This paper is a guide to the resources available for art provenance research resources. The guide addresses lack of a prescribed methodology for art provenance research. It also discusses the role of librarians in art provenance research. Traditional art provenance research as well as World War II Era (Nazi Era) art provenance research is examined in the paper.

The guide includes a literature review of current resources available to conduct art provenance research. The guide lists reference materials, previously existing guides, and online catalogs and databases that can aid the researcher or librarian. Case studies are included to illustrate practical research methods. Large art museums' practices are listed to demonstrate how to correctly read and write provenance records. A best practice section covers how to begin conducting art provenance research. The goal of the paper is aid the researcher or librarian in conducting art provenance research.

Headings:

Art -- Provenance -- Research

Ownership of materials--Art

Art -- Collectors and collecting

World War, 1939-1945 -- Art and the war.

AN ART PROVENANCE RESEARCH GUIDE FOR THE RESEARCHER AND
LIBRARIAN: A LIST OF RESOURCES.

by
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of the School of Information and Library Science
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Approved by

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Introduction

What is art provenance? The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) has three definitions that relate to the topic at hand

1. "The proceeds from a business" ca. 1628

2. "The fact of coming from some particular source or quarter; origin, derivation." ca.1785

3. "The history of the ownership of a work of art or an antique, used as a guide to authenticity or quality; a documented record of this." ca. 1867 [1]

The term "provenance" originated as a way to describe assets attained through business transactions. Although rarely used as such today, the original definition is important. Art provenance research is about finding out who has benefited from the art work, aesthetically or financially.

The second definition offered by the OED deals with origin. The American Association of Museums (AAM) Guide to Provenance Research states that the literal meaning of provenance is "origin". Where do things come from? The origin of a piece of art can make a significant difference in the value. It can even sometimes create value for something that normally would have very little.

In this paper when the term "art provenance" is used, we will be referring to the third definition of provenance, ownership and the history of ownership. How has a piece of art reached its current location? What roads did it take? Whose hands have held it? Was it ever unlawfully taken from an owner? These questions are the raised when dealing with art provenance.

Art provenance is an area of art that has long be ignored by the art history community despite the role played by art collecting in the area. Academic art historians often keep themselves distant from the financial activities of the art market. Because of this, art provenance has remained mostly outside the discipline. Only in recent years has interest in art provenance moved to the forefront of art historians' minds. This new found interest has been spurred by the large amount of art, usually of European origin, that has provenance gaps from 1933-1945. A "provenance gap" is a gap in the ownership timeline, or provenance record, of a piece of art. It is when there is no documentation of legal ownership. Older pieces of art will have some periods of time where there are provenance gaps due to incomplete or lost sales records, anonymous transactions, and by the fluid nature of the art business itself. [2] Generally these small gaps are acceptable. However the time period of 1933-1945 should be looked at more closely. This is the period of time that Nazi Germany occupied large areas of the European continent. Many people of the Jewish faith were facing deportation or death, some chose to flee. Jews were victims of an official program of anti-Semitism and genocide. Fine art and objects were stolen as part of this government policy. These pieces were either taken outright or bought at prices well below market prices. Large efforts in both European and North American museums have begun to investigate the provenance gaps in art works and in some cases returned the art to the original owners or their heirs.

One example of a family who has researched a piece with a provenance gap in the World War II era is the Bryk-Cardarelli family. In 1999 Alexander Bryk-Cardarelli began research on her great-grandparents' art collection, lost when her family had to flee the Nazi invasion of Austria. She was particularly interested in a Flemish oil painting that

was remembered fondly by her still living grandmother. The painting, *Invaded Poultry House* by Jacob Jordaens and Adriaene van Utrecht (ca. 1650) was a favorite of the grandmother's father (Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli's great-grandfather).

She first contacted the Risk International and Living Heirs Database set up by the Austrian National Archives. They were able to give her inventories of her great-grandparents' home and businesses compiled by the Nazis. She then wrote the Austrian Ministry of Culture and the Austrian National Archives for personal and business-related documentation related to her family. She received paperwork as far back as 1864 that included important postwar restitution and research request letters from family members from 1945-1967. She later received information that *Invaded Poultry House* was auctioned by the Dorotheum in 1942 and sold to a Viennese art dealer and then to an art buyer for Hitler in 1944. After 1944, she had no more documentation about the whereabouts of the painting. Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli contacted the Department of State's European Restitution and Claims Division in the U.S. The Division informed her of other organizations that might assist her.

 In 2001, at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) she found a reference to a piece that sounded similar to the piece her grandmother described. It was in a document created by U.S. Forces in Austria from 1947-1952. It described a piece, titled *Poultry,* which had the right dimensions at a castle near Salzburg, Austria. Further research at the NARA showed that 17 paintings from the castle were sent to Landesmuseum in Linz, Austria. Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli spent countless hours at the National Gallery of Art's Witt Microfiche Photographic Gallery in Washington D.C. looking through and printing out anything that resembled the painting described by her

grandmother. She would show her grandmother the printouts and asked if she recognized anything. Through this method she was able to come across a photo of the painting.

After contacting a 17th century art specialist, she was able to discover that there were three other painting titled *Invaded Poultry House* besides the one held at the Landesmuseum. They were all in private collections and had provenance information from 1916 on. She then contacted the Austrian Ministry of Culture about holdings at Landesmuseum. The Austrian Ministry of Culture had a research team at the Landesmuseum in place and gave her the information that the painting was still there.

After submitting a propriety claim for the painting to the Director of Landesmuseum, the museum investigated the documentation that Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli had accumulated. Landesmuseum found that the painting in their possession was in fact the one stolen from her great-grandparents. In 2003 the painting was returned to the family in time for the grandmother 93rd birthday. [3]

The role that art provenance research played in the story shows how this type of research can help society as a whole. The goal of art provenance research should be to trace the ownership and location of an object from its creation to the present (Yeide, 2001). However the Bryk-Cardarelli story also shows the time and commitment that must be invested in conducting provenance research. It involves doing research with primary sources, through many organizations, and across international borders.

Finding provenance records of art works with provenance gaps not from 1933-1945 is difficult too. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Provenance Research Project mentions several reasons why research into art provenance is complicated. Often the records from sales have not survived. Many private collectors buy and sale through third

parties, such as dealers or auction house. They often choose to do so anonymously. Also many 19th and 20th century dealers and auction houses are no longer in business. Their records often were not preserved, lost or destroyed. [4]

The goal of this paper is twofold. First, it strives to be a guide to art provenance research in general as well as a librarian's guide to art provenance research. Provenance research raises questions for librarians. Why there are no prescribed methodologies for doing provenance research? What is the library's role in art provenance research?

Second, this paper will also give a listing of the relevant literature and sources available in the area of art provenance. And, following the literature review, there will be a list of best practices. How does one do provenance research? What are the existing models? What, at the present are librarians doing to aid the research? This paper intends to be a resource that can help librarians and researchers.

Research Questions

Why is there no prescribed methodology for art provenance research?

Here is an example that contrasts with the experience of Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli. In 2007, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles conducted a daylong scientific workshop to discuss an acrolithic *Cult Statue of a Goddess*, often referred to as *Aphrodite*. It was bought by the museum in 1988 from a London dealer who claimed it had been in a Swiss collection since 1939. The Italian Ministry of Culture claims it was looted from Morgantina, Sicily. The workshop was held to review what is known about the statue and the claims of the Italian Ministry.

The conference included an art historian, a geologist from a university in Sicily, an archeologist, a palynologist (studies spores and pollen), and a conservation scientist.

Each expert brought their knowledge to the table. The art historian discussed the relationship of this sculpture to other works from that area in the Mediterranean. The archeologist discussed other archeological sites in Sicily where temples were constructed in the 5th century B.C. and then sacked by the Carthaginians at the end of that century. The palynologist spoke about her analysis of pollen remains in the soil residue from the statue. Her analysis suggested that the pollen was representative of a landscape that had been largely cultivated.   The conservation scientist presented the chemical content of soil removed from the statue. His conclusion was that it could have come from Sicily but that it needed to be compared with samples from the Morgantina area. The geologist showed through his research that the limestone used in making the statue was around 23-24 million years old and probably from eastern Sicily. [5]

The workshop shows a different, far more technical, rather than historical approach to accurate provenance information. The research used by the Getty Museum is different in focus and data from what was done by Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli. The objects are from different locations, different eras, different materials, and different contexts, so the research is different. The reason that there are no prescribed methodologies is because almost every instance, and every artifact, is different. Provenance gaps can take place in any era, any place in the world. Almost every piece must be taken on a case by case basis. But, what they tend to have in common is that all significant artworks, artists, art communities, transactions and exhibitions have traces of documentation that librarians are prepared and trained to address.

What is the library's role in art provenance research?

"Libraries also are often reluctant to lend unique or fragile works, such as pamphlets and exhibition and/or sale catalogues. Many times these items are uncataloged and filed as

ephemera. Some librarians are willing to check a specific reference to a work in a sale or exhibition catalogue and send you the information, but you should not expect this service from all library staff."
-AAM Guide to Provenance Research [6]

Most primary sources of information about a piece's provenance are likely to be located in an archive or a library. It is discouraging to see that one of the most important works in recent years on art provenance research, a guide from the American Association of Museums, basically says not to use a librarian. Experienced researchers can often run into trouble looking through primary sources, not to mention novice researchers.

The Art Institute of Chicago in 1998 hired four researches to look through the works in their collection with provenance gaps between the years 1933-1945. The librarian's role in this research was to aid the researchers and to offer instruction and research support. The librarians produced bibliographies. They offered workshops and individual bibliographic instruction. They also made sure collections development collected relevant materials to aid in research. Efforts like the ones made at the Art Institute of Chicago shows us that collaboration between researchers and librarians can be beneficial. Having a librarian present during initial stages of research can help illuminate paths that need to be followed by art provenance researchers. [7]

Research

When doing art provenance research, the types of resources used vary. Monographic resources include catalogues raisonné, monographs, exhibition catalogues, journal articles, photographic archives, and inventories. There are also online resources including archives, portals, and databases. Each provides different types of information.

Literature Review

Literature in the area of art provenance, like the research it self, is multifaceted. The starting point for research depends on what information the researcher has at the beginning of the search. Sometimes the researcher has the name of a collector who owned the piece or the gallery that sold it; sometimes the researcher might have only the physical object itself. The following literature review has been broken down to illustrate the different type of sources available and what should be looked for in those sources. The four categories are general research, research about people, research about the object, and research about the art trade.

<u>General Research</u>

The sources below are works that cover the concept of art provenance as a whole or art resources that help with all aspects of research. Most of the resources mentioned are good places with which to become acquainted to the area of art research and more specifically the area of art provenance research.

The Getty Provenance Index Databases Online

http://piweb.getty.edu/starweb/pi/servlet.starweb?path=pi/pi.web

The research library at the Getty Research Institute is one of the largest resources in the world for the study of provenance and the history of western European art. The Getty Provenance Index Databases is a research section under Project for the Study of Collecting and Provenance at Getty Research Institute. The databases are free and available online. The databases included are for archival documents, sales catalogs, and

public collections. The archival documents database has inventories and other documents

from city, state, and national archives. The time period covered is from 1550-1840. The

Sale catalog had information on pieces from auction catalogs in Belgium, France,

Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. The periods covered on the

database are 1650-1840. The public collections database has descriptions and provenance

of paintings by artists born before 1900. It covers public collections in the U.S.A. and

Great Britain. The time period covered in this database is 1500-1990. The Getty

databases are some of the most useful databases available for research on western

European art.

Yeide, Nancy H., et al. The AAM Guide to Provenance Research. Washington, DC:

     American Association of Museums, 2001.

     Written in 2001, the AAM Guide is one of the most comprehensive guides written

to date on conducting provenance research. The book it divided into halves, the first

about basic provenance research, and the second looking specifically at World War II era

provenance research. It has an acknowledged bias towards paintings. The first half gives

instruction on gathering information from the piece itself and how to use primary sources

and secondary sources. It also has directions on how to write a provenance record that is

used by most large American museums. The second half contains information regarding

World War II provenance. It briefly discusses the history of Nazi collecting provenance

then goes on to discuss how the research should be prioritized.

The most important aspect of the AAM guide is the appendices for the two sections. Section one's appendices include bibliographies on the history of collecting, research resources, and dealers. It also includes lists of dealer archives and locations, selected auction sales and exhibition resources, and libraries and photo archives. The second part's appendices include a bibliography on looting and restitution, The Art Looting Investigation Unit (ALIU) list, selected "red flag names from the ALIU list, list of consolidated and detailed interrogation reports, and a list of Einsatzstab Reichslieter Rosenberg codes.

IFAR Journal. International Foundation for Art Research. vol.1 no. 1 Spring 1998. New
York.

IFAR is the journal published quarterly by the International Foundation for Art Research. The mission of IFAR is to be a non-profit educational and research organization dedicated to the integrity of the visual arts.   The journal contains information on art authentication, forgery, and fraud; art and cultural property law and ethics; World War II-era art restitution issues; and art theft. Recent articles have included, Connoisseurship and the Catalogue Raisonné and Britain Explores Ways to Permit Return of Nazi-Looted Works in Museums. It is a print magazine and can only be bought through subscription. The journal provides current information on new resources, technologies in the area of art research, book reviews, and news on current cases. It also contains the most proceedings from conferences and panels organized by IFAR.

J. Paul Getty Trust, Getty Art History Information Program, and Institut de l'information

scientifique et technique. <u>Bibliography of the History of Art</u>. Santa Monica, CA:

J. Paul Getty Trust, 1996.

The Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA) contains indexes and abstracts of

current literature of European and American art from late antiquity to the present,

including books, exhibition catalogues, dissertations, and journal articles. It is the

reference of choice among art historians. It is still available in print in some locations, but

more widely used today via online subscriptions and CD-ROM.

The BHA volumes are broken up by year. Articles within a particular year are indexed

according to topic. Each volume is broken up into sections. The main sections are

General works, General history of Art, 300- 1400, 1400-1800, 1800-1945, 1945 to

present date. Each section has a subsection broken down by industry and region. Foe

example, to find articles related to Italian sculpture in the 1700s the appropriate place to

look would be in the section for the years 1400-1800, subsection sculpture, under Italy.

The BHA volumes start in 1973. It is as a continuation of two earlier indexes,

Répertoire d'Art et d'Archéologie (RAA) from 1973 to 1989 and International Repertory

of the Literature of Art (RILA) from 1975 to 1989. The main areas covered in the index

are European art from late antiquity to present, American art form, European discoveries

to present, traditional fine arts, decorative and applied arts, prints, drawing, and sculpture,

and painting and photography. Some journals indexed are Art Bulletin and British

Journal of Eighteenth Century Studies, a full list of serials indexed can be found at the

J.P. Getty bookstore website. You can search the website for Bibliography of the History of Art or go to this webpage: http://www.getty.edu/bookstore/toc/bha_a.shtml

Turner, Jane. The Dictionary of Art. New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 1996.

The Dictionary of Art is published by Grove's Dictionaries are often referred to as Grove's Art Dictionary. There is also an online version titled Grove Art Online and available only through subscription. It contains 45,000 articles by more than 6,800 scholars. The range covered by the encyclopedia is artists, patrons, artistic groups, sites, cities, countries, techniques, technical terms, iconography, cultures, religions, art theories, periodicals, art forms, materials, and abstract concepts. It is one of the key reference materials in art history research. Along with the Bibliography of the History of Art it should be consulted in the beginning stages of research. After each entry there is bibliography that should be consulted.

Artist entries include short biographies and generally give a list of important works. However smaller, lesser known artist may not have extensive entries. For example, the early mentioned painting, Invaded Poultry House by Jacob Jordaens and Adriaene van Utrecht, Jordeans has a six page entry; van Utrecht has one paragraph and one citation listed in the bibliography. When using the encyclopedia in print the index can be invaluable. For example the van Utrecht entry can be found by a simple alphabetical search through the volumes. However the index will lead you to the entry for a painter Willem van Nieulandt II. Van Nieulandt's daughter Catherine married Adriaen van Utrecht. This might not be relevant to the search, but it is important to note the

families were related. It is also important to note that the Grove Art Online does not make this connection.

The entries for a location can also defer. The entry for Paris is 62 pages long with six sections, each with their own bibliographies. The sections under Paris are history, urban development, art life and organizations, centre of production, buildings, and institutions. The entry for Bangkok in Thailand is 1.5 pages and has no subheadings. While important buildings are mentioned it reads much more like a traditional encyclopedia entry on Bangkok.

Art Index. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1932.

Art Index is a standard bibliographic resource. Available in print or online it indexes around 420 periodicals published throughout the world, including English-language periodicals, yearbooks, and museum bulletins, as well as periodicals published in foreign languages. The material indexed online is from 1929-1984. For indexed material after 1984 online, see Art Abstracts and Art Full Text below.

Art Index volumes are organized by year. The articles are indexed by subject. Artists are generally listed in alphabetical order with a list of articles written about the artist as well as a list of reproductions. Provenance is not a subject heading, however information about provenance can be found under the subject headings: expertising, originality in art, attribution of works of art, and authentication. A good subheading is attributed works under various subject headings or names of artist as mention above.

Art Abstracts and *Art Full Text Databases*

Art Abstracts and Art Full Text are subscription based databases not available in print. They are both designed to be companions to Art Index. As mentioned earlier, Art Index's covers only indexed periodicals until 1984. Any journal articles written after 1984 will not be in Art Index. Art abstracts will have 400 periodicals and the indexes go back to 1984. There will be abstracts of some articles starting in 1994. The difference between Art Abstracts and Art Full Text is full text articles are available starting in 1997 in Art Full Text. For a complete list of journals indexed, go to the following webpage and select Art Index/ Abstract/Full Text: http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/Journals/

Much like Art Index, the goal in researching these two databases should be to find information related to the works. Relevant search terms would be: artists, dealers, location, etc. Online databases search for keywords in abstracts and the full text of the article, which is helpful.

Yeide, Nancy H., et al. <u>Vitalizing Memory</u>. Washington D.C.: American Association of
   Museums, 2005.

Vitalizing Memory was written in conjunction with the American Association of Museums' International Provenance Research Colloquium. The book is almost exclusively about World War II art provenance. It is a collection of essays on the topic of the colloquium. The book starts out by looking at current art provenance research in specific countries. It then discusses aspects of Nazi collecting habits and collections and

collectors in general. The most helpful section is the Archives and Resources chapter.
Scholars that work at the J.P. Getty Trust write on several new aspects of provenance
research at the Getty. The two essays by J.P. Getty researches discuss the compilation of
25,000 files on various collectors and the acquisition of the records from the Oude Kunst
Gallery by the trust. The book also contains chapters on Jewish museums and the
European art trade from 1933-1945.

Vitalizing Memory was published four years after the AAM Guide to Provenance
Research and in many ways is the extension of the second half of the guide. New primary
and secondary resources are regularly found while doing research. The Oude Kunst
Gallery records include the business papers of three generations of a prominent art
dealing family. It is an important resource that is available at the Getty Research Library.
Vitalizing Memory gives information about further research being done in the area and
new discoveries after the 2001 publication of AAM provenance guide.

<u>Object Research</u>

Research sources for objects are usually large museums' online catalogues and
archival portals. These large museums have done extensive provenance research on their
own collections and have made the information available online. Internet portals are
generally large databases that let you search through different items from a consortium of
museums and private collections.

Metropolitan Museum of Art: Provenance Research Project:

www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/provenance/index.asp

At the turn of the Twenty-first century, several government entities and professional organizations started creating standards by which museums in the United States needed to examine works suspected of having provenance gaps from 1933-1945. Those organizations include American Association of Museum and the American Association of Museum Directors. The U.S. government has set up Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States and the State Department set up an electronic archive for holocaust issues.

The results of these measures have been mixed. Many museums felt cash strapped even before having to the funds for provenance research [8]. However, some larger museums have begun to do the exhaustive research on their own collections. Several have put their findings online, such as Art Institute of Chicago. Another excellent example is the Provenance Research Project at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The website gives an alphabetical listing of work with suspect provenance and then links to the picture with a record of the provenance. It is free and available online. See appendix A for a more expansive list of museums with online provenance records.

The information found on the museums' websites can help provenance researchers with clues from known provenance records. Works of art from one particular artist might have the same initial owners. Provenance records of similar works of art can at times become intertwined. One piece can often be mistaken for another, especially when dealing with incomplete sales records. Also if works were known to be in a

collection at the same time, the sales record of one might lead to the sale record of the other work.

Most museums that have large scale provenance research will have a list of works with incomplete World War II provenance records. Generally, the provenance records will be linked from the entry about the work. The museum will have a general online database of the works held at the museum. Depending on the museum, there are certain keyword that can be used such as artist names and titles. If those are not known, the Metropolitan Museum has a collection database that is broken up by museum departments. You can also search all departments. For example, if I selected European Paintings and entered the keyword "farm" I retrieve hits for works that have "farm" somewhere in the description.

Nazi-Era Provenance Portal

www.nepip.org

The Nazi-Era Provenance Portal is maintained by the American Association of Museums. The goal is to provide a searchable registry of objects in U.S. museum collections that changed hands in Continental Europe during the Nazi era. Currently there are 26,765 objects and 16 museums listed in the portal. There is a variety of different ways to start a search: artist, nationality of artist, or place or culture of object. The advance search options allow looking at different combinations of keywords.

The portal is useful for World War II provenance research. It is just a database of relevant works from participating museums. The information given about specific works

is the artist, the title, accession number, and a link to the holding museum. This portal does not have scholarly articles about provenance, looting, or art theft.

National Gallery of Art Catalogue Online

http://www.nga.gov/home.htm

The online catalog of the National Gallery of Art not only has provenance information about the art works, it also has a search function that looks for pieces by provenance. When you look at the provenance record, there are helpful footnotes and a list of names associated with pieces. The names will link to that person's biography page. This site is limited to art works held in the National Gallery of Art.

<u>Research on People</u>

The amount of general biographical resources available is staggering. Finding relevant information about lesser-known artists, especially those who worked before 1900, is often challenging. However finding relevant information about specific collectors is almost impossible. This list includes important works that can be used to help sift through large amounts of non-relevant information.

Bénézit, E., et al. <u>Dictionary of Artists</u>. Paris: Grund, 2006.

The Dictionary of Artists by Bénézit is one of the most important multivolume biographical dictionaries about art. Originally published in 1911, it was written in French. It has been since been translated into English. It has 14 volumes that list artist

alphabetically by their last name. It is only available in print and most often non-circulating.

The Bénézit dictionary is excellent for looking up lesser known artist. In The Dictionary of Art published by Grove the entry for Adrian van Utrecht was only about a paragraph long and gave little information on his works. The entry for Adrian van Utrecht in Bénézit also has a small biography. But along with the biography it has examples of his signatures from different works. Most importantly, it has a list of museums and galleries that own his works and auction records. When doing provenance research this information can help attach artist to works.

Klimt, Andreas, Michael Steppes, and K.G. Saur Verlag. <u>The Artists of the World: Bio-Bibliographical Index A-Z</u>. Munich: K.G. Saur, 1999.

Saur publishes a series of biographical indexes in most European languages, for example the French Bibliographic Index is in French and the American and British biographical indexes are in English. Their online World Biographical Information System is very helpful when researching artists and collector. The drawback with Saur's products is that subscriptions are expensive and the large amount of their non-digital data is on microfiche. The most recent 2007 edition of the American Biographical Index is only held by 11 libraries in the U.S.

The most important resource available published by Saur's is The Artists of the World Biobibliographical index by Profession. It is meant to be a preview for the Allgemeines Kunstlerlexicon, a large compilation of artist biographies. Unfortunately, it

is only currently published in the Germen language and is only up to Goepfart

alphabetically. The index however is in English and is complete. It listed by name, type

of activity or activities, date and place of birth and death, if unknown, date and/or place

of the first and/or last reference. Each entry includes at least one bibliographical source

reference.

Finding artist can be very difficult. The volumes are organized by professions,

and then broken up by countries. Artists are organized by birth date, if birth date is not

known death date, if death date is not known first date mentioned. There is a glossary of

terms in the front to help define occupation. For example Pablo Picasso would be looked

up under Painter-Spain- 1881.

<u>Trade Research</u>

As mentioned above, sales records often do not survive, many collectors buy and

sell through third parties, and art businesses go out of business and records are destroyed.

Here are some resources that will help along the way.

Graves, Algernon. <u>Art Sales from Early in the Eighteenth Century to Early in the</u>

<u>Twentieth Century (mostly Old Master and Early English Pictures).</u> London: A.

Graves, 1918.

This three volume set from 1918-1921, tabulates and arranges paintings that

changed hands during the selected time period. It is impressive in its scope given the

time period; however it does not record every transaction. Book reviews at the time of

the publication note a few important sales that were not mentioned. So it is safe to assume less important transaction may also be omitted.

It is arranged alphabetically by artist and surprisingly easy to use. To look up Jacob Jordaens go to volume 2 and search for Jordaens alphabetically. You will find a list of works sold. It gives the date of the transaction, the auctioneer, the owner, lot number and title of picture, purchaser, and sale price. Of course not every entry has a complete record, however it is still an excellent resource for finding out about sales in Europe.

Sale Catalogs Index Project (SCIPIO)

The SCIPIO (Sale Catalogs Index Project) database from OCLC is the only online list of auction catalogue records. It provides information on auction sales catalogs from all major North American and European auction houses and some private sales, from the late 16th century to current auctions. Its records include dates and places of sales, auction houses, sellers, institutional holdings, and titles of works. It is a subscription based database, requiring the user to pay for the use or be a user at an authorized subscriber. The interface is not as user friendly as the Getty Provenance Index, but it is the only resource of its type.

Case Studies

Because every search for art provenance information is different, learning occurs with ever search. When starting provenance research, it is important to look at what other researchers and museums have done, in order to take advantage of their successful

searches and avoid the mistakes that they made. The following two case studies are

included in order to show different methods of doing provenance research.

Case Study 1

In a 2006 *Oud Holland Journal* article, Volker Manuth discusses the provenance

of a 17th century painting by Carel Fabritius. The painting, titled *The Sentry* (for image

see appendix B), gives an excellent example of how confusing art provenance research

can be. The painting is currently owned by the Staatliches Museum in Schwerin,

Germany.

In 1677, a Fabritius painting, described as depicting a hunter, is mentioned by a

notary recording the sale of the painting in Leiden, Holland. However, scholars do not

think this refers to the *Sentry* because most 17th century notaries would have known the

difference between a sentry and a hunter. The helmet and the costume of the man in the

painting were not typical of a hunter in the 17th century. Since that is most likely not the

Sentry, the first recorded mention of the painting is in 1792 in a Schwerin Museum

catalogue (Germany). The catalogue lists the artist as *A.S.* This means that in 1792 the

signature on the lower left hand corner of the painting must have been covered up. In a

1752 inventory of the Schwerin museum, the painting is not mentioned, which means the

painting arrived there between the years 1752 and 1792.

Further research discovered that the painting was mentioned in a 1753 sales

catalogue for the Gerhard Michael Jabach collection. Jabach died in Livorno, Italy. He

probably inherited from his grandfather, Everhard Jabach, a famous collector. The sales

catalogue list lot 37 as a Rembrandt and described it as having a soldier sitting in a gate

cleaning his gun. The dimensions are accurate with the Schwerin's *Sentry*. There is also

no documented Rembrandt that fits that description.

The sales catalogue lists the purchaser of the painting in question as "Winter". It

probably refers to an Amsterdam collector named Hendrik de Winter. However there is

no information about how the painting went from Winter's possession to the Schwerin

collection. It stays in the collection until Napoleonic troops removed it from Schwerin

and brought it to Paris. In a French catalogue in 1809, it is mentioned that the original

signature was discovered during cleaning. It remained in France until it was returned to

the museum in Schwerin, Germany, where it is held currently held. [9]

The case studies shows how often through the lifetime of a work of art there can

be misidentification, misattribution, and lost documentation. When there is a record for a

work that resembles the one in question, it needs to be analyzed closely. It is also

important to look at the art work completely. The Fabritius painting was misattributed

because no one had taken the time to clean the painting.

To primary sources used to gather the information for this provenance record

were a Dutch record of sale from 1677, museum inventories from 1752 and 1792 in

Germany, a 1753 sale catalogue of a private collector in Italy, and a French inventory

from 1809. The provenance of this painting shows the diversity of primary sources that

need to be utilized to document provenance.

Case Study 2

In 2000, the San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) received a claim on behalf of the

heirs of Jakob and Rosa Oppenheimer. The Oppenheimers were Jewish owners of the

Galerie van Diemen in Berlin. The claim pertained to *Allegory of Eternity* by Rubens in

the museum's collection (for image see appendix C). The claim stated that the

Oppenheimers were forced by the Nazi government in 1935 to sell all their fine art

collections. The claim also stated that the painting given to the museum was unlawfully

obtained and that the piece should be returned to the heirs.

The museum first made sure that the painting in question was the piece in the

museum's collection. It was. The oil painting had been in the museum's collection since

1947. The museum's original provenance records showed that painting was sold in 1935

at the Graupe auction house in Berlin. The museum started to do research itself on the

provenance of the piece.

The museum also asked for more information from the heirs to determine

provenance. The museum wanted evidence of the following, ownership, forced sale

without appropriate compensation or restitution, and evidence that the museum had

purchased the painting from someone who obtained the painting unlawfully.

The original provenance from the SDMA records the following:

Hermitage Collection, St. Petersburg, Russia; Duke Vladimir Bariatinsky,
Stroganoff Palace, St. Petersburg, Russia; (sold at) Rudolf Lepke auction house
(Sammlung Stroganoff, no. 73), Berlin, Germany: May 12-13, 1931; van Diemen
sale, Graupe, Berlin, Germany: January 25-26, 1935; Frederick A. Stern, 1942;
(with) Jacob M. Heimann, New York, New York: 1946; Gift of Anne R. and Amy
Putnam.

The provenance gaps are between the Stroganoff Sale in 1931 and the van

Diemen sale in 1935. How did Galerie van Diemen acquire the painting? Who benefited

from the proceeds of the 1935 sale? There were also provenance gaps that were not

related to the claim.

The SDMA was able to get a copy of the Graupe catalogue from the Galerie van Diemen liquidation sale. It was a large and impressive sale, which included the painting in the SDMA collection. However by 2001 the museum had not heard back from the heirs and the heirs made no claims at other museums for the other pieces in the liquidation sale

Using the <u>AAM Guide to Provenance Research</u>, the museum was able to find information on Galeria van Diemen. The gallery had branches in Amsterdam and New York. In the 1930s, it had become affiliated with Karl Lilienfeld. Karl Lilenfeld was acquired later by Achim Moeller. Today Achim Moeller does not have the old Galerie van Diemen files. However through networking in the art research community, the museum was able to find a German report in response to a claim for two other works by Rubens in the same sale as the SDMA painting. With that information the museum discovered that the Oppenheimers were successful Berlin Art dealers. They left Germany in 1933 after the Nazi's accused them of being "Jewish capitalists." Their businesses were eventually closed, and their stock liquidated.

Two years after the initial claim, the museum received a later from the heir's lawyer. However she was no longer representing the heirs. She was now representing van Diemen and Co. as appointed liquidator. She requested the restitution of the painting to the company. The company's stockholders were the heirs listed in the first letter. There was still no concrete proof of ownership.

After the second letter the SDMA sought outside legal help. With that help, they were able to get more information on the Oppenheimers. One museum lawyer went to Berlin, looking through records at the Restitution Offices, the Office of Commerce, the

Bundesarchiv, the Berlin Document Center, and consulted the Reichskulturkammer

records. The provenance record of the SDMA was improved with the information found.

Here is the updated 2002 provenance record for the painting:

> Anonymous printseller, London, 1835; Prince Vladimir Bariatinsky, Saint
> Petersburg, Russia, ca. 1864–ca. 1920; State Hermitage Museum, Saint
> Petersburg, ca. 1920–May 1931;5 (through Rudolf Lepke Kunst-Auktions-Haus,
> Berlin, sold with the Stroganoff collection, May 12–13, 1931, cat. No. 2043, lot
> 73);6 (with Leo Blumenreich, Berlin, May 1931);7 (with Galerie van Diemen,
> Berlin, 1932–1935);8 (through Paul Graupe auction house, liquidation sale of
> Galerie van Diemen [Berlin branch], Berlin, January 25–26, 1935, lot 51); (with
> Arthur Goldschmidt/J.S. Goldschmidt, Berlin, 1935); Conrad Bareiss, Salach,
> Germany, ca. 1938–1939 (unspecified art dealer [U.S.A.?], 1940);9 Frederick A.
> Stern, New York, 1942; Zinser Collection, New York, ca. 1946; (with Jacob M.
> Heimann, New York and Beverly Hills, 1946–1947); purchased by Anne R. and
> Amy Putnam for the Fine Arts Gallery (now SDMA), April 30, 1947.

In 2003 a museum representatives went to Berlin with the lawyer and an

Oppenheimer heir to look at confidential files. The trip took place in January 2003. After

meeting, the museum had a better understanding of the Oppenheimers, including their

persecution and flight from Germany and attempts to continue operations from France

and Switzerland, the closure and liquidation of their Berlin galleries. Neither

Oppenheimers nor their heirs benefited from the 1935 liquidation sale.

The museum still had questions about the provenance gaps but decided to settle

with the heirs. The cost of litigation was too high. A settlement was paid to the heirs and

the museum was able to keep the painting. The sum of the settlement is confidential. [10]

When claims are made to museums about works with questionable World War II

provenance, often times the museum must re-examine the current provenance record.

Any claim must be taken serious and all documentation in the museums possession or in

the possession of the entity making the claim must be critically examined.

The SDMA researchers had to network with other provenance researchers to find out about relevant names. They also used the AAM guide's appendices to help expand their knowledge about the people involved. Provenance research is time consuming; all the outside help that can be utilized can save valuable time.

Best Practices

Every piece of art has a different story, creating different complications with research for each piece. The most important thing to do is to list what is known about the piece and what is not known about the piece, in order to create a starting point. As research continues, the list of knowns should get longer and the list of unknowns should get shorter.

Start out by finding documentation about information you already know. Check the facts you uncovered from the object itself or talking to current and past owners. In order to have a complete provenance history, there must be documentation for every period of time, including the present. When at all possible, go to the original source, do not rely solely on photocopies.

Provenance research that is published must be critically analyzed. Keep in mind the publication dates of resources. Provenance research is difficult and often mistakes are carried from one record to the next. All facts should documented by sources. Most pieces will have some provenance gaps and missing documentation, but those should be mentioned in the record. If there are two conflicting records that cannot be thoroughly documented, that fact should be in the provenance record. If published information has been proven to have a mistake, mention it in a footnote to stop further confusion.

All information should be recorded, even if it seems to be trivial and have little relevance to the piece at hand. It is impossible to know what later will become an issue. Especially when doing research in person and far from a home base, it is important to take away all available information that is available. If an obscure citation is missed, a subsequent connection might not be made.

How does one start art provenance research? The answer to this question depends on what information you need. Sometimes a researcher is looking for a piece of art that belonged to a family member. If they are lucky, they have picture of the painting and the name of its artist. Sometimes the researcher knows where the piece of art is today but wants to find out who has owned the piece in the past. The term "working backward" will refer to researchers who are aware of the current location and working backward to find out who has owned the piece in the past. The term "working forward" will refer to researchers who are aware of the location of a piece in the past and want to find out where the piece is currently located.

Working Backward

The most important resource that someone with the piece in their possession has is the piece itself. The information that can be gathered from the actual object can be extremely useful down the road. Ask and document the following questions:

What is the medium? It is a watercolor, oil? Does it use a particular form or technique? If a painting, is it on canvas, wood or another surface? Have there been noticeable repairs? Does the frame look original? Is there a signature? Use a magnifying glass to make sure you are not missing something. Are the markings anywhere on the painting? On the frame? On the object itself, if not a painting?

What does the piece depict? Is there anything written on the back of the piece?

The more information that you are able to find to identify the piece in the beginning, the easier it will be when your research begins. Remember that something that seems insignificant now could later prove to be incredibly important.

Begin doing research on what you have learned about the object. If the object had a paneled back use resources like the *Grove's Dictionary of Art* to find out about back panels. That could give you concrete information about the piece.

If the artist of the art is known, begin doing research on the artist. If it is a famous artist, it will probably be in a large art text like the *Grove's Dictionary*; for more obscure artist look in biographical tools like *The Dictionary of Artists* by Bénézit. Most artist dictionaries will have list of known works by the artist and can be helpful in identifying the piece. Finding out the time period and the place that the artist lived can be invaluable. If there is still no mention of the artist in the larger reference books, online biographic resources like the K.G. Saur database, *World Biographical Information System*, for example, cannot be matched by print materials.

Other reference resources can be valuable at this point in the research. The Art Index *with Art Abstracts/Art Full Text* or Bibliography of the History of Art should be consulted for scholarship about the artist. Are there collectors throughout history who have specialized in the artist or the genre? Coming up with key names pertaining to the artist will allow more specific searches later on in the research process.

Who is the current owner? How did they acquire it? Do they know the person who owned it before? Begin working backward immediately with the current owners on what they know about the provenance.

People's memories are sometimes cloudy and the further back in time the cloudier they become. It is useful to employ variant spellings of unfamiliar names when looking for archived sales records. Some archives that might be helpful in the search are the National Archives at www.archives.gov, and the National Gallery of Art has World War II resources available online (www.nga.gov/resources/ww2res.htm). Archive Canada can help find information on pieces that spent time in Canada. (www.archivescanada.ca/english/index.html)

Working Forward

In order to start a search, begin by documenting what is known. Is there is a period of time that can be established when the piece was in a confirmed location? The Getty Museum has the Getty Collectors Files that contain about 20,000 entries with information on international collectors, dealers, auctioneers, and art institutions from the Middle Ages to the present. The files are searchable online, but online you can only find out if a file exists. To see the contents of the files you have to go to the Getty Research Library in California.

If the title of the piece and artist is known, as with working backward, research can begin on where the artist lived and what collectors, present and past, are interested in that artist. One of the goals of AAM's Nazi-Era Provenance Internet Portal, is to create an internet portal listing all U.S. museums holdings with questionable provenance gaps from 1933-1945. While it is by no means complete, 16 large U.S. museums have put their holding of works with questionable World War II era province on the portal. The National Gallery of Art also has a large catalog that can be searched online. The scope of the collection is not limited to things in the museum, but also includes photographs that

are in the archive collection. The Gallery's Witt Microfiche Photography Library has large numbers of images, but must be visited in person.

It will aid research immensely, if there is a photograph of the picture. If there is not one available the resources mentioned above can help. One invaluable resource that might have photographs is the catalogues raisonné of a specific artist. A catalogue raisonné is a descriptive catalogue holding all the known works of one artist, grouping them by subject, or branches of subjects. Larger art research libraries usually have extensive holdings of catalogue raisonnés.

The Cultural Property Advice webpage is an advisory service set up by the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Association. They have developed a checklist titled "Acceptable evidence for due diligence" that helps people decide what sort of documentation is needed to make a strong provenance claim. It is available online at www.culturalpropertyadvice.gov.uk/private_individuals/buying_with_confidence. Information about sales transactions can be found in databases like SCOPIO and reference books like *Art Sales from Early in the Eighteenth Century to Early in the Twentieth Century* by Algernon Graves.

Existing Practices

Large museums conduct provenance research on their own collections and have begun to post not only their findings, but the process of their research. For the specific guidelines that the Associations of Art Museum Directors developed for Nazi-Era provenance gaps, a researcher should consult the Report of the AAMD Task Force on the Spoliation of Art during the Nazi/World War II Era (1933-1945) available online. [11]

Here is some of the information given on the larger art museums' websites on

writing/reading provenance records and how record documentations.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art

http://www.lacma.org/art/ProvIntro.aspx

> Provenances are given in chronological order, with the earliest known owner
> listed first and LACMA last. A question mark before a name indicates that there
> is some question, explained in the footnote, about whether the painting was in that
> collection. Brackets around a name indicate that the individual was a dealer.
> When known, a collector's life dates are included in brackets immediately
> following the name. Dates in parentheses after the city indicate the dates that the
> painting was known to have been in that collection. When the circumstances of
> transfer from one collector to another are known, collectors are separated by a
> semicolon, preceded by words such as "sold," "by inheritance," or "gift," to
> indicate how the transfer took place. The semicolon is followed by a preposition,
> generally "to" or "through." "Through" indicates that the painting was consigned
> to a dealer. When the circumstances of transfer are unknown, the semicolon is
> replaced by a period mark. Footnotes document the source of information
> included in the provenance.

J. Paul Getty Museum

http://www.getty.edu/museum/research/provenance/provIntroUnderstanding.jsp

> The provenance, or history of ownership, of our paintings is listed in
> chronological order, starting with the earliest known owner and moving forward
> in time. Each entry is in the following format:
> Date range of ownership: name of owner or seller, life dates of owner or seller if
> known (location of owner or seller in parentheses if known), details (if known) of
> the transaction by which the object passed to its next owner, including
> information about the particular sale if known (e.g., auction date, place, lot
> number, sale price)
> Here are a few common date formats:
>
> *1955-1970* The work entered this collection in 1955 and left it in 1970.
> *1955-*   The work entered this collection in 1955, but we do not know when it
>   left.
> *-1955*   We do not know when the work entered this collection, but it left in 1955.
> *By 1955-* The work was in this collection by 1955 but may have entered it earlier.
> *-still in 1955* The work was still in this collection in 1955, and may have left it at
>   a later date

An owner name with no date(s) in the left column indicates that we know the work was in this collection, but we do not know precisely when. We do know the work was in this collection between the owners listed above and below it, though there may be other unknown owners in the chain of ownership.
"Private collection" indicates that we know the work was not owned by a dealer and can mean one of two things: 1) we do not know the name of the owner or seller of that work, or 2) we know the name of the owner or seller, but he/she made it a condition of sale that his/her identity not be revealed. "Private Dealer" means that we know the seller was a dealer but we do not know his/her name.

AAM Guide to Provenance Research [12]

The AAM guide to provenance research has five things in a provenance citation that should be looked for

1. the owner of the object, any references that will point to a period of ownership and help locate previous owners

2. previous attributions, documenting by whom and when the work was reattributed

3. other versions of a piece, provenance for different versions of a piece are often confused with one another, document each with a photograph or photocopy

4. pendant and other related works, series and pair usually have the same starting point, so provenance of a pendant can sometimes lead to clues

5. photographs of collectors homes in articles that may have the piece in the background

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art

http://www.lacma.org/art/ProvIntro.aspx

Provenance research begins by assembling the information in the museum's files—acquisition and exhibition records, scholarly references, and correspondence. The information available on each object varies, depending on the date and circumstances of acquisition and past research on the object. The goal is to find specific names and dates that will identify when and from whom each owner acquired the work, and to whom and when each relinquished ownership of it. It is important to document the circumstances of that transfer—

sale, inheritance, gift. Exhibition catalogues, which identify the owner at a specific date, sale catalogues, especially those annotated with names of buyers and sellers, collection catalogues, and catalogues raisonnés (monographic books with lists of all the known works of an artist) are important sources of information. Other clues may be found in photo archives and scholarly articles about the artists and/or collectors. Papers and business records of collectors and dealers are very valuable sources of information, but they are often limited by the availability of the records, as well as by the willingness of dealers to reveal their sources. Digging deeper, the researcher may look for wills, insurance inventories, and other personal documentation.

The Librarian's Role

The librarian is an agent of the search, available to the researcher. The advantage of librarians in art provenance research is that they bring a level of expertise to research that can be invaluable. The area of art provenance in recent years has become a controversial topic, especially with art work taken from Jewish families during 1933-1945.

Establishing complete provenance for a piece is often impossible, and extremely challenging for an independent researcher. To provide maximum assistance, librarians need to be partners in the research process. There are three key ways a librarian can help facilitate the process: instruction, creating bibliographies, and collection development

Instruction

Working with primary sources can be difficult. Librarians need to provide both individual instruction sessions and workshops to teach researchers how to find information. Accessibility is a concern for primary resources in libraries; library catalogs should comprehensively cover the collection

Creating bibliographies

Useful bibliographies on certain aspects of art provenance research can provide starting points for researchers. Bibliographies should also be made available to the public, preferably online.

Collection development

Acquiring relevant research material and making interlibrary loan agreements with important institutions expands the area being searched. Important databases need to be purchased, if possible.

Conclusion

Libraries and archives hold a large majority of the information needed to make a complete provenance record. The complete and correct organization and cataloging of holdings is an essential part of getting the information in a form that people can use. The accessibility of provenance-related information must be a priority, especially now that governmental and professional organizations have made 1933-1945 provenances a priority for museums.

Given the importance of World War II era provenance in the field, research today is almost completely dominated by works in European provenance gaps between the dates 1933-1945. The large strides that have recently been made in provenance scholarship have been due to efforts made in the research done on these works. There are no sign that the interest in establishing ownership for works in that date range will fade. It may even become more important as resources become more widely available to the public.

The resources for art provenance research in non-western art are lacking. The only resources available for works of non-western art are if the art spent time in Europe

or North America. Due to the extreme interest in World War II provenance research this is an area that has little to no scholarship. In future more emphasis should be placed on this area, especially with the current situation in the Middle East and the pillaging of museums.

Provenances research is time consuming and labor intensive. Once sources have been located, they must be translated and authenticated. A researcher will sometimes not be able to establish provenance for large gaps of a work's lifetime because records do not exist. When doing provenance research the researcher must be able to spot a dead end. But as the Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli story demonstrates, sometimes the results of the research can be very rewarding and worth the effort.

Notes

1.

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3. Written by Ms. Bryk-Cardarelli for Museum news.

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4. http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/provenance/pv_introduction.asp
5. Documented by J.P. Getty Trust public relations and an article in the Art Newspaper.

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7.

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10. Originally published in the March/April 2006 Museum News, was originally read
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us.org/pubs/mn/MN_MA06_VitalizingMemoryExcerpt.cfm.

11. http://www.aamd.org/papers/guideln.php
12.

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American Association of Museums, 2001. pgs. 33-34

Appendix A

Provenance Resources Online

J. Paul Getty Provenance Research
    http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/provenance_index/pscp.html
National Gallery of Art Mercury Catalog Image Search
    http://library.nga.gov:7488/
The Art Lost Register
    http://www.artloss.com/

Art Museum with Provenance Research Projects

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Provenance Research Project
    http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/provenance/index.asp
Los Angeles County Art Museum Art Provenance Project
    http://www.lacma.org/art/ProvIntro.aspx
The Art Institute if Chicago Provenance Research
    http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/provenance/
The National Archives Art Provenance and Claims Research Project
    http://www.archives.gov/research/holocaust/art/
The National Gallery of Canada's Provenance Research Project
    http://cybermuse.gallery.ca/cybermuse/enthusiast/provenance/index_e.jsp
Musées nationaux Récupération
    http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/mnr/pres.htm

World War II Era Resources

AAM Guidelines Concerning the Unlawful Appropriation of Objects During the Nazi Era
    http://aam-us.org/museumresources/ethics/nazi_guidelines.cfm
Nazi-Era Provenance Portal
    http://nepip.org/index.cfm?menu_type=
National Gallery of Art World War II Resources
    http://www.nga.gov/resources/ww2res.htm
Claims Conference- Looted Art and Property Initiative
    http://www.claimscon.org/index.asp?url=looted_art

Appendix B

Carl Fabritius. *The Sentry.* 1654. Schewrin, Gernamy

Appendix C

Peter Paul Rubens. *Allegory of Eternity*, ca. 1625-1630. San Diego Museum of Art

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