

Museum librarianship: A Cross-discipline and Cross-institutional Model of Librarianship. The Historic New Orleans Collection and the Case for Successful

Museum Librarians on Duty

Anita Kazmierczak, Auburn University



Abstract

Museum librarianship has existed as long as there have been museums; however, a formal definition and research description of this unique model of librarianship is needed. This paper aims to address these deficiencies and to bring more light to museum librarianship as a cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional form of librarianship, one that unites the “library” and the “museum” within one research collection. This paper will discuss similarities and differences between the museum librarian and the traditional librarian. This paper also aims to describe museum librarianship via published literature, the author’s professional experience as a museum librarian, and a careful examination of the operations and structure of The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC) library. The THNOC serves as a good example of a museum library through its mission, procedures, and common operations. The work of the librarians at the THNOC and their commitment to the museum’s library mission, their agility in serving internal and external users, and their knowledge and professionalism can be seen as exemplary of a new type of library role: the holistic librarian.

Keywords: museum libraries; museum librarianship; New Orleans, Louisiana; The Historic New Orleans Collection; special libraries; holistic librarianship; museums

According to the *Core of Standards* of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), all museums are required first to be “a good steward of its resources held in public trust” and second to “demonstrate a commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access” to its holdings (AAM, 2018). Museums are guardians and promoters of science, culture, tradition, art, history, and technology. Government, foundations or nonprofit organizations can administrate museums but "museums, regardless of size, wealth, or founding date, have a common aim” to “seek to present the objects in their collections in accordance with the best professional practice, thereby contributing to public knowledge and enrichment”(AAM, 2018). To fulfill this goal of service to the public on the highest, most professional and knowledgeable level of expertise, museums create support systems made of different units and departments, including laboratories, showrooms, galleries, archives, and *libraries*.

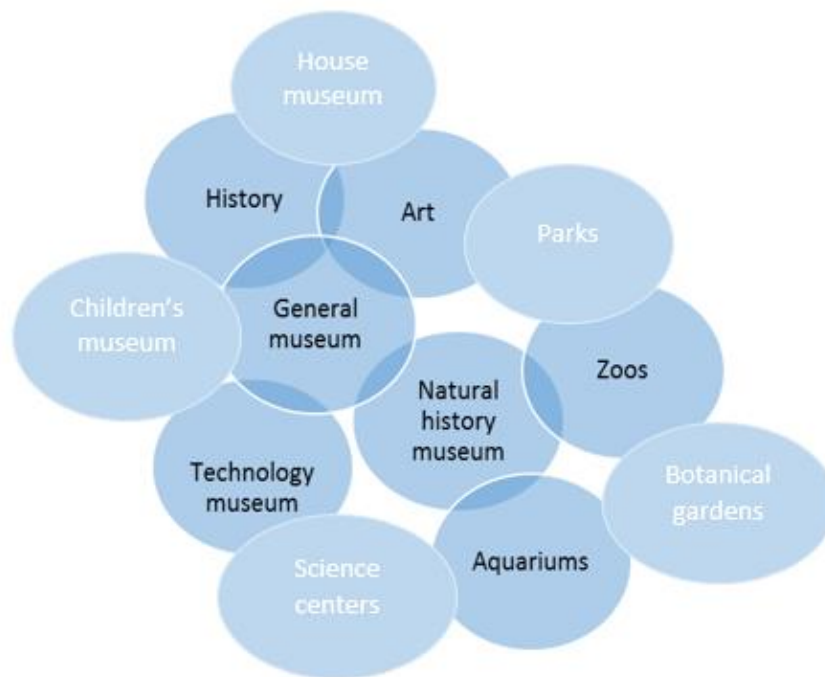


Figure 1. Museums cluster. Museum’s type depends on subject, audience, and location.

The library, like the museum, is a "collection of resources in a variety of formats that should be:

- (1) organized by information professionals or other experts who
- (2) provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access and
- (3) offer targeted services and programs
- (4) with the mission of educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences
- (5) and with the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole" (Eberhart, 2010).

Regardless of their similarities, museums and libraries are not the same kind of "collecting" and "serving" institutions. The shared core principles such as "strong historical and philosophical connections" and "common goals of public education and community development" (Bell, 2003) connect museums and libraries, which makes the existence of the library within the museum easy to justify. Promoting education and serving the public are two important reasons for the presence of the library in the museum; however, there seems to be an absence of reinforcement from the AAM in promoting libraries within museums. The author is certain that museums substantially benefit from having a library or a library service component either integral to or in support of a research department. Both the museum and the library are complementary to each other, as they serve the public through education, research, publication, and outreach, although with uniquely specialized areas of emphasis and service.

The differences between libraries and museums "can be profound" (Storey, 2003) and "the assets, personnel, professional training, and the terminology used can be dramatically different partly due to different materials handled" (Lester 2001). For

example, "while a knowledge artifact (like a book) can speak for itself, a cultural artifact requires interpretations" (Gibson, 2007). Hence, the techniques of describing and organizing collections in the library and the museum can be, and are very different. "Libraries tend to be open-access and support freedom of information. They have even-handed collection policies on all subjects and perspectives. They list and advertise all items of the collection, through the catalog" (Gibson, 2007). The museum approaches its access and organizational policies slightly differently, "there is an emphasis on the protection of the intellectual property rights of objects, and the protection of confidentiality (...) museums collect unique, monetarily or intellectually valuable objects that require significant attention to issues of security and preservation" (Gibson, 2007).

Often, but not always, the catalog, searchable databases, and indexes are for the internal staff use only, although museums sporadically provide access to their all holdings via an on-line (OPAC) catalog that is open to the public. Due to the protection of privacy of donors and artists, the copyrights laws, and lending agreements, museums will cautiously participate in programs like WorldCat. Therefore, to search museum holdings, users often have to access online catalog located exclusively on the institution's website (THNOC model).

According to Lester, "museums have seen their role as providing context through interpretation," while libraries offer direct access to the resource (Lester, 2001). Museums collect and process primary resources and materials, while libraries chief focus is the collection of secondary (supporting) resources and materials. Libraries provide the context and background for researchers and patrons to interpret and understand primary materials such as sculptures, paintings, and all physical items collected in the museum.

Two of the main goals of the museum are to exhibit and to research, therefore, the goal of the library in the museum would be to support these objectives by creating broader context for the collection, and providing reference sources for both internal staff and external visitors. Supporting and promoting scholarly works and research are what unites museums and libraries. Both institutions play an educational and recreational role. Both provide resources and services to the community. Both have a “role in cultural transmission and preservation” (Gibson, 2007), and both are “cultural heritage institutions working for the public good” (Allen & Bishoff, 2002).

The library within a museum should be an equally distinctive and supportive unit, with the host institution gaining substantially from this symbiotic cross-institutional union. The primary purpose of the library in the museum is to “provide timely, accurate, useful information services and resources to the host institution” (Larsen, 1985). The host benefits from the library by receiving “direct and customized to its collection enhancement of museum programs and services, and further support to the museum operations and mission” having a library “saves museum’s staff time,” thereby saving the museum money. A museum library can be described as a customized collection of print and non-print reference works that are available at all times to museum professionals, as well as to the public, and that can have a vast impact on the shape, direction, and scope of potential research opportunities museums can offer.

Museum libraries are frequently not circulating collections their holdings are available for only internal research at the museum. The closed stacks policy could require appointments for external users to access holdings. Due to concerns over control and protection of access to assets, museum libraries rarely participate in the interlibrary loans

and other shared resources projects. To comply with copyright laws, a museum's catalog is designed with an internal user's needs in mind first. Access points in the museum catalog are controlled and screened before being published to external users via OPAC. The existence of two parallel catalogs, internal and external, is not unusual for museum libraries. Closed stacks and subject limitation of a museum's collection also influence the structure of the catalog. To be able to meet the internal museum's management policies, the museum library catalog needs to be built around different principles than the traditional library catalog.

Moreover, the museum-wide catalog has to include and provide access to different formats of holdings, from curatorial objects like paintings and sculptures, bibliographic materials like books and sheet music, and archival materials like manuscript collections. Different national cataloging and processing standards rule over the diverse formats collected in the library and the museum. The rules and standards apply to both the museum and the library despite format differences, all encoded representation (bibliographic, archival, and curatorial) of all the museums holdings are loaded into one catalog. The key to an inclusive and accessible museum catalog is the customization of cataloging software used by the museum. Curatorial, bibliographic, and archival metadata is loaded into a single catalog, while the original data comes from separate cataloging and processing modules.

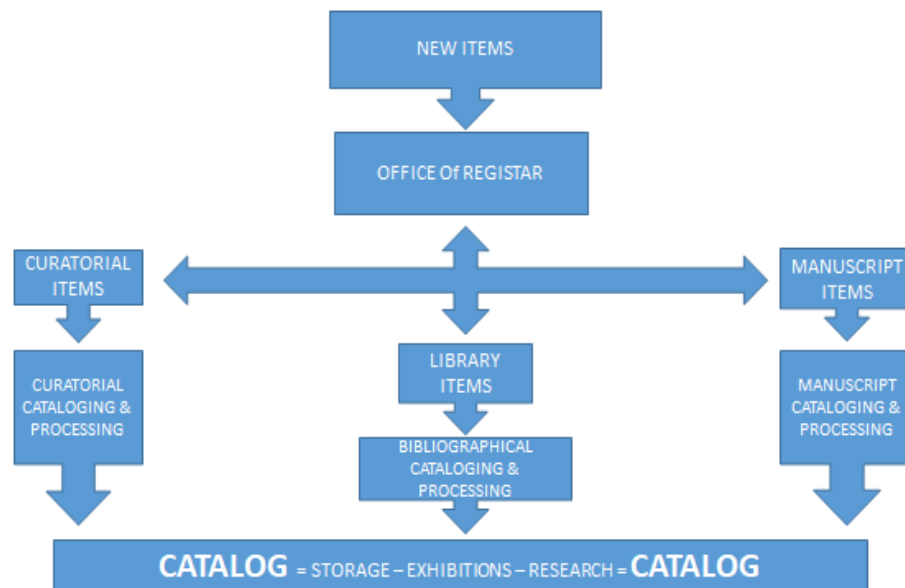


Figure 2. Cataloging and processing in the museum environment.

Many museums have declined to institute a library due to essential challenges (e.g. staff shortage, financial difficulties, and logistics), although the library benefits often outweigh the alleged difficulties. The need for a library in the museum was expressed in an early 20th century UNESCO statement that seems, regardless of the passing time, to be very fitting: “Identification of the specimens coming into museum calls, in the first place for an expert staff and in the second for a good library of reference books if the requirements of serious students are to be met. From this, it follows that a museum must have a good reference library with all the standards works dealing with the subjects in the collections” (Toupin, 1985). The American Library Association (ALA) describes the library’s role in the museum as “an organized, accessible collection of print and non-print materials and resources, suitable to the museum” and requests a “place dedicated to housing library materials and the services associated with them,” that is capable of providing “information services to the museum community, based on the collection, and

the community's needs" (Bierbaum, 1994). Furthermore, the library should be an integral and supporting unit for the host institutions. "Library supports the museum at all points, and in all phases of its mission, the goals and objectives of the library reflect the mission and goals of the museum" (Toupin, 1985). Library serves the internal staff, such as curators, historians, artists, scientists, and docents. Equally, the library provides resources to external researchers and scholars and general visitors.

Additionally, museum libraries are the mirror and the enlightening context for the museum holdings. The library as a collector of resources gathers materials related to the museum collection and the museum itself, to preserve and archive materials and resources such as exhibitions catalogs, programs, and brochures, internal financial and organizational records. The library's goals match the museum's goals, and the library's operations like acquisitions, cataloging, processing, and preservation, support the museum's operation respectfully. Finding ways to create one harmonious organization is challenging but is achievable as demonstrated by the successful The Historic New Orleans Collection example.

The case for a library in a museum is very challenging, and the need for the library can be overlooked due to the absence of official regulation and encouragement from governing organizations like the AAM. To receive museum accreditations, AAM does not indicate the need for a library department. "The library is not crucial; while it is included in the AAM accreditation standards, there has been no correlation between the accreditation of the museum and the museum's library services" (Bierbaum, 1994). Many museums do not have a library due to staffing and budgetary constraints, and the lack of a formal requirement to have one. Museums substitute, the absence of a library, with an

informal reference materials unit. These are often as simple as a room with books and reading materials without internal organization. The library requires standardization, regulations, and professional staff. Therefore, a museum's informal "reading rooms" or "passive book storage" of any kind will not be acknowledged in this paper as proper library departments (Bierbaum, 1994). As Bierbaum (1994) writes "the museum does not have a library until the collection of materials (book and non-book, print and non-print) is located in a place dedicated to library and information services and overseen by someone charged with responsibility for two things: first, planning for daily functions and activities, including a program of services based on the needs of museum's staff and the library users, and second thinking about and planning for the future."

The role of the museum library might be slightly altered according to the host institution's fundamental goals, but the core purpose of the library should follow requirements of the American Library Association (ALA), and should not deviate significantly from academic or public libraries. The library can only fully support and serve its host if it is controlled by a set of standards and rules that defines the library as a library. Hence, even as a part of a different cultural institution, the library should be staffed with trained librarians to ensure all of the ALA standards and guidelines for technical and public services are followed and implemented diligently (Koot, 2001).

Museum Library and Special Libraries in the Literature

The connection between special libraries and museum libraries has been frequently discussed in the literature. According to Larsen, the museum library is considered as "one branch of the family of special libraries" (Larsen, 1985). The discussion about whether that is a correct "consideration" appears in several publications.

Categorizing the museum library within the special library group is seen as imprecise, and can be questioned. Frequently, museum libraries are omitted from the list of special libraries group, for the reasons represented in the literature below. The earliest definition of special libraries comes from the *Constitution of Special Library Association* and says “all small special libraries throughout the country; financial, commercial, scientific, industrial; and special departments of state, college and general libraries; and, in fact all the libraries devoted to special purposes and serving a limited clientele” (The Special Libraries Association, 1910). There is visible lack of reference to museum libraries, “special” is a synonym for an unusual, and not autonomous library units within an uncategorized and un-profiled institution such as a museum. Also, the SLA (Special Libraries Association) founders are not listing museums as primary host institutions. A museum library is a cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary library, and it is also a very self-directed and self-sustained place of research, therefore, the categorized museum library as an example of a typical special library could be misleading and misinterpret the museum library’s core justification of existence.

There is profound inclination between researchers to either place the museum library within its category or avoid categorization overall. The trend is to write about museum libraries as either “a library” or “museum library” bypassing the need to assign them to the established library groups such as special, academic, public. Museum library contains the values and characteristics of them all. The problematic task of classification rises from the cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional designation of museum libraries. They are not academic libraries, but they do carry elements of academic institutions, as well as elements of a public library; therefore, the special library group can be broad

enough to classify museum library as a "branch of special libraries" (Walker, 1985). However, this classification does not comprehensively represent the scope and mission of museum libraries.

The term "special library" is seen as rather unsatisfactory. Starting with the founders of SLA, back in 1909, John Cotton Dana articulated his hope that "the name will be just temporary" (Murray, 2013). The upgrade to the name never happened, and a special library is what is often used to categorized libraries within another institution, including museum libraries. According to the SLA, the guiding principle for all special libraries is to "exist to support the parent organization and to make its work effective" (Murray, 2013). The ties to the parent institution are what links museum libraries with special libraries. Is it correct, and is this the proper classification? It leaves a certain lack of fulfillment since museum libraries often play not only a supportive, but often a prominent role within the museum itself. Famous libraries such as those of MoMA, MET or THNOC, are all well known, borderline independent libraries, but are all still very firmly attached to their host institution.

As far back as 1950, Ruth S. Leonard clearly defined special libraries by emphasizing that a "special library is not a separate entity, but exist as an integral part of a highly specialized kind of organization whether it be an industrial corporation, research, or service institution, a trade association, a government agency or a museum" (Leonard, 1950). Leonard's description marks the first time that "special library" was specifically defined to include the museum library.

The main argument against Leonard's theory is that it omits the critical fact that museum libraries are most often hybrid divisions, built upon cross-disciplinary and cross-

institutional rules, and are standardized by hybrid guidelines to achieve equalization of museum and library within one cultural entity. The unique hybridization alters how holdings of the collections are represented, handled and processed. Hybridization also allows the library to become a self-sustainable department within the museum with its own budget, policies, standards, and qualified staff to do solely library related work.

In 1983, Ellis Mount was perplexed by how surprisingly unclear the interpretation of special libraries was received. He addressed the unregulated generalization and came up with an updated description. He extended the scope of special library definition, stating that the primary characteristic of special libraries are these “which are sponsored by business and industry, not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, and professional associations.” Mount’s categorization made room for all the “un-fittable” libraries. Whenever the library was not visibly public or academic, it was special. He also added to the “special” category, the small, subject-oriented units and departments that are part of an established public or academic library system (Mount, 1983), and that new approach diluted the definition throughout the library spectrum. Every library could be seen as special, and the word “special” was not sufficiently defined or limited. If one follows Mount’s theory, special libraries could be part of all institutions, including museums and traditional libraries; however, this definition admits redundancy by allowing a special library to operate within a library. There is no point to call a library within a library special, it’s simply a special collection, department, or unit. For a library to be a special library it needs to compromise unique characteristics such as subject focus or need to be exclusive to a commercial, cultural, or governmental host.

Neither Leonard nor Mount’s definition sheds much light on specifics of special

library categorization. Either museum libraries belong within this group or not. Due to a lack of standardization and lucidity of terminology, museum libraries are described as a “branch” of special library family but not a special library *per se*. Museum libraries are a significant and integral part of the host institution, but they also can be an independent entity within that institution. The Historic New Orleans Collection library exemplifies a museum library that is both dependent and independent from its host. It has unique research, resources, staff, budget, policies, and organizational structure, while residing in a separate building, physically removed from the host museum. Should museum libraries be classified as special libraries? Would it be more appropriate to classify them as museum libraries and end the speculation? This paper seeks to differentiate and support the case that museum libraries are a valid and separate category of libraries and librarianship.

Museum Librarianship: Education and Training

According to the University of Southern California’s Master of Management in Library and Information Science program, museum librarians “facilitate research” (USC, 2013). They work to build collections of books, periodicals, and digital resources. They manage archives that focus on diverse specialized subjects, and they work directly with researchers to help make important discoveries. Museum librarians work equally with bibliographic, curatorial, and archival materials. Therefore, there is a need to train librarians to be familiar with all avenues of research resources and their formats. The secondary priority for museum librarians is to “meet organizational missions,” work on an equal basis with external scholars, and also support and serve internal staff such as historians, curators, educators, conservators, and designers. Librarians help with research

and other museum tasks and projects like exhibitions, educational outreach, publications, catalogs, programs, concerts, lectures, and symposia. The librarian must be aware of the internal needs and internal goals of the institution. Without knowing how museum operations are executed, the librarian cannot fulfill the duty of supporting the mission of the museum.

Often a museum librarian finds the opportunity to pursue a distinctive specialty and become an expert in the topic by gaining knowledge of an area of study specific to the museum collection discipline. That is often a reason why librarians with interests in art, science, culture, language, history are attracted to work in a museum library. That is also why the second graduate degree or specialization related to the museum collection is highly desirable, although not required, while hiring new museum library staff.

There are other roles of museum librarians, like maintaining historical objects collected by the museum and the library. The librarian works with other museum staff to preserve and display these objects, however, the librarian cannot rely solely on the museum staff's expertise. To be a successful museum librarian, one needs to take a proactive role in handling museum and library materials. To adequately secure the well-being of the items it is a duty of all museum staff, and that includes librarians, with no exception. Therefore, the librarian needs to know how to work with curators, and how to work with historical objects outside the regular library environment. The librarian in a museum must be brave enough to step outside of the conventional library parameters. The museum librarian has a dual role in supporting the mission of the museum both as a librarian and as an employee trained in the handling and preservation of the whole collection. An effective museum librarian is not a one-dimensional library worker, but

one who must be aware of and follow the newest methods of physical and digital preservation of often most “un-library” items.

Having a Master in Library Science (MLS) is the key to success for any librarian, although, in the case of museum librarianship, it is preferred (not required) to match a library science degree with other qualifications and expertise in art, history, linguistics, science, or another discipline, interest, and skill. The museum librarian often is the staff member who “does it all” (Benedetti, 2003). Museums frequently have fewer funds to support a large number of professional staff, and that means more duties and responsibilities for the librarian; therefore, a solid and thorough library education and training matched with creativity and flexibility on the job will produce a model museum librarian.

The key to the respectable and effortlessly operating library are proper and adequate staffing decisions (Usher, 1985). The purpose of the museum library is “to support the curatorial and other professional staff in its study of the museum collections, and to provide research materials and library assistance for museum exhibitions, lectures, and publications. The library plays a significant role in establishing the museum’s reputations as a research institution” (Usher, 1985). Therefore, because it plays such a critical role across multiple functions, the professional background, knowledge, and skills of the librarian are essential to the museum library. The skills of the librarian must match the goals of the institution to serve it best. The number of museum staff is usually not as important as the correct selection of the personnel and their skillsets to run all museum operations sufficiently and effectively. As a result, the task of finding the right people is difficult.

The most challenging factor for an MLS librarian in becoming a museum librarian is on-site training and gaining an understanding of the unique character of the museum's systems, structure, and operations. Based on personal experience, the librarian needs to make a shift of mind from library service to museum service. The focus alters from the primary library collection to the main museum-wide collection and how the library collection relates to it and how fits in it. The librarian has to recognize and navigate between both the small and the big picture of the museum library.

Librarianship in the museum is placed in the middle of a foreign context that can create a professional challenge for a librarian. The librarian must be aware, for example, of differences between audiences and patrons who visit the library and the museum. The museum audience contains both internal (curators, docents, other museum staff) and external (visitors, tourists, scholars) researchers. Whereas, the conventional library mostly targets external patrons. Museum library must fulfill both internal and external requests. Additionally, the collection of the museum library often is not simply unique, but can be considered peculiar and odd. Some holdings are borderline inappropriate to be given an MARC21 record, but if they fit the museum's collection at large and they happen to be assigned to the library, they will be part of the museum's library collection and they will be treated and cataloged in the same way as any other print object. If the librarian happens to be a cataloger, the sky is the limit. To elaborate, the art of cataloging often has a place in the museum's libraries. It takes a lot of imagination and self-motivation to catalog museum library materials; therefore, boredom will never enter the glossary of the museum librarianship handbook. The rules of appropriateness are not applicable when the need for a customized approach is the primary requirement.

The audience of a museum library is so different from the users of the public or academic library, and the librarian always has to keep that in mind. The goal is the same, to provide the best access and make all holdings (within copyrights law) discoverable. The primary purpose of the on-site librarian's training is to learn the policies and culture of the museum and to learn how to walk the thin line between museum and library. It is crucial, *via* self-learning and on-site discovery, for the librarian to gain knowledge of the host institution and to become an independent and reliable staff member. Museum librarians, based on personal experience, do not ask “can it be done,” but rather “how it can be done?”

There is a lot to be said about training and education of museum librarians. Knowledge of a particular institution can be obtained while on duty, but the library education needs to be in place on the day of hire. Usher writes “a master’s degree in library science from an accredited graduate library school is a necessity. With this degree, the librarian is prepared to perform and direct the bibliographic and technical activities of a library. Strong academic background and a keen interest in the subject field in which the museum specializes are also essential” (Usher, 1985) but are not required. Frequently applicants will see additional qualifications like “an advanced degree in the subject field may be a requirement where highly specialized bibliographies and other services are expected of the library staff. In addition, proficiency in at least two foreign languages is a prerequisite in most museum libraries” (Usher, 1985). It is not easy to become a museum librarian, but to become one is worth the effort.

Library information schools (LIS) in the United States and Canada currently offer several programs to provide education and to support training for those whom consider

museum librarianship a professional calling. This paper gathers programs and curricula that can be helpful to aspiring museum librarians. The education will give whomever plans to work in museum library a head start and can provide an important understanding of museum librarianship. Also, learning about this very distinctive model of librarianship could be a test if such a calling is a good match for someone. Museum librarianship is not for everyone, just as public, school, or academic lines of duty might not be for every librarian. Every librarian answers to an inner voice, education and training can help to discover the right “call of duty.”

Few LIS programs examined for this paper offer elective courses like Special Libraries and Special Librarianship. These are introductory classes that aim to describe the basis of work in the museum library or any other nonpublic and nonacademic library. The umbrella of “special library” can cover many types of libraries and information centers, so having just these elective courses as the only training before applying for the museum job maybe insufficient to grasp the essence of museum librarianship. A short excerpt of the Special Libraries course from the University of British Columbia (UBC; 2018) might showcase how basic and superficial those courses can be:

Special Libraries: the goal of the course is to introduce graduate students to the environment and culture of special libraries and the current issues facing special librarians. Management of special libraries and information centers requires a knowledge of basic management practice, specific subject expertise and interest (knowing the “business of the business” of the organization) and an ability to plan, implement and deliver appropriate, cost-effective service which meets the particular needs of the organization.

Increasingly such service relies on electronic capture, access, and delivery of information. Many special librarians now find themselves directing hybrid physical and virtual libraries; absorbed in massive change, empowerment, and innovation movements; taking on corporate-wide project management, and thinking more broadly about the value of information and corporate knowledge management.

Another elective course that can be useful for the museum librarian is Art Librarianship class, which offers more detailed description into a museum librarian's duties. For example, the course description for Art Librarianship at the Queens College in NYC (2018) is "Survey, evaluation, and application of reference and bibliographic resources in the visual arts; techniques and procedures for serving the needs of various clientele; special issues in art and museum libraries." For in-depth courses, the librarian should search for more library/museum hybrid oriented courses such as Museum Informatics, which will provide "an introduction to the study of how technical innovations influence the social world of museums by exploring the nature of information technology in museums and the way modern information systems have shaped the museum environment" (Florida State University, 2018).

A single course may surely provide enough information to spark interest in museum librarianship, but might not be enough for someone to want to become a museum librarian. Few ALA-accredited Library Schools provide full programs curricula to educate and broadly train museum librarians. The table below (*Table 1*) provides descriptions of currently available programs in the United States and Canada.

| ALA accredited LIS Program | Course/Program name | Courses/Program description |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Kent State University | Museum Studies Program | <p>The museum studies courses at Kent State employ a holistic approach to the study of museums as institutions, like libraries, that generate and perpetuate knowledge. Students will gain an understanding of museums in context as dynamic, interactive information systems composed of people, objects, and activities. SLIS courses are structured within a library and information science framework, students are able to cut across the spectrum of traditional academic disciplines, which strengthens the skills of future museum professional by giving them a broader perspective, a larger knowledge base, and more flexibility. Courses offered: Foundations of Museum Studies -- Museum Collections--Museum Communication -- Museum Users --The Museum System -- Developing Memorable Museum Tours - -Museum Collection Information Management --Museum Object Preparation --Methods, Museums and the Law--Writing and Developing and Exhibit Script</p> <p>Source: https://bit.ly/2uM5QuX</p> |
| University of Maryland | Certificate Program in Museum Scholarship and Material Culture | <p>Augments graduate work in American Studies, Anthropology and Archaeology, Historic Preservation, History, Library and Information Studies, and other disciplines by training students to understand the particular challenges, issues, and opportunities encountered when conducting and presenting material culture scholarship in the museum environment. A unique program in this region, the certificate aims to equip students with skills for research, scholarship, and presentation that are appropriate to museums of history, culture, and material life. Courses offered: Introduction to Museum Scholarship -- Museum Research Seminar -- Museum Scholarship Practicum</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | | <p>and media to enhance services and engage with visitors across physical and virtual contexts. We prepare graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary for careers in this rapidly changing field and the ability to engage with today's diverse and connected global audiences.</p> <p>Source: https://bit.ly/2A6idHv</p> |
| <p>University of Toronto</p> | <p>Master in Museum Studies (MMSt)</p> | <p>Gain comprehensive knowledge of the functions of museums in their broader social and cultural contexts. Be forward-focused and understand where museums are headed in the future. Develop a strong theoretical background and professional understanding of museum origins, ideologies, changing philosophies and current practices. Learn methodologies for research Core courses examine museological scholarship and its practical application in different environments and facets, including: collections, curatorship, digital heritage, global cultures and museums, museum education and programming, museum management. Courses offered (some): Museums and Cultural Heritage: Context and Critical Issues -- Exhibitions, Interpretation, and Communication -- Museum Planning and Management: Projects, Fundraising and Human Resources -- Museum Environment -- Museums and New Media Practice -- Museums and Indigenous Communities - - Representing, Documenting and Accessing the Cultural Record -- Museums and their Publics.</p> <p>Source: www.ischool.utoronto.ca/</p> |
| <p>University of Toronto</p> | <p>Master in Museum Studies (MMSt)</p> | <p>Gain comprehensive knowledge of the functions of museums in their broader social and cultural contexts. Be forward-focused and understand where museums are headed in the future. Develop a strong theoretical background and professional understanding of museum origins, ideologies, changing philosophies and current practices. Learn methodologies for research Core courses examine museological scholarship and its practical application in different environments and facets, including: collections, curatorship, digital heritage, global cultures and museums, museum education and programming, museum management. Courses offered (some): Museums and Cultural Heritage: Context and Critical Issues -- Exhibitions, Interpretation, and Communication -- Museum Planning and Management: Projects, Fundraising and Human Resources -- Museum Environment -- Museums and New Media Practice -- Museums and Indigenous Communities - - Representing, Documenting and Accessing the Cultural Record -- Museums and their Publics.</p> <p>Source: www.ischool.utoronto.ca/</p> |
| <p>University of South Carolina</p> | <p>Museum Management Certificate</p> | <p>“Our certificate program will give you specialized museum training to complement your other academic studies. We'll use McKissick Museum as a teaching tool to train you to work in one of our nation's rapidly growing institutions”</p> <p>Source: http://www.sc.edu</p> |
| <p>Simmons College</p> | <p>Special Libraries Concentration</p> | <p>Courses offered to fulfil concentration requirements : Special Libraries (LIS</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | <p>414) – Concept in Cultural Informatics (IS 432) – Digital asset Management for Libraries, Archives and Museums (LIS 532F) – Sites of History (LIS 532I) – Information visualization (LIS 473) – Photographic Archives and Visual Information (LIS 471) – Digital Stewardship (LIS 448) – Art Documentation for Museums, Archive and Libraries (LIS 446)</p> <p>Source: www.simmons.edu/gslis</p> |
| UCLA | Special Libraries Studies | <p>Courses offered: Artifacts and Cultures (IS 211) – Museum Informatics (IS 289) – Indigenous Perspectives on Museums, archives, and Libraries (IS 289-1) – Seminar Curatorship (IS 289-2) – Special Libraries and Information Centers (IS 421) – Seminar: Special Collections (IS 439) – Environmental Protection of Collections for Museums, Libraries and Archives (M 238) – Conservation (M 240)</p> <p>Source: https://grad.ucla.edu</p> |
| University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill | Special Libraries Studies | <p>Courses offered: Cultural Institutions (INLS 554) – Special Libraries and Knowledge Management (INLS 747) – Access, Outreach, and Public Service in Cultural Heritage Repositories (INLS 754)</p> <p>Source: http://sils.unc.edu</p> |
| St. John's University St. John's University | Special Librarianship Study Focus Special Librarianship Study Focus | <p>Focus of study: Special librarianship: Special librarians are information resource experts dedicated to putting knowledge to work to attain the goals of their organizations. Their position titles are as varied as the environments in which these information professionals are employed. Today's special librarians do far more than locate and collect data for their clients. Using current technologies, they also evaluate, analyze, organize, package, and present information in a way that maximizes its usefulness.</p> <p>Courses offered: Museum Informatics (LIS 258) – Planning and delivering Information Literacy Programs (LIS 221) – Special Libraries and Information Centers (LIS 232) – Metadata (LIS 237)</p> |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| | | <p>– Special Collections Librarianship and History of the Book: Principles and Practices (LIS 245) – Database Modeling and Design (LIS 248) – Information Use and Users (LIS 260) – Knowledge Management (LIS 282)</p> <p>Source: www.stjohns.edu/dlis</p> |
| San Jose State University | Special Librarianship | <p>Special libraries, also called information centers, knowledge resource centers, or a variety of similar names, are information-focused units that support the strategic goals of the organization within which they're based. A special library may itself be its own department with from one (a "solo librarian") to dozens of librarians and other information professionals.</p> <p>Source: http://ischool.sjsu.edu</p> |
| University of Texas, Austin | Museum Studies Concentration | <p>Courses offered: Preservation, Administration and Services (INF 392C) – Materials in Libraries, Archives, and Museums (INF 392E) – Historical Museums: Context and practice (INF 388E)</p> <p>Source: www.ischool.utexas.edu</p> |
| Syracuse University | Museum Studies Concentration | <p>Courses offered: Libraries, Archives, Museums (IST 715) a study of libraries, archives, museums, and national parks as cultural institutions, their missions and operating structures, involvement in joint ventures, both physical and electronic – Introduction to Preservation of Cultural Heritage (IST 622) introduction to field of preservation of cultural heritage, including institutions, contexts and methodologies, concept of place and culture, objects and resources for study.</p> <p>Source: http://ischool.syr.edu</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>University of Wisconsin, Madison</p> | <p>Information School/Art History Double Degree</p> | <p>The purpose of the iSchool Art History double degree would be to prepare students to work as art/visual resources librarians or visual resource managers, particularly for positions that require a stronger art background than a prior art BA allows. Graduating students might be employed in educational, cultural heritage, or commercial environments working with both physical and digital materials. Examples might include: art librarian at an academic institution, librarian or visual resource manager at a museum, or image manager for a publisher.</p> <p>Source: https://ischool.wisc.edu/</p> |
|--|--|---|

Table 1. List of LIS programs and curricula teaching museum studies.

The Historic New Orleans Collection: Museum, Research Center and Publisher

The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC) is a nonprofit museum, research center, and publisher dedicated to preserving the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South. THNOC “was created in 1966 by General and Mrs. L. Kemper Williams” and is “located in the heart of the famous French Quarter, it was established from their [Williamses] private collection to preserve and exhibit items of cultural and historical importance. The unique collections are housed in historic buildings which are beautiful and significant in that aspect alone. The THNOC is comprised of a research center, public exhibitions galleries, two historic museum residences, and a gift shop” (THNOC, 1978). The main and original campus of The Collection is located at 533 Royal Street and “presents changing displays on local culture and historical subjects at no charge to the public” (THNOC, 1978, p.1). The Collection officially opened to the public in 1974. Their main goals and mission have not changed much since the founding years, although the organization has grown over last 40 years to 10 historic buildings in two campuses, one on Royal Street, and a second on Charters Street where the museum’s Williams Research

Center and the library are located. It represents an example of a museum library and museum librarianship including duties, mission, and goals.

In 1978, THNOC “consists of archives, a library, and the museum. Each offers collections on social, cultural, political, economic and military developments of Gulf South, Louisiana and New Orleans” (THNOC, 1978). The Collection was built on the fine nucleus of materials assembled by General and Mrs. L. Kemper Williams, and the archives maintain and make available for study unique textual sources on New Orleans and Louisiana history and culture. With complimentary broadsides, newspapers, sheet music and libretti, more than one hundred linear feet of manuscripts (THNOC, 1978). Those numbers are much greater today, but the scope of the collection remains unchanged. THNOC is devoted to its primary subject of expertise and “the holdings of the Historic New Orleans Collection constitute one of the most comprehensive research facilities on regional history ever to be privately assembled” (THNOC, 1978).

Today, THNOC employs over a hundred staff, and occupies 10 buildings divided between two campuses and an off-site storage facility. It holds over “30,000 library items, more than two miles of documents and manuscripts, a microfilm collection, and more than 500,000 photographs, prints, drawings, and paintings, as well as beautiful and unusual three-dimensional objects” (THNOC, 2018). The majority of holdings are stored in the vaults inside the Williams Research Center (WRC), where the divisions of museum library, manuscripts, and reference are located. The original library, archives, and the reading room used to be located in the main building at the Royal Street campus, but since the opening of WRC in January 1996, all the resources, collections, supporting materials, as well as all library and archives staff were moved to the Charters Street

campus. This paper focuses on the Williams Research Center since the library is a part of it. In 1978, THNOC wrote proudly about their library as “an excellent library providing numerous volumes, rare books, pamphlets, periodicals, microfilms and microfiche collections, and city directories of New Orleans” (THNOC, 1978).

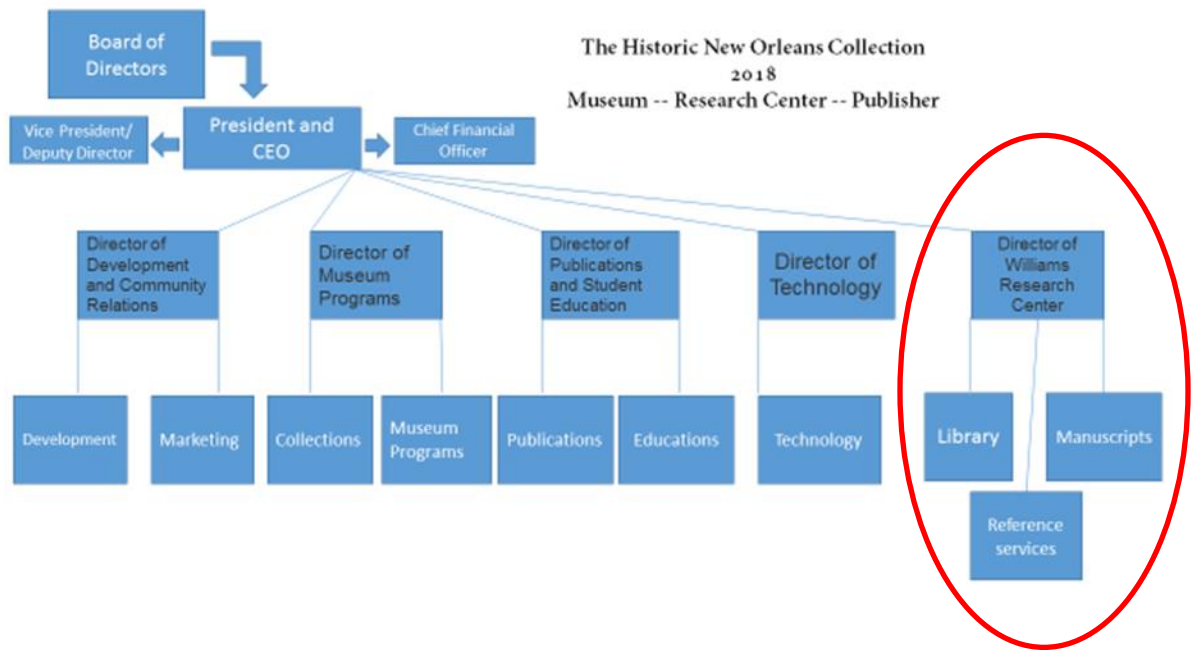


Figure 3. The structure of THNOC, 2018.

The Williams Research Center was opened to the public in 1996 after a full and thorough renovation of its building. Initially designed in 1915 by city architect Edgar Angelo Christy, the building was used in its best years as a courthouse (2nd floor) and police station (1st floor). THNOC completed a full renovation of the structure with exceptional attention to details as a way of preserving original features of this early 20th-century construction. When purchased by the Collection in 1993, the building was in a very “sad shape and out of use for 20 years” (Hardy, 1996, p. E-3). Today, the building resembles anything but “sad,” and stands as an example of exquisite period architecture. The functionality as a research facility motivated the renovation plan, to make it suitable

for THNOC divisions: library, manuscripts, and reading services.



Front Façade of Williams Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2016. Photo by THNOC.

All three divisions are, for understandable and logical reasons, under the same roof. To support both the goals and the mission of THNOC, the Williams Research Center is seen as one research center, divided into three units: library, manuscripts, and reading services (Reading Room). The WRC is managed by the Director, who answers directly to the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Director of The Collection. Technical Services, the Office of Registrar and the Reading Room are all located in the WRC building, as those departments' work is most inter-tangled and dependent on each other. To unify holdings of museum, archives, and the library, THNOC has one online catalog (OPAC) available to the public via THNOC's web site (goo.gl/fM8yZi).

Search page that let patron search via keyword all holdings of the museum.

Bibliographic, curatorial and manuscript hits within collection that match keyword.

Bibliographic record that match the search keyword, with LCCN and local location assigned.



Figure 4. THNOC on-line catalog.

The online catalog contains all the museum holdings from paintings and sculptures through pamphlets and books, to manuscripts. All items at the time of acquisitions, either via purchase, donation, or gift are assigned an individual accession number. The Office of Registrar categorizes each object into either library, manuscripts or curatorial collection. The process is relatively simple but takes many skillful museum staffers to make it smooth and adequate. The THNOC Registrar employs (in May 2018) five registrars with professional degrees like Master of Library Science, Master of Arts, or Master of Science with emphasis and training in arts administration or museum studies. The registrars are responsible for the check-in and the check-out of items for exhibitions, and loans to a different institution (exhibition loans not interlibrary loans). The Registrars move and track items, so in a perfect world, nothing gets out of sight, and everything is accounted for.

The initial records created by registrars are minimal and provide a limited description of each item. Their focus is to provide provenance and a general description of an item, but often registrars go further, and records can include cataloging details such as

Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH), Getty subject headings, and terminology of local collections themes. The registrar's records must be informative and understandable to all THNOC staff with and without cataloging expertise. As trained both museum and library professionals, they have to provide a record that will be understood across the museum, and simultaneously follow the museum, archival, bibliographic, and institutional standards. Registrars must have not only a professional library training, but also museum training, and need pervasive knowledge of the THNOC collections and local rules to follow all accordingly.

THNOC uses a custom collection management system that is capable of integrating all research divisions (museum, library, and archive) into a unified whole. Minisis Inc. designed MINT, to meet the needs of The Collection exclusively. MINT is described as a records management interface that provides "total cultural asset management" (Minisis, 2018). It integrates all holdings, despite the provenance and format, into one system designed to support all three cataloging and processing modules. It was created to follow all national rules and standards. It is a little known fact that the main issue with museum collections is the combinations and variation of formats of collected objects. There is an assumption that archival, bibliographical and curatorial holdings cannot be registered and cataloged within one system, but MINT is intended to support all cataloging modules and all the standards without compromising the content.

Here's how it works. A registrar creates skeleton records in MINT and that initial data is "pushed" down to three separate modules: M3 (Management for Museums) for curatorial cataloging, M2A (Management for Archives) for manuscript cataloging, and the M2L (Management for Libraries) for cataloging with full respect to RDA, AACR2. After

archival, bibliographic, and curatorial cataloging (A-B-C) is completed, the final records are pushed back into MINT and become available internally *via* staff catalog, and externally to researchers and guests via OPAC. Some items will not show in the public catalog, but will be available for internal staff use only due to copyright and loan agreements. The process is complicated, and the systems sometimes can be hard to navigate for the catalogers, but every museum collection is nothing short of complicated. Working in unfamiliar and custom systems is one of the adjustments librarians needs to adapt to when working in the museum environment. Bibliographic, manuscript, and curatorial catalogers are required to follow the current national standards, and records have to meet the quality of other research institutions without exceptions. THNOC library records are loaded and available to all via the OCLC Connection community to copy and edit; therefore, all the technical services staff are trained librarians with impressive backgrounds and professional expertise.

Most museums and museum libraries do not participate in extensive resource sharing programs, like Inter-library Loans (ILL), or WorldCat, including THNOC. OPAC can be accessed through the museum's website. To conduct research or to see an item from the collection visitors have to visit THNOC's beautifully renovated Reading Room, located on the second floor of Williams Research Center. The Collection firmly follows a closed stacks policy, with no exception to internal staff. Items can be only checked-out for the exhibitions, loans, or research that is conducted within museum parameters.

Reading Room and Reading Services

The Reading Room opened to the public in 1996. It contains collections of non-circulating books, pamphlets, and reference materials. All researchers can access most of

the THNOC holdings at the Reading Room, which is open to the public from Tuesday to Saturday (to accommodate weekend visitors). A total of six staff work in the Reading Room (as of May, 2018), including the head of Reading Services. Three of the staff are MLS librarians, two have two graduate degrees in history and art and additional MLS and two have graduate degrees in history with a concentration on New Orleans and Gulf South history. The Reading Room handles and represents all the holdings from all three research divisions. Their knowledge about the collection is critical to support THNOC's mission and to help external researchers and internal staff. Reading Room staff are encouraged and motivated to publish, give talks and lectures, conduct individual research, and to catalog and process individual manuscript or curatorial collections. Additionally, the staff rotate one day a week outside of the Reading Room, during which they may focus on writing, cataloging, processing or conducting research that often produces a paper or lecture.



View of The Historic New Orleans Collection Reading Room, photo credit THNOC, 2017

The Reading Room serves a wide range of visitors from academic scholars to artists, writers, and passing by tourists looking to trace their family's genealogy. The reference staff equally serves both researchers who are working on site or remotely via telephone or email communication. They answer emails, supply answers with digital examples of needed items, help design research, and aid in conducting actual in-person visits to the Reading Room.

The Reading Room is supported at all times by the considerable intellectual muscle and technical expertise of Technical Services Department librarians located directly below the Reading Room. The catalogers are on-call supporting staff, and they are the ones who participate in the out of the Reading Room rotation system.

Technical Services Department

The Technical Services Department is one of the main units of THNOC structure, but it is kept behind the scenes like many library technical services. There are nine librarians and archivists who are responsible for all of The Collection cataloging. The current Head of Technical Services and Associate Director of WRC have an MLS and an additional graduate degree, as is necessary to support the library mission in the museum. He also serves as a curator and research mentor. The catalogers or cataloging librarians possess additional degrees, often in a particular language, art, history, or music, which enables richer records to be created for THNOC. The encouragement for professional growth and motivation to conduct research is one of the unique characteristics of THNOC. All employees are given equal opportunities to pursue their specialized interests, as long as they are within the museum's subject scope. The outcome of this independent research yields benefits for both staff and the institution.

The library is divided into collections that are categorized by formats. The Reading Room stacks are made of general collections (print materials from the beginning of 20th century to the most current publications), reference books, and the contemporary pamphlet collection. The regular stacks, as all the collections, are organized according to the Library of Congress classification scheme. Three rare print collections are housed in vaults: Rare Pamphlets, Rare Books with a special unit for Priority Rare Books, and the Sheet Music Collection, which since THNOC is in the heart of New Orleans is full of very rare pieces of music. The Williams Research Center is also a primary location for all manuscript collections organized by MSS numbers and all curatorial objects such as maps, flat files that contain broadsides, programs, playbills, microfilms, sculptures, photographs, paintings, drawings, pins, figurines, furniture, and so forth.

The Technical Services Department librarians support the mission of the museum chiefly by providing descriptions and by creating state-of-the-art access to all holdings. They also participate in research, organize exhibitions, acquisitions processes and transactions, support publications efforts, and represent THNOC through lectures, articles, and research papers. They all also partake in the museum's outreach programs and they serve weekly rotating staff at the WRC Reading Room as temporary reference staff.

The unique duty of being reference librarians caused catalogers to become involved deeply and passionately in other aspects of museum service. The host institution adopts all the knowledge and skills of librarians at the THNOC and puts all to use in different departments. All librarians are part of reference and research, supporting both internal and external missions. Catalogers answer research questions, help conduct research directly, and perform reference jobs at least once every two weeks in the Reading Room. At all

times, technical services librarians are working as a backup for the Reading Room staff.

Often the cataloger will have the most background knowledge about materials or collections, and he/she is the designated staff member to handle material throughout the research and other museum functions linked to that collection. Hence, librarians are part of exhibitions, where they play equally important roles as the curators. THNOC librarians are authors and curators of the exhibition or education program. The duties of the librarian are not limited to the library only. All librarians write articles and papers, all are encouraged to present and give talks, and participate in educational projects and outreach programs. Librarian and museum staff are unified during museum-wide events, where everyone works and represents THNOC to the public. The library is a department that plays a vital and crucial role for the whole structure of the THNOC. All departments, including the library, work to support THNOC-wide projects and programs. This solidarity is reinforced by thorough communication between the various departments and monthly staff meetings during which all department heads give a short summary of past, current, and future projects and progress or setbacks.

The final interesting fact about the THNOC library structure is the way holdings and local procedures are incorporated within the museum. The divide between museum, library, and manuscripts are floating, and almost nonexistent when looking at the whole institution. Locating and coordinating all cataloging in one department was an essential decision to make it work effectively; therefore the differences and unwanted decentralizations of different systems are avoided but the distinguishing characteristics of the library or archives are retained and easily recognized by the public.

Conclusion

Museum librarianship is an attractive professional path, but it is not an easy one. The job openings are sparse and hard to come by. The training and education are challenging to obtain. There is no additional reward besides personal satisfaction and the professional fulfillment of working in the museum such as The Historic New Orleans Collection. The museum librarian is an essential member of a museum environment, but one who, sadly, is often unrecognized. This model of librarianship might be not for everyone, but this paper showcased how exciting it can be, how very interesting, and intellectually stimulating it is, and how it can support professional growth. The essential job duties will depend on the size of the museum, and the type of collection. There can be one solitary librarian running a museum library, or there can be a whole group of librarians as the Historic New Orleans Collection model shows. To be a museum librarian, one needs to focus on the mission of the host institution, rather than the library *per se*. All librarians in the museum serve not the library, but the museum. The mission, collection, goals, topics, and interests of the museum are distinctive features of the museum librarian's job.

The museum's mission cannot over-shadow the rules and standards a librarian should follow to keep professional relevance to the field of librarianship. Proper education and training are essential to succeed as a museum librarian, and to become a holistic librarian who does it all. But what better job than the one that gives the ultimate challenge and expands one's professional and personal knowledge and interests? Museum librarianship pushes the boundaries of traditional librarianship. Therefore, it is not for everyone, but for the select few who decide to make that leap, it can be a life-shaping professional career opportunity.

References

- Allen, N., & Bishoff, L. (2002). Collaborative digitization: Libraries and museums working together. In *Advances in librarianship* (pp. 43-81). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- American Alliance of Museums (2018). *Core of Standards*. Retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2L921Gr>
- Bell, C.J. (2003). Library-museum connections in community colleges: innovations for lifelong learning. *Community & Junior College Libraries*, 11(4), 45-68.
- Benedetti, J.M. (2007). *Art museum libraries and librarianship*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
- Benedetti, J. M. (2003). Managing the small art museum library. *Journal of Library Administration*, 39(1) 23-44.
- Bierbaum, E. Green (1984). The Museum Library Revisited. *Special Libraries*, 75(2), 102-113.
- Bierbaum, E. Green (1994). *Museum librarianship. A guide to the provision and management of information services*. Jefferson: McFarland Publishing.
- Constitution of Special Library Association. (1910). *Special Libraries*, 1(1), 8.
- Eberhart, G. (2010). *The Librarian's Book of Lists*. Chicago: American Library Association. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2utw1ER>
- Guide to Research at The Historic New Orleans Collection* (1978). New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection.
- Gibson, H. (2007). Links between libraries and museums: investigating museum-library collaboration in England and the USA. *Libri*, (57), 53-64.

- Hardy, J. (1994). Three years ago. Center: HNOC to unveil new quarters. *The Times Picayune*, E1-E3.
- Jesella, K. (2007). A hipper crowd of shushers. *New York Times*, July 8, 2007, ST1.
- Koot, Geert-J. (2001). Museum librarians as information strategists. *INSPEL*, 35(4), 248-258.
- Laster, J.C. (1985). *Museum librarianship*. Hamden: Library Professional Publications.
- Leonard, R. S. (1950). Education for special librarianship. *Special Libraries*, 41(5), 157.
- Lester, R. (2001). The convergence of museums and libraries? *Alexandria* 13(3), 183-191.
- Mount, E. (1983). *Special libraries and information centers: an introductory text*. New York: Special Library Association.
- Murray, T.E. (2013). What's so special about special libraries? *Journal of Library Administration*, (53), 274-282.
- Storey, T. (2003). Libraries: their role and relationship to other cultural institutions. *OCLC Newsletter* 260 (April), 12-14.
- Toupin, J.M. (1985). The library and its parent organization. *Museum Librarianship*, pp.1-12.
- The Historic New Orleans Collection*. (2018). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2L8COPN>
- The Special Libraries Association. (1910). *Special Libraries*, 1(1), 1.
- Usher, E.R. (1985). Staffing the museum library. *Museum Librarianship*, pp.13-19.
- Walker, W. B. (1985). Introduction. *Museum Librarianship*, pp. xi-xii.
- 5 reasons to become a museum librarian*. (2013). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2NaBid7>