

Rishabh Shah

4655 4192

October 25, 2017

Museums 301 Midterm Question One

Name at least two ways in which the de-accessioning of George Catlin paintings from Chicagos Field Museum was controversial.

Provide two primary reasons why museums should exercise caution when considering de-accessioning items from their collection.

Define the term "repatriation" with regard to museum collections and cite at least two instances/examples in which repatriation was discussed in class.

What is the essential difference between a collection of objects owned by an individual collector and a museum?

A collection of objects owned by an individual is different than a museum is due to the purpose of each. A museum is charged with many duties: educating the community and serving the public; collecting, preserving, and cataloging objects; and saving cultural and natural heritages, among many others. However, a private collection does not need to meet any of these duties, as it is simply a collection of objects a private individual owns. A collection in a museum will be used according to the mission statement of the museum, which contains nuanced versions of the duties all museums are charged with. If executed correctly, the museum, and its collections, will have a positive impact upon its community, while private collections do not have an obligation to do so.

Reformer John Cotton Dana is credited with many innovations in American museums. What was it specifically that Dana was reacting against.

John Cotton Dana was a professional librarian who created the Public Museum of Newark, NJ. With the creation of this museum, Dana also developed a new model of what museums could be. According to Dana, collections had to directly aid members of the local community. He focused on tying the exhibitions at the Public Museum of Newark closely to the needs and interests of the local community. Dana's museum and the exhibits inside it, which were designed as user oriented, were shared freely with the community.

Dana did not see value in private collections, or collections which did not put the local com-

munity first. He strongly opposed the Metropolitan Museum of Art located in New York City. This was due to the Met not putting the community first. Additionally, Dana held a strong dislike towards the large staircase leading to the entrance of the Met. According to him, the grandeur of the staircase did not welcome all members of the community.