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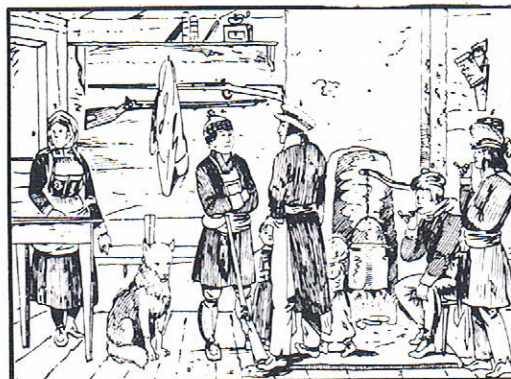
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Simon James Dawson was appointed by the Canadian Government in 1857 to explore the country from Lake Superior westward to the Saskatchewan. His report was among the first to attract attention to the possibilities of the Northwest as a home for settlers. He was later to build the Dawson Route from Lake-of-the-Woods to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

William George Richardson Hind accompanied his brother, Henry Youle Hind, as official artist when the latter was in command of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan exploration expedition of 1858. W. Hind revisited the Northwest in 1863-64 and did numerous paintings of the people and general scenes.

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COVER

Colonists on the Red River. Swiss woman, man, and children; De Meuron soldier; Scotch settler; French Canadian. From sketches by Peter Rindisbacher, 1822.

*Courtesy of the
Provincial Archives of
Manitoba.*

Museum Planning and Feasibility Studies

Who needs it? and why?

The exercise of producing a planning study or a feasibility study can be a traumatic experience for a museum. Not only is the institution's past record of triumphs and failures laid bare for public inspection, but its hopes and dreams for the future are set down in black and white for all the world to see.

Why is a museum willing to subject itself to such scrutiny? What is the value in a planning study that justifies the time, money, and energy that must be put into it? There are a number of benefits, but the primary one is in what the study can do for the organization itself. A study can help the museum look at where it has come from, where it is now, and where it would like to be in the years to come. The old cliché about a plan being a "blueprint for the future" still applies; a plan can give direction to the institution and help it focus its energies on the things that it feels are most important.

There are external benefits as well. A study provides a museum with the chance to take a hard look at its surroundings and come to grips with the external forces that influence its future. It enables the museum to assess the opportunities and constraints in the world around it and to review its goals in relation to the needs of its community and to the reality of available resources. Planning studies unfortunately don't come with guarantees, but they are valuable tools for any museum's long-term development.

David McInnes

Heritage Resource Officer
Historic Resources Branch
Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation

(Editor's Note: The following articles were prepared for *Dawson and Hind* from presentations made at the 1986 A.M.M. Annual Conference.)



Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre

When, in the course of a museum's development, its activities and collections increase intensely, it is time to pause and assess the implications of its own success. The Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre experienced such an astonishing rate of growth between 1979, when it completed renovations to its current facility, and 1984, that serious consideration had to be given to embarking on a planning process which would alleviate the situation in the future.

A preliminary review of past experiences and current trends in programming and collections management identified inadequacies of space for current needs and underscored severe constraints on potential future growth. This internal document also outlined a wish-list of projections for the type of space that might be required in the next ten years. The need for practical long-range solutions was made more urgent by the existence of unutilized publicly owned land adjacent to the Centre. The designation of this land for

development that would prevent its future use for the expansion of the Centre would be disastrous for the institution's well-being.

Consequently, the Development Committee of the Board of Directors, charged with studying the problem, recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken on capital development of the site south and east of the Centre. In its report to the Board of Directors, the Committee also emphasized the need for community involvement in the development project. The focus of the feasibility study would then be twofold:

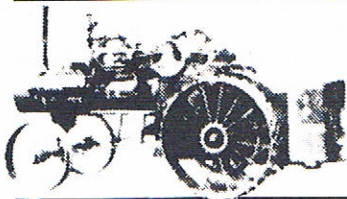
1. to address the need for and feasibility of a major capital project based on a comprehensive review of current and future needs in programming and collections management, and
2. to recommend options and priorities for the program and collection development and to integrate them into a physical facility on a site adjacent to the Centre.

Based on these general objectives, the Development Committee prepared comprehensive Terms of Reference for the project and proceeded to seek funding for the feasibility study at the federal and provincial levels. The Terms of Reference identified the specific issues to be addressed by the planning study, the roles and responsibilities of the consultants, the Board of Directors, the Development Com-

have to offer. The study will be instrumental in targeting our market. It has been said that a facility can go broke marketing their product to people who really don't care about it. Every museum has its own segment of the public interested in what it offers. The trick is to find them.

And of course the major undertaking is the development of a long-term financial plan to encompass the areas of membership, public fund-raising, corporate and foundation support, and available government assistance. Each of these areas and many more are complex enough alone but for long-term growth and development they must co-exist and complement each other. This plan, when complete, will focus our efforts toward the desired end result, which will have been identified by Professional Market Analysis and a thorough in-depth study of comparable institutions. It should do something else as well. It should convince potential supporters that we know where we're going and how to get there. We recommend it highly.

Tom Wilson, *General Manager*
Western Canada Aviation Museum Inc.
Winnipeg, Manitoba



Manitoba Agricultural Museum

As with any nonprofit organization, 50-75% of all useful time is spent in trying to raise funds to survive. The Manitoba Agricultural Museum, unfortunately, is no different and as a result must continuously be knocking on Government doors.

In the spring of 1986 the museum was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, which essentially removed it from a specialized department and lumped it in with every other museum in Manitoba. The Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation immediately recommended a study be done to determine the museum's viability. The idea of the study was to determine the size, layout, staffing, and present needs of the museum, as well as to determine where the museum should be in the next five, ten, and fifteen years.

I think the Manitoba Agricultural Museum suffers the same growing pains as does any organization run by a Board of Directors. Plans are made as to future development, but as directors change, ideas and plans change as well. It becomes very difficult to establish a long-range plan and then have everyone approve it.

It is hoped that by completing this study the museum will be able to establish a reasonably firm plan for the future. This will include the establishment of policies in regard to complex development, antique acquisitions, deaccessioning, staff requirements, education programming and public awareness promotions. However, this has to be a two-way street. If these policies can be established and adhered to, then it is hoped that Government will also follow the recom-

mended financing. It is very difficult for a struggling organization to see \$50,000 spent on a study when you can't keep your bills paid. However, we are hopeful for the future and that the Government will establish the recommended funding following completion of this study.

We are just in the beginning stages of our study and have three applications at National Museums of Canada. It is hoped that they will approve one of the prospective candidates at their February meeting, and that our study can be under way by early summer.

Terry Farley, *Administrator*
Manitoba Agricultural Museum Inc.
Austin, Manitoba



The Sam Waller Little Northern Museum

The Little Northern Museum in The Pas was formally opened as a private museum in 1958 by Sam Waller, who had been collecting for over thirty-five years during his career as a teacher and lay missionary in northern Ontario and Manitoba. As a true Victorian-era natural history enthusiast, Mr. Waller's museum represents a wide variety of interests from archaeology to zoology (particularly ornithology). It is a modern example of those Renaissance collections which have given rise to many of the world's major museums. Upon Mr. Waller's death in 1978, this unique collection was willed to the Town of The Pas which now operates it with a full-time curator and a 1986 operating budget of \$45,900.

As is the case with many such small institutions, our major difficulty is a shortage of space. If our facility is to be able to serve our community to its maximum potential, we desperately need additional areas for storage, conservation and cataloguing work, public programming, a library, offices for staff, and space for volunteers. As luck would have it, in 1982 the town's former Courthouse-Community Building, a classic three-storey brick structure built in 1916, was designated as a provincial historic site. This building now stands empty and unused.

Many people in The Pas have come to, what on the surface appears to be, the obvious conclusion that the Courthouse is the ideal solution to our need for space. Since 1982 we have been lobbying and negotiating with the Province of Manitoba (which owns the building) and have finally come close to finalizing agreements for gifting the building to the Town of The Pas along with a half-million dollar grant to assist with renovations. Since the estimated costs of the renovation project have been calculated at close to \$1 million the next problem facing us is where to obtain the extra \$500,000. The obvious answer is from the federal Department of Communications Cultural Initiatives Programme.

Before becoming eligible for such grants, however, the Department of Communications, in conjunction with the National Museums of Canada Museum Assistance Pro-

gramme, requires that a formal feasibility/planning study be carried out. The ways and means of obtaining the money for such a study are too complex to recount in detail here. Suffice it to say that \$12,200 from NMC MAP, \$7,000 from Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, and \$6,000 from the Town of The Pas were sufficient to buy a basic planning study carried out by Barbara Ashdown of Associated Urban Planners of Winnipeg.

We established the objectives for the study as follows: to assess and make recommendations on (1) the current status of the museum's management, facilities, financing, staffing, policies, programmes, and attendance; (2) potential growth and development; (3) a five-year plan to serve as a basic management tool; (4) the impact of a move on the museum's operations and operating expenses; (5) the potential market and marketing strategies; (6) cost/benefit of three proposed alternate locations; (7) potential funding sources; (8) feasibility of adopting a new archival role; and (9) feasibility of assuming the status of a regional museum.

The study produced a number of important recommendations on all of these issues. We now have a formal document which gives the required justifications for soliciting grants to complete the \$1 million project and strong support for the continued development of the museum along professional lines.

Despite its overall value, however, there were problems with the study process — all of which can be boiled down to the fact that no outside consultant can be expected to develop the required in-depth understanding of a local situation in the short time usually available for such research. Combine this with the long-standing (and often well-founded) suspicion about "outside experts" in small communities, and you have a situation ready-made for misunderstanding. In the planning study carried out for the Little Northern Museum, problems ranged from the superficial (misperception of distances) to the significant difficulty our consultant encountered in understanding the true potential for local fundraising.

In light of this problem with planning studies done by outside consultants, I want to briefly examine an alternative — something a small museum could and should do before, besides, and beyond a planning study by outside experts. That alternative is something called "self-study." Self-study is a new buzzword which means undertaking your own analysis of your museum's purpose, objectives, strengths, shortcomings, and potential.¹ In many cases the results will be similar to those basic recommendations provided by an outside consultant but will have the added advantage of an insider's analysis based on a much more complete understanding of the local situation.

First, before spending \$25,000 on a planning study, spend \$25 on the reference book *Planning Our Museums*.² Although in some respects it is repetitive and contradictory, this excellent resource provides much of what museum workers need to know about planning and how to go about it. Another good source in this field is the workbook *Long and Short Term Planning* which provides a step-by-step outline of the planning process.³

Second, you should be aware that a basic planning study

will tell you little more than what can be learned from an introductory museology course supplemented by some judicious reading in the museum literature. Delegate one of your volunteers to enroll in a museum studies course and, after eight months, that person will be equipped to take a leadership role on your planning committee. Advice on how to obtain this training as a part-time student at the University of Winnipeg, or through various correspondence courses, is available from the A.M.M. and from Advisory and Extension Services.

Once your museum embarks on a building programme for example, there are a number of other good sources of information such as the book *Building For the Arts: A Guidebook for the Planning and Design of Cultural Facilities* which outlines the strategies used in developing new facilities.⁴

In short, therefore, if your museum volunteers spend time and energy rather than money on the process of studying your facility, operations, and future potential, you may end up farther ahead. The information you gather by self-study will be similar to that brought together by an outside consultant, however the analysis of that data will be based on a much better understanding of your local situation than can be developed by a stranger during a three-month study. Even if your museum is fortunate enough to be able to afford hiring a professional planner, if you have studied your own museum yourself first, you will be much better prepared to ask the right questions of, and to give firm direction to, your outside consultant.

Those of us who work in small museums are well aware that there are two important resources which always seem to be in short supply — time and money. If you can scrape together the money, then by all means buy a planning study. If, however, you have more volunteer time than money, you would be well advised to research your own situation and potential before, besides, and beyond purchasing the services of an outside expert.

NOTES

1. See, for example, the entire February 1986 issue of *Museum News* for various approaches to self-study. (*Museum News* is published six times a year by the American Association of Museums, 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street NW, Washington, D.C. Single copies are available for \$4 (U.S.) each. *Museum News* is also available at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature Library.)
2. Lord, Barry and Gail Dexter Lords, eds. *Planning Our Museums*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1983. (Available through the Canadian Museums Association, 280 rue Metcalfe Street, Suite 202, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1R7.)
3. Strachan, Dorothy and Judy Kent. *Long and Short Term Planning: A Participant Workbook Developed by Skills Programme for Policy Volunteers in Recreation, Fitness and Sport*. Gloucester, Ontario: Tyrell Press Limited, 1985. (Available through Advisory and Extension Services, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature.)
4. Brown, C.R., W.W. Fleissing and W.R. Morrish. *Building for the Arts: A Guidebook for the Planning and Design of Cultural Facilities*. Santa Fe, N.M.: Western States Arts Foundation, 1984.

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