

**ARGUING THEIR WAY AROUND THE WORLD:  
AN EXHIBITION PROPOSAL FOR THE 1927 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON  
WORLD DEBATE TOUR**

Utilizing visitor-centered, interpretive exhibition theories to enhance library displays.



by  
Kimberly René Harper

A MASTER'S PROJECT

Presented to the Arts and Administration Program  
of the University of Oregon  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master's of Science in  
Arts and Administration

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Cover picture: *World Debate Team and Coach*, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University of Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403-1299.

## ABSTRACT

Title: ARGUING THEIR WAY AROUND THE WORLD: AN EXHIBITION PROPOSAL FOR THE 1927 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON WORLD DEBATE TOUR

Utilizing visitor-centered, interpretive exhibition theories to enhance library displays.

This historical and interpretive study explores the archival collection of the University of Oregon 1927 World Debate Tour. The development of an interpretive exhibition proposal on the subject for Special Collections at Knight Library on the UO campus provide a focus for the study. Key museum literature sources on exhibition development, audience learning, and interpretation guide the study. The key literature sources were synthesized with descriptive data from historical research of the archival collection to produce the exhibition proposal. This study provides Special Collections with some fundamental background information in exhibition theories and methods, a model of how interpretive exhibition methods could be applied to their collections, and a proposal framework to apply to other collections and subjects in the future.

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“It is the hope of each that the tour will be one of lasting benefit to the English speaking world, not so much because of what they say, but because of the precedent set. Their thoughts on international affairs may have little influence except as it moulds their own lives in the service of mankind, but if a precedent of friendly international debating encourages something more than academic discussions, then such meetings may be a future influence to be reckoned with.” -Avery Thompson

“Travel tends to break down provincial barriers to universal human understanding. That is why a trip entirely around the earth is superior. Just as local environment soon seems small and easily comprehensible to a child, so will a world become small and comprehensible by familiarity. Each frontier of a country crossed is just another frontier of knowledge mastered.” -Walter Hempstead

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This project is dedicated to my father, John Harper, who set me on this path to the museum world so many years ago and taught me the importance of remembering our past.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

DESIGN OF STUDY.....	1
Purpose Statement.....	1
Context of the Problem.....	2
Background of the Problem.....	7
Significance of the Study.....	15
Design of the Study.....	16
Limitations.....	19
Assumptions.....	20
Definitions.....	20

## CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF KEY LITERATURE.....	22
Exhibition Development.....	22
Audience Learning.....	36
Interpretation.....	54
Summary and Conclusion.....	70

## CHAPTER III

UO WORLD DEBATE TOUR HISTORICAL NARRATIVE.....	71
Organizing the Tour.....	71
Debate at the University of Oregon.....	74
The World Debate Tour.....	78
Outcomes of the Tour.....	94
Legacy of the World Tour.....	103

## CHAPTER IV

THE UO WORLD DEBATE TOUR EXHIBITION PROPOSAL.....	107
The Development of the Exhibition Proposal.....	107
Arguing Their Way Around the World: A Narrative Walk-thru.....	125

## CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	130
Conclusions.....	130
Recommendations.....	135

## APPENEXES

APPENDIX I.....	139
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APPENDIX II.....	141
APPENDIX III.....	144
APPENDIX IV.....	146
APPENDIX V.....	154
APPENDIX VI.....	157
APPENDIX VII.....	159
APPENDIX VIII.....	161
APPENDIX IX.....	163
APPENDIX X.....	188
REFERENCES.....	191

## CHAPTER I

### DESIGN OF STUDY

#### Purpose Statement

The department of Special Collections and University Archives (Special Collections) at the University of Oregon (UO) Libraries has many unique collections of materials that lend themselves to creating exhibitions. Exhibitions, however, are often not a high priority for them. Their main task is to serve as a research facility. They typically have neither the resources nor the expertise to produce quality exhibitions that educate and engage their visitors. Their library materials, although often visually beautiful, tend to be flat and text heavy, which when presented in an exhibition, can be uninteresting and non-engaging and can require a great deal of effort on the visitor's part to fully appreciate. The purpose of this study was to explore how applying visitor-centered, interpretive methods to Special Collections' library exhibitions might improve the quality and effectiveness for their visitors.

This historical and interpretive study explored the archival collection of the UO 1927 World Debate Tour. I developed an interpretive exhibition proposal on the subject for Special Collections at Knight Library on the UO campus. Key museum literature sources on exhibition development, audience learning, and interpretation guided the study. These key literature sources were synthesized with descriptive data from historical research of the archival collection to produce the exhibition proposal. This study provided Special Collections with some fundamental background information in exhibition theories and methods, a model of how interpretive exhibition methods could be applied to their collections, and a proposal framework to apply to other collections and subjects in the future.

### Context of the Problem

On October 11, 1927 three students from the UO, Walter E. Hempstead, Benoit McCroskey, and Avery Thompson, set out on a debate tour around the world. This was the first time an American university debate team had traveled around the world and the tour generated much publicity throughout the U.S. and the world. Throughout the six months of the tour, the debaters traveled through eighteen countries, including Japan, China, The Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Egypt, England, Scotland and Ireland, and participated in a total of thirty-three international debates. Upon their arrival to the Atlantic coast of the United States, they made their way across the country at eighteen different American universities, until they returned to Oregon on April 20, 1928.

Team-member Walter Hempstead conceived of and organized the tour. The students not only organized the tour, but they also financed most of the trip themselves through ticket sales proceeds and newspaper article commissions. In almost every country they visited, the debaters met historically significant people and witnessed important world events. For example, when the team made its way into India, they met Mahatma Gandhi and attended the opening of the 42nd Indian National Congress where twenty-five thousand representatives from every province in India passed a resolution calling for complete independence from the British Empire (Hempstead, "Sights of India", Jan. 1, 1928). In Egypt, they were privileged to go inside the recently opened tomb of King Tutenkamen. In Italy, they witnessed a rare appearance of "Il Duce, Signori Benito Mussolini, the premier and dictator of Italy" (Hempstead, "Oregon Debator Obtains Movies of Mussolini", Feb. 1, 1928) and in London, they were spectators at the funeral procession of the great WWI hero, Field Marshal Douglas Haig (Hempstead, "Four Princes Walk", Feb. 27, 1928).

The choice to create an exhibition proposal on the World Debate Tour archival collection came about for several reasons: (1) the story of the World Debate Tour was compelling and interesting both in content and visuals, (2) Special Collections' location and highly specialized, non-circulating collections contributed to a lack of visibility and accessibility for the average library visitor, (3) the materials housed in Special Collections are eclectic and primarily two-dimensional and text-heavy, suggesting the need for a more interpretive method of access, (4) the limitations of the library's lobby display cases called for more creative and interpretive display methods in order to better engage the passing visitor, (5) past exhibitions of Special Collection materials provided little engagement or interpretation for visitors.

1. I became aware of the World Debate Tour while conducting research in the University Archives for the UO's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. An initial review of the World Debate Tour collection revealed an interesting and compelling story that was rich both visually through photographs and ephemera and literarily through first hand accounts of the tour in written articles. The World Debate Tour collection contains portions of a scrapbook that chronicles the trip through articles the team members wrote and sent to various Oregon newspapers and through other clippings the debaters collected while on tour.

The articles serve as a travel diary, chronicling the team members' experiences, observations, and perceptions in all of the places the tour took them. Not only do the articles illustrate the team members' travels, but they also give incredible insight into many of the socio-political environments of the countries the tour visited. The collection also includes some of the programs, posters, and advertisements produced for the tour. One of the team members, Walter Hempstead, donated his personal photo album of the tour along with some

correspondence and private papers. The photos provide an excellent visual reference to the first hand accounts of events described in the newspaper articles as well as a snapshot of what life on the road was like for the team members.

2. Special Collections contains a vast collection of rare manuscripts, documents, photographs, and books. The materials housed within Special Collections are maintained in closed stacks and are only available by request. Not all of the items in the collections are cataloged in the University of Oregon library database. Those not listed are still cataloged in the old style card catalogs in the Special Collections reading room. The collections are non-circulating and may only be viewed in the reading room under supervision. There are also strict rules about how material must be handled. For example, visitors must use book cradles and gloves and may only take notes from the materials with a pencil (“Using Our Collections”, Retrieved on October 14, 2002). The department is located on the second floor of the original 1937 structure of Knight library, which is isolated from the main lobby, stacks, and reference areas in the library’s more recent additions (appendix I).

3. The collections housed in Special Collections range from university attendance and graduation records to rare hand painted medieval manuscripts. There are five areas within Special Collections: University Archives, Rare Book Collection, Manuscript Collection, Photograph Collection, and the Oregon Collection. University Archives includes records, publications, theses and dissertations, photographs, audio, film, and memorabilia regarding the UO’s past and present. The Rare Book Collection has such books as medieval manuscripts, fine press books, and a collection of miniature books fewer than five inches tall. The Manuscript Collection contains documents, architectural drawings, and broadsides of various men, women, companies, and organizations. The Photograph Collection contains

over 125,000 photographic images from all over the world and the Oregon Collection contains materials dealing specifically with the state of Oregon (Special Collections & University Archives, retrieved on November 16, 2002).

4. The main lobby of Knight Library holds a series of display cases that various departments in the library use for exhibitions and displays. There are four vertical wall cases where the majority of exhibitions are presented (appendix II). The display cases are in a high traffic area between the circulation desk and the main reference area of the library. The cases are situated in such a way that nearly every library visitor must pass by them at least once during his or her visit (appendix III). Given their location, these display cases provide a unique opportunity for Special Collections to expose regular library visitors to their collections. The cases, however, are stationary and protected by glass, which provides little opportunity for visitors to interact with the exhibition in a more hands on way.

5. I observed how the various limitations faced by Special Collections were manifested in their exhibitions by looking at several past exhibitions from Special Collections. Five past exhibitions were translated on to the library's web-site ("Special Collections and University Archives Exhibits", retrieved on October 14, 2002). Although they are not within the context of the lobby display cases, one could still see many of the problems they pose. Each of the five exhibitions featured a collection from Special Collections.

*The Talk of the Town: Jane Grant, 'The New Yorker' and the Oregon Legacy of a Twentieth Century Feminist*, drew from the extensive personal manuscript collection of Jane Grant, early feminist and co-founder of the The New Yorker magazine. The Jane Grant Collection contains numerous photographs, documents, letters, sketches, newspaper clippings

and ephemera from her career and life. The exhibit also featured early issues of *The New Yorker* from Special Collections' Rare Book Collection.

*Feminist Voices and Visions from the Pacific Northwest*, featured the Duniway Family Papers manuscript collection. The exhibit focused on Abigail Scott Duniway, early pioneer and women's suffrage leader. The Duniway Family Papers include Abigail's correspondence, Oregon Trail diary, speeches, short stories, business papers, and scrapbooks.

*Boss of the Waterfront: Wayne Morse and Labor Arbitration*, exhibited the personal manuscript collection of Oregon Senator Wayne Morse. This exhibition contained materials from both the Manuscript Collection and University Archives. Again the materials in the collections included photographs, letters, and business and political documents.

*Twentieth-Century American Children's Literature*, drew upon collections of American children's literature focusing on four particular authors. The exhibition displayed books, original drawings, and items from personal manuscripts of four children's book illustrators.

Finally, *Under Western Skies: Ernest Haycox and the West in Fiction and Film*, profiled the life and work of UO alum and Western novelist using collections from his personal manuscripts and library and from University Archives. Letters, documents, records, photographs, and books were among the materials shown.

The materials used in these exhibitions demonstrated again the flat and text heavy nature of the collections housed in Special Collections. Nearly all the artifacts in these exhibitions (letters, documents, newspaper clippings, and photographs) were flat, two-dimensional paper products. The layout and organization of these past exhibitions revealed that each had large sections of narrative text displayed along with the visuals, documents, and



objects. Each section of the exhibitions had a page or two of dense reading. Imagining these lengthy text sections as panels in a display case was rather daunting. Passing visitors would have to spend quite a bit of time at the various sections reading the narrative as well as the captions for the corresponding visuals in order to get the full story of the exhibition. Further investigation into the narrative of the exhibitions showed that there were no clear messages of themes for visitors to glean quickly from the content. The exhibitions required the visitors to read the entire narrative in order to understand the main message of the exhibition.

The review of these past exhibitions revealed that there were little interpretive, interactive, or engaging elements for visitors. The object of these exhibitions seems to be to display the holdings of the library. The exhibition experience consisted of only reading and viewing the visuals. While each of the exhibitions contained a multitude of interesting visuals and content, no other efforts seemed to be made to engage the visitor beyond these elements.

### Background of the Problem

Libraries and archives appear to recognize exhibition as an important piece of their services and programming for many years. A preliminary search for literature on library exhibitions and displays showed a range of sources on creating exhibitions and displays for libraries (“Exhibits in ARL libraries”, 1986; Casterline, 1980; Kemp & Witschi, 1997; Tedeschi, & Pearlmutter, 1997; Dutka, Hayes, & Parnell, January 2002). However, closer examination of these sources revealed that library exhibitions and displays were generally produced as promotional or marketing tools. Many sources (Tedeschi, & Pearlmutter, 1997; Kohn, 1982; Schaeffer, 1991) appeared to be less concerned with communicating a certain story or message and more concerned with advertising collections and services. The majority

of the sources on library exhibitions and displays concerned themselves with creating effective signage and graphics and hardly discussed how to create effective and engaging content or how to interpret the content for the visitor.

The Association of Research Libraries (1986) recognized in a survey of exhibition procedures and policies that libraries used exhibitions primarily to promote the use of the facilities and their collections. Another study (Kemp & Witschi, 1997) suggested that while libraries do assume exhibitions to be worthwhile, they are generally regarded to be secondary to other library functions. The most common reasons libraries did not employ more elaborate or interpretive exhibitions were lack of funding and adequate staff expertise. The University of Oregon Libraries Exhibit Policy cites the promotion of programs, events, and collections as the main goals for their exhibitions (“University of Oregon Libraries Exhibit Policies”, retrieved on October 14, 2002). The policy states, “The Library Exhibit Program is one of the most effective ways to engage the interest of the campus and community and to publicize services, programs, and collections”. There is not an established exhibition department, but exhibition proposals are reviewed and administered by an exhibits committee made up of eight librarians. The exhibitor, generally a library staff member, is responsible for all aspects of the exhibition including development, design, fabrication, conservation, and installation (appendix IV).

I turned to the museum field for sources on developing more visitor centered, interpretive exhibitions in order to demonstrate how Special Collections could move their exhibitions beyond mere displays and engage the visitor better. Three areas of information were sought: (1) Exhibition Development, (2) Audience Learning, and (3) Interpretation.

#### *Exhibition development*

There are several distinctions between exhibits and exhibitions. Beth Redmond-Jones (2003), an exhibition developer, explains that an exhibit is a single display and an exhibition is a series of exhibits strung together with a common theme and goal. There are also many different types of exhibits and exhibitions. Kathleen McLean (1993) states, “All exhibitions are three-dimensional, environmental experiences. But they are as varied as the subjects they examine: art, history, natural science, and technology exhibitions all require different planning and design considerations” (p. 21). Exhibitions are very multi-faceted and possess several different functions.

Kathleen McLean (1993) states that exhibitions have three primary functions: to show things, to communicate ideas, and to promote experiences (p. 16). The three functions work together to engage and communicate with the viewer. There are many modes of learning and communication, but exhibitions seem to be regarded as particularly effective and engaging ways to impart information from one party to another. In their article, *Intrinsic Motivation in Museums*, Mihály Csikszentmihalyi and Kim Hermanson (1995), agree with McLean, saying that in the information age, technology is changing how we learn and how we are entertained. “Museums offer the opportunity to interact with a real environment, one in which the objects are still imbued with the blood, the tears, the sweat of their makers” (p. 60).

An exhibition is the product of the hard work and creativity of many people. McLean (1993) goes on to say that in the last 20 years many in the museum field have adopted a team model. In this more inclusive model, all staff members are involved in exhibition development. Each brings their unique viewpoint to the table. In this model museum staffs are able to address issues and concerns better in all aspects of the process.

There is no one way to develop an exhibition, but according to some, there are certain steps that should be followed to get the best results. McLean (1993) tells us that different kinds of exhibitions require different kinds of planning and design. “There is no one right way to create an exhibition, but an unlimited number of possible combinations of elements” (p. 33). For most, the process begins with concept development.

Whether centered around a collection, a story, or an idea all exhibitions should revolve around a central concept. For Beverly Serrell (1996) the most important element of an exhibition concept is what she calls the “Big Idea”. Serrell says that, “a powerful exhibition idea will clarify, limit, and focus the nature and scope of an exhibition and provide a well-defined goal against which to rate its success” (p. 1). There are many other exhibition development plans with varied steps and degrees of details. However, all processes have the same general concepts behind them: concept development, design development, implementation, and evaluation. Institutions should take the roles and processes that fit their criteria and adapt it accordingly. In any exhibition development process it is important to improve the process each time and learn from any mistakes and successes. A review and refine step should be taken throughout the entire process.

### *Audience Learning*

One of the most crucial elements in creating any exhibition is determining who the visitors are and why they come to an exhibition. Kathleen McLean (1993) contends that museums need to be more aware of who is looking at their exhibitions. They need to design exhibitions with the visitors’ perspective in mind. An audience is generally made-up of a mixture of people, not just one type.

Most museums have some idea what types of visitors are coming to their institutions. Often this is determined through visitor surveys and demographics. John Falk (1998) explains that the research consistently finds that museum attendees are generally more educated and affluent than average Americans (p. 38). Research also shows that children and family groups make-up the majority of the American museum-going public and that minorities visit museums at a lower rate than European Americans (p. 40).

While this information is interesting, demographics alone cannot paint the whole picture and tell us why people visit museums. Museum visitors come for a variety of reasons; curiosity, interest in a certain subject, to get information, to be entertained, to interact with people, and most importantly to learn. Studies show that the primary reason most people visit museums is in order to learn (Falk, 1998; Falk and Dierking, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi and Hermason, 1995). Motivation to go to a museum and to learn from an exhibition is an important first step in the learning process. Human development researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and educator Kim Hermason (1995) write that people, especially children, are naturally curious or interested in many things and display a keen desire to learn.

In *Learning from Museums*, researchers John H. Falk and Lynn Dierking (2000) look in depth at how museums facilitate learning in their visitors. They state that museum learning is complex, it involves many variables, and many different types of learning occur within the museum setting. The Contextual Model of Learning developed by Falk and Dierking contends, “all learning is situated within a series of contexts” (p. 10). It involves the overlapping of one’s personal, sociopolitical, and physical contexts. Learning is the process and product of the three interacting and working simultaneously in a given situation. Within this model of learning, time is the fourth context. Limited time is a key factor in

visiting exhibitions, especially in a museum type environment where there is more than one thing to see or do.

Another important element of learning in the museum is each visitor's individual learning style (Cunningham, 2002). Learning styles can affect the way visitors experience and learn from exhibitions. Individuals have preferences for how they perceive and process information. These learning styles help motivate people to learn.

Theories on learning styles and personality types, such as Bernice McCarthy's *4Mat System* (1987) and Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), whose theories have been adopted by many in the museum field (Cunningham, 2002; Parman, 2001; Redmond-Jones, 2003; Serrell, 1996; McLean, 1993), describe various "types" of learners who exhibit certain qualities when engaged in a learning activity. Although each theory classifies these types of learners differently, they describe many of the same qualities.

Bernice McCarthy (as cited by Redmond-Jones, 2003 and Serrell, 1996) identifies four styles of learning: imaginative learners, analytical learners, common sense learners, and dynamic learners. Howard Gardner (as cited by Cunningham, 2002, p. 6) described seven styles of intelligence that affect the way people learn: visual-spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal or social intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalist intelligence, and logical-mathematical intelligence.

Beverly Serrell (1996) contends that there is no such thing as the "average" visitor, but that there are some overarching trends and patterns to visitors' behavior in museum exhibitions, regardless of who they are or how they learn. These behaviors can help determine what visitors need and want from an exhibition. Visitor studies and research on learning styles has helped museums and exhibition designers to realize that not all of their

visitors absorb and retain information in the same way. In order to make exhibitions accessible to everyone they must accommodate for those different styles. Knowing whom their visitors are, why they come to their exhibitions, and how they experience and learn from them helps exhibition developers to design exhibitions that appeal to a diverse group of people.

### *Interpretation*

The mechanism for delivering the information to the visitor is the main focus of an exhibition. This is called interpretation. There are many definitions for interpretation that have emerged over the years. Many of these definitions originated in the nature guide tradition of the National Park Service and have since been adapted to the museum field.

Freeman Tilden (1957), sometimes referred to as the father of interpretation (Cunningham, 2002), wrote one of the first definitions of interpretation in his book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Tilden defined interpretation as,

An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information... Interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact... Interpretation should capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit” (American Association of Museums, 2001).

The National Association for Interpretation (2000) defined interpretation as “a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource” (American Association of Museums, 2001).

In all of these definitions one element remains constant: communication. Interpretation is a communication tool. Interpretation leads to new understanding and revelation. Interpretation involves both the emotional and the intellectual. Although interpretation practices began in the nature and park services, museums have realized how these practices can be used in their institutions. Cunningham (2002) refers to Tilden's *Principles of Interpretation* as a more detailed definition of what interpretation is and is not. She uses them as guidelines for developing effective interpretative elements for museums (p. 4).

Tilden's *Principles of Interpretation*, as cited by Cunningham (2002), is: (1) Any interpretation that does not somehow relate to something within the personality of experience of the visitor will be sterile or meaningless, (2) Information alone is not interpretation. It is revelation based on information. Moving beyond the facts and engaging the viewer, (3) The chief aim of interpretation is provocation, not instruction (cause them to think), (4) Interpretation should aim to present the whole idea rather than a part and should address the whole person rather than any one aspect, (5) Interpretation for children is not a dilution of adult information, it is a fundamentally different approach, (6) Interpretation is an art (or combination of arts) such as storytelling, music, theater, drawing, or dance.

Cunningham (2002) states that interpretation is not just one thing. It involves the whole of the exhibition. Interpretation involves audiences (who are the visitors, how do they learn), resources (the people, props, collections that provide the substance for the interpretation), and techniques (forms of interpretation that are possible and most appropriate for subject etc., strategies that make your interpretation engaging and interactive) (p. 4).



Interpretation comes in many different forms. Mary Kay Cunningham (2002) divides interpretation into two areas: Non-personal Interpretation, which includes such things as signs, brochures, exhibits, audio-tours, and video and Personal Interpretation, which includes such things as programs, classes, demonstrations, tours, storytelling, characterizations, music, and theater (p. 8).

Some of the biggest and most commonly used elements of interpretation in exhibitions are labels and text panels. Beverly Serrell (1996) states, “Interpretive labels tell stories; they are narratives, not lists of facts. Any label that serves to explain, guide, question, inform, or provoke-in a way that invites participation by the reader-is interpretive” (p. 9).

The AAM defined several outcomes of effective interpretation (AAM, June 15-16, 2001). Effective interpretation causes the audience to be connected and engaged. The audience response to an effective interpretive exhibition is emotional, intellectual, personal, and experiential. Effective interpretation triggers memories and reflections and empowers the audience. In an effective interpretive exhibition, ideas become more meaningful and learning and new understanding is achieved. Finally, an institution that utilizes effective interpretation is taken serious, achieves recognition, and achieves its strategic goals.

### Significance of the Study

Exhibitions are an important communication tool for Special Collections. This study was intended to benefit Special Collections by providing it with an example of how visitor-centered, interpretive methods could be applied to their collections. The framework for visitor-centered, interpretive exhibition development will be able to be applied to other collections and will set a new standard for the way they develop exhibitions in the future.

It is important for this historic and unprecedented event in the UO's past to be exposed to the greater university public. The World Debate Tour put the UO in the headlines across the world in the late 1920s; however, it appeared that the materials on the World Debate Tour have not been researched before. I found the archival materials in the University Archives among other unprocessed collections. There were no indications in the archive's records that these materials have been processed or researched before and the UO library catalog showed no previous studies on the subject. The UO still has a very active debate team. However, the Forensic Department's web site makes no mention of the World Debate Tour on their history page ("Forensics Team History", retrieved on October 21, 2002). The World Debate Tour seems to have been forgotten. Therefore, this study uncovered a chapter in the UO's history previously unknown to current and past researchers. The historical research conducted for this study was intended to benefit future researchers and to contribute to the larger body of knowledge and the collections of Special Collections and the UO Libraries.

This study was also intended to be a contribution to the field of library exhibitions. It was the hope of this study to demonstrate that library exhibitions could be improved beyond mere displays of objects and promotional materials by employing some new exhibition methods and strategies from the museum field. Libraries cannot utilize all of the exhibition methods and strategies that museums employ, but they can learn from the processes and theories and adapt the methods and strategies to fit their own circumstances and needs.

#### Design of the Study

This qualitative study used historical research methods and served as a partial case study for Special Collections. This study required two areas of data: historical research from

the World Debate Tour archival materials and selected literature on exhibition development. Data gathering methods included document analysis and review of selected literature. The data from the document analysis and the selected literature review were synthesized and interpreted into a visitor-centered, interpretive exhibition proposal for Special Collections. Conclusions and recommendations were made for Special Collections' future exhibitions.

#### *Document analysis*

The primary resources regarding the World Debate Tour were initially found when I was working in Special Collections for another project. I found many of the primary sources and artifacts dealing with the World Debate Tour while casually perusing the shelves in the archives. The other sources found in the initial search for archival documents were obtained by a computer search of Special Collections' on-line catalogue and a manual search of the Special Collections' card catalogue. The primary documents found included newspaper articles, magazines articles, photographs, personal archives, yearbooks, and scrapbooks.

The review of the World Debate Tour archival materials determined categories of primary and secondary sources sought in the other areas. For example, I was led to a search for historical information about the initial discovery of the tomb from a newspaper clipping in the World Debate Tour collection referring to the debater's visit to King Tut's Tomb. Other primary and secondary historical sources were obtained through computer searches of library databases and the Internet. The categories of additional historical information that were searched for in this study were Debate history, Debate in the U.S., Debate in Oregon, International debate, UO debate history, U.S. Foreign Relations, U.S. History, and World History.

The following process for primary source document analysis and historical research was created based on the historical research methods outlined in *Research Methods and Methodologies for Art Education* (La Pierre and Zimmerman, 1997): (1) review World Debate Tour artifacts and literature currently held by the University Archives, (2) read written sources, look at pictures, ephemera, objects and artifacts in collection, (3) compile the information from the primary sources in the archives, (4) prepare chronology describing what happened when, (5) look for gaps and anomalies in the written information on the World Debate Tour and determine how to fill those gaps with other primary sources or secondary histories, (6) compile data into an historical narrative of the event.

#### *Review of key literature*

Key literature from the museum field was selected and reviewed in order to determine some of the theories, processes, and procedures of developing visitor-centered, interpretive exhibitions. The three areas of key literature were (1) Exhibition Development, (2) Audience Learning, and (3) Interpretation. Literature sources included library literature such as periodicals, books, and Internet sources. Databases utilized in the search for literature were UO Libraries Catalog, Orbis, WorldCat, Art Abstracts-OCLC FirstSearch, Arts & Humanities Search-OCLC FirstSearch, and Dissertation Abstracts-OCLC FirstSearch. Literature referenced by authors of works found using the above databases were also searched. From the initial literature search key works were chosen for their relevance to the three subject areas and scope of the project.

I limited the literature review in several ways. I limited the literature review to works published after 1990. This was done to obtain the most current and up-to-date theories in the field. This current literature was further limited by using sources that have been identified as

“experts” in the field from the American Association of Museums, readings, and classes and lectures I have attended on the subject. The literature review was also limited on the basis of availability of sources. Many of the most current works were unattainable for review.

#### *Synthesis and interpretation of collected data*

The synthesis and interpretation of the historical research and literature review into the exhibition proposal was done by choosing areas in the artifacts that would be personally meaningful and significant to the storyline of the exhibition and the visitors that would view it. The interpretation of the historical data was then delineated into an exhibition proposal by applying the information from the literature on exhibition development, audience learning, and interpretation.

The following interpretation process was created for this study based upon several planning processes discovered in the literature review (Lord, 2000; McLean, 1993; Parman, 2001): (1) determine target audiences, (2) develop exhibition purpose statement, (3) develop exhibition take-away-messages and objectives, (4) develop exhibition storyline and conceptual design, (5) combine elements into a narrative walk-thru of the proposed exhibition. The narrative walk-thru is the exhibition proposal.

#### Limitations

This project had several limitations: (1) the interpretation process is a highly selective process and the outcome of that process can vary depending on the individual, team, or institution doing the interpreting. Therefore, this study was limited to the interpretation of the author and served only as one example of the process. (2) This study was only concerned with the early stages of the exhibition development process. It addressed only the conceptual development of the World Debate Tour exhibition proposal and did not address the physical

design or layout. (3) The content, form and design of an exhibition is determined and sometimes even limited by various circumstances such as the location or the audience. The proposed exhibition in this study was designed specifically for the four vertical wall display cases in the Knight Library lobby. The limited space and fixed dimensions of the display cases limited the design and scope of the exhibition proposal to fit within the criteria of the cases. (4) A crucial element in developing any exhibition is determining the make-up of the viewing audience. This is often determined by membership, patronage, or population statistics for a given institution or area. This study was designed specifically for the visitors in Knight Library (see narrative walk-through for detailed make-up of library audience).

#### Assumptions

A compelling story and visual materials are not the only factors that determine whether or not an exhibition should be developed. Adequate interest, funds, time and staffing are needed to effectively develop exhibitions. Therefore, three assumptions were made for this study: (1) interest was shown in an exhibition on the World Debate Tour, (2) funding was available for the exhibition, (3) knowledgeable library staff was available and had time to develop the exhibition.

#### Definitions

##### *Conceptual Design*

Concurrent with storyline development, the conceptual design establishes the look and feel of an exhibition (McLean, 1993).

##### *Exhibit*

Discrete, conceptual units, experiences, or components within the exhibition layout, planned by the exhibit developers as separate experiences for visitors (Serrell, 1996).

*Exhibition*

A defined room or space, with a given title, containing elements that together make up a coherent entity that is conceptually recognizable as a display of objects, animals, interactives, and phenomena (Serrell, 1996).

*Interpretation*

A communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of an audience and the inherent meanings in the resource (Cunningham, 2002).

*Interpretive Exhibition*

Interpretive exhibits bring objects, images, and ideas to life for visitors through storytelling, diverse presentation media, and learning opportunities that engage multiple intelligences (Parman, 2001).

*Narrative Walk-thru or Storyline*

Sometimes called a script, scenario, or exhibit outline, the narrative walk-thru builds the framework of the exhibition from its basic concepts and take-home messages, and develops themes and exhibit areas (McLean, 1993).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF KEY LITERATURE

I conducted a limited literature review in order to provide a framework for the development of the exhibition proposal and to identify key issues. As discussed in the background section of chapter one, a preliminary review of literature on developing exhibitions for libraries revealed that library exhibitions generally were produced as promotional tools, were less concerned with communicating to the visitor a certain story or message, and were more concerned with advertising collections and services to the visitor. The majority of the sources on library exhibitions and displays discussed creating effective signage and graphics rather than how to create and to organize effective and engaging content. I turned to the museum field for sources on developing more visitor-centered, interpretive exhibitions in order to demonstrate how Special Collections could move their exhibitions beyond mere displays and engage the visitor better.

I sought three areas of information: (1) Exhibition Development, (2) Audience Learning, and (3) Interpretation. I formed several guiding questions within these three areas. I developed these questions to help answer key issues for Special Collections. This chapter then explored the detailed review of literature conducted using these three topic areas and guiding questions

#### Exhibition Development

The first set of information sought in the literature review was a greater understanding of what an exhibition is, how exhibitions differ from other modes of communication, and what the exhibition development process entails.



*What are exhibitions and exhibits?*

There are several distinctions between exhibits and exhibitions. Beth Redmond-Jones (2003), an exhibition developer, explains that an exhibit is a single display and an exhibition is a series of exhibits strung together with a common theme and goal.

In her book, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, Beverly Serrell (1996) defines exhibits as “discrete, conceptual units, experiences, or components within the exhibition layout, planned by the exhibit developers as separate experiences for visitors” (p. 238). Serrell defines an exhibition as “a defined room or space, with a given title, containing elements that together make up a coherent entity that is conceptually recognizable as a display of objects, animals, interactives, and phenomena” (p. 238). One can see that the difference is that an exhibit is a single experience of a single idea or object and an exhibition is the joining of many different single experiences into one large cohesive experience that links all the elements together with one overarching concept.

There are also many different types of exhibits and exhibitions. According to Kathleen McLean (1993) in *Planning for People in Museums*, there are several general types of exhibitions: object-based exhibitions, exhibitions that demonstrate phenomena, topical exhibitions, permanent, temporary, and traveling exhibitions, and substantial exhibitions. McLean states, “All exhibitions are three-dimensional, environmental experiences. But they are as varied as the subjects they examine: art, history, natural science, and technology exhibitions all require different planning and design considerations” (pg. 21).

Exhibitions are very multi-faceted and possess several different functions.

McLean (1993) states that exhibitions have three primary functions: to show things, to communicate ideas, and to promote experiences (p. 16). The three functions work together to engage the viewer in the exhibit. First, the main business of exhibitions is to show things. Exhibitions may show objects from a collection or may show things designed especially to illustrate a principle, convey information, or tell a story. Secondly, exhibitions are also a medium for communication and learning. Exhibitions can communicate ideas, information, feelings, or values. Finally, exhibitions are experiences, not products. In an exhibition the experience of the visitor is just as important as the information conveyed to them.

### *Why exhibitions?*

There are many modes of learning and communication, but exhibitions seem to be regarded as particularly effective and engaging ways to impart information from one party to another. McLean (1993) asks why learning from an exhibition is better than learning from other modes of communication such as a television program, a classroom lesson, or a book. Her conclusion is that generally exhibitions have the “real thing”. In other words, exhibitions usually contain the actual objects, documents, ephemera, or sometimes people, as opposed to the two dimensional images and text of other modes of learning.

In their article, *Intrinsic Motivation in Museums*, Mihály Csikszentmihalyi and Kim Hermanson (1995), agree with McLean, saying that in the information age technology is changing how we learn and how we are entertained. “Museums offer the opportunity to interact with a real environment, one in which the objects are still imbued with the blood, the tears, the sweat of their makers” (p. 60).

Barry Lord (2003), in chapter two of *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, states that exhibitions have two main purposes: as a core function of a museum and as a function of

communicating meaning to a visitor. These two purposes work together to bring the entire experience to the visitor. Lord states, “to understand the museum exhibition...it is necessary to see it not merely as a core function of museums, but as a powerful means of communication with the museum’s public” (p. 15). Within the communication function of the museum exhibition there are four modes of visitor understanding: contemplation, comprehension, discovery, and interaction (p. 19). Although there are many ways exhibitions communicate with their visitors, these four are the most common and widely used.

*Who are the key players?*

An exhibition is the product of the hard work and creativity of many people. The people that develop exhibitions play critical roles in making exhibitions accessible and engaging for visitors. Kathleen McLean (1993) explains that until recently museum the “expert” curators generally designed exhibitions and others supplied supplemental materials around the curators design. In this hierarchical model, not everyone has involvement with the planning and conceptual process. Others have to work their materials and events in around the concept imposed by the curator. In this model of development someone’s interests inevitably get overlooked because not everyone is involved in the process from start to finish.

McLean (1993) continues to say that in the last 20 years many in the museum field have adopted a team model. In this more inclusive model, all staff members are involved in exhibition development. Each brings their unique viewpoint to the table. In this model, museum staffs are able to address issues and concerns better in all aspects of the process.

In, *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord (2002) state that the exhibition development process is a multi-disciplinary process. Involvement from all areas of the museum is required for a successful exhibition and many areas overlap with one another (p. 1). Lord and Lord describe several types of roles involved in the exhibition development process. Audience specialists play a key role in the development of an exhibition. These are often people involved in development, marketing, education, and evaluation. Content specialists, such as curators, researchers, collections, and education are also crucial to the process. Another important role is that of the communication specialists. The people involved in the communicative aspects of an exhibition are the designers, interpretive planners, writers, and educators. Finally, there are the installation specialists. These roles include conservators, preparators, contractors, and designers.

Many others (Parman, 2001; Serrell, 1996; Cunningham, 2002; Redmond-Jones, 2003) agree that the exhibition development process is a team process. While each development process uses slightly different role descriptions, all emphasize that the roles should work together (appendix V).

*What are the steps in developing an exhibition?*

Kathleen McLean (1993) states that every museum or other exhibiting institution approaches the exhibition development process differently. An institution's mission, resources, staffing, and collections all contribute to how an exhibition is created. An important area of research in the museum field is in developing an exhibition planning process that allows a staff to develop exhibitions effectively. There is no one way to develop an exhibition, but according to some, there are certain steps that should be followed to get the best results. McLean tells us that different kinds of exhibitions require different kinds of

planning and design. “There is no one right way to create an exhibition, but an unlimited number of possible combinations of elements” (p. 33).

McLean (1993) continues that there is no one step by step process for exhibition development. Every exhibition is unique and requires different methods. The development process should act as a guideline and remain flexible for any unseen circumstances. “Ideally, all of the process and planning should take place in order to create the best possible visitor experience” (p. 49).

For most, the process begins with concept development. Whether centered on a collection, a story, or an idea all exhibitions should revolve around a central concept. For Beverly Serrell (1996), the most important element of an exhibition concept is what she calls the “Big Idea”.

A big idea is a sentence—a statement—of what the exhibition is about. It is a statement in one sentence, with a subject, an action, and a consequence. It should not be vague or compound. It is one big idea, not four. It also implies what the exhibit is not about. A big idea is big because it has fundamental meaningfulness that is important to human nature. It is not trivial. It is the first thing the team, together, should write for an exhibition (pg. 1).

Serrell says that, “a powerful exhibition idea will clarify, limit, and focus the nature and scope of an exhibition and provide a well-defined goal against which to rate its success” (p. 1).

Serrell (1996) continues to state that exhibition developers must resist the urge to try and tell every aspect of a story. Too much information is daunting to a visitor. An exhibition will make more sense overall if it has a single message that unifies all its parts. Exhibitions

that lack a big idea are often overwhelming, confusing, intimidating, and complex. The Big Idea is used to delineate what will and will not be included in the exhibit and everything in the exhibition should reflect the Big Idea. According to Serrell, the whole exhibition development process depends on the development of a Big Idea (p. 5).

There are many different exhibition processes described in the museum field. Lord and Lord (2002) set out a three-phase development process (p. 3). The Development Phase is when the concept, interpretive planning, research, exhibition brief, preliminary budget and schedule, and funding are developed. The development phase is when the exhibition idea or concept is created, tested, and refined. It develops an understanding of what the exhibition is about and why the museum is doing it. The Design Phase is when the schematic design, design development, detailed design and specifications, detailed budget and schedule, detailed content research, and text are developed. “The design phase is when the exhibition brief [concept] is transformed into three-dimensional reality through the creativity and insight of designers working collaboratively with representatives of museum departments, interpretive planners, and evaluators” (p. 3). The Implementation Phase is when the procurement, project management and construction, installation, fine-tuning, and evaluation occur. “The implementation phase, [is] actually building and installing the exhibition” (p. 4).

McLean (1993), whose book is widely cited in the field (Serrell, (1996; Parman, 2001; Cunningham, 2002; Redmond-Jones, 2003), lays out a detailed development plan that can be adapted to fit any type of exhibition (p. 51) (appendix VI). Before beginning, McLean asks us to remember a few fundamental rules when developing an exhibition. First, one must always plan ahead. There are always constraints to contend with. Secondly, eliminate a phase of the process if it isn't necessary. Thirdly, always keep everyone

informed. Good communication is the key to a successful development process. Finally, it never works as well as it does on paper.

McLean's (1993) exhibition process begins with the feasibility or needs assessment of the project. This step will help determine if the idea works with an institution's resources. McLean, like Serrell, firmly believes that, "all exhibitions start with an idea" (p. 53). This process can be difficult and adequate time is needed for an exhibition idea to develop.

McLean (1993) explains that assessing the exhibition idea will make sure the concept fits with the institution's criteria, policies, or mission. An exhibition should be supportive of and relevant to an institution's mission. It should be visually interesting and appropriate as an exhibition. The exhibition idea should be researchable and there should be adequate information on the topic. An exhibition idea should be multifaceted. There should be a variety of levels of information and it should be accessible to many different visitors. The institution should support an exhibition idea internally. It should be supportive of the institution's collections and connective, tying into other aspects of the institution. Finally, an exhibition idea should be fundable and supported outside of the institution.

Like Serrell's "Big Idea", McLean (1993) also supports writing a purpose statement in this first stage of the development process. "Purpose statements define the exhibition problems to be solved, and describe what the exhibition is supposed to do and for whom" (p. 54). Assembling the key players is also an important step in the assessment of the exhibition idea. All who will be involved in the exhibition ideally should be brought together in this early stage of the process and should be involved in writing the purpose statement to ensure that all are being served.

The second phase in McLean's (1993) exhibition development process is the development of the Preliminary Design. The Preliminary Design maps out the content and form of the exhibition. Communication goals are generally created during this phase of the development process. Communication goals are points the exhibition will teach the visitor and clarifies the focus of an exhibition. This is usually a larger priority for topical or thematic exhibitions. Developing take home messages is also a step that takes place in the Preliminary Design phase. Framing take home messages and communication goals puts the planners in the visitors' shoes and requires the planner to think about what they are trying to say with their exhibition. When developing these communication goals and take-home messages, developers must remember that exhibitions cannot contain all of the information they may want to include. They have to decide what is the most important information to include and edit it down to the bare essentials.

After the communication goals and messages have been established, the next step in McLean's (1993) process is the preliminary research of the subject. This step defines the parameters of the exhibition topic, stories, and identifies the available objects and graphics, and other important elements of the exhibition. Front-end evaluation can be done at the point to see if the planners are on track with the idea.

The storyline, also called a narrative walk-thru or exhibition outline, builds a story framework for the exhibition concepts and take home messages and develops its themes. This piece of McLean's (1993) process begins to divide the content into exhibit areas. The storyline can range in size and detail from an annotated outline to a narrative description. Developing the storyline should be a subtractive process; editing and ironing out the details



form the preliminary research and making connections with the communication goals and take-away messages.

The detailed design phase in McLean's (1993) process fills in the details of the preliminary design. This is the part in the design process where the abstract ideas turn into general concepts and then into concrete schematics. The conceptual design suggests the physical concepts and abstract physical relationships among the idea elements in the exhibition. It establishes the "look" or design reference for the exhibition. The conceptual design phase is also the chance to develop potential design solutions to problem concepts and creates the visual elements to illustrate the exhibition concepts. It transfers the words and ideas of the storyline into visuals.

The conceptual design phase in McLean's (1993) process is also a good point to do formative evaluation. Evaluation at this point is a chance for a dialogue between exhibition designers and potential exhibition visitors to be established. Evaluating the conceptual design before it is fabricated is an efficient way to test how people will react to the exhibition and to make any changes. After the conceptual design is established, abstract ideas of the storyline and the general concepts of the conceptual design come together to form the final design. The final design, sometimes called the final script, pulls everything together from the storyline and conceptual design, describes all artifacts and visuals, and includes support materials. The final design can be written in the narrative or can also be done visually in a storyboard form.

The next phases in McLean's (1993) exhibition development process are Production Planning, Production, and Post-production Maintenance. Production Planning involves creating the specifications for the production of the exhibition. Cost estimating and design

revisions happen in this phase. Once the overall design is developed the costs can be figured and the design may have to be revised accordingly. Once the design has been fully revised construction and specification documents can be created. These documents translate the final design into the physical design.

The main functions of McLean's (1993) production phase are the fabrication and installation of the exhibition. Once the exhibition has been fabricated and installed the post-production events can take place. Most exhibitions have a special opening reception to celebrate the end of the exhibition development process. However, the exhibition process does not end there. Most exhibitions require maintenance. Planning for routine maintenance is important. This will make sure everything is in its place and running as it's supposed to throughout the duration of the exhibition. Summative evaluation is also an important post-production and maintenance phase of the exhibition. Evaluation of an exhibition will help determine whether the objectives of the exhibition have been met. It is a wonderful tool to see what worked and what did not.

There are many other exhibition development plans with varied steps and degrees of details (appendix VII and VIII). However, all processes have the same general concepts behind them: concept development, design development, implementation, and evaluation. Institutions should take the roles and processes that fit their criteria and adapt it accordingly. In any exhibition development process it is important to improve the process each time and learn from any mistakes and successes. A review and refine step should be taken throughout the entire process.

*What issues should be kept in mind when developing an exhibition?*

There are many elements to any exhibition, but some general concepts should be kept in mind when developing an exhibition. Several researchers lay out criteria for developing good exhibitions. Kathleen McLean (1993) uses eight criteria for developing a good exhibition from the Natural History Museum in London. (1) Make the subject come to life, (2) Makes its point quickly, (3) Has something for all ages, (4) Are memorable, (5) Make it clear where one should begin and how one should continue, (6) Uses modern display techniques that help one learn, (7) Uses familiar things and experiences to make its points, (8) Includes a comprehensive display of objects and/or specimens (p. 20).

If a concept is too abstract or requires too much background or large volume of explanation and text, it probably isn't suited for an exhibition. McLean (1993) says, "if words are the only way to present a concept and if the concept cannot be shown physically, it is probably inappropriate" (p. 16). Words should be used to support and enhance the objects and things being shown. Communication takes place through every aspect of the exhibition, the way it looks, sounds, and feels. An exhibition must convey concise messages. An exhibition should be designed for clarity and brevity.

Time is a critical piece of the exhibition puzzle. According to John Falk (1998) most visitors only spend an average of 15 to 20 minutes in any one exhibition and only view exhibition components for a few minutes. A typical family visit to a museum lasts from one and a half hours to two and a half hours. Exhibitions must be able to deliver an engaging experience in the limited time frame of the average visitor.

McLean (1993) believes that the essence of a "good" exhibition, what exhibition developers should strive for:

[Developers should strive for] substantial exhibitions [that] attract and reach people; they [should] make things accessible, both physically and intellectually. They [should] communicate with people on a variety of levels and provide multiple points of entry to exhibition concepts. They [should] fulfill their purpose without unnecessarily deteriorating or breaking down. They [should] appeal to all the senses. At their best, exhibition environments [should be] powerful, transformative experiences (p. 34).

*The Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence (1997)* developed by the standing professional committees council of the American Association of Museums state that “An exhibition is successful if it is physically, intellectually, and emotionally engaging to those who experience it” (AAM, 1997). Six areas of standards were developed by this body of the AAM to indicate excellence in exhibition development. These six standards are audience awareness, content, collections, Interpretive/Communication, design and production, and ergonomics (human comfort, safety and accessibility). The AAM recommends that these six standards should always be addressed when developing an exhibition.

In *Excellence in Exhibition: A report to the board of NAME*, by Eugene Dillenberg, Lynn Friman, and James Sims (AAM, 2001), many conclusions were drawn about what makes an exhibition good. The report states, “An exhibit is a medium of communication” (AAM, 2001.). Exhibitions communicate in four ways: intellectually, physically, emotionally, and holistically. Exhibitions present information. They need to be accurate, interesting, relevant, and innovative. They should make the visitor think. Exhibitions present 3-D objects in a 3-D space. They should provide the visitor access to the objects by

physically moving through the exhibition. Exhibitions should establish a meaningful context. An exhibition should make the visitor feel. The key to a really effective exhibition is to be able to address all three areas all at once and cause the visitor to think, experience, and feel. The exhibition should be a holistic experience.

In *A Tool for Judging Excellence in Museum Exhibitions*, Beverly Serrell and the Excellent Judges (2000) describe five elements that an excellent exhibition should have: comfort, competence, engagement, meaningfulness, and satisfaction. Serrell states, “Good comfort opens the doors to other positive experiences. Lack of comfort prevents them” (AAM, 2000). Inclusion, pluralism, authority, voice, attribution, accountability, orientation, way finding, ambiance, quality of execution, and durability all contribute to a visitor’s comfort in the exhibition environment. When visitors feel intellectually competent the learning process is greatly enhanced. Flow, levels of understanding, vocabulary, label content, density, juxtaposition, reinforcement, redundancy, and integrity in an exhibition all contribute to a visitor’s level of competency. Engagement in the exhibition subject matter is also crucial to a quality exhibition. Serrell and the Judges suggest that engagement levels can be measured by time spent, social interaction, and diverse modalities of presentation.

In addition to being engaging, exhibitions must be personally meaningful to visitors. Visitors must be involved in the exhibition in immediate and long lasting ways. The authors suggest that meaningfulness can be achieved by including relevance, connections, cognition, inspiration, reflection, universal human concerns, and soulfulness in the exhibition (AAM, 2001).

Finally, a visit to an exhibition must be a satisfying experience for visitors. Satisfaction is the feeling a visitor walks away from the exhibition with. Satisfaction is an

accumulation of all the elements other elements. A satisfied visitor feels fulfillment, surprise, and gains lasting impressions (AAM, 2001).

### Audience Learning

The second set of information sought in the literature review was a deeper understanding of why people visit exhibitions, how they learn from exhibitions, and how to utilize learning in the exhibition environment.

#### *Knowing your visitor-why do they come?*

One of the most crucial elements in creating any exhibition is determining who the visitors are and why they come to an exhibition. Kathleen McLean (1993) contends that museums need to be more aware of who is looking at their exhibitions. They need to design exhibitions with the visitors' perspective in mind. An audience is generally made-up of a mixture of people not just one type. Oftentimes exhibitions are geared toward either scholars or experts in the field or toward the "lay" un-enlightened visitor and can end up either talking down to the visitors or over their heads. She writes, "we are so focused on creating our exhibitions, with all the attendant obstacles we must face along the way, that we don't think about all those people on the horizon" (p. 1-2).

Most museums have some idea what types of visitors are coming to their institutions. Often this is determined through visitor surveys and demographics. In his article, *Visitors: Who Does, Who Doesn't, and Why*, John Falk (1998) notes that in the last twenty years many researchers have done studies to determine what variables, such as education, income, occupation, race and age, cause people to visit museums and exhibitions. These variables can vary in different settings and geographical locations, but they do reveal certain trends and patterns of museumgoers. For example, Falk explains that the research consistently finds

that museum attendees are generally more educated and affluent than average Americans (p. 38). Research also shows that children and family groups make-up the majority of the American museum-going public and that minorities visit museums at a lower rate than European Americans (p. 40).

While this information is interesting, demographics alone cannot paint the whole picture and tell us why people visit museums. Falk (1998) states, "Museum-going, like much human behavior, is far too complex to be understood merely on the basis of demographics" (p. 40). Museum visitors come for a variety of reasons; curiosity, interest in a certain subject, to get information, to be entertained, to interact with people, and most importantly to learn. McLean (1993) and Lisa Roberts (1997) also point out that visitors come to museums for a variety of reasons including social interaction, entertainment, personal involvement, relaxation and learning.

Interpretive Specialist, Mary Kay Cunningham (2002), describes the various reasons people visit museums in her five steps of visitor involvement: (1) Recreation ("I visit for recreation-time with family, friends, etc."), (2) Refuge ("I visit because it's refuge for me-nostalgia"), (3) Knowledge ("I visit for more knowledge"), (4) Connection ("I feel connected to the institution"), (5) Support ("I support institutional goals") (p. 5). The goal, according to Cunningham, is for museums to get the visitor to move up the steps from recreation to support, broadening their reasons for visiting.

Studies show that the primary reason most people visit museums is in order to learn (Falk, 1998; Falk and Dierking, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi and Hermason, 1995). Museumgoers tend to value learning and seek the challenge of exploration and discovering new things. This, Falk (1998) explains, is why museum going correlates with one's level of

education. “Most Americans who visit museums believe that education is an important lifelong process, and they perceive educational activities as an interesting and important leisure-time pursuit” (pg. 40).

*What makes visitors want to learn?*

In order to better understand how visitors experience exhibitions and what their needs and wants are, I wanted to further address the primary reason people visit museums in the first place: learning. Why and how do people seek learning in museum exhibitions and what are the different ways in which people perceive and process information in a learning environment such as a museum?

Motivation to go to a museum and learn from an exhibition is an important first step in the learning process. Human development researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and educator Kim Hermason (1995) write that people, especially children, are naturally curious or interested in many things and display a keen desire to learn. They state that people are both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated to learn. Extrinsic motivation happens when the reward for a given action comes from outside the activity one is performing. Intrinsic motivation occurs when there are no rewards for performing an activity, beyond the experience itself. Besides school groups, most museum exhibition visitors are there because they made a conscious choice to be there. Therefore, exhibitions rely on intrinsic rewards to motivate their visitors to learn. Curiosity may have been why they came to an exhibition, but if it does not hold their attention or motivate them to continue they will not learn from the experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995, p. 36).

Csikszentmihalyi and Hermason (1995) ask “how do museums motivate viewers to learn?” and “how do museums present information in a meaningful way, a way that deepens



a person's experience and promotes further learning?" (p. 36). Based on their research in intrinsic motivation they conclude that museums need to provide their visitors with what they call a "flow" experience. A "flow" experience is "a state of mind that is spontaneous, almost automatic, like the flow of a strong current". This is experienced in certain activities such as chess, endurance sports, and the arts (p. 36).

They continue that flow activities have clear goals and appropriate rules. Flow activities usually provide immediate and unambiguous feedback and occur when the activities are in balance with one's abilities. While the challenges of the activity should match the skills of the participant, one's skills must also increase along with the challenges posed in the activity. This allows for learning and provides a sense of discovery for the person doing the activity. Csikszentmihalyi and Hermason (1995) write;

When goals are clear, feedback is unambiguous, challenges and skills are well matched, then all of one's mind and body become completely involved in the activity. Attention is focused and concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about problems. In the flow state, a person is unaware of fatigue and the passing of time—hours pass by in what seems like minutes. This depth of involvement is enjoyable and intrinsically rewarding (p. 36).

By engaging museum exhibition visitors at this level they are motivated to become actively involved in the subject and thus encouraged to learn.

In *Learning from Museums*, researchers John H. Falk and Lynn Dierking (2000) look in depth at how museums facilitate learning in their visitors. They state that museum learning is complex, it involves many variables, and many different types of learning occur within the museum setting. Falk and Dierking explain that many have traditionally thought

of museum learning in the transmission-absorption model (if you build it they will come and learn). However, a museum exhibition is not a classroom and the traditional model of learning in this setting is flawed. Many believe that if “visitors come to museums, look at exhibitions, or participate in programs, and if the exhibitions or programs are good, the visitors learn what the project team intended” (p. 3). This model does not take into account why people choose to visit exhibitions or the nature of learning itself.

The *Contextual Model of Learning* developed by Falk and Dierking (2000) contends, “all learning is situated within a series of contexts” (p. 10). It involves the overlapping of one’s personal, sociopolitical, and physical contexts. Learning is the process and product of the three interacting and working simultaneously in a given situation. Within this model of learning, time is the fourth context. Limited time is a key factor in visiting exhibitions, especially in a museum type environment where there is more than one thing to see or do. Therefore, learning is “the never-ending integration and interaction of these three contexts over time in order to make meaning” (p. 11). Echoing Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995), Falk and Dierking state that the museum exhibition environment is a free choice learning experience. Free choice learning tends to be nonlinear and personally motivated and the viewer usually chooses when, where, and what to learn.

Falk and Dierking’s (2000) eight key factors of the *Contextual Model of Learning* that influence museum learning are: Personal Context, (1) Motivation and expectations, (2) Prior knowledge, interests and beliefs, (3) Choice and control; Sociocultural Context, (4) Within group sociocultural mediation, (5) Facilitated mediation by others; Physical Context, (6) Advance organizers and orientation, (7) Design, (8) Reinforcing events and experiences outside the initial learning experience (p. 148).

The first context in Falk and Dierking's (2000) *Contextual Model of Learning* is the Personal Context. Most significant learning is self (intrinsically) motivated. People are motivated to learn in supporting environments, with meaningful activities, and when they have choices over their learning, and the task is not below or beyond their skills. A person learns best when the information is personally meaningful. "Learning is never just facts and concepts. Learning, particularly intrinsically motivated learning is a rich, emotion-laden experience, encompassing much, if not most, of what we consider to be fundamentally human. At its most basic level, learning is about affirming self" (p. 21). Also, learning is always constructed from a base of prior knowledge and experiences.

Visitors to museums do not come as blank slates. They come with a wealth of previously acquired knowledge, interests, skills, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences, all of which combine to affect not only what and how they interact with educational experiences but also what meaning, if any, they make of such experiences (p. 87).

The second context in Falk and Dierking's (2000) model is the Sociocultural Context. Learning is both an individual and a group experience. "What someone learns, let alone why someone learns, is inextricably bound to the cultural and historical context in which learning occurs" (p. 50). Our background and upbringing greatly influence the way we learn. The people we attend museums with are also a great influence on how we react in a given situation. One might be more receptive to a subject or experience when with a certain social group and one might be more reserved or distracted with another.

The third context in Falk and Dierking's (2000) model is the Physical Context. All learning is situated within a physical context. It is bound to the place in which it occurs and is influenced by the awareness of a particular place. "Humans automatically form long-term,

emotion-laden memories of events and places without deliberately attempting to memorize them” (p. 65). Our memories and past experiences of different environments influence the way we experience new environments.

As one can see there are many things that contribute to a person’s learning. Personal, social, and environmental elements all determine how and why one might be motivated to learn in a museum exhibition setting. And while there are many factors involved in motivating visitors to learn, Falk and Dierking (2000) contend that, “it is only as events unfold for the individual after the museum visit that experiences that occurred inside the institution become relevant and useful” (p. 133). In any exhibition setting, visitors can only learn broad generalizations and show generalized increases in understanding and interest. The specifics of what they learn are normally highly personal and unique.

#### *How people learn?*

Another important element of learning in the museum is each visitor’s individual learning style (Serrell, 1996). Learning styles can affect the way visitors experience and learn from exhibitions. Individuals have preferences for how they perceive and process information. These learning styles help motivate people to learn. Theories on learning styles and personality types, such as Bernice McCarthy’s *4Mat System* (1987) and Howard Gardner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), who’s theories have been adopted by many in the museum field (Cunningham, 2002; McLean, 1993; Parman, 2001; Redmond-Jones, 2003; Serrell, 1996), describe various “types” of learners who exhibit certain qualities when engaged in a learning activity. Although each theory classifies these types of learners differently, they describe many of the same qualities.

Bernice McCarthy (as cited by Redmond-Jones, 2003 and Serrell, 1996) identifies four styles of learning: imaginative learners, analytical learners, common sense learners, and dynamic learners.

- Imaginative learners are the visitors that ask why. They want to know why things are the way they are and how they became that way. Imaginative learners also like to relate the information they are receiving to their own personal experiences.
- Analytical learners are the visitors that ask what. They want to know the facts of what they are learning and respond to information provided by “experts”. Analytical learners tend to be label readers.
- Common sense learners are the visitors that ask how. They want to know the mechanics of how things work. They tend to like to try things and discover things for themselves in a more hands-on way.
- Dynamic or experiential learners are those who ask what if. They like to learn by experimenting with things. Dynamic learners use trial and error to understand phenomena.

Howard Gardner (as cited by Cunningham, 2002, pg. 6) described seven styles of intelligence that affect the way people learn.

- Some people have visual-spatial intelligence. These learners think in pictures and perceive the visual world accurately. These types of learners tend to pursue activities in the arts.
- Some people have bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. These learners possess the ability to use one’s body in a skilled way. Bodily-Kinesthetic learners pursue physical activities such as, dance, theater, and sports.

- Some people have musical intelligence. These learners understand and create music.
- Some people have interpersonal or social intelligence. These learners have the ability to perceive and understand other people. Interpersonal learners are often politicians or teachers.
- Some people have intrapersonal intelligence. These learners are proficient at self-analysis and understanding one's own emotions. These types of learners often pursue activities of introspection.
- Some people have naturalist intelligence. These learners have the ability to recognize flora and fauna and have a desire to work with nature in some way.
- Some people have logical-mathematical intelligence. These learners possess the ability to reason and calculate and to think in a systematic manner. Logical learners seek activities that ask them to solve problems.

While it is important to be aware of the different ways in which people learn, Beverly Serrell (1996) reminds us to remember “that all learners use and need all different kinds of learning experiences. One learning style may be more comfortable for a person in one situation, but not in another” (p. 52). Serrell identifies three typologies of museum visitors, emphasizing that these are generalizations at best and do not accurately depict a visitor's experience, but do draw upon some of the different learning styles described by researchers. “Streakers” are people who go through an exhibition quickly and stop only at a few elements if any. “Samplers” or “browsers” are people who spend some time in an exhibition and stop at a few things that may interest them. “Studiers” spend more than average time in an exhibition and stop to look at everything (p. 41).

Mary Kay Cunningham (2002) also addresses the different ways in which people become involved in and absorb information from exhibitions. Cunningham explains that within the exhibition setting people remember 10% of what they read, such as signs, labels, or brochures, 20% of what they hear, such as lectures, tours, or recordings, 30% of what they see, such as looking at pictures, visuals, or design elements, 50% of what they hear and see, such as watching demos, videos, or tours, 70% of what they say, such as participating in discussions, telling a story, or social interaction, and 90% of what they say and do, such as simulation, dramatic presentation, or interactives (p. 5).

Using these levels of learning Cunningham (2002) identifies two types of visitor involvement: passive involvement where reading, hearing, and seeing amounts to verbal and visual modes of receiving of information and active involvement where talking and doing allows the learner to receive and contribute to knowledge and get actively involved in doing something (p. 5).

*What do visitors need and want from exhibitions?*

Beverly Serrell (1996) contends that there is no such thing as the “average” visitor, but that there are some overarching trends and patterns to visitors’ behavior in museum exhibitions, regardless of who they are or how they learn. These behaviors can help determine what visitors need and want from an exhibition. Serrell explains that as a population, museumgoers exhibit many similarities in how they experience museums. Most come in social groups, such as school groups or families. A diverse cross section of visitors is attracted to the same elements in an exhibition. More people will skip pieces of an exhibition if they cannot easily understand or connect with it. Elements that are more concrete and less abstract attract visitors of all ages. Young people are more likely to touch

interactives before adults. Young people are less likely to read text than adults. Groups and individuals navigate the space of the exhibitions and their time spent there differently.

Visitor evaluations can help determine what visitors desire from exhibitions. Serrell (1996) cites several evaluations that asked museum visitors what they most wanted to see in an exhibition. Museum visitors said they want the exhibition experience to be involving and easily understandable. They want the subjects to come to life and for the experience to be memorable (p. 46).

In all aspects of the museum experience, Falk and Dierking (2000) emphasize using evaluation to keep improving exhibitions and programs for their visitors. Evaluation is a critical piece of the exhibition development process. Not only does it help to know an audience better, but it can also help to improve and refine the development process itself. Serrell (1996) states, “Evaluation can help sort out what visitors know, what is or is not obvious, and whether the assumptions the exhibit developers are making about the audience are grounded in some form of shared reality” (p. 131).

According to Serrell, evaluation can help exhibition developers find out what their visitors think and expect and find out if their exhibition met its goals and objectives (p. 137-141). Serrell describes three types of evaluation (p. 133):

- **Front-end Evaluation:** Before an exhibit project gets underway, front-end evaluation is helpful in studying the current state of the potential audience. Developers can find out what visitors know, what their expectations are, and to what they may already think about a particular exhibit topic.



- Formative Evaluation: During the exhibition development, formative evaluations can fine-tune texts to make sure that directions, information, and vocabulary levels are appropriate for the visitors that will be using them.
- Summative Evaluation: Once the exhibition is open, summative evaluations can reveal areas that need further refinements that could not have been anticipated earlier. Evaluations after the opening can give researchers the opportunity to test hypotheses about visitor use and impacts and determine exhibition success.

Kathleen McLean (1993) states that “evaluation is most useful for exhibition planners if it is visitor-oriented—if it focuses on identifying who museum visitors are and how best to communicate with them” (p. 70). This type of evaluation is sometimes called visitor-studies. It allows the museum and the visitor to become better acquainted.

According to McLean (1993), evaluation can almost be a type of science. Some of the theories and methodologies are quite complex and detailed. McLean recommends that exhibition developers not get too bogged down in the specifics of the theories.

They must not lose sight of their responsibility when developing exhibitions to include visitors in the process. This means relying most heavily on front-end and formative evaluation. Perhaps the most significant aspect of front-end and formative evaluation is that they encourage us, as exhibition professionals, to involve our visitors, to consider them *partners* in a dynamic process of exhibition development, rather than *recipients* of our wisdom and talents (p. 80).

*How can these learning styles, needs, and wants be utilized in the exhibition setting?*

Visitor studies and research on learning styles have helped museums and exhibition designers to realize that not all of their visitors absorb and retain information in the same way

and in order to make exhibitions accessible to everyone they must accommodate for those different styles. Knowing whom their visitors are, why they come to their exhibitions, and how they experience and learn from them helps exhibition developers to design exhibitions that appeal to a diverse group of people (Roberts, 1997).

Beverly Serrell (1996) argues that some of the traditional assumptions and practices in the museum field are not effective in making visitor-centered exhibitions. Serrell explains that it is often believed that one should decide upon a particular audience to communicate with in each exhibit message. The intent is to reach a broad audience, but it can sometimes lead to confusion with too many voices speaking in the exhibition (p. 42-45).

Serrell (1996) explains that audiences have a diversity of people with different learning styles. Yet often exhibitions are written in and presented in one voice or style. Exhibitions must accommodate for all types of learners in the way they present the information. Museums should aim to reach as many people as possible with one voice and be inclusive not exclusive to all visitors.

Serrell (1996) states that some museums operate with the assumption that if you put up lots of information everyone will be able to find something that appeals to them. This actually becomes overwhelming and daunting, making visitors are less inclined to spend time with it. “When you delete things that do not appeal to the broadest possible range of visitors, utilization of all elements can actually increase” (p. 43). Kathleen McLean (1993) agrees, “[Exhibition] learning is personal, self-paced, and exploratory by nature, all too often, exhibitions are designed for formal, intensive learning” (p. 9). Many traditional models in the museum field try to give too much detailed information that is more appropriate for a lecture or classroom lesson rather than an exhibition.

Serrell (1993) explains that many museum professionals believe that it is hard to get visitors to relate personally to a subject because they usually have limited knowledge about the subject to begin with. If a subject is too complex for someone to understand in the limited time and with basic knowledge then maybe it should not be shown in an exhibition. A widely held belief in the field is that by making the exhibition appeal to the broadest audience it is lowering the display to the lowest common denominator. Serrell contends that museums should always strive for the common denominator, which is the happy medium between all of the visitors' needs and wants (p. 44).

Serrell (1996) recommends that museums think of the whole audience as time-limited, motivated non-experts where everyone is a nonsequential "sampler". In other words, they are visitors with limited time and who are interested in the subject, but have a limited knowledge base and do not process information in a thorough or linear way. This, she believes is the most productive way to design exhibition content. The goal is to encourage and make possible more and longer sampling. Visitors are eager to learn, Serrell argues, but do not want to spend much time or effort doing so. The goal is to attract, communicate, inspire, and help visitors get what they are seeking (p. 45). Above all, museums (and other exhibiting institutions) must remember that the visitor is a fundamental part of the overall exhibition and without them there is no reason to create them.

According to Serrell (1996), exhibition designers should strive to provide choice for the visitor at every level of the exhibition. The choices should be made clear and apparent to the visitor and the variety of choices should add up to the greater whole of the exhibition. There are several areas of choice that an exhibition should provide for its visitors: (1) Sequenced or un-sequenced, (2) Pace-controlled or not controlled, (3) Peer groups or

authority-led, (4) Concrete or Abstract experiences, (5) Active participation or vicarious watching, (6) Verbal and nonverbal stimuli, (7) Orientation, (8) Concentration and relaxation (p. 52-59).

1. An exhibition should allow for those who like to follow a clear path and for those who look at things more randomly. It should be well organized, but still make sense if viewed “out of order”.

2. An exhibition should offer the visitor a set-time span, such as a guided tour, or allow the visitor choose their own pace.

3. An exhibition should provide an environment where the visitor can have interaction with their peers or family group where the visitor or people who prefer to have information given to them. It should be made so both groups and individuals can walk through comfortably.

4. An exhibition should provide its visitors with a variety of learning styles. Some visitors come to see, do, and feel, while others come to read, think, and ponder ideas. Long labels with lots of information interfere with the abstract learner and short labels with scant information do not satisfy the concrete learner. A visitor-centered exhibition should supply more information for concrete learners in other forms than labels, thus not overwhelming the abstract learner with too much information.

5. An exhibition should provide its visitors with a variety of experiences. Some visitors like to do and participate in activities, while others like to watch and observe. Exhibitions that offer hands-on experiences as well as demonstration and observation experiences will be able to cater to both types of visitor.

6. An exhibition should be engaging both visually and in content. Some visitors like to experience visually oriented exhibits without the intrusion of labels, while others want to know facts about what they are looking at. Finding the right balance between visuals and text will cater to both elements.

7. An exhibition should be clearly laid out and organized providing the visitor with adequate orientation to the experience. This is important to all learners. It gives everyone a jumping off point.

8. An exhibition should provide a space for both quiet contemplation and social interaction. It should be a space where people can be social, but also provide for self-reflection and meditation.

Csikszentmihalyi and Hermason (1995) recommend ways in which museums can use intrinsic motivation to help their visitors learn. They state that “visitors come with such a broad range of interests and backgrounds that no single recipe for motivating them could possibly apply across the board” (p. 37). Museums must strive to capture the visitors’ curiosity and after their curiosity is aroused, the exhibition must engage sustained interest in order for the visitors to learn. Connecting visitors personally to the exhibition subject will be the best motivation to learn.

Most important, the link between the museum and the visitor’s life needs to be made clear. To inspire intrinsic motivation, the objects one finds and the experiences one enjoys, while possibly inspiring awe and a sense of discovery, should not feel disconnected from one’s own life. Hopefully, the museum experience will inspire visitors to see the relationship between the exhibits and their own concerns, and

perhaps be stimulated to create art, pursue science, and so on, after leaving the museum (p. 37).

Like other researchers in the field, Csikszentmihalyi and Hermason (1995) encourage museums to display information in context and present various viewpoints. They also emphasize how important it is to allow visitors to choose their path whenever possible. They state that information that is presented as true without alternative perspectives discourages people to explore and learn more (p. 37).

When we are intrinsically motivated to learn, emotions and feelings are involved, as well as thoughts. For example, our wish to know about peoples in faraway places includes not only the desire for intellectual understanding, but also the desire to feel emotionally connected to them as well. We are often drawn to exhibits containing diaries and personal letters because they connect us with another's feelings (p. 59).

Falk and Dierking (2000) argue that museums could be even better learning environments if they better understood the nature of learning itself. Their Contextual Model of learning is proposed as a framework for making museum learning better. First, they argue that museums need to maximize the personal nature of learning. Museums should try to reach out to the public and facilitate meaningful connections with the institution. They suggest that museums “provide opportunities for people to construct connections between museum experiences and their lives” (p. 188) and allow experiences where people can personalize the information presented to them. Building emotion into the learning experience, making it enjoyable as well as entertaining, and relating to the needs and interests of the visitor will all help make the experience more personally meaningful.

Secondly, like Serrell (1996), Falk and Dierking (2000) state that museums also need to acknowledge that there are different types of learners in their audiences. In order to cater to every visitor's individual learning style, museums should offer clear choices and let the visitors control their experience. "Visitor choice in what and when to learn and perception of control over learning tend to be intrinsic to the museum experience" (p. 87). Exhibition designers should provide a variety of entry and exit points in the exhibition, so there is no one strict path to follow. They should also layer the complexity of information, so people can choose how deep to go into the subject will allow a visitor to feel like they are directing their own learning.

Thirdly, Falk and Dierking (2000) argue, museums should strive to facilitate the social dimension of learning. "Most museum visitors arrive as part of a social group, each representing its own unique community of learners" (p. 110). Permitting more than one person to share the experience at a given time, fostering social interactions, and encouraging conversation among the visitors all contribute to the social aspect of learning in the museum setting. "Conversation is a primary mechanism of knowledge construction and distributed meaning-making" (p. 110). Utilizing stories and narratives and creating opportunities for further dialogue after the exhibition experience are ways to facilitate the social aspect of learning. Museums should also be sensitive to culture specific language and avoid culture specific things that may alienate visitors of other groups. Museums should create multiple opportunities for diverse populations to see themselves in the experience and at the same time learn about others.

Finally, Falk and Dierking (2000) say the museum should facilitate the physical dimension of learning by creating the appropriate setting for the experience. Museums

should help the visitor navigate the experience by having clear goals and appropriate rules that are obvious to the visitor. Visitors should be encouraged to learn with all of their senses throughout the exhibition. Museums should also strive to maintain the museum environment, ensuring that all elements are functioning properly and using the entire environment to enhance the visitor's learning.

Good design draws visitors in, engages all their senses, and compels them to investigate the topic at hand. It immerses visitors and enables them to navigate without the help of a guide. Finally, good design is increasingly moving away from the concept of exhibitions as spaces for visually displaying objects to the view of exhibitions as environments in which visitors experience art, history, nature, or science (p. 133).

### Interpretation

The third set of information sought in the literature review was an explanation of interpretation, how it is utilized in the exhibition setting, and why it is important.

#### *What is interpretation?*

Understanding what visitors' want from exhibitions and how they process and perceive the information presented to them is just one step in the development of visitor-centered, interpretive exhibitions. The mechanism for delivering the information to the visitor is the main function of an exhibition. This is called interpretation.

There are many definitions for interpretation that have emerged over the years. *The American Association of Museums Exemplary Interpretation: Characteristics and Best Practices Seminar Sourcebook* (2001) laid out many of these definitions for comparison and to demonstrate how the practice has evolved overtime. Many of these definitions originated



in the nature guide tradition of the National Park Service and have since been adapted to the museum field.

- Freeman Tilden (1957), sometimes referred to as the father of interpretation (Cunningham, 2002), wrote one of the first definitions of interpretation in his book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Tilden defined interpretation as,
 

An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information... Interpretation is the revelation of a larger truth that lies behind any statement of fact... Interpretation should capitalize mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit” (AAM, 2001).
- In *Interpreting the Environment*, Edwards (1976), another naturalist, wrote, “Interpretation aims at giving people new understanding, new insights, new enthusiasm, new interests” (AAM, 2001).
- William J. Lewis (1980) wrote in *Interpreting for Park Visitors*, “it’s the primary function of interpretation to be the interface between the park and those who visit it” (AAM, 2001).
- William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low (1985) in *Interpretation of Historic Sites*, defined interpretation as “both a program and an activity. The program establishes a set of objectives for the things we want our visitors to understand; the activity has to do with the skills and techniques by which that understanding is created” (AAM, 2001).
- Sam H. Ham (1992) in *Environmental Interpretation*, stated that, “Interpretation involves translating the technical language of a natural science or related field into terms and ideas

that people who aren't scientists can readily understand. And it involves doing it in a way that's entertaining and interesting to those people" (AAM, 2001).

- In *The Handbook for Museums*, Gary Edson and David Dean (1994) define interpretation as “the process of making something understandable or of giving something a special meaning [where] the process of interpreting requires an understanding of the ways ideas and information are communicated” (AAM, 2001).
- *Interpretation*, a special section of the UK publication, *Museum Practice* (1997) said of interpretation: “It is the process of using displays and associated information to convey messages about objects and the meanings which museums attach to them; and of selecting appropriate media and techniques to communicate effectively with target audiences” (AAM, 2001).
- The National Association for Interpretation (2000) defined interpretation as “a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource” (AAM, 2001).
- The National Interpretation Project said, “Interpretation is a dynamic process of communication between the museum and the audience” and “Interpretation is the means by which the museum delivers its content” (Museum News, Sept/Oct, 1999, pg. 81).

In all of these definitions one element remains constant: communication. Interpretation is a communication tool. Interpretation leads to new understanding and revelation.

Interpretation involves both the emotional and the intellectual.

To better understand how interpretation is used, it is helpful to know a little bit about the history of museums and their relationship with interpretive practices. In, *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum*, Lisa C. Roberts (1997)

gives a brief history of the evolution of interpretation practices in American museums. Roberts begins by acknowledging that interpretive devices, such as labels, brochures, or lectures were employed sporadically in American museums throughout the nineteenth century and were commonplace by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, these devices were largely information based and included rather dry information, such as dates, places, names, and other statistical facts (p. 60).

However, Roberts (1997) continues, some museum figures longed for something more. John Cotton Dana, director of the Newark Museum in the early 1900s, saw education as a museum's primary mission. He exhibited things that went beyond the traditional type of displays. His wish was that a diversity of exhibitions would attract new audiences. Early museum education pioneers, like Cotton, sought to appeal to a broad audience, intending to breakdown museums' elitist barriers. They saw museums as a community service and made efforts to make collections accessible to more visitors in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was not the norm by any means and these early educators were later thought to be innovators in their field.

Museum education began to evolve into a profession and educators began to effect the interpretation of collections. They lobbied heavily for visitors' interests to be represented in the museum. According to Roberts (1997), educators did three things to bring interpretation into the museum. First, educators brought interpretation into the museum by advocating for the presence of education and interpretation. "Providing interpretation was the single most important thing museums could do to engage visitors with their collections" (p. 63). This practice was not widely accepted at first. Art museums were especially resistant to adding interpretation as they thought it detracted from the art. Education and

interpretation grew through the 1960s and 1970s, but still had little involvement with the exhibition development process. Interpretation services came after the fact and outside the exhibition. In 1973, the AAM approved the creation of a standing professional committee on education. By 1980s interpretation was an accepted institutional function and educators were more involved in decision and policy making and the exhibition development process.

Secondly, Roberts (1997) explains, educators brought interpretation into the museum by recognizing that exhibition language needed to change if interpretation was going to be effective. Curators, scholars, or “experts” usually did exhibition writing. “As a result, labels and other interpretive materials often bore a voice that was technical, verbose, and eminently curatorial” (p. 67). Visitor studies practices began to reveal the ineffectiveness of museum labels. Labels needed to be more comprehensible and engaging.

Museum officials were finally beginning to get the message: Interpretation was about communication; and effective communication required bridging the world of the expert and the world of the lay person with language that was intelligible to the latter without being a misrepresentation of the former (p. 67).

New styles and techniques of label writing became more common. Many adopted a prose style that was short, simple and direct. Organization of information, label hierarchy, use of humor, colloquialism, questions, second person voice, and narrative strategies became more common in exhibition text. Also with new research in the visual presentation and design as an interpretive element educators and designers begin to work together for the common good of the exhibition.

Thirdly, Roberts (1997) concludes, educators realized that the content of the messages should form a meaningful context for the visitor in order for them to be effective.

Educators advocated that, “visitors’ interest and attention [were] determined not by an object’s inherent appeal, but its relevance to their own frame-work of knowledge and experience” (p. 69). Exhibitions began to include visitor-centered content. “It became clear that the task of interpretation was first and foremost a task of connection: getting visitors to connect to what they see” (p. 70).

Interpretive Specialist Mary Kay Cunningham (2002) defines interpretation’s impact on the visitor in the museum: “Interpretation enriches the visitor experience by connecting the value of our institution’s messages and collections to the real (intellectual) and meaningful (emotional) world of the visitor through personal and non-personal communication” (p. 1).

Although interpretation practices began in the nature and park services, museums have realized how these practices can be used in their institutions. Cunningham (2002) refers to Tilden’s *Principles of Interpretation* as a more detailed definition of what interpretation is and is not. She uses them as guidelines for developing effective interpretative elements for museums (p. 4).

Tilden’s *Principles of Interpretation*, as cited by Cunningham (2002), are: (1) Any interpretation that does not somehow relate to something within the personality of experience of the visitor will be sterile or meaningless; (2) Information alone is not interpretation. It is revelation based on information. Moving beyond the facts and engaging the viewer, (3) The chief aim of interpretation is provocation, not instruction (cause them to think), (4) Interpretation should aim to present the whole idea rather than a part and should address the whole person rather than any one aspect, (5) Interpretation for children is not a dilution of

adult information, it is a fundamentally different approach, (6) Interpretation is an art (or combination of arts) such as storytelling, music, theater, drawing, or dance.

Cunningham (2002) states that interpretation is not just one thing. It involves the whole of the exhibition. Interpretation involves audiences (who are the visitors, how do they learn), resources (the people, props, collections that provide the substance for the interpretation), and techniques (forms of interpretation that are possible and most appropriate for subject etc., strategies that make your interpretation engaging and interactive) (p. 4).

Interpretive exhibitions are multifaceted and should utilize all of the components of good interpretation. Alice Parman, a writer and content manager for the Portland, Oregon design firm Formations Inc., clearly defines the multifacetedness of interpretive exhibitions: “interpretive exhibits bring objects, images, and ideas to life for visitors through storytelling, diverse presentation media, and learning opportunities that engage multiple intelligences” (Parman, 2001).

#### *What are the different forms of interpretation?*

If interpretation is the communication tool, then what physical forms does it manifest itself in an exhibition? Interpretation comes in many different forms. The National Interpretation Project, states that, “Interpretation media/activities include, but are not limited to exhibits, tours, web-sites, classes, school programs, publications, outreach” (Museum News, Sept/Oct, 1999, p. 81). Mary Kay Cunningham (2002) divides interpretation into two areas: Non-personal Interpretation, which includes such things as signs, brochures, exhibits, audio-tours, and video and Personal Interpretation, which includes such things as programs, classes, demonstrations, tours, storytelling, characterizations, music, and theater (p. 8).

Some of the biggest and most commonly used elements of interpretation in exhibitions are labels and text panels. Beverly Serrell (1996) states, “Interpretive labels tell stories; they are narratives, not lists of facts. Any label that serves to explain, guide, question, inform, or provoke-in a way that invites participation by the reader-is interpretive” (p. 9). Labels are a major source of an exhibition’s interpretation. Serrell says, “the purpose of interpretive labels is to contribute to the overall visitor experience in a positive, enlightening, provocative, and meaningful way” (p. 9).

Labels are communicators. McLean (1993) contends that labels should not only convey information, but should be part of the graphic element of an exhibition as well. Labels must be understandable as well as fit in with the design of the exhibition (p. 106). According to McLean, people usually spend only a few seconds reading a label and most people read at about five words per second (p. 109). Therefore, labels must convey the essential facts and get the point across quickly. She also states that while labels are important, and sometimes even crucial, to an exhibition, they should not be overwhelming. They should be combined with the other methods of communication to become a part of the entire experience.

Setting goals and objectives for the exhibition’s labels during development may help developers organize and plan the exhibition experience for the visitor. McLean (1993) lays out some guidelines for creating effective labels (p. 107).

- Establish clear reference to the topic and providing simple, cohesive explanations.
- Adhere to the topic and do not shift the area of reference.
- Establish orientation to the topic with out assuming prior knowledge or experience.

- Make the labels readable and concise and written in an appropriate conversational and social tone.
- Design labels to encourage the visitors to read: ask questions, encourage participation, make comparisons, and attract attention.
- Layer the information in the labels: provide different levels of engagement.

Beverly Serrell (1996) emphasizes the importance of visitor-friendly labels. She says, visitor-friendly style [labels], in the overall analysis, means that museum practitioners learn to put visitors first-respecting and valuing their concerns, wishes, desires, and perceptions. When label writers indulge themselves with catchy phrases and clever style, or curators indulge themselves in more, more, more, words on the wall, or designers indulge themselves in award-winning new graphic styles, they are not being visitor friendly. The whole exhibit team must agree and care about what the primary impact on the visitors will be (p. 92)

Serrell (1996) has several suggestions for writing visitor-friendly labels (p. 84-91).

- Start with information directly related to what visitors can see, feel, do, smell, or experience from where they are standing.
- Vary the length of the sentences.
- Use short paragraphs and small chunks, not large blocks of information.
- Metaphors are better for other forms of narrative, not labels.
- Alliteration is an easy device to overuse.
- Exclamation points in labels shout at the readers and force emphasis on them.
- Humor is subjective. It should also be used sparingly.
- Use quotations when they advance the narrative and are necessary.



- Make visitors want to read.
- Use informative paragraph titles and subtitles.
- Have a snappy ending.
- Newspaper journalism is not a good model.
- Stay flexible.
- Interrelate labels with their settings.
- Set up conversations.

Chris Parsons (1999), in her article, *Golden Words: Exploring Label Copy in Today's Exhibits/Using labels to encourage conversations and stories*, looks at the role of labels in conversations and in conveying stories to make labels more effective to the visitor. She emphasizes the use of interpretive labels to cause visitors to interact with one another. "Labels mediate visitors' social interactions, for better or for worse" (p. 2). Parsons cites learning research (Vygotsky, 1978, Daniels, 1996) that believes that conversations are the key to learning and that learning is a social process. Some museum research (Hensel, 1987, Borun, 1997) shows that exhibitions and labels that support conversations and social interaction enhance learning. "So the more our visitors talk, the more they learn" (p. 2).

Parsons (1999) asks, how do exhibitions enhance conversations with labels? Get the visitor to pay attention and use labels, try and answer the visitor's questions, and provide relevant and concrete information to the visitor. Use questions to engage readers. Visitors are more inclined to read when labels are short and challenge the visitor in the form of a question. Get the visitor intrigued and ask questions that have no right answer to encourage observations, comparisons, and discussions with other visitors. Finally, end the label with a question to prompt the visitor to go look for more inside and outside of the exhibition.

Parsons (1999) states that stories are important in peoples lives and cultures. She quotes Philip Gerard (1996) in, *Creative Nonfiction: Researching and crafting stories of real life*. Gerard says, “our natural tendency in real life seems to be to tell stories: the story of what we did at the office all day, the story of how we met our husband or wife, the story of what happened at the party last night” (p. 3). Parsons cites research (Chadbourne, 1991; Nabhan & St. Antoine, 1993; Nabhan, 1997) that shows that people learn best from stories rather than straight facts or concepts (p. 3). The museum experience should be an interaction of the exhibition story and the visitors’ personal stories.

Parsons (1999) asks, how do exhibitions use stories in labels? Developing main messages and themes will help format the exhibition storyline. The exhibition labels should help deliver theses messages and make it into a story. Also, exhibitions must think about labels from the visitors’ viewpoint as well as the exhibition’s. Understanding the visitor is the key to great exhibition interpretation and effective labels.

#### *How is interpretation applied to exhibitions?*

Simply putting up labels or providing a docent tour does not seem to ensure successful interpretation. Interpretive elements must be designed carefully to fit the exhibition, the institution, and its visitors. Mary Kay Cunningham (2002) sets some guidelines for successful interpretive technique (p. 9). First, set the tone: the appearance and placement of interpretation influences how people feel about the experience. Secondly, grab their attention: ask a question, make a shocking statement, and offer provoking statistics, facts, or images. Thirdly, bridge: answer the visitors’ unspoken questions and start building anticipation for other experiences. Fourthly, create a dialogue: ask visitors to consider a subject internally or to discuss it with others, encourage the sharing of perspectives and

experiences. Fifthly, inclusive comments: build in universal concepts that every visitor can relate to, reference known topics, people, and places. Sixthly, props and interactives: consider how to illustrate or demonstrate important concepts with interactives, sensory experiences, refer to visible examples in collection, or offer manipulatives. Seventhly, language: use concrete language, picture words, use specifics, and watch for slang or biased language. Finally, humor: use humor wisely, be sensitive, and smart

Many in the field (Cunningham, 2002; McLean, 1993; Parsons, 1999; Serrell, 1996) cite questioning as a great way to get people involved and engaged in the exhibition setting. Questioning can take many different forms in an exhibition. It can be done through text panels or through guides and docents “Visitors who recall facts, process data and apply ideas are more likely to derive meaning from their experience than those who simply respond ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the questions they are asked. Planning for successful interpretive interaction includes creating a variety of thoughtful questions” (Cunningham, p. 11).

According to Cunningham (2002), there are many different types of questioning. One form of questioning is Recall. Recall questioning asks visitors to remember information they just read. It can involve counting, describing, identifying, listing, matching, and observing. Another form of questioning is Process. Process questioning asks visitors to analyze, classify, compare, contrast, use analogies, and organize information. Another form of questioning is Application. Application asks visitors to take information and apply it to their knowledge base by finding examples, hypothesizing or predicting, inventing, generalizing, imagining, or applying a principle.

One of the steps in McLean’s (1996) exhibition development process was developing themes and messages. Theme and message development is also an important aspect of the

interpretation process. Cunningham (2002) explains the importance of themes and messages, “the theme and messages identify what is most important for the visitor to know and limits the amount of information we can share. Providing limits will help make the interpretation more potent and increase the potential for the visitor to take-away relevant information” (p. 12). Exhibition themes and messages help to better guide the interpretive elements and create a more comprehensible experience for the visitor. “Interpretation without themes and messages is just like a road trip without a destination-it may have interesting moments, but you never get anywhere” (p. 13).

Cunningham (2002) describes a theme as the overriding idea in the program that the visitor should take away with them. The theme summarizes the compelling information and tells visitors what to expect. It is the plot of the story the exhibition is trying to tell. It should tell the visitor what about the topic is important. Messages are what illustrate the theme through supporting facts, anecdotes, experiences, and concepts. Identifying the main messages helps provide focus and limits the amount of information that can dilute the interpretation.

The AAM *National Interpretation Project* extracted three general characteristics of exemplary interpretation and some strategies to achieve them (AAM, June 15-16, 2001). The three characteristics were Strategy/Content, Enabling Factors, and Access/Delivery.

- Under Strategy/Content several strategies were cited as having been used in exemplary interpretive exhibitions. These exemplary interpretive practices included, clear statements that described the purpose, supported the institution’s mission, and clearly described goals and methods. They has broadly stated values and involved their community. They demonstrated knowledge of the exhibition subject. They selected

content carefully and conscientiously and made the content relevant and part of a broader, contemporary dialogue. Finally, they engaged important issues.

- Under Enabling Factors several strategies were cited as having been used in exemplary interpretive exhibitions. Exhibitions that demonstrated exemplary interpretation demonstrated internal clarity and set goals. Exemplary interpretive exhibitions employed learning theories and educational research. They used evaluation, knew their audiences well, and created relationships between the museum and their audiences.
- Under Access/Delivery several strategies were cited as having been used in exemplary interpretive exhibitions. Exemplary interpretation should provide visitors' with multiple levels of entry. It should have an inviting design and be guided by the overall philosophy of the institution. Exemplary interpretive exhibitions should create a bridge between the audience and the content. They should express clear ideas, which are apparent to the audience and use appropriate media to get those messages across.

*Why is interpretation so important?*

According to Kathleen McLean (1993) the effectiveness of the interpretation in an exhibition determines the effectiveness of the objects on display and the experience of the audience. If the interpretation element of the exhibit is clear, concise and engaging then the visitor can have a greater understanding and interest in the objects or ideas being illustrated. McLean contends that the storyline of an exhibition is where the interpretation stems from and establishes the context for the objects or ideas being shown and the experience of the audience. "For communication to actually take place, exhibitions must convey concise messages. They must speak in a familiar language and tell interesting stories" (p. 17).

Lisa Roberts (1997) discusses some of the overarching benefits interpretation has had on the museum field. She states that, “as advocates for visitors and their perspectives, museum educators have served as the catalysts of the wider shift to a more context-based definition of knowledge” (p. 72). The inclusion of interpretation in museum exhibitions has shown that there is more than one way of thinking about a given topic. Museums have learned that the manner of presentation affects not only the effectiveness of the communication process, but also the particular meaning it tries to convey.

Roberts (1997) notes that interpretation has changed the way the field thinks about and defines exhibitions themselves.

Once a seemingly straight forward matter of displaying collections, exhibition can now be viewed as an eminently interpretive endeavor: not just that the information exhibits present is subject to multiple interpretations, but the very act of presentation is fundamentally interpretive...exhibits then are not simply displays; exhibits are systems of signs in and of themselves. They express messages about objects and the worlds from which they came, as well as about the institutions from which those messages emanate” (p. 75).

Because of ever evolving interpretation practices, many exhibitions are now driven by ideas for which the collection serve as the vehicle. An object’s presented meaning is ultimately shaped by decisions about its interpretation and presentation.

Finally, Roberts (1997) explains, the inclusion of interpretive practices in the museum setting has put a greater emphasis on the visitors’ overall experience in the exhibition. “The ‘reality’ of an object is as much a feature of presentation and experience as its provenance” (p. 102). In most museums now merely displaying the “real” thing is not enough. It must be

accompanied by the interpretive elements that make viewing the objects a meaningful experience.

There are many benefits to effective interpretation in exhibitions of any size or subject matter. Mary Kay Cunningham (2002) lists six major benefits of good interpretation (p. 3). Interpretation attracts visitors to the exhibition: “Interpretation is a product that invites and holds visitor participation”. It increases visibility of the institution: “Offering interpretation in a given location sends the message that there is something worth seeing here”. It enhances the recreational experience of the exhibition: “Gives people the opportunity to actually learn something about what they are seeing-especially when they are involved in the learning process”. It creates a positive image about the institution: “By providing engaging experiences and information you are providing something the visitor wants and thus sending the message ‘we care about our visitors’”. It increases the public understanding and awareness of the institution: “Communicating the messages and mission of your site”. Finally, it preserves the collections and increases institutional support: “Protects what is valuable through education and promotes understanding of management decisions”.

The AAM defined several outcomes of effective interpretation (AAM, June 15-16, 2001). Effective interpretation causes the audience to be connected and engaged. The audience response to an effective interpretive exhibition is emotional, intellectual, personal, and experiential. Effective interpretation triggers memories and reflections and empowers the audience. In an effective interpretive exhibition ideas become more meaningful and learning and new understanding is achieved. Finally, an institution that utilizes effective interpretation is taken serious, achieves recognition, and achieves its strategic goals.

## Summary and Conclusion

There was a vast amount of literature available for review; too much for the limited time of this study. The museum and exhibition development field seems to be a burgeoning field. It was clear from the search for literature that in the last 15 years, more and more people in the field are sharing their experiences and knowledge and I got the sense that the field is quickly becoming more professional and recognized.

This literature review was just a brief overview of some of the major issues involved in developing exhibitions. It introduced me to the complexity of exhibition development and its many different processes and players. A few key points that I came away with were: (1) the exhibition development process should be inclusive and flexible, (2) the visitor is the key to the exhibition experience, and (3) interpretation is a communication process. These three points along with the processes and techniques uncovered in the literature helped to guide the development of the World Debate Tour exhibition proposal for this study.



## CHAPTER III

### UO WORLD DEBATE TOUR HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

I needed to gain a better understanding of the subject matter in order to prepare for writing the exhibition proposal. As stated in the significance of the study in chapter one it appeared when first examined that the materials on the World Debate Tour had not been researched before. I found the materials unprocessed in the university's archives and there were no indicators in the records that the materials had ever been looked at before. Therefore I found it necessary to conduct some historical research. I developed a historical narrative on the World Debate Tour using the World Debate Tour archival materials and other archival sources. This narrative is supplemented by copies of photographs and other materials from the collection (appendix IX).

#### Organizing the Tour

On October 11, 1927 three University of Oregon undergraduate students set out on an unprecedented tour around the world. The UO World Debate Tour was the “first world debate tour of an American university [and] the first in history by college undergraduates” (Thompson, 1928). The tour began by crossing the Pacific Ocean to Hawaii and then proceeded through Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe, across the Atlantic Ocean and the United States finally ending back in Oregon where it started six months earlier. Visiting sixty institutions in eleven countries and traveling a distance of 30,000 miles over land and sea, the World Debate Team spoke in front of live and radio audiences, participated in twenty-nine debates, and appeared at seventy other speaking engagements.

The three students, Walter E. Hempstead, Avery Thompson, and Benoit McCroskey, members of the university debate team, were chosen for the tour at a competitive speaking

tryout in May 1927 (appendix IX, a). Walter Hempstead, a junior from Portland majoring in journalism, was incredibly active in debate on the UO campus. At the time he was chosen to go on the world tour he was vice-president of Delta Sigma Rho, the debate honorary fraternity, had debated on the varsity team for two years, and had participated in oratory for two years as well. Benoit McCroskey, also from Salem and a junior in pre-law, was a three-year Oregon debater and orator and the president of Delta Sigma Rho. Like Walter, Benoit already had quite a bit of debate experience under his belt. The two veteran debaters would spend the first half of their senior year utilizing this experience while traveling the world. Avery Thompson, originally from Salem, was just a sophomore in pre-law when he was picked for the team. Avery had only two years of debate and one year of oratory experience (“Oregon Debate Men to Make World Tour”, May 3, 1927).

An undertaking of this magnitude had never been attempted before, although, some similar forensic projects had already been conducted. In 1924 a team of graduate students from Oxford University had gone on a tour of American universities and in 1927 graduate students of the University of Sydney, Australia, completed two separate tours, one of the United States and the other of the world. In both cases, only debate contests were held (Thompson, 1928). The UO World Debate Tour utilized both debate and oratory and was the first debate tour in history navigated by an American university or undergraduate students. It was also the first debate tour to complete a circuit around the entire world in one trip.

Conceived by team member and general forensic manager, Walter E. Hempstead, the trip’s main purpose was to use debate and speech “to foster throughout English-speaking nations, the feeling of international friendship” (Thompson, 1928). The students saw themselves as American “ambassadors” of good will and were ardent proponents of world

peace. They stated that the tour was “guided by the spirit of idealism in international relations” (Thompson, 1928). The team spoke and debated on a variety of topics including the foreign extraterritoriality privileges in China, the independence of the Philippine Islands from the United States, whether democracy was a success or a failure, and the impracticality of prohibition. Each team member also prepared several individual addresses to be delivered in places where debates were not scheduled. The titles of some of the addresses they prepared were “‘Political America’; ‘The International Mind’, and ‘Shadows of Truth’” (“Schedule and Itinerary Abroad”, n.d.). No record of the content of these talks could be found, but one can assume, given the focus of the entire tour, that they probably dealt with American foreign relations and international peace.

In addition to the speeches and debates, the team members also corresponded with several newspapers back in the United States and wrote articles for some nationally circulated magazines. They wrote one letter a week to the UO student newspaper, *The Daily Emerald*, to keep in touch with the university (“McCroskey in Paradise”, n.d.). The correspondence from the team members acted as a travel log for the people back at home and allowed them to follow the debaters on their adventures.

The tour was financed through a multitude of sources including “guarantees from opposing institutions, writing, backing of the Oregon Chamber of Commerce and support from their university” (Thompson, 1928). A receipt from the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO) shows that on October 1, 1927 the Executive Council approved a \$600.00 donation to the World Debate Tour (“Associated Students”, October 5, 1927) (appendix IX, b). Walter was in charge of the finances for the tour and did most of the scheduling as well. According to him, it took approximately eighteen to twenty months of

planning to pull the tour together. Debate and speech dates were secured by sending letters of request to over five hundred institutions around the world. Walter noted that many more institutions responded to their request than could be met during the tour's time frame (Hempstead, "Student Touring", n.d.). The schedule and itinerary for the tour stated that the team was unable to meet with the University of Perth in Australia, Wellington University, Christ Church College and University of Auckland in New Zealand, and Grey University College in Bloemfontein, South Africa ("Schedule and Itinerary Abroad", n.d.).

Once the dates were set, travel arrangements were made. Traveling by steamship and train, the team members could not afford first-class tickets on their tight budget. Luckily, Walter was able to find affordable second-class accommodations with a Japanese steamship company that served every important port in the Pacific and "Orient" (Hempstead, "Student Touring", n.d.). Other travel arrangements were made while on the road. The total cost of the trip was about \$5,000. Each debater contributed out of their own pockets about as much as it would have cost them to be in school ("Debated Round the World", n.d.). According to the 1927-28 UO Catalogue, in 1927 tuition at the UO was free to all Oregon residents. There was a registration fee of \$59.25 per year and the estimated cost of room and board was between \$600.00 and \$800.00 ("University of Oregon Catalogue", 1927-28, pg. 37). One can assume that the debaters each contributed approximately \$800.00 of their own money to the total cost of the trip.

#### Debate at the University of Oregon

At the time of the World Debate Tour the UO already had a long and prestigious debate and oratory history. Forensic activities formally began with the formation of two literary societies in 1876, the inaugural year of the UO. The Laureans, a group for male

students, and the Eutaxians, a group for female students, met once a week to discuss various subjects of interest and to participate in debate and extempore speaking. The UO taught a classical education and great importance was placed on being able to think and speak before an audience (Morris, 1920).

Literary societies quickly became the heart of campus social life. There were no other organized clubs or sports for students in the early days of the university and the literary societies stepped up to fill the need. The groups became incredibly popular. So much so that a second group for men, the Philologians, had to be formed in 1893. In addition to the literary and forensic activities, the societies organized socials, dances and picnics. In 1877 they pooled together \$220 to purchase seven hundred books from the Eugene library and established an incorporated library on campus of which they were in charge. The societies also published the first student newspaper, *The Reflector*, from 1891 to 1894 (Morris, 1920).

Interest and participation in the literary societies began to decline around the turn of the century as more activities became available to students. Eventually the groups were dissolved, however, the demise of the literary societies did not end forensic activities at the UO. Competitive debate and oratory began in the 1890s and continued to gain momentum through the 1920s leading up to the historic world tour.

The first oratorical contest, the Failing-Beekman Contest, was held at commencement in 1890. Named for the Hon. Henry Failing and the Hon. C.C. Beekman, who each gave monetary gifts for an oratorical contest in 1889, the Failing-Beekman Contest was a very popular event during commencement week. Only members of the graduating class were eligible to participate and the first place winner received a prize of \$150 and the second place

winner received a \$100 prize (Oregana, 1924, p. 294). From that beginning, UO students began competing in many different speaking contests throughout the state and nation.

The literary societies had some experience debating amongst themselves. There is conflicting information about when exactly the first inter-collegiate debate occurred. The 1929 Oregana lists the first debate occurring in the early 1890's between the UO and Albany College. Victor P. Morris (1920), a UO student, wrote in *History of Forensics at the University of Oregon to 1920*, that the first inter-collegiate debate took place between the Laurean Society of the UO and the Philadorian Society of Willamette University in April of 1896 (p. 19). Each account claims Oregon as the winner of that first meeting. No matter when it occurred, the first competitive debate launched Oregon into the state, national, and international forensic scene. As in oratory, competitive debate flourished after that first meeting and the UO began competing in many competitions and became members of various debating leagues and honorary fraternities.

In the early years only men were allowed to participate in debate, as the faculty felt it was undignified for women (Morris, 1920). However, this was eventually turned around and the 1912 Oregana provides one of the first descriptions of an inter-collegiate co-ed (female) debate. As the literary groups began to fade men and women began to form debate teams and clubs, which were administered through the ASUO in the early 1900s.

From its beginning the university offered courses in Rhetoric and public speaking. A department of Public Speaking was formed in 1917. The 1918 Oregana lists the mission statement of the newly formed department.

The department of Public Speaking comprises two branches of work, both being mediums of expression for the individual. One, that of debate, has a far reaching

field, that of training our future public speakers. The other branch of the work is devoted to the authentic interpretation and production of drama. The great value of the work is the immense possibility of self-development as a result of the interpretation of life as one gets it from the drama (p. 42).

The importance of learning to speak before an audience appeared to still be a crucial aspect of the UO curriculum. The 1918-19 UO Catalogue stated that the “study of the speech arts has become one of the most important factors in education for the reason that, no matter what one may know, one’s knowledge is of comparatively small value to others unless one can express oneself not only intelligently, but with effectiveness and grace of manner as well” (p. 171).

Debates and oratoricals were very popular at the UO. They often attracted hundreds of people and raised enough money to subsidize other student activities. For example, the 1929 *Oregana* stated that in 1903 the debate activities at the UO grossed a profit of \$900, part of which was used to pay for football, which did not make any money (*Oregana*, 1925, p. 195). In 1919 an inter-mural debate series between campus houses involved one hundred forty-eight students and attracted four hundred people to watch the contest (*Oregana*, 1919, p. 188-89). In 1925 when Oregon debated Oxford, their first international debate, 2,500 people came to hear the arguments (*Oregana*, 1925, p. 275).

The UO showed great ingenuity in their forensic endeavors. Three years before they made history with the world tour, they organized the first ever radio debate with the University of California, Berkeley. On February 29, 1924 the two teams broadcasted their arguments over the airwaves. The listening audience was given ten days to send in their votes for the best team. Oregon won the historic debate 1,420 to 620 (*Oregana*, 1924, p.

297). The radio debate was an annual occurrence for many years after and eventually led to a popular radio program in the public speaking department.

The debate program at the UO also spearheaded the development of a new style of competitive debate known as the “Oregon System”. J. Stanley Gray, head of the public speaking division in the mid 1920s created the new cross-examination debate style. Rather than the customary formal style in which collegiate debaters took their turns, made their arguments, and sat down, teams were allowed to cross-examine and ask questions of their opponents. This revolutionary way of conducting competitive debate made a name for Oregon across the field of forensics.

By the time of the World Debate Tour, the UO appears to be at the height of its forensic activities. The forensic program participated in debate and oratory contests on the state, national, and international level. Several honorary forensic fraternities and debating and oratory leagues had been established and forensics was one of the most popular activities for Oregon students to participate in and attend. In the year of the World Debate Tour the UO had the largest and most successful forensic program in its history (Oregana, 1928, p. 175).

### The World Debate Tour

#### *Hawaii*

“Leave Eugene and Portland, October 7, 1927; Leave San Francisco, California, October 11, via “Korea Maru” of N.Y.K. line. Honolulu, H.I., October 17-31, University of Hawaii.

‘Resolved, that foreign powers immediately relinquish extraterritoriality privileges in China’” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).



The team set off on their voyage from San Francisco on October 11, 1927. They sailed on the Korea Maru ocean liner. It was probably the first time any of the three team-members had ever been on a sea going vessel. Their first destination was Honolulu, Hawaii. They arrived in Hawaii after six days at sea (appendix IX, c). Benoit reported in the team's first letter home that the voyage from San Francisco to Honolulu was calm and not one of them got seasick. "We have had wonderful weather since we left San Francisco, except for the first night out, which was rather rough. However, none of us has been sick, although we did feel a little upset at first" (McCroskey, "McCroskey in Paradise", n.d.).

In Hawaii they were scheduled to meet with the University of Hawaii for two debates. During their two-week stay in Hawaii the young men were wined and dined by various groups and UO alumni and did a sizeable amount of sightseeing in a Nash Sedan that was lent to them by the Von Hamm-Young Co. "We have been entertained and banqueted continually since our arrival here... Sunday a group of alumni of the University of Oregon gave us a luncheon and a trip to interesting places on the island" (Hempstead, "Honolulu Fetes Oregon Debaters on World Jaunt", Oct. 31, 1927) (appendix IX, d).

It was the first time these native Oregonians had ever been to a warm ocean and they spent some time learning how to surf at Waikiki Beach. Walter reported on the newfound sport, "One of my colleagues, Mr. Thompson, was not at first proficient in the art and fell off many times during the precarious enterprise. In one catastrophe in which he swallowed half the ocean, he remarked: 'I've got to learn to keep my mouth shut'" (Hempstead, "Student Touring", n.d.).

*Japan*

“Yokohama, Nov. 13; Kobe Nov. 15; Nagasaki, Nov. 17; Shanghai, Nov. 19; Hong Kong, Nov. 23” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

After two weeks in paradise, the team left the palm trees and sandy beaches of Hawaii and sailed from Honolulu to Yokohama on the Shinyo Maru ocean-liner. This was the longest of their eleven boat trips and unlike the voyage to Hawaii, this trip was stormy and rough. Avery wrote in the weekly letter to the *Daily Emerald*,

Jack [Walter] is supposed to write this letter but he is resting in his cabin. Just resting, though there is a sixty-mile gale outside...we are seasick...the stern bobs up as though the front end were going to dive to the bottom. Then up shoots the bow like a skyrocket. And what is worse is that this same up and down prevails every place we go (Thompson, “Gale Disturbs Regimen”, n.d.) (appendix IX, e).

After thirteen days at sea, the weary UO debaters arrived in Yokohama, Japan. From Yokohama they traveled to Tokyo where they competed with the Intercollegiate Federation of English Speaking Societies in Japan in Japan’s first ever International Oratorical Contest. The speaking contest was held at Asahi Shimbun Auditorium in front of an audience of about 2,000 people. Hundreds of people were turned away from the popular event that night and the Oregon debaters came away with the silver loving cup for their efforts (Hempstead, “Japanese Students Glad”, December 10, 1927). Throughout their stay in Japan the boys were asked to speak at several other engagements, but did not participate in any formal debates (appendix IX, f).

Probably the most exciting thing that happened to the team in Japan took place in Nagasaki. While wandering the streets, taking in the sights, Avery and Benoit were arrested

and accused of being spies. By accident, the two naïve-students had taken photographs of a fortified zone. Benoit wrote about the experience in one of his letters: “We had strolled blithely along, ignorant of the policeman who was following us, and were about to snap another picture when he approached and stopped us.” They were taken to the police station and informed that they were guilty of taking the illegal pictures. They pleaded ignorance to knowing that they had broken any laws and were then cross-examined at length and had their baggage searched as well. After the film in their cameras was confiscated “at last we were told that the official committee was now satisfied that we were not government spies” Benoit rejoiced. “At least we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have furnished the Japanese government with some very interesting pictures, and further, that we have augmented their official files to the extent of two exceedingly complete personal histories” (McCroskey, “Oregon Debaters Arrested”, November 20, 1927).

### *The Philippines*

“Manila, P.I., November 25, University of the Philippines. ‘Resolved, That Filipino people be given immediate complete independence’”(Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

Walter, Avery, and Benoit had only been on the road for a little over a month when they participated in their most surprising debate. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, the Oregon team met the University of the Philippines in what the Philippine press called the “verbal battle of the century” (Hempstead, “Manila Engagement Heated”, November 27, 1927). All the preparation and training the team members engaged in before and during their trip, could not have prepared them for what would happen that night.

The great battle took place in the Grand Opera House in Manila. It seemed as if every important official, dignitary and politician from all over the Philippine Islands were in

attendance that night. The opera house was filled to capacity with 5,000 people, mostly native Philipinos, in the audience. 5,000 more people were outside the opera house trying to get in to the historic event. The police had to be brought in to manage the excited crowd. Walter reported in an article he sent home to the States that even ticket scalpers were at the debate. “Who ever heard of ticket scalpers at a college debate”, Walter asked in his letter (Hempstead, “Manila Engagement Heated”, November 27, 1927). Two radio stations were also set up to broadcast the debate across the Philippine Islands and other Asian countries (appendix IX, g).

The debate began around 8:00 pm and lasted over four hours. “Fist fights, cat calls, boos, hisses, thunderous applause, crash of chairs and whistling” (Hempstead, “Manila Engagement Heated”, November 27, 1927) were some of the reactions from the audience that night. What was it that caused such intense interest and reaction to that night’s contest? Walter observed that it was the subject of the debate that caused the audience to show such fervor. Arguing the negative side of the independence question, the Oregon team was unable to deliver a convincing argument and lost the debate after the audience voted unanimously for the other side. Walter said of the event, “that was the most dramatic evening of my life. Here we were-three University of Oregon boys 10,000 miles from home, speaking to 5,000 people friendly to the opposite side, on the question nearest and dearest to their hearts” (Hempstead, “Manila Engagement Heated”, November 27, 1927).

### *China*

“Hong Kong, Nov. 30-Dec. 3, ‘Resolved, That Foreign powers immediately relinquish extraterritorial privileges in China’” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

After such a dramatic appearance in the Philippines the three debaters landed in China and after debating the European Y.M.C.A they ventured away from Hong Kong and into Canton, the birthplace of the Chinese Nationalist Movement. The students were greeted by fireworks and a twelve-course Chinese banquet when they arrived at Lingnan University in Canton. Walter stated “most tourists avoid going up the great West River Valley, 90 miles from the British colony of Hong Kong, because of the unrest, uncertainty, insecurity and instability which have driven all but about 100 Americans out” (Hempstead, “Chinese Paradox”, December 3, 1927).

During their stay in China, the boys were able to observe the conditions in which the Chinese people lived and worked as well as some of the social turbulence and political unrest that plagued the countryside. Walter wrote of the jarring changes that were occurring in China and how viewing them first hand gave him much greater understanding of the situation (appendix IX, h) (appendix IX, i).

The old and the new is represented at Canton, where, more than anywhere else in china, one may see the conditions under which the masses live. We feel that it was a remarkable opportunity to come into contact with the intellectual trends of leading students and officials who are working wholeheartedly in the Nationalist cause...Secondly, it was a most strategic point at which to see the many remnants of a civilization stretching for 40 centuries back into the remote dawn of Oriental history- perhaps even to the beginning of man” (Hempstead, “Chinese Paradox”, December 3, 1927).

But, despite the apparent danger of traveling into the Chinese countryside, the debaters were shown nothing but hospitality from the students and others they came in

contact with. All expressed desires for friendly international relations with the United States. “Students of Lingnan, representative teachers, the mayor and other officials of the government who gave the Oregon team a reception, the American consul-everyone expresses the conviction that the United States is China’s best friend in the vexing international problems of the Far East”(Hempstead, “Chinese Paradox”, December 3, 1927). After their explosive arrival, the debaters engaged Lingnan University in a debate. According to the Oregonians it was the “first time a public debate had been held by college students in China” (What the Oregon Debaters Saw”, n.d.).

### *India*

“Nagpur, India, December 23, University of Nagpur, ‘Resolved, That democracy is a failure’” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

From China the trio steamed around the Malay Peninsula stopping in Singapore and Penang on their way to India. They spent two weeks in India, traveling over 2,000 miles, mostly by train, visiting Calcutta, Benares, Agra, Delhi, Nagpur, and Madras. The sites they saw in India were many and included the Taj Mahal, the sacred temples of Benares, and the holy Ganges River (appendix IX, j).

At this time, India was experiencing much political unrest. The Indian people were campaigning against the British Empire for their independence. While passing through Madras the boys heard that Mahatma Gandhi, the popular Indian leader, was staying near by. Gandhi was in the area because the 42<sup>nd</sup> Indian National Congress was meeting there. The team was able to secure an audience with the political leader at his temporary home. Walter described their first view of Gandhi, “Squatting with his legs crossed under a muslin breech cloth, his only clothing, and reading a Madras English paper through his delicate spectacles,

his sharp features betraying no emotion at our presence, sat the great Swaraj leader” (Hempstead, “W.E. Hempstead Explains Jaunt Through India”, n.d.).

On that particular day Gandhi was observing a day of silence and would only communicate with the young Oregonians by writing on a piece of paper. “‘You have probably heard,’ wrote Gandhi with pencil on a piece of torn paper, ‘that I never talk to visitors while observing my day of silence’” (“Sights of India Prove Contrast to Debate Team”, January 1, 1928). Even though the Oregonians were privileged enough to meet Gandhi, when asked, he refused to give Walter, Avery, and Benoit his autograph because of his policy to favor only those who wore Indian made garments (Hempstead, “W.E. Hempstead Explains Jaunt Through India”, n.d.).

In Madras they also witnessed the 42<sup>nd</sup> Indian National Congress in action. The Indian National Congress was not the official legislative body of India, which met in Delhi under British control. The debaters were able to obtain free press passes to get in. They were completely unprepared for the sheer magnitude of the event. Held under a large tent-like structure that had been erected for the event, 25,000 representatives from every province in India were present that day. “Squatting on mats spread on the dirt floor of an immense palm-leaved tabernacle hastily erected for the purpose, we were in the midst of a hundred Indian reporters”, Walter wrote of the experience (“Sights of India Prove Contrast to Debate Team”, January 1, 1928). Unknown to the observing team, it was a truly historic day they were about to witness. For on that day the “delegates passed a resolution calling for complete independence from Great Britain” (“Sights of India Prove Contrast to Debate Team”, January 1, 1928) (appendix IX, k).

### *Egypt*

“Leave Nagpur, Dec. 26; Arrive Colombo, Ceylon, Dec. 29; Port Said, Jan. 10, 1928; Cairo, Jan. 11; Assuit, Egypt, January 12-18, Assuit College” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

The team left India and sailed to Egypt by way of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Arriving in Port Said, Egypt, Walter made a small day trip to Jerusalem by himself while Avery and Benoit went on to Cairo. In Jerusalem Walter made a quick survey of several of the sacred sites of Christianity. Walter had a deeply personal reason for wanting to see the “Holy Land”, “Jerusalem from earliest childhood has been a source of intense interest to me and it was a real inspiration to see the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where Christ was crucified, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Jordan River and the Dead Sea” (Hempstead, “Priests Fight Duel”, January 22, 1928).

After Walter caught up with his mates, the team traveled from Cairo to the city of Assiut (Asyut) by train. Because of their dwindling funds they were forced to ride third class, which, as Benoit explained, “no one but natives travel third class-that is no one DID until WE came along” (McCroskey, “Adventure Accompanies Debaters”, n.d.). The experience was unlike any traveling they had done before.

On one leg of the journey we sat on our suitcases for some time, and then squeezed in with the natives when an opening presented itself. I woke up in the morning snuggled by the side of a bare-footed Egyptian soldier, and there across the aisle was Hempstead, peacefully sleeping with his head on a burly peasant’s shoulder (McCroskey, “Adventure Accompanies Debaters”, n.d.).



Once in Asyut they were hosted for six days by Assuit College, which was under the direction of the American Presbyterian Mission.

Their adventures continued in full force in Egypt. They explored the ruins of temples in Karnack and Luxor (appendix IX, l). They even climbed the great pyramids of Giseh. Walter commented that climbing a pyramid was not an easy task. “The ascent of this pyramid we found to be an arduous task, but the unobstructed views of the Nile valley from its top was well worth the effort” (McCroskey, “Wonders of Ancient Egypt”, January 23, 1928) (appendix IX, m).

Luck seemed to follow the intrepid travelers wherever they went and Egypt was no exception. It just so happened that the day they traveled to Thebes and the Valley of the Kings was the first day in over a year that the recently discovered tomb of King Tutankhamen (King Tut) was opened to the public. Many of the artifacts had already been removed and were being shown at the museum in Cairo. But, still housed within the elaborate passageways was Tut’s coffin. “Tutankhamen was resting inside his gilded inner coffin enclosed within a giant granite sarcophagus at least twelve inches thick on every side but the top, which was covered with glass so that the coffin may be observed with the aid of powerful electric lights” (McCroskey, “Wonders of Ancient Egypt”, January 23, 1928). This was truly a privileged experience (appendix IX, n).

Throughout the trip the boys collected an array of interesting souvenirs, but while in Egypt they picked up their most exotic treasures. “We found time to do a little plundering on our own hook in some of the tombs of a nearby mountain. I secured a genuine mummy head”, Benoit wrote of their Indiana Jones like adventures (McCroskey, “Wonders of

Ancient Egypt”, January 23, 1928). Walter also wrote home about a mummy head he had obtained, although through more legal means.

I also have one, finely preserved, which the science department of Assiut College gave me. We have got ten of them safely out of Egypt since our baggage was not inspected carefully by the customs officials. It is difficult to export antiquities, but we have an interesting display to bring home, although the cost was painful in the form of fleabites and legal routine. Thompson has contented himself with a small bottle of Nile water (Hempstead, “King Tut’s Tomb Seen”, January 22, 1928).

### *Europe*

“Alexandria, Jan. 19; Naples, Jan. 21; Rome, Jan. 23; Venice, Jan. 26; Geneva, Jan. 27; Paris, Jan. 28” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

After exploring the desert sands of Egypt the three traveled up through Italy, Switzerland and France before crossing the English Channel to their next debating engagement in England. They spent about ten days seeing the sights of Western Europe and spent most of that time in Italy where they were quite amazed by the sights and sounds. Walter wrote that “the Taj Mahal of Italy is St. Peters...my fellow debater, McCroskey, who was with me as we entered, as well as myself, could not utter a sound, so magnificent seemed the interior workmanship of the church” (Hempstead, “Oregon Debater Obtains”, London, Feb. 1, 1928). Benoit was equally impressed with Florence, Venice and Milan and felt it was well worth it to lose three nights of sleep to see these beautiful places. “One can always sleep, but one can’t always watch the shimmering flicker of lights on the Grand Canal, or the queer shadows cast by the barber pole mooring posts as the gliding gondola disturbs the oily

blackness of the water” (McCroskey, “Mussolini’s Influence felt”, Feb. 5, 1928) (appendix IX, n).

*Great Britain*

“London, England, January 31-February 3; Sheffield, England, February 3, University of Sheffield; Edinburgh, Scotland, February 4, University of Edinburgh; St. Andrews, Scotland, February 8, University of St. Andrews; Aberdeen, Scotland, February 9, University of Aberdeen; Glasgow, Scotland, February 10, University of Glasgow; ‘Resolved, That Prohibition of intoxicating liquors is impracticable’; Belfast, Ireland, February 15, Queen’s University of Belfast; Dublin, Ireland, February 16, University of Dublin; ‘Resolved, That Democracy is a failure’” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

Once arriving in England, they set about on a series of debates and speaking engagements that took them through Scotland and Ireland. The team won six out of seven debates while in Great Britain. While most of their time in Great Britain was spent in debates and speaking engagements, the three did have time to fit in some sightseeing. Some of the more memorable sights were those of every day student life. In Aberdeen, Scotland, they witnessed a game of Rugby. Walter couldn’t help but compare it to American football. “Being a combination of baseball, basketball, football and soccer, it is a fast exhibition, but does not produce such high peaks of emotional excitement as the slower moving but more dramatically organized plays of American college football” (Hempstead, “Scotland ‘Votes’ Dry”, Feb. 11, 1928).

In Ireland the Oregonians took the chance to tour two pillars of Irish Industry instead of historical landmarks. In Belfast they visited the Gallaher’s tobacco factory and in Dublin

they toured the world famous Guinness Brewery. The brewery particularly impressed the team.

This mammoth brewery fired our imaginations. After liberal samples had been politely accepted for scientific analysis on our part, it assumed gargantuan proportions. That shrine, a comprehensive symbol of an ancient American era with which, being young men, we were unfamiliar, rivals the Pyramids of Egypt (Hempstead, "Student Touring", n.d.).

It may seem odd that a beer factory would cause so much excitement among three college age men, however, in 1928 the United States was still under prohibition and the sight of a fifty-acre liquor factory and the chance to drink alcoholic beverages legally was something that had been unavailable in America since 1920.

When in London, the debaters witnessed the funeral procession of Field Marshal Earl Haig, a great British military figure and World War I hero. Benoit described the scene of British royal pomp and circumstance.

Companies of soldiers from every branch of the British service, the King's own palace guards, as well as representatives of the French and Belgian army, all slowly marched to the muffled dirge of the band. The Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, Prince Albert and Prince Arthur all paid their respects to the great man by taking part in the procession on foot. The flag-draped coffin was followed by the personal charger of Earl Haig, and as the long procession wound slowly through the hazy London mist toward Westminster Abbey it was truly an impressive sight" (McCroskey, "Oregon Debaters Discover Atlantic Very Rough Ocean", Feb. 26, 1928).

*The United States*

“Leave port of Cobb at Southampton, Irish Free State, Feb. 17, for New York City, arriving February 26, 1928. Transcontinental tour of United States leads from Massachusetts to Oregon” (Schedule and Itinerary Abroad, n.d.).

The Oregonians set sail for America on February 17, 1928. It was a rough trip across the Atlantic back to the United States. Benoit reported that there were a “score or two of individuals on deck with their heads bowed over the rail” (McCroskey, “Oregon Debaters Discover Atlantic Very Rough Ocean”, Feb. 26, 1928). The three debaters were included in that score or two.

On the day the team was supposed to arrive in New York a telegram with Benoit’s name on it was delivered to the UO that alarmed the administration and student body.

Arrived yesterday P.M., slept in Central Park last night. Hempstead caught cold because the slats on his bench were so far apart that a draft was created. Had 15 cents for breakfast, and bought hotcakes, each one of us taking one. Waitress objected to bringing three plates, but we had all the syrup we wanted. Send us some cash as soon as possible. We can’t keep this up much longer (“World Debaters Broke”, Feb. 23, 1928).

Articles in the *Daily Emerald*, reported a flurry of activity and controversy over dispatching money to the stranded debaters. Many student leaders expressed that something should be done. The junior class offered the profits from Junior Shine Day to be sent to rescue the team (Galloway, “Money to be sent World Tour Team”, n.d.). In response to some criticisms that the team had gotten themselves into this predicament by being extravagant in their spending, professor and debate coach J.K. Horner vehemently argued that the team

deserved the university's support because they were acting as university representatives and had undertaken the unique project with that in mind.

Personally, I think it nothing but downright maliciousness to charge these boys with having been extravagant...it took nothing less than a high order of intestinal fortitude to start on a world tour with as little money as they had. They have not been extravagant. They have gone third class and slept in many cases on the floor...They have cut their daily food allowance in many cases just to be able to take advantage of things they should have had money enough for in the first place...And after the splendid record that these men have made for themselves and for the University of Oregon, it is certainly a regrettable circumstance that anybody would charge these boys of extravagance in their personal accounts ("Round-World Debate Funds Cause Clash", n.d.).

The *Daily Emerald* headline on February 24, 1928 read, "Money dispatched 3 Oregon Debaters Broke in New York".

Walter later stated that the reports that they were broke and sleeping in the park were greatly exaggerated.

Upon reaching this country February 27, they immediately broke into big print when some one, presumably a student of their own college, sent a fake wire, telling of their being broke and sleeping on park benches in New York. Hempstead denied the story, and pointed out that the telegram, sent to the Oregon college head, had been delivered on the day their boat was to land at New York. The boat was actually delayed two days (Hempstead, "Debated Round the World", n.d.).

Benoit recalled that when he saw the headlines proclaiming the team destitute he “was comfortably seated in the spacious living room of the International House...[and] had just consumed a large and appetizing meal” (McCroskey, “Oregon Globe Trotter Would like to Live in Hawaii if Part of Scotland”, June 2, 1928).

Benoit wrote that they had no idea how extensive the rumor was until they met with some other universities and the other teams expressed concern for the Oregonians. “They were actually concerned for our welfare, offered to do anything they could to get us back home” (McCroskey, “Oregon Globe Trotter Would like to Live in Hawaii if Part of Scotland”, June 2, 1928). They began to realize that the students and faculty back home really believed they were stranded when they saw some of the Emerald articles describing the efforts that were being made to assist them. The matter was finally cleared up and identified as a hoax.

One of the first stops they made on their way home was in Washington D.C. where they crossed paths with the OSC (Oregon State College, now Oregon State University) debate squad on their own tour of the United States. Arrangements were made in D.C. for the UO boys to meet President Coolidge (“Oregon Debaters meet in Capitol”, March 5, 1928). The World Debate Team then headed across the States making their way through nine states in the Mid-West and the Rocky Mountain states, conducting their last debate on the tour in Denver, Colorado on April 15, 1928 (appendix IX, o).

On April 20, 1928 the students at the UO followed the marching band down 11<sup>th</sup> avenue to the train station in downtown Eugene to welcome the trio home. The Daily Emerald reported that “a cheering crowd of several hundred UO students, faculty, and towns people assembled...at the Southern Pacific station and gave a rousing welcome to the three

Oregon round-the-world debaters” (“Cheers Greet Round-World Debating Trio”, n.d.).

Student Body President, Donald Beeliar and University President Dr. Arnold Bennett Hall each gave a short address to the crowd that had assembled. Hall stated that it was gratifying to see such interest and enthusiasm usually reserved for football directed at an academic subject such as debate (“Cheers Greet Round-World Debating Trio”, n.d.). After six months and eight days the three debaters had come full circle completing the first collegiate round-the-world debate tour.

#### Outcomes of the Tour

Once home, the three debaters became celebrities of sorts. They were asked to speak at many functions across the state and were written about in newspapers and magazines across the country. A UO alum living in Jacksonville, Florida wrote to Dean Gilbert to express his great excitement to see the three Oregon debaters on the front page of the *Florida Times-Union* (“Renown of Debaters Spreads to Florida”, n.d.).

One of the reasons that people were so interested in the tour was that in addition to their regular cameras, the boys had taken a movie camera with them on their adventures and had compiled their trip into a 2-hour movie, which they used to illustrate their talks. Entitled *Around the World in 60 Minutes*, each of the team members spoke about a leg of the trip while some of the film footage was shown. The debaters gave their talk to various community groups and at university assemblies (“World Debaters Tell of Travels in Other Lands”, n.d.) (appendix IX, p).

It was during the course of their trip that they began to realize the potential that their photographic efforts held. Benoit corresponded with Edward Best, the chairman of the



ASUO lecture committee, while on the road about the possibilities of future lecture opportunities. He explained to Best the types of scenes they were attempting to capture.

We are doing our best to get pictures full of life of the places in which we visit. Not only have we taken scenes significant in connection with our forensic engagements, such as the opposing teams, and campus scenes of the respective colleges, but we are trying to record as vividly as possible under the transient circumstances of the tour, the native life, how the people dress and act (McCroskey, "Film Camera Plays Part in Debate Tours", n.d.).

Walter described their cinematic efforts in more detail in an article entitled, *Forensic Filmers: The Cinematic Adventures of the World Tour Debaters*, for *Movie Makers Magazine* in the February 1929 issue. In this article, Walter recounted many of the amazing sights they captured on film during their voyage. Five days before departing the three debaters passed by a Kodak store in San Francisco and decided to buy an amateur motion picture camera to document this historic speaking project. The purchase was an extravagance, but they were able to make up for the expense when they returned home by charging admission to their presentations.

Although having no previous experience with making movies, the debaters were still able to capture "unique pictures under humorous, dramatic, and even dangerous conditions" (Hempstead, "Forensic Filmers", 1929, p. 96). Some of the incredible scenes caught by the camera included the "awe inspiring" and exquisite views" from Haleakala Crater on Maui, pictures of Japanese fencing and Jujitsu in Tokyo, views of Indian temples and Egyptian tombs, sights of the Roman ruins and a rugby game in Scotland.

In Japan, Avery and Benoit were arrested for still-photographing near a fortified zone in Nagasaki. They had their film confiscated. Little did they know that earlier Walter had taken a movie of the same area and had not been caught. The footage of this was included in the movie.

Many of the scenes in the movie and the images they captured were of everyday life in the countries the tour visited. In China they filmed scenes in the countryside of Canton. In India they filmed people at the Kali Temple worshipping and performing goat sacrifices. They also captured the Indian practice of bathing in the Ganges (appendix IX, q-s).

The people in the different countries they visited were very willing and anxious to be filmed and photographed (appendix IX, t-v). Walter noticed the desire to be photographed especially great in Italy, which he felt added to the scene. "In no country did we find the people more willing to be photographed than in Italy. A group of mothers near Rome insisted upon having their babies and themselves photographed. They showed great vivacity and I was glad to thus enliven the scenes of Roman forums and aqueducts" (Hempstead, "Forensic Filmers", 1929, p. 96).

Through the films they created, they were also able to show their audiences some of the historic people they met and events they witnessed. Upon meeting Mahatma Gandhi they were permitted to take a movie of him at his temporary home in Madras. They filmed him as he sat in his room reading an English paper (Hempstead, "Forensic Filmers", 1929, p. 96). In Italy Walter stumbled across an opportunity to film Benito Mussolini, the brutal fascist dictator. In an article Walter relates how he pulled off this dangerous assignment.

Late in our stay in the Eternal City I was approaching the Chamber of Deputies when I noticed a large semi-circular crowd. I learned that they were waiting for the exit of

none other than the Dictator. I started to walk boldly across to the door, from which the mob was being held back, to join a small group of professional cameramen-with certificates of permission. Three steps from the semi-circle a stern, black-shirted Fascist guard stopped me, warning me back with an ominous look in his bushy-browed eyes. He didn't see the camera concealed under my overcoat. So, sneaking back, desperately I sighted the camera over the heads of a group of taxi drivers, then intent upon the commanding figure of Mussolini descending the steps of the Parliament building. Naturally enough, I shuddered through fear of being detected, held for treason, and forced to relinquish camera and films. You don't need a magnifying glass nor a vivid imagination to see that Italy's Premier is in that picture (Hempstead, "Forensic Filmers", 1929, p. 115).

The movies and photographs the debaters took captured images that many people of that time would not have been able to see otherwise. Like the debaters, it is presumable that a majority of the UO campus and Eugene population had never had much of an opportunity to travel, especially out of the country. Contemporary images of foreign countries and peoples were probably not readily available for the average person during this time period. There was no television and motion pictures were still developing as a means of mass communication (1927 marked the advent of the first "talkie" movie). Through their movie talks the debaters provided a unique and rare opportunity for their peers to experience the world tour through images.

Perhaps more important than the sights they captured were the connections they made and impressions they formed, which they were also able to share with the people back home through their articles and movie talks. The World Debate Tour had quite an effect on the

team members and the people back at home that followed their travels. Travel was not as easy in 1927 as it is today. Those who were following the team by reading the newspaper were able to live vicariously through the members and thus became exposed to things they might never have been exposed to before.

Even before the team left it was apparent that the tour would be able to inform the people back at home about things they would normally not have access to. An article in the Daily Emerald at the start of the tour illustrated the opportunities the students saw in the debate tour. “And as our bright young men have their eyes and ears and minds open they will continue to accumulate knowledge that will make them less provincial, and that will, through their letters to American newspapers have a large influence in rendering millions of their fellow citizens in the country less provincial” (“Our Boys are Leaving”, November 9, 1927).

Throughout their letters home, the three debaters recounted their adventures and wrote about meeting new people and being introduced to new and different ideas. Their first letters home described the numerous nationalities of the passengers that they met on the ocean liner as they crossed the Pacific. Since it was a Japanese owned boat most of the passengers were non-American and non-white. “Only about 10 per cent of the passengers are Americans, and the rest, while mostly Japanese, include Chinese, Russians, Jews, Dutch and Javanese” (McCroskey, “McCroskey in Paradise”, n.d.). Benoit wrote that he was able to use the information he had gained from a Russian history course to talk with a gentleman from Russia about the revolution and current political situation there.

Benoit also spoke about how being introduced to new people and ideas made him look at his own beliefs a bit differently and how meeting people from other nations and

beliefs opened his eyes to some of the pre-conceived notions he might have had. “There is something about sociably playing Mah Jongg, a Chinese game, with two Japanese and a Dutch-speaking native of Java that makes one wonder as to the logical basis of nationalistic prejudices” Benoit wrote (McCroskey, “University Debate Team Enjoys Trip on Pacific”, October 16, 1927). He went on to illustrate how these encounters have caused him to look at his own beliefs. “Many of the ideas with which I have come in contact already, although they conflict with mine, perhaps, usually have as much basis in reason as those which my training has led me to entertain” (McCroskey, “University Debate Team Enjoys Trip on Pacific”, October 16, 1927).

Avery had a similar experience conversing with a Japanese journalist who questioned the validity of the American immigration laws that excluded Asians from immigrating to the U.S. “This made me think about the subject in a different manner than I had ever considered it before...Being an American I could not entirely agree with him. However, it would not take many such persons to convince me that possibly even an American policy could be in error” (Thompson, “First Taste of World Startles College Lad”, Oct. 15, 1927). Exposure to different perspectives were causing the team members to broaden their own ideas and by communicating these new ideas through their letters home during the trip and their movie talks after they returned home, they opened up the possibility for their revelations to be transferred to a larger audience.

Some of the experiences they shared with their peers may have been perceived as controversial in 1928 America. Throughout their trip the team members made occasional hints at their experiences with alcohol in foreign countries. Benoit added a little postscript in one of his first letters home describing some of the team’s activities on the ocean-liner

crossing the Pacific, “Oh Yes-I almost forgot the Japanese bartender, besides being polite and meticulously clean, is very proficient, I understand” (McCroskey, “University Debate Team Enjoys Trip on Pacific”, October 16, 1927). Walter, in his letter home from Ireland, alludes to their visit to the Guinness brewery, but never directly addresses the experience. “[The Speaking Society] escorted us on a tour of inspection which was (we being Americans and not so very old) the treat of our lives.” Walter also refers to the site they “inspected” in Dublin as the “eighth wonder”, presumably to be included with the other seven wonders of the world (Hempstead, “Dublin Typical of Old World”, Feb. 15, 1928). Their movie footage even captured some scenes that would not have been proper under prohibition.

In a humorous scene, an Aberdeen bartender was shown dealing out Scotch whiskey to my eager colleagues from a colossal liquor bottle of about two gallons capacity.

This scene, along with Guinness’s brewery in Dublin, the largest beer factory in the world, strikes a responsive note in the minds of most people to whom the pictures have been shown (Hempstead, “Forensic Filmers”, February 1929, p. 115).

The tour also revealed to the three team-members and those that followed their travels through the papers, how the rest of the world perceived Americans. To see what other countries and nationalities thought about the United States first hand was truly a unique experience for the team. Most of their impressions about how other nations perceived Americans were positive. The debaters were enthusiastically welcomed in every country they visited. Many of the people they met throughout the tour expressed the desire for friendship with Americans. The students in China expressed “the conviction that America [was] China’s best friend. Hatred of the British, who [held] most leased concessions and

unequal treaties under extraterritoriality, [was] intense and growing more so” (Hempstead, “Oregon Men Debate”, Dec. 3, 1927).

While many of perceptions of Americans were positive, some were not. The Russian gentleman the boys had met on the voyage to Hawaii expressed that he felt that Americans were naïve when it came to foreign relations. “The Russian had been studying America for a communist newspaper in Paris. He recognizes the great industrial superiority of America, but he says, ‘America is young, too young to realize’” (Thompson, “First Taste of World Startles College Lad”, Oct. 15, 1927). The Chinese showed a “resentment of western civilization being imposed upon the people of China...They [did] not want the people...to become slaves to the machine” (Hempstead, “Oregon Men Debate”, Dec. 3, 1927).

In several of the countries the debaters visited, Americans were thought to be lazy, rude, and snobbish. While in Singapore the team members were “especially interested to learn that Americans [did] not thrive in the rubber business ...because the Americans [would] not stay more than a few months away from the comforts of home” (Hempstead, “Oregon Debaters Visitors in Lazyland”, Dec. 11, 1927). In Europe, the boys observed resentment towards the United States over the collection of war debts from the First World War and were also shocked by some of the behavior they witnessed from their fellow countrymen. Benoit wrote, “Having observed a few typical American tourists at large in Europe, I can see even more reason than war debts for resentment against the United States. There ought to be a law that some of these people renounce their citizenship before leaving the country” (McCroskey, “Oregon Globe Trotter Would Like to Live in Hawaii if Part of Scotland”, June 2, 1928).

The chance to see how students around the world lived and worked also opened the eyes of the team members. Many of the letters and some of the movie scenes depicted the lifestyles of students in the various countries. The team noted some similarities and some glaring differences. Walter gave a lengthy description of the Japanese educational system in one of his articles.

There is nothing coeducational. There is no dancing and only 30-second movie kisses are tolerated. Women usually attend private schools. All the men students wear black uniforms. Classroom work consists of 42 hours per week, in contrast to our 16-hour average at the University of Oregon. Studying 12 or 16 subjects at the same time, they carry on a serious effort which would appall our friends at Eugene (Hempstead, "Japanese Students Glad", Nov. 18, 1927) (appendix IX, w).

In Egypt they were excited to learn that Assiut College used an American system of instruction.

Assiut is the most American city in Egypt. No better schools are to be found in the 12,000 square miles, which the Nile feeds. Five hundred girls are taught in the Assiut Girls' School, an allied branch of the college which accommodates over 700 men. The American system of instruction is used, the only difference being the cost of board. Sixty to \$100 is the range of a years residence expense in one of the finely-equipped dormitories (Hempstead, "King Tut's Tomb seen by Debaters of Oregon; Mummy Heads Obtained", Jan 22, 1928).

Their observations about how students around the world compared to students at the UO provided another perspective about life that probably would not have been gained without the team's first-hand accounts of what they saw (appendix IX, x).



The three debaters gained much knowledge and experience about themselves and their world on the debate tour. Benoit concluded an overview of the tour by stating what he felt the outcome of the tour was.

The trip had several results for us. We were exposed to considerable first-hand knowledge... Then, although we were not official ambassadors of good will, we may have done a little to foster friendly relations between the students of the United States and other nations. Further, it gave us a chance to see our country as others see it, which in some cases is in a none too favorable light; and finally, it resulted in proving to us that debating is, or should be, an entertaining game, not an over-serious attempt to win a decision (McCroskey, "Oregon Globe Trotter Would like to Live in Hawaii if Part of Scotland, June 2, 1928).

Walter felt there were three main benefits of the tour. "First, it was a liberal education in itself, as they had planned. Second, it promoted forensics, and last it created good will among the schools all over the world, and was a decided credit to their own university" (Hempstead, "Debated Round the World", n.d.). Avery wrote that he hoped that the outcome of the tour would be,

One of lasting benefit to the English speaking world, not so much because of what they [said], but because of the precedent set. Their thoughts on international affairs may have little influence except as it moulds their own lives in the service of mankind, but if a precedent of friendly international debating encourages something more than academic discussions, then such meetings may be a future influence to be reckoned with (Thompson, 1928).

### Legacy of the World Tour

In the years directly following the debate tour its legacy was felt at the UO and in other parts of the world. The World Debate Tour was very influential and inspiring to foreign students and debate teams. One Japanese student, Frank K. Hirano, was so moved by the goodwill mission of the debaters that he wrote a letter to the student body of the UO to express his gratitude. “It is my great pleasure to write to you all students of Oregon how brightly and excited enterprise you have started to have a good understanding between your country and ours” he began his letter. “I believe if only we do our best efforts to bring a good understanding with each other, really and truly, we shall be able to realize a good warm friendship between us” he concluded (Hirano, “Japanese Student at Waseda College writes of Around-the-World Debaters”, n.d.).

The University of the Philippines and the University of Santo Tomas debate teams were so inspired by the three debaters that they planned their own debate tours to the United States and the Orient respectively. The University of Santo Tomas planned to travel to Hong Kong, India, and other places in the Orient to “acquaint the people of the Orient with conditions obtaining and to encourage greater contact among students of the Far East” (“Sto. Tomas may send Debating Team Abroad”, n.d.).

The University of the Philippines, energized by their historic debate with the UO team, wanted to travel to the United States to continue the discussion of independence with other American institutions. However, the historic independence debate in Manila had “provoked so much discussion that [U.S.] Secretary of War Davis frowned on the affair and notified Henry L. Stimson, governor-general of the Philippines, that no more debates on that subject could be tolerated by the government” (“Oregon-Philippine Debate Draws Ire of

United States Secretary of War”, n.d.). Consequently, Governor Stimson canceled the planned tour to the United States.

Walter followed up his student debate career by becoming the assistant debate coach and the oratory coach in 1929. Walter was an assistant coach in debate for approximately three years according to the debate pages of the 1930, 1931, and 1932 Oregana yearbooks. While coaching for the debate program, Walter utilized his experiences from the World Debate Tour and helped organize another one. The Pacific Basin Goodwill Tour took three UO debaters, Robert T. Miller, Roger Alton Pfoff, and David G. Willson, on a seven month, 35,000 mile circuit of the Pacific. Walter was the faculty advisor for the tour.

The 1932 Oregana claimed the tour to be the longest international speaking and debating trip ever sponsored by an American university. It was both longer in time and miles than the World Tour. The tour began in Portland on June 2, 1931, sailing to New Zealand, Australia, Sri Lanka, India, Straits Settlement, Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Japan, and Hawaii. The debaters spoke at one hundred engagements, thirty of which were debates. The Pacific Basin Tour had many of the same peaceful intentions as the World Tour and also attracted significant press coverage.

The influence of the World Debate Tour was somewhat short lived and it appears that its historically significant accomplishments were soon forgotten. Debate at the UO drastically changed in 1933 when the speech division adopted “symposium style” debating and radio programming as the primary focus of forensic activities. The 1934 Oregana stated that symposium style debating “was introduced to do away with the digressions, hiding of facts and evading issues that were so prevalent in the competitive type of argumentation” (Oregana, 1934, pg. 117). Symposium debating involved five different speakers presenting

different pieces of an issue to an audience. There wasn't an opposing team and the audience had a chance to participate by asking questions. This style effectively combined debate and oratory and suspended the state, national and international inter-collegiate contests and leagues the University participated in. The famous "Oregon Style" of competitive debating was abandoned for a new style.

Not only has the story and influence of the World Debate Tour been forgotten, but also the collection of memorabilia and documentation was hidden away and may not have been found had I not had the happenstance to find it. Even so, only a small sampling of the World Debate Tour has been uncovered by this study. There are many other materials that could be sought out and there is much more research that could be done on the World Debate Tour to uncover more of its details.

There are many lessons to be learned from the story of the World Debate Tour. The actions taken and lessons learned by the World Debate Tour team can be easily applied to the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although many strides have been made toward world peace and friendly foreign relations, there are still many obstacles to overcome. In a time of great turmoil and strife, the three college students of the World Debate Tour set out on a good-will tour of the world, promoting peace and international relations through the power of speech. They proved that students could make a profound impact on the way the people of the world view one another.

## CHAPTER IV

### UO WORLD DEBATE TOUR EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

#### The Development of the Exhibition Proposal

I developed the exhibition proposal by synthesizing the historical data with the information obtained in the review of the key literature. I delineated the interpretation of the historical data into an exhibition proposal by applying the concepts on exhibition development, audience learning, and interpretation from the literature to the story and artifacts of the UO World Debate Tour. The synthesis and interpretation of the historical narrative and key literature into the exhibition proposal was done by choosing areas in the story that would be meaningful and relevant to the visitors that would view it. I created the following development process for this study based upon several planning processes discovered in the literature review (Lord & Lord, 2002; McLean, 1993; Parman, 2001): (1) determine target audiences, (2) develop purpose statement, (3) develop exhibition take-away-messages and objectives, (4) develop exhibition storyline and conceptual design, (5) combine elements into a narrative walk-through of the proposed exhibit. The narrative walk-through is the exhibit proposal. The first section of this chapter describes how and why I developed the areas of the exhibition proposal. The second section is the finished narrative walk-through.

#### *Location*

As stated in chapter one in the context of the problem, the main lobby of Knight Library holds a series of display cases that various departments in the library use for exhibitions and displays. There are four vertical wall cases where the majority of exhibitions are presented. The display cases are in a high traffic area between the circulation desk and

the main reference area of the library. The cases are situated in such a way that nearly every library visitor must pass by them at least once during his or her visit. This location was chosen as the site of the UO World Debate Tour exhibition.

### *Exhibition Team*

As stated in the literature review, the exhibition development process is ideally a team effort. Lord and Lord (2002), McLean (1993), Parman (2001), Serrell (1996), and others all agree that exhibitions are more inclusive when developed by a team model. Each person involved in the process brings a unique viewpoint to the table and issues and concerns are better addressed. Ideally, the UO World Debate Tour exhibition would be developed by a team of people with varying expertise and interest in the story. I imagine that the development team would be composed of several people from the library, someone from the Forensics department, several students, and other potential audience members or people with ties to the subject.

### *Target Audiences*

As demonstrated in the review of key literature (Falk and Dierking, 2000; McLean, 1993; Serrell, 1996), knowing the make-up of the audience is a crucial step in developing an exhibition. The first step in the development of the UO World Debate Tour exhibition proposal was determining the make-up of the Knight Library audience. I developed several guiding questions to help determine the audience: who comes to the library, why do they come to the library, and what can this information determine about the potential audience for an exhibition in the library?

The UO Libraries are composed of seven different libraries: the Knight Library, the Architecture and Allied Arts Library, the Portland Architecture Library, the Law Library, the

Mathematics Library, the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology Library, and the Science Library (“UO Libraries and Collections”, retrieved on May 5, 2003). Five of the seven libraries are on the Eugene campus. The Knight Library is the largest of the libraries and houses collections in the humanities, social sciences, music, and business, as well as Special Collections and University Archives, government documents, microfilms, and maps.

The materials and services offered by the UO Libraries are available to all UO students, staff, and faculty (Harper, personal communication, May 5, 2003). It is also part of several interlibrary loan networks that make its materials and services available to other universities and colleges. In addition to servicing students, staff, and faculty, the UO libraries also have a program that allows the public to use their materials and services. The Oregon Card Program allows free borrowing privileges to any person over 18 years of age and living in the state of Oregon (Harper, personal communication, May 5, 2003).

Visitors to campus are also introduced to the library system. Knight Library is one of the most important buildings on campus and is a stopping point for prospective students, visiting parents, visiting lecturers and professors, and even tourists. These people probably come from all over the United States and possibly even the world. Campus tours conducted by the Office of Admissions take their visitors to Knight Library two times a day (Harper, personal communication, May 5, 2003). It is even included in a self-guided tour brochure entitled, *Arts on Campus*. This brochure is available to prospective students and campus visitors through the Office of Admissions (Harper, personal communication, May 5, 2003). Knight Library is number seven on the tour. The brochure talks about the historic 1937 front portion of the building and the artwork that is housed within the building. It also mentions that the library is the largest research library in the state of Oregon, that it holds the

photographic collections in Special Collections, and that it offers special programming and exhibitions that are open to the public.

According to data provided by the library (Harper, personal communication, January 30, 2003), the UO library system currently does not keep detailed track of how their visitors use their services. Their system records gate counts (number of people who walk through the entrance turnstiles) and circulation transactions. These numbers are reported for the entire library system of which the Knight Library makes up approximately 64%. According to those numbers, a typical week in fall quarter sees 15,553 people pass through the library system gates. A typical week in the fall sees 2,826 reference transactions with an annual total of 80,630 reference transactions. The library system sees an annual total of circulations, including renewals, but not reserves, of 437,091 volumes and 120,192 reserves circulation transactions. The UO library system is open to the public an average of 96 hours in a typical week.

In order to get a broader view of whom these people using the library system are I looked at the University's campus profile from the Office of Administration (Harper, personal communication, May 5, 2003) (appendix X). According to these statistics in the fall of 2002 the UO had a total enrollment of 20,044 students. 16,047 of these were undergraduates and 3,997 were graduates. 46% of all students were male and 54% were female. The average age of all students were 22 year old. Students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories were represented in the UO student population. 70% of students were Oregon residents, 23% were out of state residents, and 7% were international students who represented 78 different countries. Some of the most popular areas of study among undergraduates were art, anthropology, architecture, biology, business



administration, economics, educational studies, English, environmental studies, general science, history, journalism, political science, psychology, sociology, and Spanish. The UO also has an equally diverse faculty and staff population. In 2000 the UO had a total of 3,536 employees. That included administrators, faculty, professionals, and staff (“All University Employees”. Retrieved on May 5, 2003).

I determined from all of this statistical information, that the audience make-up for an exhibition in the Knight Library would be very diverse. The majority of the UO population is made up of undergraduate students with diverse areas of study and interest. The Knight Library is the main library facility on the UO campus and sees the highest volume of visitors and circulation of materials. These materials are available to students, faculty, staff, and the public. The library also receives a number of visitors for varying purposes. Based on this, I decided that the audience for the World Debate Tour was primarily students in their early twenties with many different interests and backgrounds. The audience would also contain faculty, staff, visitors, and community members with a great diversity in age, background, and interests.

It was clear to me when examining the make-up of the potential audience, that the exhibition would need to appeal to all types of visitors, as there is not one type of visitor solely represented in the audience. As stated in the review of key literature, exhibitions need to be designed with the visitors’ perspectives, needs, and wants in mind. The UO World Debate Tour exhibition needs to interest and attract the very diverse audience of Knight Library. I felt that the students, faculty, staff, and some community members were most likely in the library for research purposes. Given this, their time is most likely limited. However, since they are already there to learn, perhaps they would be receptive to another

learning experience, such as an exhibition. For some visitors, I felt that they were more likely to have free time to experience an exhibition in the library. They may not be there for research purposes, but may be interested in the library as a function of the campus.

### *Purpose Statement*

Following McLean's (1993) exhibition development process recommendations from the literature review, I assessed the World Debate Tour as an appropriate exhibition idea. First, I made sure the subject fit with the Library's mission, Special Collections' mission, and the mission of the library's exhibition policy. The Library's mission statement is:

The University of Oregon Library, as the largest research library of the state, seeks to support and stimulate undergraduate instruction, graduate instruction, graduate and faculty research and service on the University of Oregon campus as well as respond to the needs of scholars by providing access to recorded information and information services ("Library Mission Statement", retrieved on May 25, 2003).

The mission of University Archives is: "The mission of the University of Oregon Archives is to collect, preserve, and make available the records of the university" ("University Archives", retrieved on May 5, 2003). The Library's exhibit policy mission is: "Exhibits reflect the scholarly, historical, social and cultural concerns of the University of Oregon. Their purpose is to promote interest in and use of the collections and services of the UO Libraries and to recognize the University's contribution to the larger community" ("Exhibits Policy", retrieved on October 14, 2002). The World Debate Tour archival collection is an important part of the university's history and of the library's collections. It is an appropriate subject to exhibit in the library.

Secondly, I made sure the World Debate Tour was visually interesting. The World Debate Tour archival collection contains scrap-booked newspaper clippings from all over the world. These articles were cut out and pasted to pieces of paper in a semi-chronological order. The articles are yellowed with age, but are still quite readable. Many of the articles have photographs in them of the debaters before, during, and after their journey. In addition to the scrap booked articles are several front pages of newspapers from the Philippines and Japan. These feature large headlines and photographs about the debaters. These articles are fragile, but very visually interesting.

In addition to newspaper articles, the collection also contains a few programs and posters from debates they competed in. There are also several magazine articles that were published during and after their trip. These magazine articles have been removed from the magazines, but are very interesting with photographs of the trip and advertisements of the late 1920s. The most interesting aspect of the collection is the photograph album. These photographs not only document the three debaters at various stops on their journey, but also depict many everyday scenes of the people and places they saw. Some of these images are quite moving and even a little shocking and they offer a small slice of the conditions of the countries they visited.

Given the pieces of the collection and the story they illustrate, I decided it was visually interesting enough to warrant creating an exhibition. In addition to the World Debate Tour collection, there are many other artifacts that can be brought in to tell the story. Yearbooks from 1927 and 1928 have picture layouts and written materials on the tour. Full issues of the Daily Emerald are available to display. Photographs and artifacts from the literary societies and early debate groups are available and photographs and artifacts for

debate activities that occurred after the World Debate Tour are available as well. These other materials from the University Archives in conjunction with the World Debate Tour collection work together to tell a larger story and add to the visual depth of the exhibition. With interpretation and design elements the visual aspects can be even more enhanced.

Thirdly, I made sure the topic was researchable and had adequate information to create an exhibition. This piece of the assessment had already been begun by the review of the collection and subsequent historical narrative that was developed in chapter three. However, beyond the artifacts in the collection there are more sources of research that could be utilized for the exhibition. The archives has vast information on the university and its history. Sources in the archives could further fill in the story and context of the World Debate Tour. More historical information about the time period in which the tour took place could also expand the context of the story. There is also the possibility of reaching out to alumni and families who remember the tour or have artifacts associated with the tour. This would give a broader personal aspect to the story and could provide more materials for the collection. Given all of the sources of available information I determined that the subject was highly researchable and contained more than adequate information.

Fourthly, I made sure the World Debate Tour idea was multi-faceted and provided a variety of levels of information. The World Debate Tour story has many levels. It is a story about a trip. It is a story about students and education. It is a story about world politics and international relations. It is a story about debate, speech, and communication. It is a story about the UO and its history. There are many ways the story could be told and many sub-stories that could be brought out.

After assessing the exhibition idea and deeming it appropriate, I wrote the purpose statement. The purpose statement, according to McLean (1993), should “define the exhibition problems to be solved and describe what the exhibition is supposed to do and for whom” (p. 54). I wanted the World Debate Tour exhibition to expose the lost story and artifacts. Not only did I want to tell the remarkable story, but I also wanted the significant of and impact of the events of the World Debate Tour on the debaters and participants to be emphasized.

In a time of great turmoil and strife, three college students set out on a good-will tour of the world, promoting peace and international relations through the power of speech. They proved that students could make a profound impact on the way the peoples of the world viewed one another. This exhibition intends to expose the long lost World Debate Tour collection to the University of Oregon community. It will reveal the historic and unprecedented events of the tour and demonstrate how this student-organized activity had a profound impact on its participants.

### *Objectives*

Forming the objectives and take-away messages or communication goals was the next step in the process. As stated in the literature review (McLean, 1993; Serrell, 1996) forming communication goals requires the exhibition developers to think about what they want their exhibition to say. An exhibition cannot contain every detail of a story. It must be pared down to its bare essentials.

After thinking about the story, its collections, and the various missions of the library there were several things I wanted the visitors to learn in the exhibition. Because this story had been lost in the archives for so many years, the first objective I developed was to expose

the greater university community to the extraordinary accomplishments of the UO World Debate Tour. Simply revealing the story was an important goal for this exhibition.

Secondly, I wanted this exhibition to celebrate the UO's long history and traditions in debate and public speaking. The World Debate Tour is steeped in a rich history of forensics at the UO. It was, at one time, more popular than sports or Greek life.

In alignment with the different missions of the library, another important objective for the World Debate Tour exhibition is to emphasize that the World Debate Tour collection is one of many in Special Collections and University Archives. The World Debate Tour should encourage visitors to seek out other interesting stories and collections in Special Collections and University Archives. Finally, in alignment with the purpose of the exhibition, another objective for the World Debate Tour exhibition is to convey to the visitors, especially the students, that the power to change the perceptions and opinions of their world.

#### *Take-away Messages*

I created three messages I wanted visitors to take away from the World Debate Tour exhibition: (1) the UO World Debate Tour was a historic and unprecedented event, (2) communication is an important tool, (3) students (people) have the power to change their world.

#### *Storyline and Conceptual Design*

As stated in the literature review (McLean, 1993), the storyline is where the purpose, objectives, and take-home messages come together to develop the exhibition's themes, divide the content into exhibit areas, and define the visitor's experiences. In this section of the exhibition development process I brought the purpose, objectives, and take-home messages together to create the exhibit themes. I divided the exhibition into four sections: one for each

vertical display case in the library. Each section is developed around a theme. For each theme I developed a description of the content, the visitor experience, and possible visuals and artifacts.

There were several elements that I wanted to be present throughout the entire exhibition. One of the main criteria that several of the literature sources (McLean, 1993; Serrell, 1996) cited for an effective exhibition is clear orientation and organization. It should allow for both visitors who like to follow a clear path and for visitors who view things out of order. It should also provide clear orientation for the visitors so that they might clearly understand what they are viewing and know what to expect from the experience. Taking this into account, I decided that each section would have a “way finding” element that would orient the visitor to the general, overarching story. This element would serve three purposes. First, it would provide a context for the sub-stories that the different sections represent. Second, it will allow for continuity for the visitors who view the sections out of order or at different times. Third, it will direct the visitors to the other sections of the exhibition, orienting them to the whole exhibition experience.

Written into the exhibition’s objectives is the emphasis that the World Debate Tour collection is part of Special Collections and University Archives. This objective will be realized by placing in each section an element about Special Collections, so that the visitors will know where the artifacts in the exhibition come from. This element will also encourage visitors to seek out Special Collections for more information and other collections.

Providing the visitor with choice is another important exhibition element brought out by the literature review (McLean, 1993; Serrell, 1996). Choice should not only be incorporated into the exhibition, but the visitor should also be provided with choices for after

the exhibition experience. For each section, I included an element that would lead visitors to more information and sources on the particular exhibit theme. For example, the UO Debate History section might include an element emphasizing the continued forensic activities at the university and direct the visitors to the current forensics department web site or other sources about modern day forensics.

As stated in the literature review, many experts (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Serrell, 1996; McLean, 1993) advocate for evaluation as a means of exhibition improvement. Visitor evaluations can help determine what worked and what was missing. I would like to provide an opportunity for the visitors to give feedback. Each section, or perhaps pair of sections, should provide some type of opportunity for visitors to give comments, reactions, and suggestions. This could be in the form of a comment card or book, or perhaps simply supplying an e-mail or phone number for people to contact.

Many agree (Csikszentmihaly & Hermanson, 1995; Falk and Dierking, 2000) that connecting the visitors personally to the subject is the best way to motivate them to learn from an exhibition. I wanted the World Debate Tour to be relevant to people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially to students. The story of the World Debate Tour is mainly a story about students and student life. The main players in the story were young students and the students they met around the world.

There were many aspects of the story that I believed would strike a cord with modern day students. The observations the debaters made of how students around the world lived and worked could offer drastic comparisons and some poignant similarities for modern day students. The popularity of debate and speech in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in comparison to today may surprise many modern day students as well. The specifics of the



tour, how it was organized and financed solely by the students, and the celebrity of the debaters at home and abroad are also very interesting when compared to modern day student experiences.

Finally, two other important exhibition elements that must be incorporated into the entire exhibition are learning styles and levels of information. As was discussed in the literature review (Cunningham, 2002; Serrell, 1996), a person's learning style can affect the way he or she experiences or learns from an exhibition. These styles help to motivate a person to absorb the information being presented. The World Debate Tour exhibition will utilize as many learning styles as possible. To do this, it will present several different layers of information. Because of the exhibition's location, text will probably be the primary interpretive element. However, this text will be used as sparingly as possible within the exhibition itself. Labels and text panels will be brief and concise. Titles and headings will be utilized to impart the basics of the story quickly. This will provide for those visitors who are browsers and do not wish to read a lot of text. More detailed information should be provided for those learners who want to know more facts. This could be done either with handouts or take-away sheets or by providing sources for further study such as a web site, book, or librarian to contact.

Asking questions or posing problems in the text and labels will be the best way to accommodate for more interactive learners in this setting. These questions could ask the visitor to search for some detail in the pictures or to think of a comparison to some event in the story. It will also be a good way to get the visitor to relate the content to his or her own experiences, making it more personally meaningful.

The artifacts, visuals, and graphics will be the most important layer of information in the exhibition. Displaying the “real things” in the collection is an inherent function of an exhibition and important to give the exhibition a sense of time and history. However, simply displaying the artifacts with explanations is not effective. I wanted interpretive design to be utilized wherever possible. Arranging and enhancing the artifacts in a way that tells the story without too many words will be a great way for more visual learners to be interested in the story. For example, when talking about the route of the tour, it may be more effective to illustrate it with a large world map with the destination points mapped out on it instead of describing the route of the tour in text. This gives the visitor a chance to see the whole trip at once.

### *Exhibit Themes*

As defined in the literature review (Redmond-Jones, 2003; Serrell, 1996) the difference between an exhibit and an exhibition is that an exhibit is a single experience of a single idea or object and an exhibition is the joining of many different single experiences into one large cohesive experience that links all the elements together with one overarching concept. Taking this into account, I developed four separate exhibit themes for the exhibition. The exhibit themes help map out the form and content of the exhibition and help to clarify the focus of the exhibition and what it will teach the visitor. Each reflect the four different sections of the exhibition and each are four different stories that stand by themselves, but also work together to create a larger whole. There were many things that could be told in this story; many details and anecdotes, but I decided that these four areas were the roots of the overall story of the tour: (1) A Popular Pastime: UO Forensics History,

(2) By Land and By Sea: The World Debate Tour Route, (3) Observations: Communicating with the People Back Home, (4) Impacting Perceptions: The legacy of the tour.

*A Popular Pastime: UO Forensics History*

The first exhibit theme I developed was, *A Popular Pastime: UO Forensics History*. This theme will show how debate and speech got started at the UO with the formation of the Literary Societies in the early years and discuss how the activities grew from there. It will mostly concentrate on the years before the World Debate Tour, but will also have a brief bit about forensics today and how the practice is still going strong.

The two points I wanted to emphasize in this section are the importance of forensics in the students' lives and their education. First, forensics was a very popular student extracurricular and social activity, even more popular than sports for a while. Compared to modern day popularity of forensics as a social activity at the university, this may be quite interesting and different from many students' personal experiences. Learning that hundreds and even thousands of students went to a public debate or speech on a Friday night for fun, may cause the visitor to reflect on his or her own social activities for comparison. Secondly, debate and speech were an important part of the classical education emphasized by the UO. It was viewed as a fundamental skill for both men and women in the early years of the university. This is key to understanding why forensics was so popular at the UO. This would be a good place to ask what is forensics and why do they call it that?

Depending on the order the visitor views the sections in, the visitor experience for this exhibit section should be one of introduction and context. The visitor should understand how the World Debate Tour fits into the history of forensics at the UO. It should also expose

the visitor to the topic of forensics in general. This section will feature the oldest artifacts in the exhibition, so it should also convey to the visitor a sense of time and history.

Possible objects and pictures to illustrate this section are: literary society photos, early debate scrapbooks, literary society minutes scrapbooks, early yearbooks, early forensics posters and fliers, debate photos prior to 1927, and early newspapers with forensics headlines or articles.

*By Land and By Sea: The World Debate Tour Route*

The second exhibit section I developed was, *By Land and By Sea: The World Debate Tour Route*. This section will describe the facts of the tour. It will show the route of the trip and describe the various places they went. It will concentrate on the logistics of the tour; the when, where, and how of the journey.

I envisioned this section being illustrated by a large world map with the route of the tour mapped out on it. At each of the destination points there would be a photograph and description of what happened at the spot. This could be a great way to show the route of the tour rather than describing it with words. It would utilize the photographs in the collections as well as some of the programs and posters from some of the competitions. This theme will help teach the visitor of the historic and unprecedented nature of the tour.

This section will give the visitors a comprehensive look at the who, what, why, where, and when of the World Debate Tour. They will see the images and the words of the tour and experience the distance through the visual of the world map. Viewed by itself the visitor will get the overall gist of the story of the tour. Viewed with the other elements, it will be the beginning of the story of the tour.

Possible objects and pictures to illustrate this section are: photographs taken on the tour, programs and posters from some of the competitions on the tour, and other souvenirs from the trip.

*Observations: Communicating with the People Back Home*

The third exhibit section I developed was, *Observations: Communicating with the People Back Home*. This theme will show how the debaters shared their experiences with the people in the United States and around the world. It will concentrate on the letters they wrote and published in various newspapers and magazines. It should also talk about the film footage and photographs they took on the trip and how they were used to give illustrated lectures when they returned home.

This section should communicate the details of the tour to the visitor. I especially wanted to emphasize the many observations about the foreign peoples and places that the debaters made on their journey and imparted to others in their articles. The debaters described their adventures and the living conditions and social customs of many of the countries they visited and took many photographs and film footage illustrating these observations.

It is important for the visitor to understand how unique an opportunity it was for the people of this time to get first-hand accounts of international events. The people of the 1920s did not have the access to the amount of news and visual media that people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century do. Television did not exist. Movies were just beginning to develop and radio was also not widely distributed. The letters, articles, photographs, and films showed the people back at home things, places and people they would not have had access to otherwise. This is

an important comparison for the visitor to make with his or her access to knowledge of the world.

This section should utilize the collection to illustrate its content. The newspaper and magazine articles and photographs will show the visitor the medium of communication between the debaters and their followers. Displaying the various articles will also illustrate how widespread the coverage of the tour was.

*Impacting Perceptions: The Legacy of the Tour*

The fourth exhibit theme I developed was, *Impacting Perceptions: The legacy of the tour*. This theme will discuss the influence the World Debate Tour had on the field of forensics at home and abroad. This section will discuss the debate tours that followed or were planned to follow the World Debate Tour. It will talk about the relationships that were forged and will talk about how the tour affected the lives of the students who were involved. This section will also be another good place to bring up the current practices of forensics at the UO and discuss how the influence of the World Debate Tour can still be seen today. This section should also discuss the impact the World Debate Tour had on the debater's perceptions and opinions of the world they lived in and consequently how those changes in attitude affected others who were following the tour.

I wanted this theme to show the major impact the World Debate Tour had on its various participants. The visitors will learn how the World Debate Tour impacted other debaters, the University of Oregon, and the field of forensics. This is also where the visitor will learn how the observations and experiences of the debaters changed the way they and others felt about the world around them. It will be important to make this section relevant to the modern day visitor, as it is the more abstract of the four themes. Comparing the world

situation of 1927 to the world situation of today may make the exhibit section more meaningful and relevant to the visitor.

Possible artifacts and visuals for this section are: newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, yearbooks, 1931 Pacific Basin Tour artifacts, post 1927 forensics information, photographs, and ephemera.

#### Arguing Their Way Around the World: A Narrative Walk-thru

*Title:* Arguing Their Way Around the World: The 1927 University of Oregon World Debate Tour

*Location:* Knight Library Lobby

*Target Audience:* The patrons of the Knight Library which includes University of Oregon students, faculty, and staff, campus visitors, and community members.

*Purpose Statement:* In a time of great turmoil and strife, three college students set out on a good-will tour of the world, promoting peace and international relations through the power of speech. They proved that students could make a profound impact on the way the peoples of the world viewed one another. This exhibition intends to expose the long lost World Debate Tour collection to the University of Oregon community. It will reveal the historic and unprecedented events of the tour and demonstrate how this student-organized activity had a profound impact on its participants.

*Objectives:*

- 1). To expose the greater university community to the extraordinary accomplishments of the UO World Debate Tour.
- 2). To celebrate the UO's long history and traditions in debate and public speaking.

- 3). To encourage visitors to seek out other interesting stories and collections in Special Collections and University Archives.
- 4). To convey to the visitors, especially students, that communication is the tool with the power to change the perceptions and opinions of their world.

*Take-away Messages:* There are three main messages that the visitors should leave the exhibition with:

- 1). The UO World Debate Tour was a historic and unprecedented event.
- 2). Communication in its many forms is an important tool.
- 3). Students (people) have the power to change the perceptions and assumptions of their world.

*Exhibit I: A Popular Pastime: UO Forensics History*

*Location:* West hall display cases.

*Description:* At the time of the World Debate Tour the UO already had a long and prestigious debate and oratory history. This theme will show how debate and speech got started at the UO with the formation of the Literary Societies in the early years and discuss how the activities grew from there.

*Visitor Experience:* Visitors will be introduced to the topic of forensics and its beginnings at the University of Oregon up to the time of the World Debate Tour.

*Possible Visuals/Artifacts:*

- Literary society photos
- Early debate scrapbooks
- Literary society minutes scrapbooks
- Early yearbooks



- Early forensics posters and fliers
- Debate photos prior to 1927
- Early newspapers with forensics headlines or articles

*Exhibit II: By Land and By Sea: The World Debate Tour Route*

*Location:* West hall display cases.

*Description:* The UO World Debate Tour was the “first world debate tour of an American university [and] the first in history by college undergraduates” (Thompson, 1928). This section will describe the facts of the tour. It will show the route of the trip and describe the various places they went. It will concentrate on the logistics of the tour; the when, where, and how of the journey.

*Visitor Experience:* Visitors can follow the route of the tour and the events that happened through the pictures, articles, and ephemera of the World Debate Tour archival collection.

*Possible Visuals/Artifacts:*

- Photographs taken on the tour
- Programs and posters from some of the competitions on the tour
- Other souvenirs from the trip

*Exhibit III: Observations: Communicating with the People Back Home*

*Location:* East hall display cases.

*Description:* The World Debate Tour was experienced by the people back home in Oregon and around the nation through the articles and letters the debaters wrote during their journey. This theme will show how the debaters shared their experiences

with the people in the United States and around the world. It will concentrate on the letters they wrote and published in various newspapers and magazines.

*Visitor Experience:* Visitors can read the first-hand accounts of the debaters' experiences on the tour from the articles and letters they wrote during their trip.

*Possible Visuals/Artifacts:*

- The newspaper and magazine articles
- Photographs
- Posters for illustrated talks

*Exhibit IV: Impacting Perceptions: The legacy of the tour*

*Location:* East hall display cases.

*Description:* Throughout the tour the three debaters made countless connections and formed many impressions of the world and its people. The debaters were able to share these with the people they met on the tour and those back at home, thus having a profound impact on others' perceptions. This section will discuss the debate tours that followed or were planned to follow the World Debate Tour. It will talk about the relationships that were forged and will talk about how the tour affected the lives of the students who were involved.

*Visitor Experience:* Visitors can see how the experiences of the World Debate Tour affected the participants and others who were touched by it and understand why it is an important event in the history of the UO.

*Possible Visuals/Artifacts:*

- Newspaper and magazine articles
- Photographs

- Yearbooks
- 1931 Pacific Basin Tour artifacts
- Post 1927 forensics information, photographs, and ephemera.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study only begins to explore the topics of exhibition development, audience learning, interpretation, and the UO World Debate Tour. There are many more details and issues that could be brought out with further study. However, there are many things that can be learned from this brief beginning. Using the information obtained in the literature review, the story of the World Debate Tour, and the experience of creating the exhibition proposal, I drew some conclusions about exhibition development and some recommendations for the library to consider for future exhibitions.

#### Conclusions

From this study, I have formulated some conclusions about exhibition development for Special Collections and University Archives in the UO libraries.

1. One of the main conclusions I drew from this project was the understanding that an exhibition is a communication process. McLean (1993), Serrell (1996), and Lord & Lord (2002) all emphasize the communication element of exhibitions. What struck me the most was that it was not the final exhibition itself that did the communicating, but the overall experience of the exhibition that did the communicating. An exhibition is not a product, but a piece in a process.

Like any communication process, it is only effective if all parties involved are engaged. In other words, the exhibition developers, the exhibition subject, and the exhibition visitors must all work together to create an effective communication process. Effective communication is reciprocal. Cunningham (2002) insists that communication (interpretation) involves the whole of the exhibition: the audiences, the resources, and the techniques. The

exhibition should send and receive information and the visitor should receive and send information. This interaction between the exhibition and the visitor happens when the exhibition engages the visitor and creates a dialogue with him or her. Simply supplying information is only half of the communication process. An exhibition must get the visitor involved with the subject matter to complete the process.

I tried to accommodate the communication process in the World Debate Tour exhibition proposal by creating opportunities for dialogue. I did this by suggesting posing questions or problems to the visitor throughout the exhibition. I suggested giving the visitor multiple opportunities for feedback and outlets for questions and further investigation. I also suggested making the subject personally meaningful to the library visitors by connecting the topic to modern-day issues and experiences. By engaging the visitors in the subject through questioning, opportunities for feedback and personal meaning making I felt that the visitors would not only be receiving information from the exhibition, but would also be contributing their own information to the exhibition experience.

2. Realizing that an exhibition is a communication process led me to my second conclusion: exhibition developers must remember that the visitors are a fundamental part of the overall exhibition and without them there is little reason to create it in the first place. Many in the field (McLean, 1993; Serrell, 1996; Cunningham, 2002) contend that the visitors are the center of the exhibition experience. Everything that the exhibition developers do should have the visitors in mind. The visitors' needs and wants should be used to determine how the exhibition is created, what is and is not included in the story, and how the exhibition looks and feels.

Keeping the audience's needs and wants in mind is crucial when developing an exhibition. An institution should know who their audience is, so they can accommodate for those needs and wants. The literature (Falk & Dierking, 2000; McLean, 1993; Serrell, 1996) suggests that evaluation is a helpful tool for continuing a successful visitor-centered exhibition program. It is the means by which an institution can find out how their exhibitions are performing, if they are meeting their goals, and if the visitors' wants and needs are being met. Evaluation is also another way to continue the dialogue between the exhibition and the visitors. It can make the visitors realize they have an important role in the exhibition process and give them a sense that they are a partner in the institution rather than just a patron of it.

This study has made me realize that knowing the audience is key to exhibition development. In developing the World Debate Tour exhibition proposal, I found that knowing who composed the audience of the library made it much easier to extract the key aspects of the story. There were too many pieces of the story than could be shown in an exhibition, but knowing who would view the exhibition allowed me to narrow the story down to its main components and then shape those details so they would be meaningful.

3. Another conclusion I drew was that exhibitions are multifaceted. An exhibition never performs just one task. While there are many different types of exhibitions that vary in subject, they are all, as McLean (1993) stated, "three-dimensional, environmental experiences" (pg. 21). They serve many different functions: they simultaneously show things, communicate, provide experiences, and teach. All of these functions work together to create the full exhibition experience. Exhibitions that do not utilize their multi-faceted nature can end up flat and one-dimensional. To communicate all of these functions to the visitor a

multi-faceted exhibition should provide a variety of levels of information and utilize learning styles.

The World Debate Tour story had many levels. It had many sub-stories and levels of materials. When developing the exhibition proposal for this study, I tried to choose themes, stories, and teaching points that were multi-faceted. I chose themes that had interesting artifacts and visuals to show. I chose areas of the story that had multiple levels of information to impart and I provided for dialogue and engagement within those levels of information.

4. Along with the multi-faceted nature of exhibitions, my fourth conclusion was the importance of the “real thing” factor in an exhibition. McLean (1993 and Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson, (1995) agree that the “real thing” is an important aspect of the exhibition experience. Seeing the actual artifacts involved in a story or a piece of history is what makes the exhibition experience different and unique from other learning experiences. Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995) said, “Museums offer the opportunity to interact with a real environment, one in which the objects are still imbued with the blood, the tears, the sweat of their makers” (p. 60).

This study confirmed my belief that the inclusion of artifacts or the “real thing” is what makes an exhibition so powerful. The artifacts make the exhibition experience more tangible and meaningful to the visitor. They may feel they are viewing something privileged that not many other have seen before. They may be viewing something they learned about in a book and seeing the real thing may reinforce the knowledge they already had.

I felt the artifacts in the World Debate Tour exhibition were crucial to the story. Without them, the story can only be told in words. The artifacts added a dimension of

history and reality to the story. They were also important to the exhibition because without them, if they had not been saved and found, not many people would ever have been aware of the story.

5. My fifth conclusion was that there is no “cookie-cutter” approach to exhibition development. The literature (McLean, 1993) emphasized that different types of exhibitions require different approaches and while there are pieces that every exhibition should include, those pieces will develop differently for each exhibition. A process should be developed that fits with each unique situation and institution. The development processes, like those revealed in this study, should act as a guideline and be flexible for unseen circumstances. An exhibition should fit with the institution that is displaying it. Because the exhibition development process is unique for every situation, an institution should create a process that aligns with its mission, its audience, and its collections or resources.

The process I developed for this study was unique for my situation. The elements I developed and the steps I took were done in alignment with the parameters and resources of this study. Had the World Debate Tour exhibition proposal been developed by a team from the library or another campus entity, I am sure the process and results would have been much different.

6. This led to my sixth conclusion: developing an exhibition is a team process. The literature (McLean, 1993; Serrell, 1996; Parman, 2001; Cunningham, 2002) suggests that exhibitions are more inclusive when developed by a team model. According to this model it is better to have multiple perspectives involved from the very beginning. The team model also ensures that the workload is being distributed among many different peoples. In a setting like the library, where there is not a separate department or team working solely on



exhibitions, the team model makes exhibition development a more realistic task for those who have other jobs to do at the same time. It takes the burden off the one or the few.

Much of what I developed was based on my own research, assumptions, and intuition. Having others involved in the development process would have made sure that the needs and interests of all parties and constituents were being met.

7. All exhibitions take time. Time was my final conclusion. McLean (1993) is insistent that exhibitions need time to develop. Ideas need time to formulate and develop, researchers need time to uncover the details of the story and involving other parties or consulting with experts takes time as well. While there should be deadlines and schedules to meet, developers should give themselves adequate time to fully develop an exhibition.

My experience in developing the proposal for the World Debate Tour exhibition reinforced my last two conclusions: team and time. There were many things in the World Debate Tour story that I did not have the time or the knowledge to explore for this study. This study was conducted with limited time and resources. It merely began the process of developing the World Debate Tour exhibition. Under proper circumstances an exhibition like the one proposed would need more time and resources to fully develop.

### Recommendations

Based on this study, I have formulated several recommendations for Special Collections and the UO Libraries. The library and Special Collections have a lot to gain from an effective exhibition program that utilizes visitor-centered interpretation. An effective and comprehensive exhibition program could make Special Collections more visible to the average library visitor and provide more access to their highly specialized, non-circulating collections. An effective exhibition program could better interpret and display

Special Collections' text-heavy materials. An effective exhibition program could also transcend some of the limitations posed by the stationary display cases in the library lobby. The library cannot utilize all the techniques and theories from the museum field, but they can take bits and pieces and apply them appropriately to their own situation and collections.

1. The library should make a concerted effort to find out more specifically who their audience is and what their needs and wants for an exhibition are. Knowing who their audience is will help them develop more effective exhibitions. Knowing more about their audience could help them generate more connection and support for the library. I recommend the library do a visitor evaluation to see who their audience is. A visitor evaluation could also help the library find out how effective their current exhibition program is and what is or is not lacking from those exhibitions.

2. The library should partner with other campus and non-campus programs to present exhibitions. Partnering with other campus and non-campus institutions to create exhibitions would be a good way to share in the time and cost of an exhibition and to bring in more perspectives, and address new issues. It could also be a good way to expose other areas of campus to the library and its collections. The library might also consider connecting their exhibitions with other programming or curriculum in the library and on campus to offer a more comprehensive program.

3. The library should create more interpretive labels in their exhibitions. Given the nature of the display cases and the function of the library as a research institution, it may be difficult to develop elaborately interactive exhibitions with elements such as audio, video, or manipulatives. Labels are probably the most reasonable source of the library's interpretation. As was stated in the literature review (Serrell, 1996) labels should be used wisely. I

recommend the library use their exhibition labels to engage the audience, not just to instruct or inform. They could be more engaging simply by asking questions and making the subject matter more personally meaningful to the visitor. The library should also provide choices to the visitor and accommodate for different learners. This will not only engage the visitor, but will also help them to learn from the exhibition more easily.

4. The library should approach the development of their exhibitions differently. Rather than using the exhibition medium for display, they should use it to communicate a story or a narrative for the collections on display. Exhibition is a powerful communication tool for the library and especially for Special Collections and University Archives. The library should try to move away from presenting information and collections to interpreting information and collections for the visitor. Engaging the visitor in a dialogue through story or narrative could begin to generate more interest in Special Collections and possibly make them more visible in the library.

5. I recommend that the library develop a more comprehensive exhibition policy or guide for creating exhibitions. The existing exhibition policy is really just a set of guidelines for the mechanics of putting up an exhibition in the lobby display cases and does not address some of the deeper issues of content, audience, and design. Developing a more comprehensive guide to the exhibition process or criteria for the content expectations will help the library staff to address

6. Finally, I recommend that the library familiarize themselves with some of the more current literature and trends in developing exhibitions and interpretation. It is a constantly evolving and developing field and is becoming widely recognized across fields. Specifically, I recommend Beverly Serrell's (1996) book on developing interpretive labels,

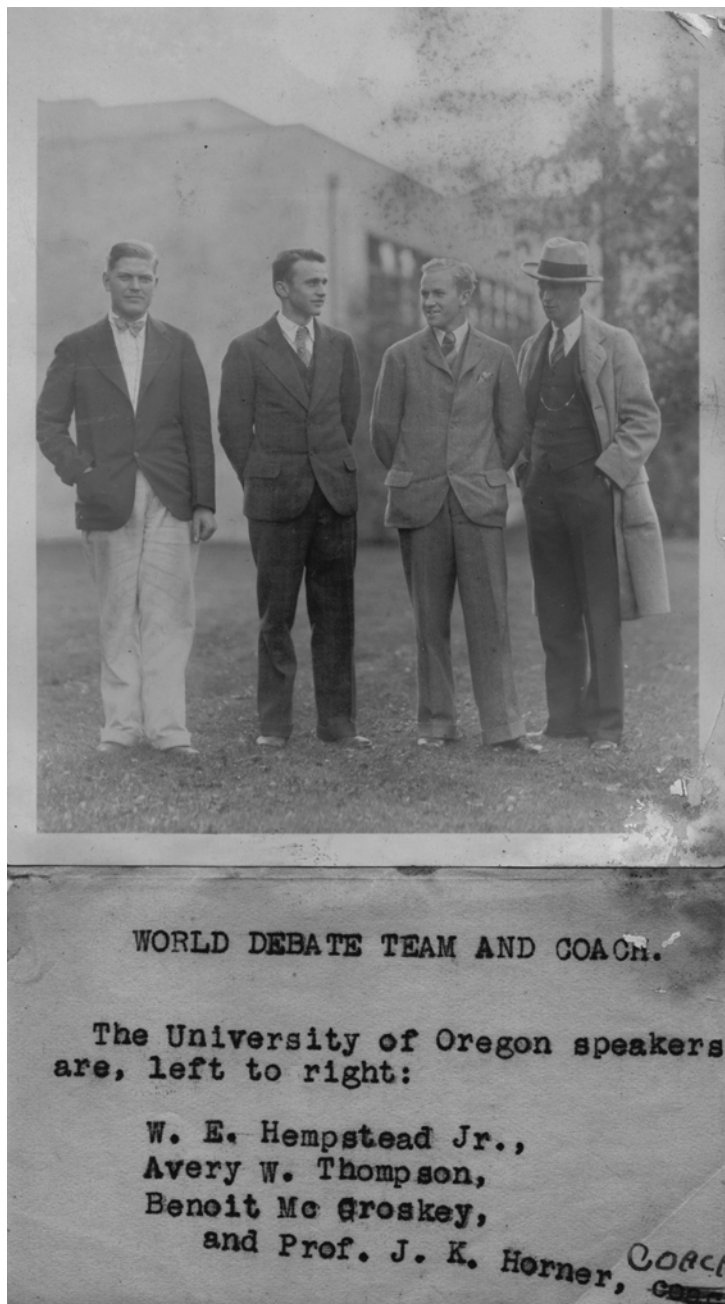
*Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, and Kathleen McLean's (1993) book on planning exhibitions for people, *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*. These two books are great overviews of the exhibition process and concentrate specifically on creating visitor-centered, interpretive exhibitions. The processes and procedures described in these two books are clear and straightforward and seem to be flexible enough to apply to any type of setting. Having these two books as a guide will provide a great start to creating engaging and dynamic exhibitions for the library visitors.

#### Suggestion for Further Study

I have a couple of suggestions for Special Collections for further study:

1. Research into how other libraries, especially university libraries, approach exhibitions would be helpful in developing a new exhibition policy and understanding what the current practices in the library field are. A survey of the exhibition programs of libraries with similar collections and audiences would be beneficial.

2. Further research on the World Debate Tour would develop the story and perhaps the collections further. There are other artifacts and stories that could be uncovered; the movies and the souvenirs from the tour would greatly add to the collection. The families of the debaters could be contacted to see if they have collections of materials on the debate tour and alumni could be solicited for memories of the tour. Also, the universities around the world that the tour stopped at could be contacted to see if they have any records in their archives about the event.



Appendix IX, a: The UO World Debate Tour Team, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

Appendix IX, b: ASUO receipt for \$600 for the World Debate Tour, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

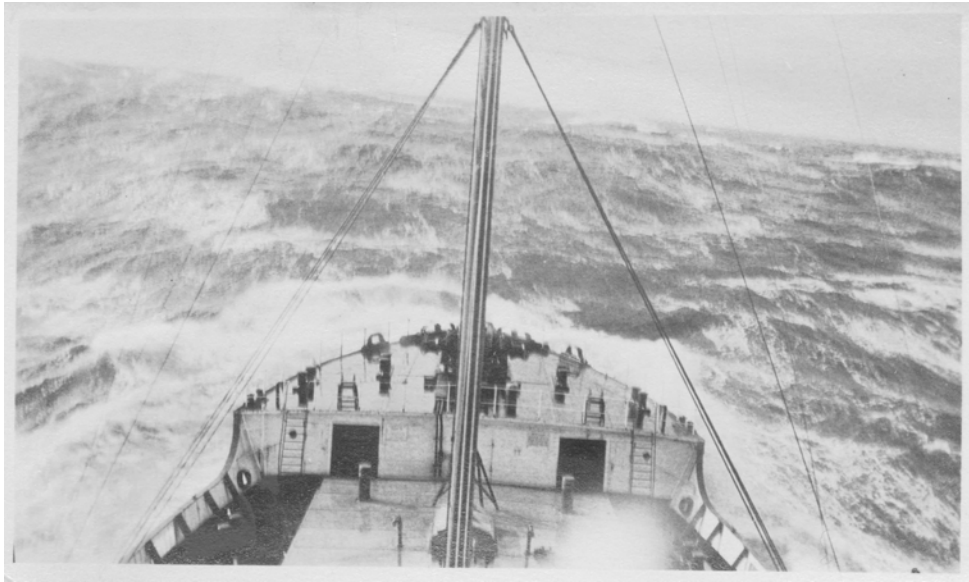


Appendix IX, c: Walter and Benoit arriving at Hawaii, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, d: The UO World Debate Tour Team with cameras in Hawaii, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



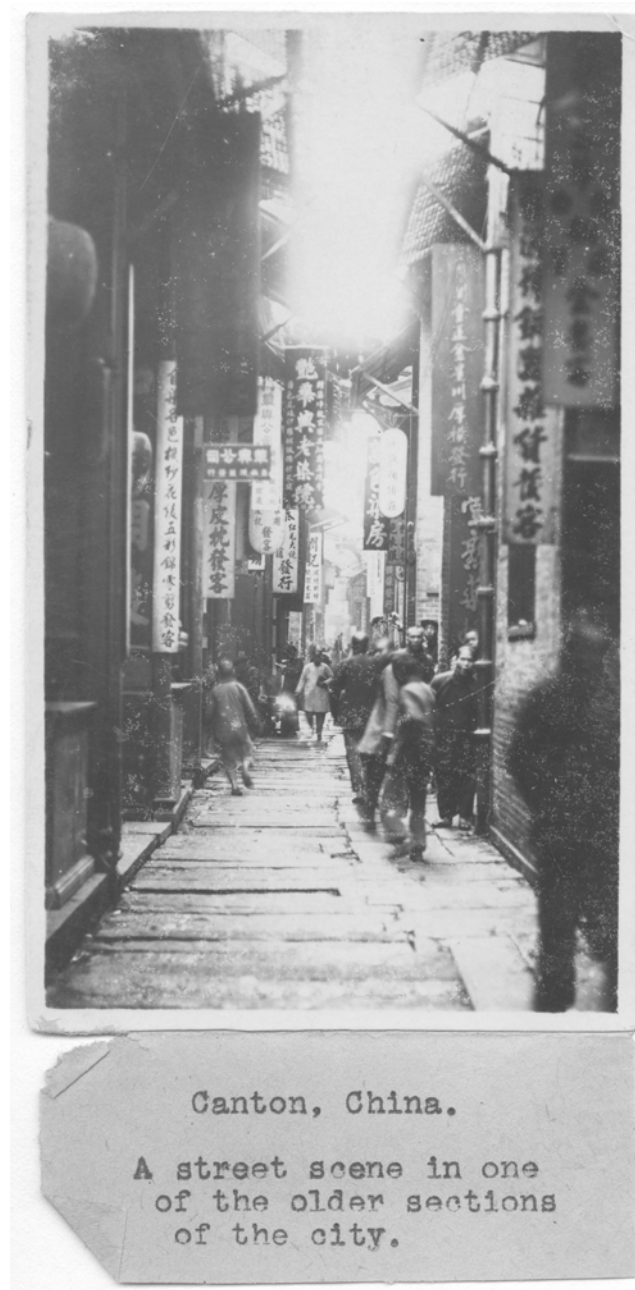


Appendix IX, e: Ocean liner at sea probably on the Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and Japan, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

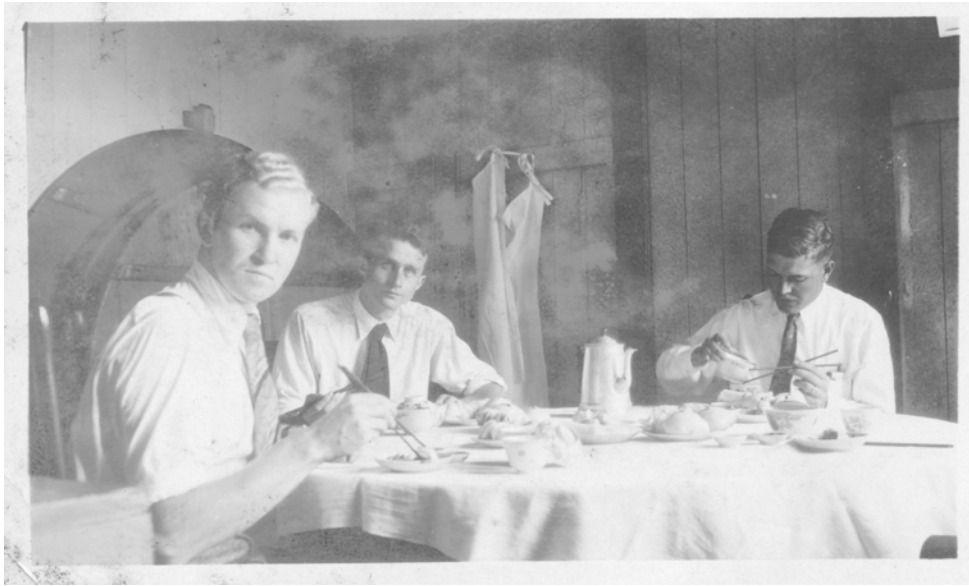


Appendix IX, f: The UO World Debate Tour Team in Japan, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

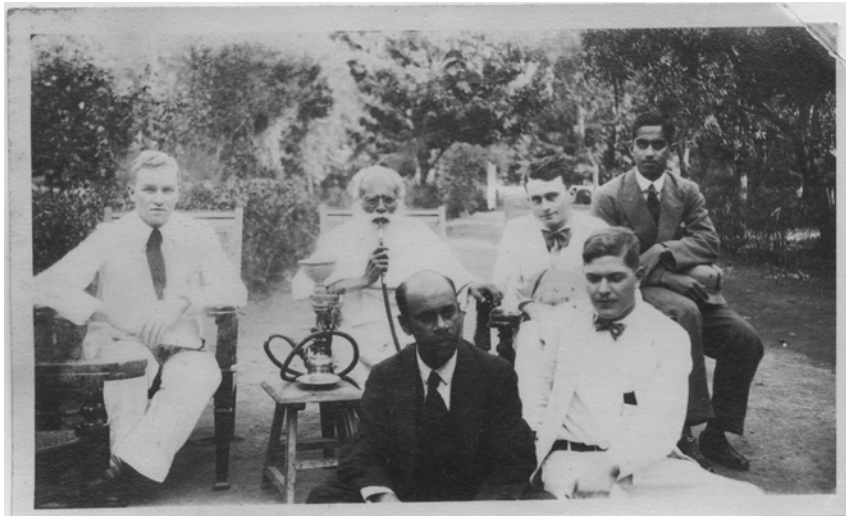
Appendix IX, g: Program from the debate in Manila, Philippines, World Debate Tour  
Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon,  
Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, h: Street Scene from Canton, China, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, i: The UO World Debate Tour Team in Canton, China eating with chopsticks, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



OREGON DEBATE TEAM  
IN INDIA.

The Americans are here seen grouped around a retired Swarajist leader with an Indian professor and a native student. From left to right, they are:(rear) Benoit Mc Groskey, Oregon Captain; I.N. Nihoji, the Swarajist; Avery Thompson, Oregon; and F. R. Anthony, Nagpur University debater. (Front) I. B. Raju, Professor at Nagpur; and W. E. Hempstead Jr., Oregon.

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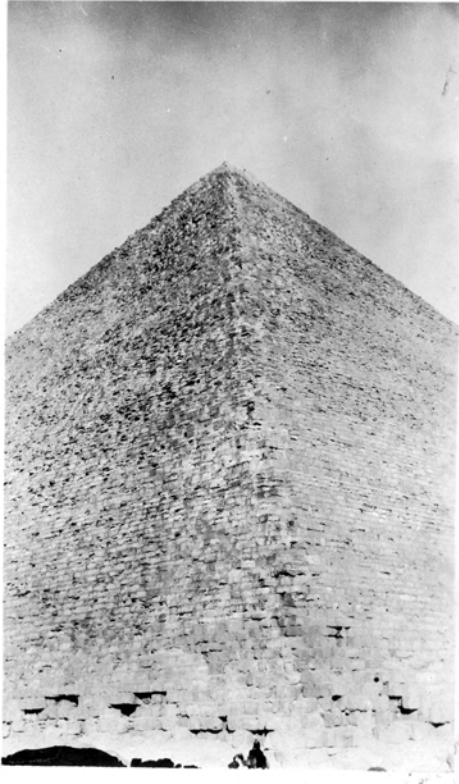


Appendix IX, k: The 42<sup>nd</sup> Indian National Congress, Madras, India, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

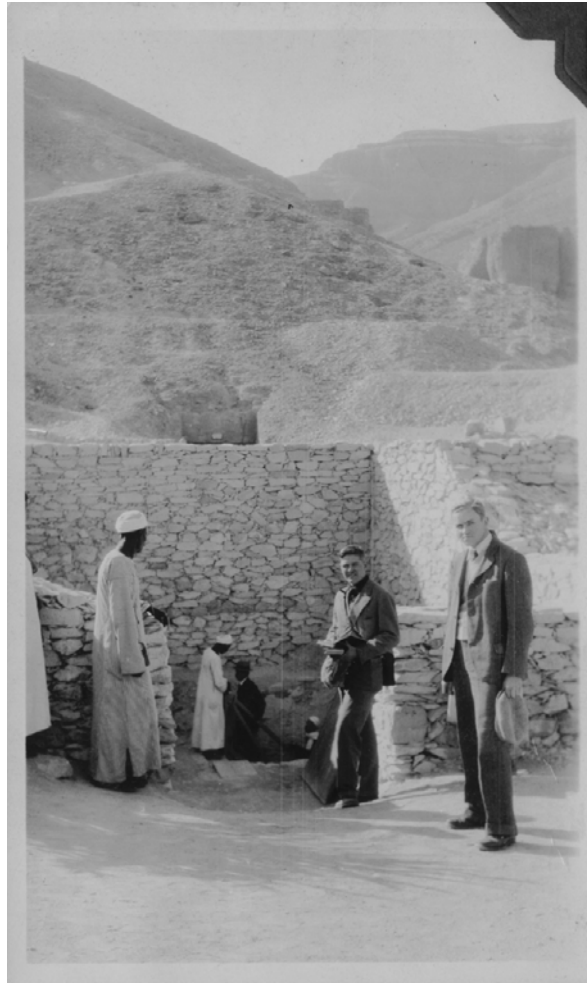


Appendix IX, 1: The UO World Debate Tour Team in Egypt, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.





Appendix IX, m: The UO World Debate Tour Team in Egypt, Pyramid of Giseh, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, n: The UO World Debate Tour Team in front of the tomb of King Tut, Valley of the Kings, Thebes, Egypt, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, o: The University of Iowa Debate Team, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

Appendix IX, p: The UO World Debate Tour Movie Talk Poster, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



CHINA'S NIGHT SOIL.

The coolies are seen carrying the  
human fertilizer out to the fields  
near Canton.

Appendix IX, q: Chinese countryside, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, r: The Ganges River, India, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, s: Japanese Street Scene, probably Tokyo, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, t: An Egyptian family, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

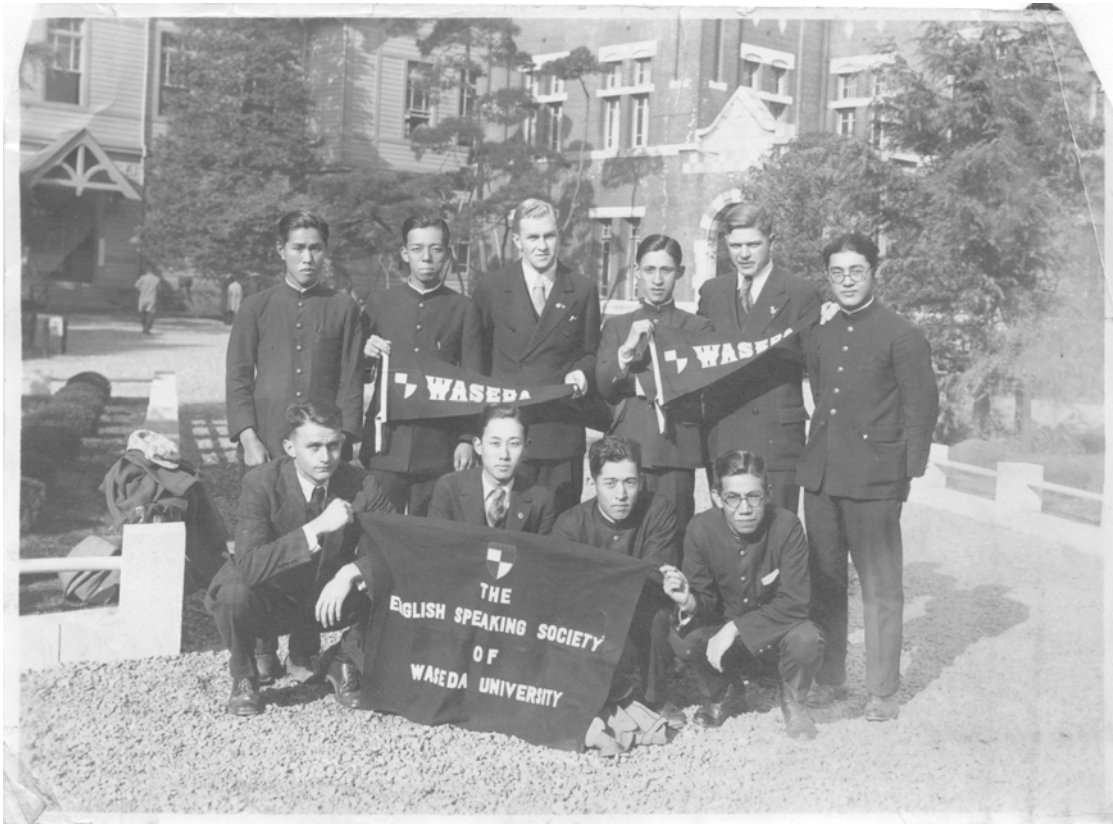




Appendix IX, u: A family at the boat docks in Manila, Philippines, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, v: Woman selling Coca Cola, probably in Rome, Italy, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, w: The UO World Debate Tour Team with the Japanese debate team from Waseda University, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.



Appendix IX, x: The UO World Debate Tour Team with Chinese debaters in Canton, China, World Debate Tour Collection, Division of Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403-1299.

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