

When necessity is the mother of invention

The development of the museum and community concept in the United States*

Mary Louise Wood The non-profit system of governing and financing museums and other cultural organizations in the United States is characterized by significant grass roots community input and responsibility. This non-profit system is being increasingly studied as a possible model by countries where recent political developments are forcing the decentralization and privatization of similar services. To understand the American system, one should analyze the historical forces that shaped the evolution of the concept of local volunteer involvement in the foundation, governance, and operations of non-profits, in this case museums.

1. Introduction

International interest in many aspects of the American version of a free market economy, including the non-profit segment, has increased since 1989 and the changes in the political, economic, and social systems of countries of Central and Eastern Europe. As representatives of cultural organizations from these and other countries where centralized government control is the tradition study the American system, emphasis needs to be placed on why and how this organization evolved. American

museums, instead of being responsible to a federally-mandated cultural policy written by a centralized ministry of culture, are responsive to their local communities whose members support the institutions with their contributions of time and money. This local involvement is manifested by volunteer Boards of Directors, membership programs, fund-raising drives, and volunteer corps, as well as public programs tailored to the needs of the individual community. International visitors need to understand the basis for the reciprocal

commitment by both the community and the museums before they attempt to replicate it.

Given the two following definitions, institutions in the United States and abroad seem to be similar: The International Council of Museums (ICOM)¹ defines a museum as: 'a non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment'. The American Association of Museums (AAM)² defines a museum as: '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'.

By reading these definitions, presumably meant to define museums all around the world, one would not immediately be aware of the symbiotic relationship that exists between American museums and their communities. The key to understanding the difference between these two definitions lies in the words 'non-profit-making' in the first definition and 'non-profit' in the second. 'Non-profit-making' in the definition of the International Council of Museums implies that museums do not deal with money and, by extension, that they do not deal with the other material problems of institutional existence because of their connection to the central government. Museums outside the United States would seem to be controlled from above and thus be responsive upward. In the United States, on the other hand, the word 'non-profit' signifies that the institution is responsive downward. 'Non-profit' implies not only that

1. the institution is not dedicated to making profits for its owners (owners are the community); but also that

2. it is serving a public good, as defined by the community, not by the central government; because
3. the institution is incorporated under state laws; (local control) and
4. it is private, separate from government;
5. it is self-governing, not controlled by outside entities; (members of the community come together for a purpose, making whatever rules they need to complete their mission)
6. it is voluntary, either in governing the institution (such as a Board of Directors) or in managing its affairs, and³
7. its holdings and all contributions made to it are exempt from taxation, in recognition by the government of the service it provides to the community.

These characteristics that all non-profits in the United States share, be they museums, associations, hospitals, et cetera, are a product of the singular history of the United States. The non-profit concept that became an integral part of the American experience is the answer that was developed to answer a question asked of all governments: who supplies what services to what groups at what price.

2. Influences of American history on the non-profit concept

There are several trends in American history – the lure of the frontier, the all-consuming distrust of central government, the force of religion, to name a few – that have contributed to the development of the non-profit concept which fostered the formation of the symbiotic relationship between museums and their communities: the effect of the frontier, the distrust of strong central government, the separation of church and state and the early evidence of predominance of volunteerism.

effect of the frontier

The lure of, first, the New World and, then, the ever-advancing American frontier had an immense effect upon the development of the non-profit sectors of American society, particularly museums, by fostering the development of intensely competitive, entrepreneurial individuals. The frontier was a magnet for a particular type of person – adventurous, visionary, self-reliant, individualistic, quarrelsome – qualities that were an asset on the frontier but a liability in the communities of the Old World from which many settlers came.

Even after the United States was established as a viable country, these and similar traits were still nurtured, albeit in a more ‘domesticated’ form; nineteenth-century titans of industry, like J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, made money instead of taming the wilderness. Their striking achievements not only re-made the face of American industry but also changed forever the shape of American philanthropy: after they made their millions, they needed yet more challenges so they turned their talents toward, among other charitable activities, collecting art and founding museums.⁴

The rough and tumble life of the frontier created not only the Morgan-type entrepreneur but also produced a new concept of class and of social mobility that influenced the growth of American museums and other non-profit institutions. Since birth and inheritance no longer determined social class, ‘newly-arrived’ men and women who wanted to establish their position in their community often gave money to cultural, educational, or social welfare organizations.

distrust of strong central government

The early political history of the United States also encouraged community control of

many local institutions, such as museums. The philosophy of government evolved by the colonists reflected their distrust of a strong central government. In an effort to keep government under control, citizens delegated responsibility for many areas usually reserved to the central government in other countries, such as culture and education, to the states. Technically the states had legal and fiscal responsibility for these areas, but, in reality, the states were only too willing to allow private citizens, as individuals or in groups, to shoulder the fiscal and fiduciary burden for these and other services. In return, the local and national government developed systems of tax relief for non-profits and those who contributed both time and goods to them that encouraged the growth of this part of the American economy.

Strong community support for museums and other non-profits in the United States can also be partly attributed to the official policy of separation of church and state. Since religious bodies were free of state control and could run their own orphanages, schools, universities and hospitals on a local level, citizens became accustomed to having a say, through their church, in these types of services.⁵

early evidence of predominance of volunteerism

By the early nineteenth century, these factors had already produced a distinct group of voluntary, community-based organizations whose unique character was commented upon by the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, in 1831 in *Democracy in America*: ‘Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations. They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies, in which all take part, but associations of a thousand other kinds, religious, moral, serious, futile, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive. The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to

build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools. If it is proposed to inculcate some truth or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society. Where at the head of some new undertaking you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association.’⁶

De Tocqueville continued by noting that, in European societies, the wealthy, powerful citizens are the heads of associations of people who are dependent upon them and thus control the means of accomplishing change – or keeping the status quo. In democratic America, however, the power comes from the citizens who, by banding together in freely-formed associations, wield more authority than they could as separate individuals.⁷

3. Evolution of the museum and community concept in American institutions

The modern American museum, a ‘thoroughly popular, democratic phenomenon’⁸, is a product of the unique history and culture of the United States. Founded by private individuals who were filling a perceived need in their communities, museums were thus responsive to the masses and to their taste.

natural history museums

The first museums in America were natural history museums, founded in the late eighteenth century. These early museums followed two models: they were either profit-making for the owner or they were specialized societies operated by the members for their own edification.⁹ Charles Willson Peale’s museum Repository for Natural Curiosities was opened in his home in Philadelphia in 1796. In 1814 his son Rembrandt opened another museum in Baltimore¹⁰ and in 1825 another son Rubens Peale

founded a New York museum at 252 Broadway.

Charles Willson Peale, that most famous early American museologist, was a pioneer: exhibit design techniques, museum education strategies, profit-making schemes were all explored by Peale. When exhibiting birds and animals, he created natural habitats in which to display specimens. To exhibit larger animals, he first made replicas of wood in natural poses and then covered them with real skins. He equipped exhibits of small items, such as the fangs of a rattlesnake or tiny insects, with a magnifying apparatus. To allow the working public to visit his museums at night, Peale pioneered the use of gas lighting in his Philadelphia museum and the branch institution in Baltimore. And Peale also appealed to the same public with ‘rational amusement’, his term for today’s ‘museum education’. The events included lectures, demonstrations of chemistry and physics, evening concerts, and magic-lantern shows. To help explain exhibits, Peale mounted a catalogue framed on the wall and wrote an eight-page guidebook.

The Peale museums were operated as money-making institutions. For example, in 1816, a total paid attendance of 48,000 brought in \$11,924; after subtracting expenses of \$2,000, there was a net of \$9,924.¹¹ Income from the Baltimore museum varied from a high of \$7,195 in 1816 to a low of \$2,478.75 in 1819.¹² Eventually, however, the museums in New York and Baltimore went bankrupt and the main museum in Philadelphia declined after Peale’s death in 1827. The demise of this highly successful enterprise has been attributed to the fact that these museums were for-profit – not non-profit – enterprises and, as such, were vulnerable to the competition of more sensational entertainment, such as the spectacles produced by that consummate showman P.T. Barnum.¹³

These early endeavors that combined learning with money-making entertainment were followed by what was to become the normal model for establishing a museum in the United States, whether natural history, art, or history: private citizen(s) form a committee and found the institution for the public good. The organizing citizen(s) then form a volunteer board to manage the museum for the public. The Board begins to bring together a collection and the public itself subsequently becomes involved in the museum in various ways, such as supporting it with gifts of time, money or collections.

Even the most famous United States museum, the Smithsonian Institution, owes its origins to the impetus of a private individual. In 1829 James Smithson, an Englishman who never saw the United States, left a bequest to 'the United States of America, to found in Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men'.¹⁴ The Smithsonian is the only American national museum, yet it receives only part of its operating funds from the federal government and is governed by a Board of Regents composed of both federal employees and private citizens.

art museums

The evolution of art museums in the United States, a product of the nineteenth century, follows a similar pattern to that of natural history museums: public-spirited citizens collaborate and establish a museum for the edification of their neighbors. After the American Revolution, Americans were not interested in European art and European-style art galleries, which were reminders of the elite, stratified society they had fought to be free of.¹⁵ They were, however, interested in contemporary American art, as evidenced by the flourishing of the Art Union movement. From 1839-1852, the

Art Union provided the opportunity for the middle class in many parts of the country, outside the large cities, to acquire contemporary American art. The Union bought original works by contemporary American painters and sold lottery tickets for about \$1, which entitled the purchaser to a print of one of the paintings in that particular drawing and a chance to win an original painting. The Art Union also maintained a popular gallery in New York which over half the population of the city had visited at one time or another.¹⁶

Temporary exhibits of contemporary American art, landscapes, still lifes, and portraits were organized in some locales by art dealers, but these exhibits had no lasting impression on the communities where they were held. The first public art museum in America was founded in 1842 by an individual, Daniel Wadsworth (1771-1848), in Hartford, Connecticut. Having inherited a family fortune, Wadsworth spent his life collecting contemporary American art. He opened the Wadsworth Athenaeum when he was seventy, and in keeping with current taste, made contemporary American painters, such as Asher B. Durand, Thomas Cole, and Frederic Edwin Church, the focus of the collection.¹⁷

After the Civil War, museum founding and building proceeded apace, both in the more established cities of the East Coast and in the newer cities of the Midwest and West. The reasons for the flowering of art museums all over the country are best summarized by a speech made in 1869 by William Cullen Bryant at the first public meeting that led to the formation of the Metropolitan Museum of Art the next year.¹⁸

- 1) If every European country, even a third rate one like Spain (sic) could have museums, so could the richest country in the world (national prestige);
- 2) 'We require an extensive public gallery to

- contain the greater works' of our artists (encouragement of native artists);
- 3) 'When the owner of a private gallery of art desires to leave his treasures, where they can be seen by the public', where can he deposit them? (refuge for collections);
- 4) If an art student was too poor to go to Italy, what was he or she to do? (education);
- 5) The museum must provide 'alternative entertainment of an innocent and improving character' to counter the vice found in the cities (uplift).

The Metropolitan Museum of Art was founded in 1870 by a Committee of Fifty-all volunteers: there was no building, no collection, just an idea. One might expect New York City to found its own art museum with the sponsorship of affluent citizens, but there are accounts of other cities in America where a groundswell of popular sentiment led to the establishment – and continuation – of art museums. For example, in Buffalo, New York, in 1861, two local citizens, artist Thomas Le Clear and art dealer Josiah Humphrey, organized a temporary exhibition of art. 'American Hall was engaged, draped and somewhat inartistically extemporized into an art gallery (...) Portraits of old citizens were borrowed, artists at home and abroad were asked to contribute, and as a result the hall was strewn with a collection of works of art. Men of influence were quietly smuggled in and requested to say a kind word for the exhibition. Ladies of taste were asked to lend the light of their countenances to the doubtful enterprise.'¹⁹ Everyone had such a good time that they decided they needed a permanent museum of art. Thus, the Buffalo Academy was born, the forerunner of the world-famous Albright-Knox Gallery.

Between 1870 and 1900 citizens of many more cities, particularly the newer ones of the Midwest and West, decided they needed a permanent museum of art to enhance their city.

In many cases, volunteer associations, exclusively men in the East, but more women in the Midwest and West, were the impetus to founding art museums.²⁰

Other museums were founded by individuals, very rich men who competed with each other to form the best collection with the most masterpieces to leave to their city.²¹ The sentiments of James Scripps (1835-1906), one of the founders of America's first newspaper chain, are typical of other newly rich citizens. Scripps, writing in 1889, wanted to see his city, Detroit, become the art capital of the United States: 'The pride I naturally felt in Detroit led me to anticipate for the city (...) some special fame (...). It was plain that she could never hope to win, like New York or Chicago, the prestige of a great commercial metropolis. Boston was already the literary center, and Cincinnati was asserting her claims to first place as the musical. The country was just waking up to an appreciation of the fine arts and as yet the place where their temple would be set up was an open problem. Why might not Detroit aspire to the honor and become the Florence or the Munich of this continent?''²²

history museums and historical societies

History museums and historical societies, the most numerous museums in the United States, were also founded by private individuals or groups who volunteered their time and money to develop institutions to serve specific functions in the community, in this case, for political and patriotic motives.

In the 1790s, the first history museums and historical societies, such as the Massachusetts Historical Society (1791), were founded to immortalize the story of the struggle of the thirteen colonies against the English empire and to explain the genesis of the American experiment in self-government. These early societies, including the New York Historical

Society of 1804, were supported entirely by membership dues. Later, in the 1850s in the Midwest, some states such as Wisconsin began to support their own historical societies.²³

Beginning in the 1850s, the movement to restore historic houses as museums and open them to the public was initiated by local citizens in diverse communities in an effort to rekindle patriotism and to educate the public about the past. An example of this initiative can be found about 1850 when the committee to save George Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, New York, the first historic house museum in the U.S., wrote that no traveler would: '(...) hesitate to make a pilgrimage to this beautiful spot, associated as it is with so many delightful reminiscences of our early history. And if he have an American heart in his bosom, he will feel himself to be a better man; his patriotism will kindle with deeper emotion, his aspirations for his country's good will ascend from a more devout mind, for having visited "Head-Quarters of Washington"'.²⁴

In the 1850s, a nation-wide drive by a private group, one of the first such efforts in the country, succeeded in preserving Mount Vernon, plantation home of George Washington. Many plans had been proposed for the mansion and surrounding acreage: a summer residence for the incumbent president of the United States, an old soldiers' home, an agricultural college, or a resort hotel. Since neither the federal government nor the state of Virginia wanted to be responsible for the property, there was little opposition to Ann Pamela Cunningham of South Carolina assuming leadership of this project to establish a shrine where 'the mothers of the land and their innocent children might make their offering in the cause of greatness, goodness, and prosperity of their country'. In 1856 she obtained a charter for the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union from the

Commonwealth of Virginia. The Association quickly established chapters in thirty states and in four years raised \$200,000 to buy the plantation and begin preservation of the mansion. This nation-wide private effort to save Mount Vernon was all the more amazing because it was launched in the last painful years before the United States was torn apart by the Civil War (1861-1865).²⁵

4. Volunteer and community support of American museums

Not only has the great majority of American museums been founded by private citizens, either acting alone or in groups, the museums are also supported by private citizens who volunteer their time and make contributions of money and relevant collections.

gifts of volunteer time in American museums

Volunteering in museums – or in any non-profit, for that matter – is an aspect of community involvement that is unique to the American non-profit sector. The beginnings of volunteerism in America can be traced to can be traced to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts where Benjamin Ives Gilman, Secretary from 1893-1925, began the docent program in 1907. The name 'docent' was derived from Latin ('docere' means 'to lead') and refers to the role of volunteer as a companion who helps the visitor 'grasp the intention of the artist'.²⁶

Most American museums utilize volunteers in all departments. According to a 1989 survey conducted by the American Association of Museums, historic site museums employ the highest percentage of volunteers, 82 per cent of total staff. Followed closely by nature centers, where 80 per cent of total staff are volunteers, and general museums, where volunteers comprise 77.7 per cent of the staff. Zoos and planetaria do not use as many volunteers, with 46.5 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively.²⁷

Statistics evaluating the effect of time donated by volunteers to an institution generally attempt to assign a monetary value to those contributions. For example, one survey indicates that, for all areas where volunteers are utilized, volunteer labor translates into the equivalent of almost three million full-time employees, worth nearly \$52 billion; nearly half of this labor is contributed to health, education, and arts organizations.²⁸ In one art museum, with a staff of twenty-five and a budget of about \$4 million, in one recent year over a hundred individuals gave about 122,000 volunteer hours as volunteer guides, museum shop sales assistants, and other positions.²⁹ It is more difficult to quantify the intellectual and emotional dedication that such time commitments represent and which are vital to a museum's support in its community.

individual memberships in American museums

The individual museum membership is another example of the sense of community ownership. When individuals 'join' their local museum by contributing differing amounts of money, they are more likely to feel that the institution is important to them and to support it in other ways, by visiting regularly, by participating in education events, by shopping in the museum store, and by voting in local elections for, perhaps, bond subsidies to construct a new addition. In a recent survey by AAM, these figures emerged: 89 per cent of private, nonprofit American museums have membership programs, as compared to 42 per cent of public museums.³⁰

private gifts of cash and tangibles to American museums

Private individuals also support museums by outright gifts of cash and tangibles. In 1989, private giving for arts and culture organizations accounted for 63 per cent of their total

revenues, including contributed art works or capital items, while income from commercial ventures contributed 26 per cent of their income, and government at all levels gave 11 per cent of their total revenue. Museums and other cultural organizations in the United States depend heavily on this non-governmental support, since the majority of these institutions are private and non-profit: 90 per cent of the orchestras, opera companies, and chamber music groups; 40 per cent of the theatre companies; and 71 per cent of the museums.³¹

5. Benefits of museums to American society

In return for the support of their communities, museums serve important functions, by virtue of their status as non-profit institutions: as innovators of public policy, as purveyors of minority views, as developers of human resources, as preservers of American heritage and as economic contributors to their communities.

museums as innovators of public policy

First of all, museums can be innovative – a rare characteristic not often found in either government or business. Governments have to control the ruled, and democracies, in addition to controlling, have to reach consensus, which makes changing the course of government like turning a large battleship in mid-stream. Businesses have different constraints on their freedom to innovate – they have to make money. But museums neither control a broad constituency nor have to make a profit, so they can experiment and find new solutions to difficult problems; often their answers become government policy. One example is the issue of repatriation of American Indian remains and grave goods. Twenty years ago, before the federal government addressed the issue,

museums such as the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, were aware that repatriation was an important issue and were dialoguing with the Hopi Indians. When the issue came up on the national level, the federal government began to draft legislation that was unfavorable to museums. Representatives from museums and Native American groups were instrumental in developing compromise legislation that was more fair to museums while still fulfilling the needs of Native Americans. The federal government has utilized the innovative ideas of the museums in similar legislation for the Smithsonian Institution's Native American collections and in founding the National Museum of the American Indian.

museums as purveyors of minority views

Another intangible service that museums provide to their communities is by advancing new, unusual, and thought-provoking ideas. A recent example would be the many exhibits generated by the Quincentenary of Columbus' voyage that challenge prevailing attitudes about the discovery and its long-lasting effects. Instead of promoting the notion that Columbus found uncivilized savages in the New World who benefitted greatly from his conquest, the revisionist approach has argued that viable civilizations were destroyed and millions of people killed or enslaved.

museums as developers of human resources

In another vein, museums give to both staff and volunteers opportunities to develop special talents. There are some persons, both volunteers and staff, who receive a sense of fulfillment from working closely with the public, not in governing them or in making money from them, but in educating the public about the wonders, the beauty, and the history of our world.

museums as preservers of American heritage

Museums have been leaders in helping to preserve the United States material and social heritage. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, non-profit organization, supported by members nationwide, dedicating to helping private individuals safeguard historic patrimony. Locally, there are about five thousand historical societies, historic house museums and history museums that collect artifacts, mount displays, stage re-enactments, compile genealogical tables, conduct architectural reviews and keep alive traditions.

Museums assist numerous groups that have played a role in America, but are no longer dominant, to explore and preserve their heritage. Examples abound, such as the new Japanese-American National Museum in Los Angeles and numerous African-American museums and Native American museums all over the United States.

museums as economic contributors to their communities

Museums play a significant financial role in their communities by attracting visitors who spend money. For example, a recent exhibit 'Mexico: Splendors of 30 Centuries' at the Metropolitan Museum of Art had over 650,000 visitors in ten weeks. 70 per cent of these visitors were from outside the area; 64 per cent came to New York specifically to see the exhibit. These tourists spent \$224 million while they were in New York visiting this particular exhibition at the Metropolitan.³² The Seurat exhibit, which lasted for four months, drew 642,000 visitors, of which two-thirds were from outside New York City; 40 per cent came to New York specifically to see the exhibit. These visitors spent about \$313 million on travel, hotels, restaurants and shopping.³³

6. Conclusion

Private, local involvement in the governance and operations of museums can have disadvantages. For example, lack of an assured, steady income can make it difficult for museums to plan ahead with certainty. If museums attempt to diversify their operations to generate income by opening book shops and cafeterias or by renting their facilities, for example, they could face loss of their special tax-exempt status. Without central government control in a city or region, museums can find themselves competing with other museums and non-profits for both audience and funds. Finally, giving legal responsibility for museums to their volunteer boards could be another drawback because it involves non-professionals in the operations and policy development of specialized institutions.

In spite of these and other possible disadvantages of local involvement, American museums are uniquely characterized by their responsiveness to the needs of their surrounding intellectual, environmental and emotional communities, their dependency upon the support of these communities, and the creative tension that distinguishes the symbiotic relationship between museums and their communities. As expressed by Germain Bazin, curator of the Louvre, commenting upon the innovations of American museums: 'The (American) museum has metamorphosed into a university for the general public – an institution of learning and enjoyment for all men. The concept has come full circle. The museum of the future will more and more resemble the academy of learning the mouseion connoted for the Greeks.'³⁴

* This paper was delivered at the Michigan Museums Association Annual Meeting in Traverse City, Michigan, on Thursday, October 22, 1992.

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Notes

1. The International Council of Museums (ICOM), founded in 1946, is a nongovernmental organization with about 8,000 members in over 120 countries around the world whose purpose is to represent the interests of the world's museums.
2. The American Association of Museums is the national service organization for museums and museum professionals. Founded in 1906, the AAM has over 12,000 members in the United States abroad, comprising about 2,500 institutions of all sizes and types, 8,500 individuals, and the remainder corporations. The AAM represents the nation's museum community in Congress when legislation relevant to the institutions, as diverse as tax law and the repatriation of Native American remains, is being considered. The organization also runs an active publications program, operates a Technical Information Service, supports programs to develop uniform museum standards, stages an Annual Meeting that draws up to 4,000 participants, and negotiates discounts for its members on such goods and services as art transport and insurance, retirement and health care plans for small museums, rental cars and hotels, and long distance telephone service.
3. See: Lester M. Salamon. *America's nonprofit sector: a primer*. New York: The Foundation Center, 1992, pp. 6-7.
4. In Europe, on the other hand, the histories of the great museums are intimately tied not to one outstanding person who set out to collect a large number of works of art with the express purpose of leaving them to the people, but to royal families whose private collections were amassed over generations by different individuals and then appropriated by or given to the new states formed in the twentieth century. For example, in Vienna, the Habsburg collections form the basis of the Kunsthistorisches and Natural History museums while, in Florence, of course, one finds the Medici.
5. In Europe, a different tradition developed. Before the Reformation, monasteries performed such duties as healing the sick, caring for orphans, and teaching students. After the Reformation, from the 16th-19th centuries, these functions were gradually appropriated by the central government or by the state church and continue to be funded and controlled by either body.
6. Alexis de Tocqueville. 'Democracy in America' (originally published in 1835). In: *America's voluntary spirit*, Brian O'Connell, New York: The Foundation Center, 1983, pp. 53-54.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
8. Nathaniel Burt. *Palaces for the people: a social history of the American art museum*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1977, p. 13.
9. See: *Mermaids, mummies, and mastodons: the emergence of the American museum*. Washington, DC, 1992. This book is an outgrowth of an exhibition held at the Baltimore City Life Museums, Baltimore, MD,

- December 1, 1990 to June 30, 1992, and places the pioneering museum founding of Charles Willson Peale and his sons in the context of the era.
10. The Baltimore institution was housed in a building that was constructed by Rembrandt Peale specifically to serve as a museum, the first such construction in the United States.
 11. See: Edward P. Alexander. *Museums in motion*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979, pp. 47-50.
 12. See: John W. Durel. 'In pursuit of a profit'. In: *Mermaids, mummies, and mastodons*, pp. 41-65, for a detailed discussion of the Peale Museum, Baltimore, finances.
 13. Barnum acquired the collections from all three Peale Museum sites, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York. Barnum's shows were therefore a combination of Peale's serious collections of geological specimens, shells, and fish as well as performances by bears, wolves, buffalo, and various midgets. E.P. Alexander, 1979, pp. 47-50.
 14. Smithson left a contingent bequest to the United States. After his heir, a nephew, died childless, the inheritance was shipped to Washington, D.C. In 1835, 110 bags of gold sovereigns worth \$508,318.46 arrived by ship in Washington, D.C. E.P. Alexander, 1979, pp. 50-53.
 15. Even though Peale's early museum was a collection of natural curiosities, it featured a collection of Revolutionary War hero portraits. However, they were exhibited more as an expression of national pride than as examples of American productions of fine arts.
 16. N. Burt, 1977, p. 49. The term 'art gallery' has different connotations in Europe and in America. European 'art galleries' were originally private royal collections of picture opened by the ruler at his convenience to the public. In America, the term seems to have a more eclectic use as one of a variety of synonyms such as 'museum of fine arts' or 'institute of arts', as a space where pictures are hung, or as a commercial venture that sells not only paintings but other forms of art, fine or otherwise.
 17. The museum was transformed in the 1880s by two more individuals. One was Elizabeth Hart Colt, widow of Samuel Colt (creator of the Colt firearm so prominent in American folklore); Mrs. Colt left paintings, sculpture, glass, and a cash bequest to the museum. The other private individual was Reverend Francis Goodwin, a scion of an old Hartford family for whom civic betterment was close to Godliness and cleanliness. Goodwin's first cousin was J. Pierpont Morgan, whose father was from Hartford. This close connection brought the Wadsworth Athenaeum cash of \$650,000 and a collection of 1,325 objects of classical bronzes, Renaissance majolica, and 18th-century porcelains. Avis Berman. 'Mr. Wadsworth's Museum'. In: *American heritage*, September 1992, pp. 101-103.
 18. N. Burt, 1977, p. 91.
 19. N. Burt, 1977, pp. 151-152.
 20. For example, art museums in Cincinnati, Columbus, and Dayton, Ohio, owe their existence to the organizing impetus of local women's organizations.
 21. For example, J.P. Morgan, Henry Clay Frick, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Mellon and Henry Walters.
 22. N. Burt, 1977, p. 182.
 23. E.P. Alexander, 1979, pp. 87-88.
 24. Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh was bought by the state of New York for about \$10,000 in 1850, which also agreed to maintain and operate it, while the Newburgh Village Board of Trustees was the guardian to keep it as it had been in Washington's time. E.P. Alexander, 1979, pp. 88-89.
 25. The preservation work began on February 22, 1860. The success of this effort led to the formation of other private voluntary committees to save such landmarks as General Andrew Jackson's home Hermitage near Nashville, Tennessee, George Mason's Gunston Hall and the Lee family's Stratford in Virginia. E.P. Alexander, 1979, p. 89.
 26. Terry Zeller. 'The historical and philosophical foundations of art museum education in America'. In: *Museum education: history, theory, and practice*. Reston, Virginia: National Art Education Association; Nancy Berry and Susan Mayer (eds.), 1989, p. 45.
 27. American Association of Museums, January 1992, pp. 85-86.
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