

MUSEUM EVALUATION RECORD

Museum Identification Data

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Data</i>
Name of Museum	The Huntington Library
Address:	1151 Oxford Rd.,
City/State/ZIP	San Marino, CA 91108
Internet Address (if applicable)	https://www.huntington.org/
Museum Mission	Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens

Evaluator Data

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Data</i>
Name of Evaluator	John DiCesare
Date of Evaluation	1/13/2020

1. Are the museum's physical facilities appropriate to its focus?
2. What is the nature of the museum's physical facilities (building, outdoor site, virtual and physical, virtual-only, etc.)?
3. What is the general condition of the museum's physical or virtual presence?
4. Is the visitor flow pattern conducive to successful interpretation?
5. What is the nature of the museum's exhibits?
6. Are the museum's exhibits conducive to successful interpretation?
7. Insofar as the exhibits and your observations of the museum's public spaces can reveal it, are the museum's collections properly safeguarded by climate control, ultraviolet light protection, fire protection, and physical security? What is the nature of those safeguards?
8. Are museum personnel, if any, helpful and knowledgeable?
9. What is your opinion of the museum in terms of its mission and success in fulfilling that mission?

I know no other more appropriate facilities than the Huntington for such a museum. Mr. Huntington, with his wealth and in his life, compiled a tremendous and expansive collection of books, documents and manuscripts. The library includes one of two complete original Gutenberg Bible's in the United States. The other being in the Library of Congress. There is a total of 13 in the U.S., but they are not all complete. These are known for impacting the technology and revolution of the moveable type printing press in the 1450s. It was this medieval technology that launched humanity of Europe and the Americas into the modern age. Derived from the Latin Vulgate, it is published in Latin with a gothic type font and many hand-painted decorations on the pages, giving its artistic appearance that majestically exemplifies its original manuscripts and revered work. The Huntington boasts of unparalleled art galleries from the founders' wife's collection and stunning botanical gardens that relax the soul, but it is his library and this Bible that this project is focused on.

The building itself was built in the early 1900s and is architecturally a magnificent structure lined with columns across the front fitting for a library museum. It is evident that the facility is well funded and maintained. Upon entering the Library, the grand entrance gives a primary focus on the Bible. Its value is estimated at 35+ million US dollars and thus, one will pass security cameras and a friendly visitor/security representative that has radio communication. It sits encased, secured, and illuminated in its display with a display board that names and describes the artifact. The room's walls are made of elegant wood that extends to the second floor that contains hundreds of

shelves of historically significant books, while the first level presents cases of artifacts and their descriptions.

The presentation of the room is well situated with displays on all sides and throughout the center, providing ample walking space for a successful interpretation. The environment is climate



controlled and items are encased in nitrogen (purged of oxygen) to reduce decay. The overall lighting is dim to protect from ultraviolet damage and each artifact has its own LED light within the cases and spotlighting from above. Fire protection is mostly hidden from view. Cameras maintain security; while knowledgeable and helpful visitor/security attendants are throughout. The Bible itself rests open at the middle on a transparent stand giving complete focus on the object. The contrastive "red carpet" background accentuates for a royal presentation. The furniture is minimally designed to not detract from the items. The naming and description are viewable above the Bible but does not detract from the room being printed and etched on what appears as plexiglass. Each descriptive summary also provides the year(s) of which the items pertain to, that gives a timeline perspective.



Beyond the library are more rooms and buildings that encompass the facility. The grounds consist of 120 acres of botanical gardens for contemplation and enjoyment that one can immerse and *get lost* in. The institution provides research and educational programs for ongoing learning. Restaurants and a gift store offer a lasting experience and human comfort. This facility exceeds one's expectations as a multi-function institution. There is an overwhelming number of artifacts and displays that cannot be accomplished in one day, thus requiring revisits. The Bible is only one of many significant works that attract hundreds of visitors daily thus more than adequately fulfills its mission.



How do we care for the collections?

Preservation

Library materials are stored in appropriate housing under climate-controlled conditions to ensure their preservation for future generations. All of the library buildings are carefully monitored to prevent damage by pests; they are designed to provide optimal lighting, temperature, and relative humidity for storage, research, and display.

Conservation

Conservation staff members repair books and archival material. They have expertise in historical materials, chemistry, and treatment techniques. Conservators use their skills to prepare items for research and exhibition.

Digitization

The Huntington's digital imaging staff uses state-of-the-art equipment to create digital copies of original items so they can be widely seen and studied—a task that also reduces the need for physical handling of the originals.