DANA
MUSEUMS AND
INDUSTRIES
MUSEUMS AND INDUSTRIES

DANA
THE NEW RELATIONS OF MUSEUMS AND INDUSTRIES

BY JOHN COTTON DANA

THE STORY OF THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF A GROUP OF EXPERIMENTAL MUSEUMS

NEWARK, N. J.
THE NEWARK MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
1919
NOTE OF EXPLANATION

Ten years ago the government of Newark said, in answer to an inquiry from a group of citizens which included the Trustees of the Public Library, that if the inquirers would cause to be formed a proper corporation to receive same, they would appropriate $10,000 for the purchase of a collection of Japanese and Chinese art objects then on exhibition in the Library. The suggested corporation was formed, with a charter including this declaration of purpose: "... to establish in the City of Newark, New Jersey, a museum for the reception and exhibition of articles of art, science, history and technology, and for the encouragement of the study of the arts and sciences. . ."

The Association is engaged in activities so varied and has collected so wide a range of material that it might appropriately be called an Association of Museums and not a Museum Association.

The following outline of the ideas in accordance with which I have managed the affairs of the Association for ten years was read to the members of the Museum Association at their annual meeting on May 29, 1919.

A somewhat detailed statement of certain of the things that have been done by the Association in these ten years will be found in the appendix.—J. C. D.
MUSEUMS AND INDUSTRIES

If you use the word "art" in talk with the average person of intelligence, that person is almost sure to think at once of paintings. If the word is "museum," the thought is almost surely of a gallery of these same paintings. If by chance the word "art" is so used as to make plain the fact that reference is not thereby had to oil paintings, you will find that it calls up in the minds of most hearers of intelligence the thought of objects that are probably old, are almost certainly unique or rare, and are indubitably costly.

This tendency to think of art and museums in terms of paintings in oil on canvas with gilt frames, or of objects which are old, rare and costly, is quite as unfortunate as it is universal. It is unfortunate for many reasons. Some of these reasons I shall try to suggest, and shall at the same time try once more to show why I have been glad to give my time and thought to the development in this city of a museum of a certain rather definite kind, which I call "new"—and to no other.

Since this association was formed ten years ago, certain ideas that had been expressed by a few rather bold and inquiring spirits, but had not received general approval by friends of museums, have come to be accepted by good authorities as cardinal principles of museum management. They are lived up to in actual administration by very few museum directors, partly because of the great burden of conservatism under which most museums are obliged to live; but they have produced quite definite results on the museum conceptions of active and observant laymen by almost compelling the adoption of new museum methods, and by calling forth new museum-like enterprises with specific activities quite impossible to the older forms of museums.
Of these undertakings, inspired by modern notions of the powers and duties of a museum, I will mention only a few.

In England, long before the war closed, men keen for the welfare of their country laid plans for the betterment of her industries. In October last, even before the armistice came, these plans were brought out and definite steps taken for their accomplishment. The British Royal Society of Arts, an ancient and powerful body, held a conference with the National Board of Trade, a most important factor in the government of Great Britain. The conference was presided over by Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, then president of the National Board of Education. To this conference were brought the plans which had been prepared independently by the two conferring bodies. These plans were found to be so alike in aims and methods, that they were easily merged into one. This plan is, briefly, to establish a "British Institute of Industrial Art, with the object of raising and maintaining the standard of design and workmanship" (and note that here mere workmanship is put on a level with design) "of works of industrial art produced by British designers, craftsmen and manufacturers, and of stimulating the demand" (note that demand is to be stimulated as well as design and workmanship) "for such works as reach a high standard of excellence."

This institute will be incorporated under the joint auspices of the Board of Trade, as the national department dealing with all industries, and the Board of Education, as the authority controlling not only the schools but also the Victoria and Albert Museum, that vast collection of the world's best products of former days in the field of applied design, commonly alluded to as "South Kensington."

The Central School of Arts and Crafts of the London County Council, the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, the Imperial College of Science and Technology,
the National Physical Laboratory, the Art Workers' Guild, the Home Arts and Industries Association and other like bodies, have expressed their approval of the scheme and their desire to help it to complete fulfilment.

The methods by which this new institute for the betterment of Great Britain's manufactured products proposes to attain its purposes are these:

Set up a permanent exhibition in London of the current products of British factories and shops, selecting the best in design and workmanship, together with kindred products from other countries, both modern and ancient.

Make a selling agency a part of this exhibit.

Establish a fund for the purchase for the State of objects of outstanding merit shown in the exhibits of the Institute.

Through the Institute bring designers, workers,—meaning men who carry out through and with modern machinery the suggestions of designers—and manufacturers and distributors into close touch with one another.

Set up special exhibits and cause them to travel through the whole country.

Make use, through constant and persistent co-operation, of all existing organizations and agencies devoted to the improvement of design and workmanship in Great Britain.

That is a very brief outline of a great and moving enterprise. The enthusiasm which the enterprise has called forth on all sides is indicative of the existence in England of widespread and deep conviction that its industrial output must be notably improved in design and quality if it is to compete successfully in the world's markets.

Note that what this group of wise men purpose to establish through their Institute is a Museum. Note, also, that they find it necessary to establish a Museum, although they
have already in London two of the world's greatest museums, the British and the South Kensington. And note, once more, that the reason they do not turn to either of these museums as the central point of their activities, is plainly because neither of them is connected closely with British manufacturing interests; neither of them shows the designers, the bench-workers, the machine-tenders, the manufacturers or the distributors what they all are doing, what their competitors are doing, what the world is doing, in their several lines; and, neither of them is, in any proper sense of the word, an industrial, a commercial or a teaching institution.

The reasons why these existing museums are not in touch with modern industry, and do not teach, lie largely in the facts to which I called attention in beginning this paper—that intelligent and influential persons to-day think of museums in terms of oil paintings or of rare, old and costly objects, and not in terms of service. Behind this conventionalized museum concept, made up chiefly of paint, antiquity, and price, lies an interesting story, the story of the origin and modern development of the museum idea, too long to be here set forth.

The first point in my argument is reached when I have shown, as I have, that if moving spirits in a great modern nation seek for help in the betterment of their industries through the medium of a museum-like institution, they find that none of the established museums has shown itself, by its acquisitions or its activities, ready to do the museum-like work which they find needs to be done.

At the risk of being unduly personal, I shall try to apply the lesson of this British New Museum movement to our own local situation.

I interrupt the argument here to mention three facts: Designers, artists, workers, manufacturers and distributors of goods of Germany formed an association some 10 years
ago, for promoting good design and good workmanship, and for the diffusion, through all parts of the empire, of knowledge to each line of industry of the progress made by the best men in that industry. This, you see, anticipated by a decade the plans now being formulated for like work in England.

Through a wealthy patron of the arts, living in Hagen in the heart of the great industrial district of the lower Rhine, this Association was able to secure—thanks to the influence of the art patron of Hagen and his close touch with the Association just mentioned,—a very admirable exhibit of the products of German applied art in many lines, the first exhibit of its kind ever brought to this country. It was shown here and later in six other large cities.

This Association asked the Metropolitan Museum of New York if it wished to show this exhibit. The reply came that the Metropolitan did not find it advisable to show these objects of applied art, partly because it could not run the risk of coming thus into close contact with anything commercial. This was only eight years ago. And you should note that in a time as near to us as is even 1911, the thought I am developing of the necessity of making our public museums of definite industrial value was still alien to our most important museum.

In 1917 and 1918, and again in the current year, the Metropolitan has held exhibits of purely commercial products. These products have been admitted under the very admirably conceived condition that they be made from designs which were themselves taken direct—with any desired modifications—from objects already in the museum's collection. That is, our greatest American museum now commits itself definitely to the policy of helping industry in its search for those factors in manufacture which are now seen to be so essential to England,—better design and better workmanship.

These facts show that England is late, though we hope
not too late, in following the lead of its great competitor; that our Association was doing sound pioneer work for the museums of this country when it brought over here and showed certain distinctly commercial products of Germany; and that the vision I had of a museum of definite industrial value to our community was after all only a few years ahead of actualities as entered upon by our greatest of museums of art.

It is proper here to note that we have in the Commercial Museum of Philadelphia an institution which has, for many years, in its special field of commerce, anticipated some of the work that England hopes to do through its proposed institute. It has not only, by its collections and its service of a corps of experts, been of immense value in promoting foreign commerce; it has also, through its very valuable traveling school collections, helped to make of more interest and value much of the teaching work in scores and hundreds of Pennsylvania schools.

The opinions I am expressing in this paper are confirmed also by the recent action of the Cleveland Art Museum. This museum opened not long ago with a very expensive loan exhibition of works of art,—including the inevitable paintings and other rare, old and costly objects,—not one of which can be said to have borne any helpful relations to the varied and wonderful industrial activities of the city which the museum was founded to serve. To-day, this same museum begins to collect objects—not, I fear, made in Cleveland, as they would in that case be neither rare nor old,—but objects "related" to objects made in Cleveland, and acquired with the avowed hope that they will prove helpful to the Cleveland designer and mechanic.

I am confirmed again in my opinions by a recent decision of the Art Museum of Buffalo, which has in recent years
found large sums with which to defray the cost of very elaborate and very expensive exhibits of paintings and sculpture, to open its doors to the products of American arts and crafts,—meaning thereby the products of private, individual workmen. This action is surely a step toward admitting the work of those designers and mechanics of our great shops, who design with their brains and produce with their hands, but as yet are anathema to most museum directors and trustees, because they bring forth their handiwork through mere machines!

The management of the American Museum of Natural History has from the very first foreshadowed the aims and activities of the proposed British institute in the field of industries; for it has always taught, has always advertised and has always been an institution of service, as well as of research and acquisition.

Our town is industrial, its products find in the main an easy market in our own country. But as peace conditions come upon us, Newark products will surely feel a little more keenly than ever before the pressure of competition from European and Asiatic manufacturers. Also, we must expect a somewhat more strenuous competition from other American cities. These facts alone would be abundant reasons for making an effort to improve—as is all of Great Britain—the design and the workmanship in our own shops. To these facts we can add the fact that our city has in recent years begun to think of herself and her development, and now quite definitely desires to be considered as good a city as any, and to be such in fact. This growth in municipal pride, this increase in a proper local patriotism, should alone lead us to wish to put on foot a movement for developing better designers and
better workmen, similar to that which Great Britain is promoting through the Institute I have described.

Let me here add that arguments much like those just noted led us, here in Newark several years ago, to do certain things for the improvement of design and workmanship. Those things include, in part, the making of three new high schools, the increase of attention paid to our evening drawing school, the building up of vocational schools for boys and girls, the use of vocational guidance, the opening of county vocational schools, and the development of our Technical School. These are all helpful to the end we are having in mind, and though our city, in spite of them, is not where it should be in education, in design, industrial design, they point to a public opinion which will surely continue to demand better and broader work for the improvement of our industrial products.

Turn, now, to the very modest efforts of this association and to the thoughts which led up to it and to the conclusions in accordance with which I have tried to guide its development, and you will see wherein lies the lesson it may draw from the industrial-betterment plans that are taking form in England.

About 13 years ago, I presented to the Board of Trade the suggestion that that body help to establish here a "Museum of Local Industries." I was made chairman of a committee on the subject, and with the assistance of Miss L. Connolly, then a supervisor in our schools, proceeded so far in investigation and plan as to be able to present to the Board of Trade a definite suggestion of certain tentative steps. The cost of these preliminary steps was to be from $150 to $300. The Board of Trade directors were not able to see how this would help the city and declined to appropriate the money needed.

Our plans were for gathering at a central point certain
products of Newark factories, so installed as to be easily seen and understood, with supplementary exhibits put up in convenient form for travel from schoolroom to schoolroom throughout the city. As the purpose of the whole scheme was educational, we inevitably tied it up to and looked upon it as a modest aid to our public school work.

Had this museum of Newark products and processes,—a museum of Newark's position in design and workmanship precisely in line with that now projected by the wise and progressive men of Great Britain,—had this museum once come into being, it would almost inevitably have been taken up into or have itself taken over the "Monsignor Doane Museum of Industrial Arts," which I later urged the Committee on the Doane Memorial to establish, instead of buying with the funds contributed for that memorial a quite inferior bronze statue by a rather inferior sculptor.

When this association was founded ten years ago I soon discovered that, though its initial $10,000, given by the city, was used to buy a collection of objects which were chiefly in the applied arts field, were models, that is to say, for all students of design and workmanship, the thoughts aroused by our name—"Museum Association"—in the men chiefly concerned in its promotion were—as my opening remarks indicated they would be—almost solely of oil paintings and of old, rare and costly objects.

I had then studied museums for some ten years. I knew that to spend our very limited funds on paintings and on rare and high-priced objects would merely lead us to construct here,—in a purely industrial city—one more of those useless, wearisome, dead-alive Gazing Collections of which the whole community would soon tire.

I thought I knew then—and no end of modifications of museum and educational practice since then have helped me
to what I fear has been to some an almost unpleasant assurance that I was right in my thinking.—I was sure then that this city could be helped in its educational and industrial life by an active, teaching museum; and certain aspects of the museum that it was my ambition then to work for were quite identical with those of "the Institute of Visual Instruction in the Arts of Design and the Refinements of Workmanship" which England now proceeds to establish.

A little later I was again able to confer often with Miss Louise Connolly, and as I had taken from her certain of my ideas about making for Newark a useful institution instead of a gazing-gallery, I asked her to go again over all obtainable museum literature, and then to visit a long list of museums and schools and to give me her conclusions thereupon. Those conclusions, found in part in her reports of study and visits, and in part in definite suggestions for a museum for Newark, were duly published. Circumstances connected with their publication obliged me then to say that, as my study of museums compelled me to feel that I could give of my time and energy only to the construction of a museum that promised to be active and useful to our city, I would have to withdraw from the museum's work if my own projects, as reflected in Miss Connolly's report, were not found worthy of acceptance.

I rehearse this episode only to make clearer to you the fact that it has not been easy to insist that this organization should move toward a museum giving rather definite values to its promoters and upholders,—our fellow tax-payers—in attractiveness and in helpfulness to industry and education, and should not move toward a mere group of galleries of paintings and costly curios.

In our attempt to make this Association both attractive and definitely useful, we have made it broader in its range of activities than museums generally are. Knowing that the
average person of intelligence has been compelled by current opinion to look, first of all, in a museum of art, for oil paintings, we have, by purchase and by gift, acquired these until our collection of them numbers more than sixty. Next after paintings convention demands of a museum of art that it possess sculptures, and our acquisitions in this line include plaster copies of antiquities, and bronzes, many of the latter being of the best quality. Next after paintings and sculptures museum precedent and popular feeling insist that we have the old and rare and costly in objects of applied art; and in this line, largely through gifts, we have come into the possession of things that fairly well meet these requirements.

If I seem to you to imply that all these paintings, sculptures and objects of age and value have been acquired against my judgment and advice, then I give you quite the wrong impression. A city as big and rich and as increasingly conscious of itself as is ours, ought to feel that it is not properly advanced, in comparison with other cities, if it has not a few treasures in the field of art, and they of the highest type and beautifully housed. And I expect to live to see Newark properly advance herself in this regard. Indeed, by far the greater part of the many exhibits we have set up in these ten years have been distinctly artistic, in the old museum meaning of the word.

What I am trying to convey to you is a clear impression of my very strong conviction, based now on more than 20 years of study of the subject of museums, and 17 years' study of our own city, that with our limited income and our limited quarters we should give much of our time and energy to testing acquisitions and methods, by and through which we can project, for our city, an institution of definite and measurable value; and of measurable value particularly,—this being very
manifestly an industrial city,—in the improvement of design and workmanship in our industries.

Because I felt that we should construct for ourselves here a useful museum, I suggested a museum of our industries to the Board of Trade 13 years ago; urged a Doane Memorial Museum of Applied Arts 11 years ago; have acquired applied art objects as our modest fund permitted and have brought out such exhibits as those of Modern German applied arts, and of the Clay products and the Textiles of New Jersey.

The best of museums, no matter how diligently it try to be attractive and useful, is quite minor in its influence compared with the schools. We have tried to adjust ourselves to this fact. We have known that what we can do in the teaching line with young people should be looked on as experimental. If we are successful in discovering a few boys and girls who are born to become students, collectors and organizers in any field whatever of sciences, art, society or industry—and we have been remarkably successful herein, in view of our limits of income, space, equipment and staff—then we can do little more. The schools, we have a right to assume, will take advantage of our modest discoveries, and pursue them. This assumption applies also to such success as we have had in meeting the calls of teachers for objects that they can use in their classrooms to make more attractive, more easily understood and more impressive the topics their textbooks expound. We lend, of objects gathered for this purpose, several thousand each year. With our present income we can not extend this work. I am sure we ought to extend it and to be granted ample appropriation for that purpose. A school museum can be far more effectively and far more economically maintained as a part of a general museum of art, science and industry, than as an independent institution.

When one of the museums in Philadelphia—following
herein the old museum idea of the supreme importance of the rare and costly—can spend $60,000 on a single vase, the cost to this city of a good school museum, of daily interest and use to thousands of our young people, seems quite negligible.

I speak of these matters at some length because I wish to make clear the wide range of our own activities, modest as they are, and to suggest that, when you do finally achieve a great and worthy museum building for Newark, it should be not merely a palace of art, and a quiet and retired home of pure science. It should contain treasures, of course; our city can not afford not to own such and rejoice in the ownership; but it should provide liberal space for setting forth the real Newark, and that means the Newark of great industries. It should promote the keenest possible interest in the products of those industries in young people, and it should give room, money and service to those methods of making those products better in design and workmanship that are about to be adopted in a large way by Great Britain. It should give ample room to display and use,—to use in education and also in expounding the raw materials of industry to managers and workers and in helping the students of all the sciences—such a collection of scientifically gathered, arranged and labelled objects as we already have in our Disbrow collections. It should afford ample room for school collections and for their study by teachers and for their transport to and from schools as needed. And it should tell the story of the life of man, in his age-long rise from cave-dweller to city-dweller, in a manner to attract by picture, map, model, tool and implement, both old and young, and to serve as a supplement and explanation to every student of society and to every reader of history.

I am trying to give the impression that in the ten years of my very cheerfully given services to this association, I have been working for a vision and a very large vision, not for a
moment to be confounded with the conventional vision of a museum of art for the momentary delectation of the passer-by.

I have tried to show you that this vision has been the product of things seen and known and not of the mere idle imaginings of a summer day. And I have tried to suggest that this vision, which could be made real here only to that very, very modest degree which the narrow limits of our income, our space and our own understandings permitted, has been seen by many in recent years, and is soon, in many of its more important factors, to be put to the test of actual practice by some of the ablest men of our day.

This test will, if it is successful, go far toward removing from the minds of the average intelligent citizen—man or woman—that tendency to which I have so often alluded, that tendency to think forever of museums in terms of oil paintings and old, rare and costly objects. As this tendency weakens, so will strengthen the tendency to think of an association like this as devoted to the task of constructing here an institution of great power for pleasure, for instruction and for industrial betterment; as devoted, in a word, not to acquisition and conservation, but to service.
APPENDIX

The preceding paper,—which is in some degree an apology for my last ten years of museum activities—was read at the annual meeting of the Newark Museum Association on May 29, 1919. The notes which follow make clearer its meaning to the few who may read it who are not familiar with the Association's work.

In the paper itself it is perhaps not made plain that a very large part of our activities had been experimental; that is to say, we have done many things the definite value of which had not been determined by the practice of other older and larger museums. We have, as I think my paper intimates, frankly begun certain forms of activity which, we were well aware, could not be carried on to definite conclusions by us, but which it seemed wise to open up for consideration by modest experiments. These statements apply especially to certain publications, like the Stories of Sculptures, the Habitations of Man, the Stories of the Prints, the stories of Clay and of Textiles and the pamphlet on Snow Paintings.

The experimental character of our work is suggested also by our Junior Museum Club, with its Junior Museum News, which we can promote and guide to a limited extent only; by our exhibits of modern German Applied Art, of New Jersey Clay Products, of New Jersey Textiles, of the Republic of Colombia, of the Colonial Kitchen, and of the Study of Birds.

Our city has no museums. It was clear to us from the first that it would in due time come into possession of museums. Our question was, what kinds of museums should they be? To this question the literature of the subject gave no answer, and did not even try to give one. Nearly all that has been written on museums begins with the quite unwarranted assumptions that museum types are fixed; that the pressing questions concerning them are questions of verifica-
tion, acquisition, conservation and installation; and that when a city decides to give to itself such of the stigmata of culture as accompany museum ownership it must acquire, first, an ornate and expensive building and then fit that building as well as its constructive features permit to the assumed needs of a museum of one of the well-known types.

Our movements in developing our very modest institution were not guided by these assumptions, and for several reasons. The reasons were, first, those that have been suggested by the paper that precedes these notes; next, the limitation of our income, $142,000 in ten years; next, the narrowness of our quarters, they being a few rooms in a public library building; next, the presence by our side of a public library, with the accompanying feeling that we were almost a component part of that library; next, the acquisition of a large, rich and growing collection of objects in several departments of the field of science; and, next, and most important of all, the knowledge that we were supported by, and were in duty bound to try to be of direct value and service to, a city of industries, a city singularly void of those institutions and objects which mark most cities of 400,000; and a city which has at its doors and of easy access, the institutions and objects of delight and education of the greatest metropolis in the world.

Facing these facts, and keeping always in mind the idea of service for the pleasure and advantage of our chiefest patron,—the people of Newark,—we have done what we could; we have frankly experimented; we have acted much as if we were a laboratory of museumology for a great city. Fortune has favored us in the fact that our staff of workers has been almost a part of the larger staff of a public library, and that its members have never known how to spare themselves when the museum's interests were concerned.
Here is a very summary record of our activities:

Receipts in cash from the city and gifts from members, $142,063; gifts of objects, 30,000 and more in science collections and several thousand others, ranging from excellent paintings to colonial candle-molds; expenditure on salaries and wages of special workers, about $60,000.

Acquisitions, a brief summary:

Oriental Art Objects—

Rockwell Collections:

a. Paintings and engravings.

b. Ivories, lacquers, bronzes, shrines, pottery, porcelains.

Tibet Collections: Edward N. Crane Memorial: Paintings, silver, bronzes, manuscripts, ceremonial objects.

Japanese life, modern; domestic articles and clothing, and other objects similar to those in the Rockwell collection.

Disbrow Science Collections:

Botanical specimens .................................. 5,000
Geological specimens .................................. 20,000
Fossils ................................................... 700
Shells, corals, sponges, etc. .......................... 8,300
Zoological, anatomical and archaeological specimens .................................. 1,200
Ethnological specimens ................................ 150

Total ................................................. 35,350

Books, pamphlets, clippings, etc., including duplicates .................................. 13,600

Paintings—in oil, watercolor and pastel .............. 65

Many thousands of other objects of art, including medals, coins; casts and reproductions; armor and weapons; bronzes; pottery, porcelain, glass, terra cotta; prints, en-
gravings and books; American ivories; textiles; silks, laces, spreads, embroidery, brocades, etc.

Ethnology, Industry and Science:
Habitations of man and objects of daily life—North American Indian, Pueblos, Cliff dwellers, Eskimos, Japanese, Mediaeval house, Greek house. Also includes implements, utensils, clothing, windmills, log cabin, etc.

Industrial products and industrial exhibits.
Science collections—birds, mammals, insects in cases, plants, herbariums.

Educational material for teachers, 3,000 items, roughly divided as follows:

Nature Study:
Birds, in boxes with pictures and pamphlets...... 300
Birds' nests, in cases with eggs and pictures...... 10
Mammals, in boxes with pictures.................. 20
Insects, butterflies, moths, in cases and in glass-top mounts ....................................... 115
Woods, showing bark and several sections....... 200
Physical geography—models of glacier, volcano, plains, etc., with photos and pamphlets...... 90

Industrial and economic products:
Industrial processes on charts and in boxes with pictures and pamphlets.................. 500
Minerals—single specimens, study box collections and charts, about...................... 600

Life and customs:
Dolls of various countries......................... 120
Objects, illustrative of daily life in various lands, about .................................. 550
Pottery, bronzes, plaster casts, about........... 150
Physiological models ................................ 15
Laboratory apparatus ................................ 50
All this school lending material is boxed and labeled.

Exhibitions:

- Paintings: 18
- Bronzes: 3
- Graphic arts: 24
- Photographs: 10
- Textiles of New Jersey: 1
- Clay products of New Jersey: 1

Total: 94

Total visitors to these exhibits, about 500,000.

Printing:

- Posters: 150
- Catalogs and lists: 100
- Circulars and invitations: 175
- Reports and descriptive pamphlets: 50
- Miscellaneous, including labels, several thousand.

Of each of the above we printed from 20 to 3,000 copies.