more traditional museum events such as special speakers, films and other audio-visual presentations. The records and activities involved in organizing and presenting these events are the same as for interpreting objects and exhibits.

¹⁵Ibid.
6. Sustaining Itself

In dictionaries sustain is synonymous with maintain which is defined as "to keep in existence or continuance; preserve or retain...To provide for the support of..."  One of the functions of any social institution is to provide for its own continuity, in the same sense that an individual person must provide for and sustain itself. As with any organization, a museum must carry out a variety of activities that enable it to exist and to facilitate its other unique activities and functions. These are sometimes referred to as administrative, or facilitative activities. The other three functions, examined above, can be called the operational or substantive functions of museums that are facilitated by the self-sustaining activities.

T.R. Schellenberg wrote that "in order to accomplish the basic functions for which it was established, an agency must engage in two types of activities" which he called "substantive activities" and "facilitative activities." Substantive activities are "those relating to the technical and professional work of the agency, work that distinguishes it from all other agencies." For museums these are comprised of the three characteristic functions discussed in this study. Facilitative activities are "those relating to the internal management of the agency, such as housekeeping activities that are common to all agencies." In her thesis *Canadian Universities: a Functional Analysis,* Donna Humphries

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
referred to these activities as comprising the function of "sustaining itself", which is the term adopted in this study. Activities in this function include planning, policy setting, supervision and management, fund raising or acquisition, and other legal, fiscal and personnel matters.

The Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS) of the Government of British Columbia, which is used by the Royal British Columbia Museum, serves as a useful guide to the activities and records within the self-maintenance function. A similar kind of classification system is used for its administrative records by the Kamloops Museum and Archives, as a department within the organizational structure of the City of Kamloops. The ARCS system of the British Columbia government is organized functionally and is divided into six general subject areas that cover all of the activities and records of the sustaining itself function of any organization. This classification system is described here only to indicate the range of activities and types of records comprising the sustaining itself function, and to show how one large museum classifies those kinds of records.

The six categories and their descriptions are:

1. Administration: consists of general administrative matters, including executive and management activities, acts and legislation, committees and commissions, conferences, meetings, annual and general reports, plans and agreements, library services, public information services, risk management, records management, security and postal services.

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21Ibid., iii.
22Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 55.
24Ibid., 1-1.
2. Buildings and Properties: covers all matters dealing with the acquisition, construction, maintenance, protection and management of all properties and facilities.\textsuperscript{25}

3. Equipment and Supplies: covers all aspects of requisition, storage, distribution, maintenance and disposal of equipment and supplies, as well as asset control, inventories and vehicle management.\textsuperscript{26}

4. Finance: covers the receipt, control, and expenditure of funds, including financial management and planning, estimates and budgets, expenditure, liability, revenue control, financial reports and audits.\textsuperscript{27}

5. Personnel: covers subjects relating to employees and personnel services, including employee files, pay records, leave management, staffing and recruitment, training, and labour relations.\textsuperscript{28}

6. Information Technology: covers the management of automated information systems and the administration of computer applications, including systems standards, telecommunications, information resource management, and the development, acquisition, security and maintenance of applications.\textsuperscript{29}

This study of museum functions and activities, and classes of records related to them, shows the value of a functional analysis as a tool for appraising museum records. Since as a general principle records follow function, it is useful to understand a museum's records from the point of view of the functions and activities common to all museums. Of course the organization of the records will depend upon which office or officer in any given institution produced or accumulated the records. This will be determined by how a museum

\textsuperscript{25}ibid., 2-1.
\textsuperscript{26}ibid., 3-1.
\textsuperscript{27}ibid., 4-1.
\textsuperscript{28}ibid., 5-1.
\textsuperscript{29}ibid., 6-1.
organizes itself to perform its mandated functions, and what functional responsibilities are assigned to the various officers within the institution. This aspect of a functional analysis will be examined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3
MUSEUM ORGANIZATION AND MUSEUM COMPETENCES

Part one - Museum Organization

As with any administrative body, the nature and organization of a museum's records are determined by the manner in which it is organized, or structured, to carry out its mandated functions. This "external structure of provenance," as Terry Eastwood has termed it, has two sets of relationships: authority and function.¹ By this he means that every administrative body (or position within the body) is given authority to perform particular functional responsibilities (activities). Each position within an administrative body, such as a museum, has links to a chain of command on the one hand, and a functional responsibility on the other. A body may change the structure of its chain of command and it may change the functional responsibilities assigned to positions within the change of command.² These changes in organizational structure can easily obscure the functional nature of the records created by various positions within a museum. This can make appraisal decisions, that is judgements of value, regarding museum records more difficult. A functional analysis can help to clarify the functional relationships of records to facilitate appraisal decisions. It is necessary then, within the analysis of idealized museum functions, to discuss museum organization and the functional responsibilities of typical museum positions or officers.

²Ibid., 5.
As discussed earlier in this study, museums are either organizations in their own right, with their own legal mandate, or they are agencies of an organization, with the delegated authority to perform certain prescribed functions of the organization. Private and community museums incorporated under a public statute (for example the Societies Act in British Columbia) are organizations. They are commonly headed by a chief administrator (usually called a director) under the authority of a board of trustees. In the case of museums that are agencies of organizations (such as university museums that are agencies of the university or of a university department) or government institutions (that are agencies of a government ministry or department) there is usually not a board of directors. The chief administrator, or director, of such a museum is responsible to the executive of the government department or ministry, or university department, to which the museum is attached. A museum as agency may have its own governing legislative act, or it may be founded simply by regulations of some type. The Royal British Columbia Museum is an example of an agency with its own "museum act."

The museum in Kamloops seems to constitute a third type, one that is responsible both to a board of trustees and a government. It is incorporated under the Society Act of British Columbia, but it is also responsible in various matters (mostly budgetary) to the City of Kamloops under a legal agreement between the municipality and the museum's board of directors. The director of the museum is responsible to a board of trustees, and to the director of a city department.

It would be convenient if museums consistently organized themselves strictly on the basis of function, but they do not. Rather, administrative divisions
or officers within a museum are assigned specific functional responsibilities or competences. Individual activities that comprise the responsibilities of an office or position may, or may not, be related to the same function as other activities within the competence of the office. By linking the idealized functions of museums with the practical activities connected to them, showing the typical records created as each activity is carried out, and then indicating which museum positions typically perform those activities, one can make more informed judgements about the value of museum records.

Within simple administrative bodies, such as small museums, officers perform functional responsibilities without the creation of elaborate organizational divisions. Indeed, in very small museums the staff (often as few as one or two persons) move from one set of responsibilities to another as they fulfill all the functions of a museum. A manual on museum administration published by the Canadian Museums Association discusses how in a one person museum the staff person acts as the administrator, curator, registrar, conservator, or secretary as circumstances demand. As the museum staff grows, the functional responsibilities tend to divide into positions assigned duties within the three operational functions and those that are assigned facilitative or support duties. However, often there continues to be an overlap.

The Kamloops Museum and Archives is a good example of this. The chief officer of the museum is responsible for all day to day administrative activities of the institution, but also actively participates in the performance of educational and exhibition activities. He or she is assisted in administrative

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activities by a clerk/typist who is responsible for clerical office work, reception and book-keeping, and provides support in the museum's operational functions. There is also a curatorial staff person (titled museum technician) who performs most activities related to the operational functions of collecting and preserving, and the exhibiting activities of the education function. There are also a number of part time attendants who perform facilitative activities such as security and building maintenance. However, they are also assigned to activities from the operational function of education such as conducting tours, and providing information to visitors about objects on display.

The literature on museum administration makes it clear that as museums grow in size and organizational complexity they tend to organize into units (or departments) based on subject, substantive function, and facilitative function. A 1927 manual on museum administration states that departmentalization by subject or collection area is common.\textsuperscript{4} However, this applies only to the operational functions of collecting objects and educating the public. An important museum manual published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that the most common museum organizational structure begins with a director, administrator, or senior curator at the top that exercises authority under a board of trustees, committee of management, council or owner. Under the director is an office staff and business administrator (performing facilitative functions) and professional staff (performing substantive functions). The number of professional staff ranges from one person to a team with a deputy director, heads of departments, and their assistants. The departments are determined by subject area of

collections. This manual is clear about the common organizational split between substantive or operational activities and facilitative activities, as well as the grouping of curatorial activities by subject. Units organized by function are usually ones for collecting, research, and education. A more recent British manual of curatorship recommends that museums organize by functions or activities such as conservation, administration, security, design, curatorial, exhibits and so on.

The general consensus seems to be that only medium to large size museums have departmental organizational structures. This structure is usually broken into one or more departments for administrative and facilitative activities, and a number of other departments for operational activities. However, there is no clear pattern of how the operational functions and activities are most commonly organized beyond the very general observation that so-called curatorial activities are divided into subject or collecting areas, and that other activities are grouped "functionally" into departments of conservation, education, exhibits and so on. For example, in 1980 the Royal British Columbia Museum was organized into fifteen divisions, including aquatic zoology, archaeology, botany, entomology, ethnology, linguistics, modern history, museums advisor, transportation collection, and publications. By 1993 there was a greater effort to organize the institution functionally. The finance and administration division included information, director's office, security, personnel, finance, marketing,

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facilities management and information systems. These all belong to the self-sustaining function. There was also a collections division, broken into subject areas and conservation. Many of the research activities (which have been treated here as part of a number of functions) were centralized into a separate research division. Finally, there was a public programs division comprised of the educational activities of exhibit, design, publishing and public educational programming.

This kind of organization by subject and function does not strictly follow the idealized museum functions identified in this study. Without a clear definition of museum functions and activities, the lack of common museum organizational structure can make an understanding of museum records difficult. However, it is possible to identify typical museum positions that exist within any museum, no matter how it is structured, and to identify the typical activities attached to these positions. This analysis can simplify the task of relating museum records to functions and activities and thus facilitate the appraisal process.

Part 2 - Museum Competences

No matter how any particular museum may be organized to carry out its mandated functions, all museums have typical officers or positions, though their titles may change from one museum to another. Each of these typical museum officers is assigned typical duties within the museum's activities, which constitute the functional responsibilities of that position. In archival science the "sphere of functional responsibility entrusted to an office or officer" is called the
competence of that office or officer. Any archivist, when appraising the records of an actual or particular museum, has to appreciate what competence offices or officers have in order to understand the records they have created, and which of the universal museum functions they have had a part in carrying out. This allows one to see functional connections among records that might otherwise be blurred by structural concerns. This ideal model of museum functions, related classes of records, and typical functional competences can then be applied to aid in understanding any particular institution and its records.

It is necessary then, as part of a functional analysis, to show how various positions in a museum relate to museum functions, that is to demonstrate the competence of the positions. There have been a number of such studies of museum positions in Canada and the United States. In 1971 the American Association of Museums published a financial and salary survey that outlined categories of museum positions. The Ontario Association of Art Galleries published a similar survey in 1975 that listed typical job titles with descriptions of activities and functions related to them. A better and more comprehensive study was conducted by the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) between 1975 and 1978. The survey of its member museums, and the analysis, were published in 1978 and a summary was published in 1979. This study shall be used here as the basis for the analysis of functional competences within

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9School of Library, Archival and Informational Studies, Select List of Archival Terminology (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1990), s.v. "competence".
12Lynne Teath, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada.
museums. As the CMA survey noted, "museum positions ultimately relate to the...basic functions that give any museum its identity".  

The various positions identified in the survey can be divided into those whose major competences are operational and those whose competences are facilitative in nature. The operational positions are the professional or para-professional positions whose activities are mainly from the three operational museum functions. Of course all museum staff participate in the facilitative activities aimed at performance of the self-sustaining function. However, among the typical museum officers there are some whose major operational activities are facilitative for the institution as a whole. The operational and facilitative positions will be presented in alphabetical order.

Operational Positions

1. Conservator

The conservator is responsible for the care of the museum's collection. The duties of the conservator are primarily from two sub-functions of the preserving function. These sub-functions are: preventing physical deterioration of objects and repairing and restoring objects. Typical responsibilities include:
- plan, co-ordinate and participate in programme to conserve and restore collections
- perform tests and technical examination for conservation and restoration treatments
- perform conservation and restoration treatments on collections

\[^{14}\text{Ibid., 2.}\]
-direct and supervise work of technical assistants in conservation and restoration work

-advice curators regarding identification, authenticity and condition of objects being considered for acquisition

-advice curators concerning environmental needs, suitability for loan or travel, physical condition and security of collections

-direct staff in handling, mounting, care and storage of collections

-assist in staff training regarding conservation

Typical job titles vary depending on level or classification of the position, the size of the institution, and the kinds of collections held by the museum. At a lower level the title could be assistant conservator or conservator technician while a mid-level position could be titled conservator or senior conservator. A high-level position in a large institution could be called chief conservator, head of conservation laboratory or director of a conservation centre. Conservator positions may also have terms that describe a department, specialty or subject area attached to their titles (e.g., art, fine art, archaeology, or textiles). In small museums the work of a conservator may be performed (usually only to the limited degree that the museum can handle) by the curator or museum technician. In large museums the conservator would report to the director, assistant director, or chief curator for the higher level positions; at the lower level positions to the chief, head or director of the laboratory or centre; in small museums to the curator or director.

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15Ibid., 9.
16Teath, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 57-58.
2. Curator

As can be seen by the responsibilities listed below, curatorship is at the heart of museum activities. The curator's duties are wide ranging and pertain to the collecting objects function (including both sub-functions), the describing objects and preventing physical deterioration of objects sub-functions of the preserving function, and the exhibiting and interpreting sub-functions of the education function. Typical responsibilities include:

- developing collections
- research subject areas of museum collections
- select, research, document, and catalogue collections
- ensure that objects are properly stored and that proper environmental conditions are maintained
- plan and organize exhibition programs
- determine themes, select objects and materials and consult on design
- prepare catalogues, articles and other publications related to exhibits, collections and museum subject areas
- perform administrative tasks that will be greater or lesser depending on where placed in the museum's organization

Common job titles for a curator are: curator, director, director of exhibitions, assistant curator, chief curator, curator of a department or subject area, collections manager, and keeper. Of course, the degree of responsibility given to any particular curatorial position depends on the size of the museum and on where in its organizational structure the position is located. The higher up the position is located the more responsibility it is assigned and the greater degree of policy and planning, budget preparation, hiring, supervision and

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training, and other administrative activities it has. In larger institutions some responsibilities, such as conservation and cataloguing, will be shared with other staff like the conservator and registrar. A curator would report to a chief curator or to the museum director.

3. Designer

Museum designers carry out activities from the exhibiting sub-function of the educating the public function. Museum design work is divided into exhibit design and graphic design. The designer's responsibilities include:
- design, construct and install new exhibits
- supervise and/or develop drawings, models and layouts
- co-ordinate technical work and organize work programme
- develop or coordinate graphics and catalogue design
- review completed exhibits for design conformity

In some larger institutions exhibit and graphic design may be two separate sets of responsibilities. With small museums this work may be carried out by the curator, technician or director. If design is assigned to a specialized office the title is usually designer or head (chief) design section. Again, if the designer is at a supervisory or administrative level, there will be more administrative activities involved. A designer is usually responsible to a head designer or the director.

4. Educator

A museum educator's activities are primarily from all three sub-functions of the educating the public function. The CMA study noted that while public

\(^{19}\)ibid., 67.
education programs are common to most museums, and while there are some responsibilities common to most museum educators, there are few patterns to museum education. Education programs in museums are extremely varied over time as well as from institution to institution. They can range from activities oriented to school curriculum, to general interest programs aimed at promoting appreciation of art or awareness of historical topics or public issues. Some of the common responsibilities of education officers are:
- develop, direct and/or conduct educational activities both within and without the museum
- plan, teach and/or supervise school curricula related programs within and without the museum
- initiate, supervise and/or prepare materials for teachers and students
- plan and/or supervise scheduling for tours, school or other group visits
- train, supervise and evaluate performance of other education staff such as docents and guides
- develop and evaluate teaching strategies for all education programs for children and adults
- research and publish on education programs, methods and effectiveness
- act as liaison between institutions and organizations
- develop themes and objectives for temporary and travelling exhibits
- develop related interpretive material
- supervise production of travelling exhibitions
- arrange for travelling exhibitions from other institutions and related public programming

21 Teach, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 77.
Common job titles for this position are: educator, supervisor of education, chief education officer, education officer, interpretation coordinator, chief curator of education, extension services officer, director of education and extension, programs coordinator, chief public programming, education and extension officer, interpreter, and curator\textsuperscript{23} An education officer would usually report to either the museum director or a department head.

5. Registrar

A museum registrar is involved primarily in activities from the collecting and preserving functions. The position of registrar is a fairly new one for many museums and its duties are often assigned to a curator, technician, or even a conservator in many small museums. A registrar's duties commonly are:

- supervise and/or create, maintain and manage records of the museum's collection
- accession all items, maintain accession records and number items
- catalogue items and maintain catalogue records
- cooperate with other staff in research on collection
- make contractual arrangements and maintain records for gift, loan and purchase of collections
- maintain location records for artifacts in collection, and carry out inventories
- plan and supervise location and movement of objects in collection as well as for loans and temporary exhibits
- prepare condition reports and ensure proper handling of collection
- arrange and maintain insurance, customs, handling, and shipping documents\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Teath, \textit{Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada}, 78, 80, 82.
Common job titles for a registrar position are: registrar, curator of collections, curator, registrar of collections, cataloguer of collections, curator/registrar. The position usually reports to the director, or senior curator. In a large museum there may be a number of assistant registrars. 25

6. Technician

Technicians fill para-professional positions in the collecting, preserving and educating functions. They provide technical assistance to conservators, curators, and designers. The technical work described here is general in nature and may vary from museum to museum. Some common tasks are:
- supervise and/or participate in design and construction of display cases and other display materials
- build models of displays and galleries
- mount and prepare objects for display
- install lighting and display equipment
- pack and unpack objects and exhibits entering or leaving the museum
- construct cases for travelling exhibits 26
- supervise or perform conservation tasks
- assist in museum research, field work and publication
- assist in accessioning, registering, cataloguing and storing collections
- secure and maintain supplies, materials and tools 27

Technical positions in museums commonly carry the title of technician or preparator. They are usually responsible to a senior technician, a senior

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25 Teath, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 90.
27 Teath, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 90.
professional staff person (e.g., curator, registrar, conservator), department head, or in a small museum to the curator or director of the museum.

Facilitative Positions

1. Archivist

The work of an archivist within a museum is to deal either with the records of the museum itself, or with records collected by a community museum and archives from other persons or organizations, or both. Since the subject of this thesis is records created or received by museums as they carry out their own functions and activities, the acquisition of records from outside the museum itself is not of interest here. A community museum and archives, in a sense, operates two institutions and sets of functions under one organizational umbrella. All records management duties fit into the category of the facilitative function of sustaining itself, or supporting the three substantive functions. For the purposes of this study a museum archivist deals with the museum's own institutional records, and thus performs facilitative activities that aid the museum in carrying out its unique operational functions. The activities of a museum archivist responsible only for museum institutional records are typically as follows:

- select, acquire and register archival materials
- store and ensure the preservation of records
- index and classify records of the institution
- provide reference service and access to records
- undertake research related to significance and interrelationships of records
-select records for publication and display
-prepare speeches, lectures, articles and displays
-administer archival programs of the institution
-serve as records manager for the records of the museum
-supervise and train staff

Typical job titles for persons performing these functions within a museum are: archivist, assistant archivist, chief archivist, administrator and head archivist, museum curator, records coordinator, records manager.

2. Board of Directors

The board of directors (or board of trustees) is important for private museums, and for museums operated by non-profit societies. The board consists of executive officers (president or chair, vice president or vice chair, secretary, treasurer) and a number of directors at large. Directors may participate in or head up various committees of the board. The overall responsibilities of the board of directors are to oversee the proper running of the institution by providing for a sound legal and financial footing, fund raising, hiring and overseeing the work of the director, planning for the museums future operations, and setting general museum policy. All of these activities belong to the facilitative function of sustaining itself.

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30Ibid.
3. Business Manager

A business manager coordinates administrative activities for the institution, which belong to the self-sustaining function. Typical responsibilities are:

- administer personnel and salary matters
- prepare or assist in preparation of applications for funding
- oversee budget operations, and financial records and reporting
- co-ordinate fund-raising activities
- act as senior supervisor of non-professional personnel, and oversees management of buildings, facilities, stores and security.  
- supervise membership programs

Common job titles for persons performing these functions are: administrator, business manager, business administrator, administrative officer, director, assistant director. The business manager usually reports to the director of the museum.

4. Director

As the chief executive officer of the museum, the director's responsibilities include:
- direct day-to-day operation of the museum
- direct, plan and coordinate all operations of the institution, including financial and budget requirements, personnel, security and maintenance, as well as the operational activities
- plan for future needs of the museum

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33 Teath, *Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada*, 55.
34 Ibid., 54.
represent the museum to the public, to the governing and funding bodies, and to other institutions and organizations
-ensure staff training

The director's office is usually known as director, managing director, head of museum or superintendent and is responsible to the governing authority of the museum. The position of museum director normally exists only in large institutions and grew out of the curator's office. That is, the responsibilities of a museum director consist of the administrative activities required for the management of a museum, and which were once invested in the curator. For example, in the Kamloops Museum and Archives the Curator/Archivist performs the functions of a chief executive officer, as well as curatorial and archival functions. In the past (and still with many museums) a museum director would be recruited from the ranks of curators, but increasingly they have been hired from outside for their administrative skills and not necessarily for curatorial knowledge and experience.

5. Librarian

The responsibilities for maintaining a library are assigned to a professionally trained librarian in a large museum, or combined with other work for a curator, registrar or director in smaller museums. Librarian responsibilities are:
-collect, preserve and administer materials which document the museum's collection
-initiate and/or supervise procedures for cataloguing information for retrieval

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36Teach, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 72.
37Ibid., 71.
- control use and loan of library materials and look to care and protection of materials
- process books for shelving or storage
- provide reference service to museum staff, outside researchers and public inquiries
- administer budget and office operations as required according to staff level of position

Common titles for officers performing librarian duties are: librarian, chief librarian, research curator/librarian, registrar/librarian, museology librarian. This position commonly reports to the director or a department head.

6. Public relations officer

A public relations officer's responsibilities are to manage information flow between the institution and the public. Examples are:
- provide information on programs
- increase public awareness of museum
- encourage favourable public awareness of museum
- provide information to media - news releases, story ideas, paid advertising
- establish and maintain good working relationship with media
- in cooperation with other staff produce publications, brochures, reports, pamphlets and newsletter to disseminate information about museum
- arrange media coverage of museum exhibits, programs and events
- respond to public and media inquiries

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39 Teath, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 85.
The role of a public relations officer will be taken by the director or curator in a small museum. Common job titles for this office are: museum information and publications officer, communications coordinator, public information officer, public relations officer, communications systems officer, head public relations and information services, communications officer. The public relations officer may report to the director, deputy director, business administrator, or department head.41

7. Training Officer

The responsibilities of a training officer can vary depending on the size of the museum and whether the officer operates within one museum or within a region. If the officer works only for one museum, she or he is responsible for the on the job training of new staff or internship trainees. Such a training coordinator:
- organizes and/or conducts training for staff
- prepares educational and instructional materials for staff
- acts as a resource person for staff training needs

Sometimes a training officer is responsible for advising museums throughout a region and is referred to as a museums advisor, training co-ordinator or educational co-ordinator. The duties of such a position include:
- provide or coordinate technical advice to museums and museum workers
- compile and distribute resource material on museological topics
- prepare educational materials for museum staff
- plan, organize and conduct training for community museum staff42

41Teath, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 87-88.
-arrange internships for trainees or museum staff
-arrange for guest lecturers
-perform research on museum topics and training techniques

Common job titles for a training officer are: training officer, museums advisor, training co-ordinator, museum staff trainer, course instructor, education co-ordinator, education officer, education supervisor, or co-ordinator museology.

This discussion of the functional competences of museums is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all museum positions or job titles. Specific job titles and positions are dependent on the organizational structure of each museum. It does however cover the general areas of work and responsibilities of museums and what kinds of offices perform the related functions and activities. The next step is to show more clearly how the areas discussed fit into the four functions of museums. If the generic museum competencies discussed here were matched with the four museum functions it would be seen that the functions are performed by different offices or officers, depending on the size of the museum and how it may be organized. The following table is meant only as a general guide, and cannot not possibly show all the ways that any particular museum may choose to organize itself and to assign its functional responsibilities. It should be noted that in small museums one, two or three persons may carry out all of the activities and functions of the museum. As they do so, they move from one set of functional responsibilities to another, that is they have the competence to carry out various areas of museum work. As a museum gets larger the work

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43Ibid., 17.
44Teath, Professional Directions for Museum Work in Canada, 93.
becomes more specialized and staff members have the competence for more narrowly defined functional responsibilities.

1. Collecting Objects
   a. Collection Programming
      - curator
      - registrar
      - director or executive officers
   b. Acquiring Objects
      - curator
      - registrar
      - technician

2. Preserving Objects
   a. Identifying Objects
      - curator
      - registrar
      - curatorial and registration technicians
   b. Preventing Physical Deterioration of Objects
      - conservator
      - conservation technician
   c. Repairing and Restoring Objects
      - conservator
      - conservation technician

3. Educating the Public
   a. Exhibiting Objects
      - curator
      - curatorial technician
-designer
-design technician

b. Interpreting Objects and Exhibits
-curator
-curatorial technician
-educator

c. Organizing Community Educational Events
-curator
-educator

4. Sustaining Itself

All museum staff members participate in activities aimed at performance of this function. However, among the twelve general competencies discussed here there are some whose major operational activities are facilitative for the organization as a whole. Hence their functional responsibilities can be described as self-maintenance of the museum. These are:

-archivist
-board of directors
-business manager
-director
-librarian
-public relations officer
-support staff (security personnel, financial and administrative clerks)
-training officer

Using this knowledge of job descriptions and the competencies of typical museum officers, it is possible to see which positions in a given museum organization carry out activities from the four museum functions, or any of their
sub-functions. This is necessary because ultimately records need to be judged according to their functional significance for the continuing needs of the museum, or to understand the museum's operations.
Museum records cannot be understood without understanding museum functions. This is accomplished by looking at the history and mandates of museums, seeing what activities are involved in each museum function and what classes of records are created by them, and then examining what offices or officers in a museum have the competence to perform the activities and functions. There is a direct connection between museum mandates, museum functions, functional responsibilities within museum organizational structures (competence), and the creation of museum records. This kind of study is a necessary part of archival scholarship because archival documents by their very nature are produced through practical activities as persons and organizations carry out their assigned or mandated functions. This is particularly true of juridical persons which, as legal entities, have functions mandated in law, and therefore must operate within rules and regulations.

All museums, no matter what the nature of their collections and programs, and, as we have seen, no matter where or when they exist, have four common functions with characteristic activities and records. While there are no absolutes in terms of museum organization, they typically assign particular activities and functions to certain offices or positions, depending on the size and nature of the museum. These offices or positions have the mandated competence to perform their roles and hence are juridical persons within their institutions.
Any administrative body needs to maintain records of its activities in order to continue performing its functions. Archives act as a memory and guide for future action by their creators. Any body has the need to retain those records that it requires to continue functioning, and has the right to dispose of them as it requires. The matter is more complex than that, for society has the right through its legal system to ensure the retention of those records that protect the legal, financial and other rights of its citizens. It is therefore necessary for society to preserve those documents that have value for administrative, legal, or cultural purposes, or as a means to hold persons or social institutions accountable for their actions. In short "society invariably preserves what it must preserve for its survival."  

Of course no documents are totally without value; they all contain some information and are evidence of some transaction. It need only be seen how scholars are often able to piece together a vivid picture of the distant past using the poor documentation that is available. Unlike the distant past however, contemporary society suffers from an over-abundance of records, most of which have very low value. If society does not select only what is most useful for its purposes, it is in danger of being overwhelmed by a mass of unmanageable and unusable records. The problem then, is how to judge which records should be retained permanently. This judgement of the value of records for permanent retention is termed appraisal in archival science. In its glossary of archival

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terminology, the Society of American Archivists defines appraisal as: "the process of determining value and thus the disposition of records..."²

As with any corporate body, museum records have value first of all to their creators, which is termed primary value, and then to other users, which is termed secondary value.³ All records then have both types of value, to a greater or lesser degree, simultaneously. To both types of users records provide, firstly, evidence of the functions and organization of the creating body⁴ and, secondly, information on persons, places, things, or subjects with which the creating body dealt.⁵ Records creators require their records to carry out their mandated functions and activities, and to provide accountability for their actions. Other potential users approach those same records with completely different and unpredictable purposes, but they must always be aware of the context in which the records were created or accumulated. As has been emphasized throughout this study, no documents can be fully or properly understood without understanding the functions, activities and organizational structure of the creating body, that is without understanding the archival nature of the records.

In recent years fierce debate has raged among archivists, particularly in North America, about the nature and practice of archival appraisal. It is not the purpose here to state the details of this debate, nor to offer some new argument. It is only to offer a functional analysis of museums in the abstract as a tool for

⁴Ibid., 139.
⁵Ibid., 148.
judging the value of the various classes of museum records to both primary and secondary users.

Throughout much of the history of museums only those records that documented collections - their acquisition, origins, and use - were considered valuable to researchers from outside the creating institutions. All other museum records were considered to have only primary values for museum staff and administrators. Even museum staff often took little note of the value which many of their records may have to their ongoing operations. However, in recent times there has been increasing use of museum records by various kinds of scholars and scientists. This was recognized in a panel on the importance of museum records held in 1981 by the Task Force on Museum Archives, under the sponsorship of the Society of American Archivists. A commentator on that panel noted, "there is a growing awareness among museum professionals of the importance of institutional records....Likewise, there is increased recognition among researchers outside the museum of the value of museum records to their work, and hence a growing demand by the public to examine museum records."7

To begin with, maintaining an archival memory is essential for the proper management of museums. This refers to the primary value of museum records. A recent book published by the Smithsonian Institution outlines some of the factors necessary for a well-managed museum.8 The list is as follows:

-a clearly defined mission and long-term goals

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7Ibid., 38.
-the ability to formulate and pursue strategies to acquire, process and expend resources with ongoing and successive programs
-a structure of governance that provides for oversight and access to resources to produce its programs
-development of skills and knowledge of its staff
-appropriate physical facilities maintained in good repair
-a system of policies and records for acquisition, management and care of its collections
-information management systems for retrieval of data for management of resources and production of programs
-ability to resolve issues and to modify practices and programs
-knowledge about the needs and wishes of its patrons and the ability to meet those needs and wishes
-maintain a positive public image

The ability of a museum to meet these factors, which are related to all of the activities of a museum, depend upon the museum creating and retaining records of its decisions and actions. All records exist on a continuum of use, beginning with the active stage (also called current) of frequent use by their creators, moving to a semi-active (or semi-current) stage of less frequent use, and finally to an inactive stage in which they are referred to seldom, or no longer used at all for current operations. At this inactive stage a decision must be made about which records have lost all value for retention and which have some continuing value to the museum, and should be retained.

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9Ibid., 70 - 72.
When considering the secondary value of museum records, there can be little doubt about the importance of museums as cultural and educational institutions, or of the importance of museum collections to many scholarly pursuits, as discussed in chapter one of this study. Museum attendance in Canada, and elsewhere, continues to grow as does the number of institutions. For many ancient collections and early museums few records have survived, and researchers were forced to use archaeological evidence and literary sources (such as reports and memoirs of visitors). From at least the Renaissance period onwards, more records have been available, and researchers have made use of legal mandates, inventories, catalogues, correspondence, annual reports, financial records, memoranda...in short, the whole gamut of museum records.

What kinds of researchers then, make use of museum records?

In a paper written for the Society of American Archivists Task Force on Museum Archives, historian Robert W. Rydell mentions the value that museum records have for historical research. Interested in questions of cultural power and how the cultural content of society is shaped, Rydell wrote a prize-winning dissertation on how the cultures of nonwhites were portrayed in world's fairs between 1876 and 1916. Museum records are extremely useful for historians interested in a wide spectrum of cultural and historical questions. Rydell mentions two studies on the role of the cultural elite in Chicago that made heavy use of records from a number of museums. These authors all found many types of museum records useful: correspondence between museum staff and

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community leaders, documents recording sources of financial support, acquisitions and field gathering records, press releases, advertisements, meeting minutes, exhibition catalogues, exhibition construction records, payroll records, diaries and journals of staff, exhibit photographs and more.

In Canada, Douglas Cole used a great many museum records in his examination of how the material culture of aboriginal people of the Northwest Coast of North America was alienated from its creators, and collected by museums throughout North American and Europe.\(^{13}\) His list of museum sources includes: museum publications, conference papers, collection catalogues, curatorial and administrative correspondence, museum mandates, financial statements and accounts, field note books, reports, legal agreements, internal memoranda, executive and committee minutes, and annual reports. The records came from the offices of museum boards, directors, committees, curators, and registrars.

The value of museum collections, and the records that document their acquisition, provenance and preservation, to various kinds of scientific researchers is well known. Historians of science find museum records valuable as well.\(^{14}\) Science historians employ the same full range of museum records in their investigations into "the administrative, educational and intellectual lives of the museum."\(^{15}\)

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\(^{14}\) Michele L. Aldrich, The Science Historian in "Keeping Our Own House in Order," 42-44.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 42.
Museum professionals and museologists also consult a wide range of museum records in their studies of the history and character of various aspects of museum work. Peter Rider, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, produced a study of the history, development and use of history exhibits in Canadian museums that used exhibition catalogues, published books and pamphlets, annual reports, museum association membership lists, museum mandates, and presidential addresses.\textsuperscript{16} Another example is a 1985 study of the origins of modern museums in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\textsuperscript{17} This study used collection catalogues, account books, legislation and museum acts, building records, personal papers of collectors, correspondence of museum directors, and collection inventories. Kenneth Hudson studied visitor responses to museums through use of museum visitor surveys, museum correspondence and published materials.\textsuperscript{18}

Besides scholars and museum professionals, the general public also qualifies as a category of secondary users of museum records. People who have donated objects to museums may wish to see how objects have been cared for and used, or they may wish to renegotiate their loans or donations. Their descendants may wish to inquire into how the objects were acquired and used as well. Members of the public may wish to inquire into how a public institution has conducted itself in some matter. In other words, museums can be held accountable for their actions through their records. Many government operated museums in Canada are subject to access to information and protection of

privacy legislation, either federal or provincial. As one museum archivist has noted, Canada's heritage "belongs to all Canadians...Everyone is entitled to, or has the right to understand his or her heritage." Museum collections are part of the heritage of society, and museum records are part of society's documentary heritage. It is a reality of our time that the public has a heightened demand for accountability from its institutions, including cultural and educational ones like museums.

This discussion has indicated, in a general way, the value that museum records have for their creators and for other groups of users. It is now possible to use the analysis of museum functions and competences to discuss the primary and secondary values of the various classes of records created by museums. Before beginning however, it is important to remember some commonly accepted principles in archival appraisal. One is that for most administrative bodies the most valuable records are created or maintained at high level or executive offices. It is at those levels that deliberations and decisions are made that affect the body's overall planning, finances, policies, procedures and operations. As well, the information at higher levels is in a more condensed, rich and usable form than at lower organizational levels. As shall be seen, however, this is not always true for museums.

The second point to be made is that all bodies, including museums, create multiple copies of documents that accumulate in various offices throughout the organizational structure. The problem is to determine which ones need to be kept after they are no longer required for operational purposes. The

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19Shelley McKellar, "The Role of the Museum Archivist in the Information Age," 349.
general principle is that it is only necessary to retain the master or original document, which is defined in law as "the first copy or archetype; that from which another instrument is transcribed, copied or imitated." In the archival science of diplomatics an original document is more precisely defined as "a perfect document...the first to be issued in that particular form by its creator...and able to produce the consequences wanted by its author." The original document will be maintained by the office that needs it to satisfy operational, financial, legal, audit or other requirements.

1. Collecting Objects

The collection of objects is the core of museum functions upon which all other functions depend. As institutions that perform their functions through the collection and use of objects, museums cannot exist without a collection in some form or another. Therefore, records that document this function have high potential value. It is noteworthy that the most valuable records from this function are created by curators, technicians and registrars at the middle and lower levels of museum organizational structures.

i.) primary value

Accessioning records, that is records related to tracking sources of objects, and the consideration, acceptance or rejection of an offer to acquire objects establish how a museum has acquired records, and document the legal transfer of ownership to the museum. These records, that include

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correspondence, receipts, and agreements to acquire or transfer, are created and maintained by curators and registrars. As documents that record the museum's rights and obligations in regard to its collection, and that contain basic information on the identity and provenance of the objects, accessioning records have permanent primary value to the museum. They never become inactive as they protect the museum's legal rights, provide accountability for its actions in relation to the collection, and provide information on the development and evolution of the museum's collecting activities. Even if the museum deaccessions an object, or if the object is somehow lost, stolen or destroyed, the accessioning records maintain these same primary values to the museum. This is also true of deaccessioning records (registers, legal agreements and related correspondence) as they are among the documents that record how the museum carried out its mandate and public trust. The wide range of records related to field gathering and excavation activities also maintain their primary value to the museum for the same reasons.

ii.) secondary value

The secondary value of acquisition records is also high. Researchers from outside the museum will want to consult these records for a wide range of legal, financial, historical, scientific uses and for reasons of accountability. The records are valuable for the evidence they provide on museum activities and for information they contain on the objects and the people, institutions, and locales that were the sources of the objects.

2. Preserving Objects

Once a museum has physical and legal custody of the objects in its collection, its major responsibility is to identify and preserve them for present
and future use. Records related to these activities are created at the level of line
staff of curators, registrars and conservators.

2.1 Identifying Objects Records

i.) primary value

These are the records related to the intellectual and physical control of
objects. They consist of registration records, catalogue records, and location
control records. Registration records identify and authenticate collections and
document the provenance, use and nature of objects. These records rarely
become inactive and they retain their primary value to the museum indefinitely.
For as long as the objects they refer to are part of the collection, registration
records can be referred to or added to at any time. Even after the objects are no
longer in a museum's collection, the relevant registration records are required by
the museum to protect its legal rights, to provide accountability for its actions in
relation to its collection, and to provide information on the evolution of the
museum's collecting programs.

Catalogue and location control records maintain their primary value to the
museum for as long as the objects are in the collection, to provide intellectual
and physical access to the collection. When individual objects leave the
collection, their individual records, such as photographs, may become obsolete.
However, they remain valuable to the museum as part of the records of museum
collecting activities, as well as documenting the use of objects while in the
museum. Indices may be revised over time, but they remain an important part of
museum operations as long as the museum exists. A card index may be
superseded in daily use by a computer system, but it is possible that not all of
the information on the cards was transferred to the computer system. The same is true of location control records.

ii.) secondary value

Registration records have very high value to a wide variety of researchers. These records provide evidence on how the museum carried out its responsibilities in regard to its collections, and they contain information that identifies objects, their composition, origin, and history of use. This information is invaluable to scientists, historians, and others who need to study objects in museum collections. The museum catalogue enables researchers to access the objects from a variety of subject or other points of view, and it often contains a good deal of information about objects. Photographs in the catalogue can be especially valuable if the object being studied is no longer in the collection, or if the researcher requires copies for study or publication.

2.2 Preventing Physical Deterioration Records

i.) primary value

Most records from this sub-function have long term operational value for museums as well. Condition reports, which document the physical condition of objects in the museum's collection, are necessary for the maintenance of proper conditions, document the monitoring of that condition throughout their life in the museum, and facilitate repair and restoration activities. They are therefore active operational records for an indefinite period. Records that document environmental conditions in the museum are also valuable for an indefinite period of time since preservation activities often require monitoring of environmental conditions over long periods. Pest inspection and treatment report have similar long term value for museum operations. The active
operational value of research materials related to pests, and to materials of which artifacts are composed, can be lengthy as well. However, their value can be diminished when the information is outdated and superseded by more recent research.

ii.) secondary value

The most valuable documents in this category to researchers from outside the museum are the condition reports on objects in the collection. These records contain the best and most detailed physical description of objects in the collection, and they are valuable for a range of research purposes (identification and the history of the use and handling of the objects are two of the purposes). Some of the records related to the study of proper environmental conditions have value to researchers outside the creating institution. These are research documents that derive from any original research conducted by museum staff if they add to general professional knowledge of these matters. This is also true of research records related to insect pests and to the physical composition of objects. Records related to monitoring and maintaining environmental conditions in the museum are too detailed to be of great value. Reports found at the level of department heads or from the director's office are are more useable and summarize museum activities in this regard. The same is true of pest inspection reports and treatment records.

2.3 Restoring and Repairing Objects Records

i.) primary value

Condition reports have been dealt with under preventing physical deterioration. Their reappearance here only emphasizes their continuing primary value. Research files related to repair and restoration techniques and
processes have long term value for continuing museum operations. A time arrives, however, when these files are outdated and obsolete. Job number registers have similar limited primary value. Treatment files, since they document repair and restoration treatment to individual objects, are required for museum operations for an indefinite period.

ii.) secondary value

Condition reports have already been identified as having high secondary value. Records related to original research on repair and restoration techniques have value for outside researchers if they contribute to general professional knowledge. Research library materials have little value as they are available elsewhere. Job number registers are unlikely to have any secondary value. Treatment files are part of the documentation of objects in the collection and therefore have high secondary as well as primary value.

3. Educating the Public

3.a. Exhibiting Objects Records

i.) primary value

Exhibit design records have value to the creating museum for information on how present exhibits were designed, and hence can be maintained. They also supply ideas and information for the development and design of new exhibits.

ii.) secondary value

Many exhibit design records are valuable to museologists, art historians, social historians and others who wish to study the history and development of
museum exhibits, or who wish to study a subject area that can be illuminated through museum exhibits and their associated records. The most valuable records for these purposes are completed exhibit plans, exhibit scripts or storylines, exhibit labels, drawings, floor plans, photographs, specifications, artifact lists, and completed artwork.

3.b Exhibit Construction Records

i.) primary value

Most records related to construction of exhibits have little value to ongoing museum operations once construction is completed. Some construction drawings, photographs and specifications may be valuable if they provide information necessary for the maintenance and dismantling of exhibits.

ii.) secondary value

The value of most exhibit construction records to outside researchers is also low. Some graphic materials may be of interest, such as construction drawings and photographs, and photographs of installation and mounting of artifacts. They will inform future researchers about how exhibits were constructed.

3.c Exhibit Maintenance Records

i.) primary value

Exhibit inspection reports have only short term operational use for the museum. Incident reports have a greater operational value. They may document incidents with legal and financial repercussions, if damage to artifacts, or injuries to visitors were involved. They may also document incidents that
affected environmental or other matters that could affect the condition of artifacts. Records related to the cleaning and repair of displays (excluding the artifacts themselves) have only short term operational value. Those that document cleaning and repair of artifacts are part of the permanent documentation of objects in the collection.

ii.) secondary value

The records related to maintaining exhibits that have high value to researchers from outside the museum are the same ones that have high primary value to the museum.

3.d. Interpreting Objects and Exhibits

i.) primary value

Records related to research activities involving objects in the collection have permanent value for continuing museum activities. Records related to research into subjects also have long term value for museum educational activities. Completed educational materials are also required for many ongoing museum educational activities, whether it is conducting school lessons and activities in the museum or developing new programs. Correspondence, memoranda, and draft manuscripts used in preparation and editing of educational materials and publications have little value for museum operations once the materials have been completed. The same is true for records related to organizing and scheduling public programs.

ii.) secondary value

The secondary value of records that document the interpretation of objects and exhibits is very high, since they are part of the permanent record of
the identification, meaning and use of the objects. Various kinds of historians, anthropologists, and scientists are interested in the information contained in research materials related to both objects and subjects. They are also interested in completed educational materials, particularly reports, and scholarly publications. Biographies of museum personnel, and others involved in museum educational activities are also of interest to scholars and other researchers. Other records from this category have low value to secondary users.

3.e Organizing Community Educational Events Records

i.) primary value

The records involved here are ones related to the fairly mundane activities of organizing events. As with the same type of records from "interpreting objects and subjects," the value of these records to the museum organizing or sponsoring community events is low once the events have taken place. These events are sufficiently documented in annual and other reports at the executive level and among publicity and public relations records related to activities in the sustaining itself function.

ii.) secondary value

The only records from this category that have interest to outside researchers are biographies of museum staff and other participants in the events. The events themselves are sufficiently documented in annual and other reports from the executive level.

4. Sustaining Itself
The sustaining itself function covers a wide expanse of activities, competences and records. The classes of records related to this function are not unique to museums, and there is a large literature on their classification and appraisal. Therefore, it is unnecessary to conduct a detailed examination of these records beyond some general comments. While all offices of the museum perform some activities that are a part of this function, for the most part records that are created by governing bodies and executive offices have the highest primary and secondary values. It is these offices, as with any administrative body, that create the records that summarize the operational and important administrative activities. These include records that document the creation and organization of the museum such as statutes, executive orders, planning documents, estimates and budgets, legal interpretations, delegations of power, relationships with other bodies and organizational and functional charts. They are, in short, all those documents that define the legal, fiscal and organizational framework of the museum. Executive level records also include valuable "reportorial documents" such as annual reports and other periodic reports that summarize museum activities, as well as minutes of meetings and conferences. All of these records are necessary for continued museum operations and are also valuable to secondary researchers.

All offices of any administrative body produce housekeeping or facilitative records that document activities not aimed at performance of its mandated substantive functions. Rather, they are created by activities that support or facilitate the performance of those functions. The records that document facilitative activities have low primary value after a fairly short period of time.

23 T.R. Schellenberg, Modern Archives, 142.
24 Ibid., 145.
25 Ibid., 146.
They also have low value to outside researchers, that is secondary value. The general principle is that if the records document or summarize important policy, procedural, legal, fiscal and operational activities, they may have high primary and secondary value. If they do not, or if they only document supporting or facilitative activities, their primary and secondary values are low.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

A functional analysis, such as this study of museums, is part of the normal working life of archivists whose duty it is to make clear, to all potential users, the full context of the creation of any group of records. Archivists commonly study the mandate, functions, and activities that produced a body of records. In other words, they as a matter of course conduct a functional analysis of a particular organization, institution, agency or person. Such a functional approach to records in the archival profession necessarily follows from the understanding that records and archives originate as the result of practical activities carried out in the performance of assigned functions. This kind of study forms the basis for an understanding of the meaning of archival documents. It is necessary for their arrangement and description, and for the orderly and efficient administration of records by their creating bodies.

The best approach to museum functions and records is to examine museums through their juridical nature. This recognizes the fact that the legal and juridical system pervades and regulates all aspects of society, and that social institutions are juridical persons that operate within a legal structure. This legal system mandates museums to carry out their activities in the performance of legally defined functions through legislation, delegations of power, articles of incorporation, and constitutions.

Museums develop from collections of objects that are amassed for a variety of personal and social reasons. These collections become museums when the activities involved in their creation, maintenance and use are pursued
for their own sake, separate from their religious or political meaning, and the collections are embodied in legally recognized institutions. When that happens museums as juridical persons exist with the functions of collecting objects, preserving objects, and educating the public. As well, as with all social institutions, museums have the function of sustaining themselves.

These abstract functions are carried out through the performance of practical activities. It is activities that produce documents that are naturally accumulated into series directly related to the functions and activities that created them. These record series also relate to the various offices (which are also juridical persons within the juridical system of rules, regulations and procedures of an institution) that have the competence to perform certain activities and functions of the museum. How the various record series relate to one another is determined by how each museum organizes its activities, and how its various offices are organized and relate to each other.

It has been said that "the business of museums is information."\textsuperscript{1} The information within museums is contained or embodied in the objects that they collect, but it is also contained in the documents that they create or accumulate as they carry out their mandated functions in relation to their collections. The information contained in museum records is required, first of all, by museums themselves to enable them to carry out their functions. It is also necessary for researchers from outside the institutions themselves, in order to satisfy a variety of cultural, historical, scientific, legal and personal research needs.

This emphasizes the value of the full range of museum records that document all of its functions. Museums themselves need to preserve those records, from all their activities, that they need for their continuing operations and to provide for legal, financial and administrative accountability. At the same time, it must be recognized that many classes of museum records have value to outside users, not just those that directly relate to the collections. Any appraisal of museum records must address the primary and secondary values of records from all museum activities.

Museums, perhaps more than most administrative bodies, document their activities extensively.² This is especially true for activities that directly relate to the provenance, acquisition, study, and use of objects that they collect. There are two important characteristics of museum records, however, that are common to most bodies in society. One is that museums create a plethora of duplicate records. Since the body of records must be reduced to only those that are necessary to satisfy institutional and societal needs, the task in appraising them is to identify and retain what the science of diplomatics calls the "original" documents (or records series). This means identifying which museum offices are responsible for creating and/or maintaining the original documents related to particular functions and activities. This study will facilitate that task.

The second characteristic of museum records is that the extensive documentation is spread through numerous offices. Often each office or position has the competence to perform activities that are from more than one function, and seldom does a position perform all of the activities that comprise a function.

For example, the "educating the public" function is carried out by curators, museum educators, designers, conservators and various technicians. At the same time, a curator may perform activities from all the museum's operational functions, as well as the self-sustaining function. This kind of incomplete functional documentation, on the one hand, and multi-functional competence on the other, is characteristic of modern institutional life. Anyone seeking to understand and evaluate the records of museums, and their informational content, must understand museum functions and activities, which offices have competence to perform the activities (and which functions they pertain to), and how each museum organizes itself to fulfill its mandated functions. This functional analysis addresses those matters to facilitate the appraisal of museum records.

Museum records have some general characteristics that make them unique. Those records that document the acquisition, provenance, use, and meaning of museum collections not only have high primary value for legal, evidential and administrative reasons, but they also remain active for an indefinite period. They seldom, if ever, lose their value for the performance of ongoing museum operations. These collections-related records, which have the highest primary value, also have the highest secondary value to researchers from outside the creating institution. Museum records are also unusual in that these same collections-related records, with the highest primary and secondary values, are created at the middle or lower organizational levels (that is by curators, curatorial technicians, registrars and their assistants, and conservators and their assistants). This is in contrast to the usual principle that records from executive and other management positions have the highest value because they summarize operations at lower levels in the organizational structure. They are
also the positions responsible for the legal, fiscal and administrative and organizational framework of the institution. While this remains true for many classes of museum records, those that document how objects are acquired, their provenance and meaning, their physical condition and conservation, and their use and handling within the museum, cannot be summarized without losing information that is vital for ongoing museum activities.

This functional analysis of museums in the ideal is intended for museums to better understand and manage their own records, and for other researchers to better understand museum records and information they contain. Ultimately, though, it is a tool to aid in appraising the value of museum records for permanent retention, and for their arrangement and description once appraised. The full range of museum activities require documentation. Just as museum collections, and their related records, tell us a great deal about the natural world and human cultures, museums as institutions can illuminate much about the people and societies that created the museums themselves. Museum records have a vital role in revealing those stories to us.
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