

**EDUCATIONAL WORK IN  
MUSEUMS OF THE UNITED  
STATES: DEVELOPMENT,  
METHODS AND TRENDS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649568611

Educational Work in Museums of the United States: Development, Methods and Trends by  
Grace Fisher Ramsey

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**GRACE FISHER RAMSEY**

**EDUCATIONAL WORK IN  
MUSEUMS OF THE UNITED  
STATES: DEVELOPMENT,  
METHODS AND TRENDS**



# Educational Work in Museums of the United States

*Development, Methods and Trends*

By

GRACE FISHER RAMSEY, Ph.D.

Associate Curator of Education  
American Museum of Natural History



NEW YORK

THE H. W. WILSON COMPANY

1938

Copyright 1938  
by  
Grace Fisher Ramsey

---

Published September 1938  
Printed in the United States of America

71  
353  
RH

3120

This Book is Dedicated to  
My Sister  
and  
My Museum Friends

## PREFACE

The "Handbook of American Museums," published in 1931, listed over one thousand museums in the United States. Two hundred and ten of these were reported as conducting educational work, ranging from occasional lectures to a well organized program. Other museums founded since this time have made their educational service one of the chief features of their work. With twenty to thirty millions of people visiting these museums annually and as many as forty million contacts a year made through the educational work of a single large museum, the conclusion may well be drawn that museums in the United States are a definite educational force, contributing to the economic and cultural life of their communities.

No study previous to this has been made concerning the educational work of museums in the United States from its beginning to the present, the methods used and the trends it has followed. In 1913-1916 Paul M. Rea made a report to the United States Commissioner of Education on the educational work of American Museums up to that time. The number of museums established in the last quarter of a century, however, has been approximately doubled and many different phases of the work have developed. The main part of this publication has been based upon careful studies by the author and a thesis accepted by New York University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the University for permission to use this material.

With many misgivings the author has undertaken the task of describing the educational work of museums. Nineteen years' experience in assisting with the development of the educational program of the American Museum of Natural History has brought the realization that no one volume can give an adequate



description of the various phases of the educational work of all the museums in the country. Nevertheless, it was felt that a concise account might prove useful to students of educational problems as well as to museum workers. The author's experience and contacts in working and conferring with noted scientists, artists, and educators have given definite advantages which have proved most valuable. Many data have been used which were gathered from the accumulated experiences of the years. To these facts have been added information secured through interviews and discussions of the work with museum directors and persons immediately in charge of the educational work in more than one hundred and forty museums visited during 1936 to 1938. Other useful data were secured from volumes of annual reports, both printed and typed, the *Proceedings of the American Association of Museums*, *Museum Work*, and *The Museum News*.

The author is deeply grateful to all of her museum colleagues who have assisted in this work by giving their time in conference and otherwise. Among those to whom a special debt of gratitude is felt are: Clinton G. Abbott, director, San Diego Museum of Natural History, California, Laura M. Bragg, director, Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Mass., Katherine Coffey, curator, Newark Museum, Louise Dunn, associate curator, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ralph Dury, director, Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, Huger Elliott, director of education, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Martha Flauhaut, assistant curator, Washington State Museum, Seattle, Philip Fox, director, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, Edward J. Foyles, director, Museum of Natural History, University of Rochester, Richard C. Fuller, director, Seattle Art Museum, Steven Fuller, assistant, H. C. Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, Anna Billings Gallup, formerly director, Children's Museum, Brooklyn, E. W. Gifford, curator, Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, California, Gertrude Gilmore, director, Children's Museum, Detroit, Blake-More Godwin, director, Toledo Museum of Art, William M. Gregory, director, Cleveland Educational Museum, Delia Griffin,

director, Children's Museum, Hartford, Elizabeth Golterman, assistant curator, Educational Museum, St. Louis, Mark Raymond Harrington, assistant curator, Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, Sarah Harper, in charge of educational activities, Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, Mrs. Heath, curator of education, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, George H. Himes, curator, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Mrs. Grace Pettis Johnson, director, Springfield Museum of Natural History, Massachusetts, A. L. Kroeber, director, Museum of Anthropology, Berkeley, California, Ilo C. Liston, secretary to the director, Seattle Art Museum, F. M. MacFarland, president, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, Harold L. Madison, director, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Mildred E. Manter, director, Children's Museum, Boston, Charles W. Mason, formerly Psychologist, Buffalo Museum of Science, Matilda J. McComas, curator of education, Baltimore Museum of Art, Amelia Meissner, director, Educational Museum of St. Louis Public Schools, Grace L. McCann Morley, director, San Francisco Art Museum, Susie W. Mott, director, Oakland Public Museum, Josephine Moyer, instructor, Reading Museum and Art Gallery, Michelle Murphy, instructor, Brooklyn Museum, Anna Wetherill Olmsted, director, Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur C. Parker, director, Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, Mildred Peake, assistant curator, Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, Mildred C. B. Porter, in charge, Children's Museum, Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, Francis W. Robinson, assistant to the director, Cincinnati Art Museum, Paul J. Sachs, director, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Edward J. Smith, curator, Junior Museum Section, Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art, W. Stephen Thomas, director of education, Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, Charles R. Toothaker, curator, Commercial Museum, Philadelphia, Dorothy Treat, assistant, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, J. R. Van Pelt, vice-director, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, Ruth V. Weierheiser, assistant curator,

Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, Katharine Gibbs Wicks, instructor in charge, Cleveland Museum of Art, Etha Wulff, educational director, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, and many others. Special thanks are also given to Professors Alonzo F. Myers, Beryl Parker, and Robert K. Speer of New York University and to the author's sister, Ethel L. Fisher, whose assistance was most valuable in this study throughout the past six years.

Many errors of omission will no doubt be noticed but the author trusts that the reader may have in this brief account, a fairly comprehensive view of the various phases of educational work in the museums of the United States.

GRACE FISHER RAMSEY

The American Museum of Natural History  
New York, N.Y.  
June, 1938