

WORLD TOUR

1971

A Sabbatical Leave Report

Presented to

the Faculty, the Administration

and the

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of

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by

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SUMMARY OF WORLD TOUR

Hawaii

The first three weeks of the tour were a prelude to the weeks that would follow. Hawaii, the first stopping place, provided the opportunity for a revisit to the school from which I had graduated. The obvious shift from a practically all white high school to a totally integrated multi-racial school was most evident. In fact, after a thirty year passage of time, all I could say was the islands were not the lazy, drowsy places I knew in the late thirties.

Tahiti

Tahiti only served to remind us of our educational bent as we kept wondering why twelve, thirteen, and fourteen-year-old boys and girls were fishing, lazying in the sun, or working in hotels and restaurants. Only six years of compulsory schooling is the rule and even this is loosely enforced due to lack of facilities and books.

Fiji

Fiji presented the opportunity to see completely unsophisticated islanders growing up and surviving in a family-centered world. On one island in the Asawa chain, we did witness a group of young children from the school at water's edge learning the mysteries of brushing teeth. The school was conducted largely by unison recitation of the lesson and the day only lasted from 8 a.m. until noon. These two groups of islands (Tahiti and Fiji) definitely did not fit the educational pattern to

which we were geared.

New Zealand

New Zealand soon stripped away the thin veneer of lassitude we had acquired, for here was a cool, bustling, busy country. In Auckland we had the good fortune to meet with Mrs. S.A. Hanson, a member of the Auckland School Board. She spent some time discussing the problems of "learning age," which had been raised to sixteen, and the preparation of students for university or trade schools. It was interesting to note that the apprentice system of training was actively used throughout New Zealand. From all indications, it provides an excellent entree into many of the technical or skill areas.

The Maori education does not seem to be a problem anyone will discuss at length. These people appear to have adapted to the white society more fully than most Polynesian groups. One highlight was a brief visit to the Maori school in Hamilton. It was only possible to see the facility as school was not in session. We were told that many Europeans wanted to enroll their children in the school because of its reputation of excellence.

Our visit to the southern island of New Zealand was one of the spectacular highlights of the trip. We were fortunate to have sunny days since at Milford Sound 360 inches of rainfall is recorded each year. On this southern island we visited the alps country, hiked on the glaciers, and flew over spectacular peaks and lakes. The fjord country at Milford Sound and its rain forests were exceptional in their beauty. The one unpleasantness of all this part of the trip was the small black flies that

bit. Again we blessed Johnson Wax Company and their marvelous product "OFF" which kept us free from bites and insects even if we were never "Dial" fresh from a shower.

Australia

Leaving New Zealand was a tug, and only the prospect of two months in Australia made us look forward to that long flight from Auckland to Brisbane, Australia.

All of our stay in Australia was filled with educational visits and new experiences in this line. At Brisbane, while my husband lectured and consulted in the rare atmosphere of science at the University of Queensland, I visited all the communications and speech classes available at the University and also attended lectures in the English Department. Things I discovered were thought provoking and even somewhat shocking. All classes were lectures. There was no attempt at discussion and the students attended and took notes, left without questions, and presumably went on to repeat this type of class. My discussions with instructors were informative but, I must admit, their aims were verbal marvels that could not possibly bear fruit under such circumstances. There was no drama taught as class work. The whole theatre program was done on a club basis, and community theatre facilities were used whenever anything was produced. This was a similar pattern which I discovered throughout the universities in Australia. Communication and speech techniques were offered in teacher training colleges, but even here on only a limited scale.

In Sidney, at the University of N. S. Wales and McQuarrie University, I found drama, and theatres were available for productions. An interesting

thing to me was that their selections for performances were primarily classics or period plays. Without exception, drama faculty members were more or less disenchanted with modern theatre materials.

The teachers colleges in Adelaide had active speech departments, but they were only stressing phonetic differences found in Australia.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating visits to a school was the one made to "School of the Air" in Alice Springs. This is in the direct center of Australia. It was really inspirational to see how much these children learned via two-way radio instruction. The enthusiasm of the teacher and her well worked out lessons made the success of this project. The students knew each other by voice and saw their classmates at one school picnic at the end of the year.

Thailand

After two months of visiting universities and colleges in Australia, we again went west making an extensive stop in Bangkok where Dr. Sai Bahnurata, Deputy Director of Elementary Education and a former student of mine, met us and assisted us in seeing some of the functioning of education in Central Asia. We were also guests of the UNESCO science group which is working on a program of updating science teaching throughout Southeast Asia.

For a week we kept a busy schedule of consulting and discussing educational problems. One highlight was a visit to Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand where we visited the developing home industries in the area. Here we saw young people apprenticed to various trades and skill occupations which provided them with a livelihood. Outside the city of Bangkok

we saw little evidence of extensive school training. The silk weaving, pottery making, carving, and umbrella industries were all busy centers, and the villages had a good standard of living where a decade or so ago these areas in the north were racked with hunger and poverty.

Tibet

After leaving Thailand, our westward Odyssey took us to the top of the world where we visited Nepal. The primitive society of this land-locked country is most interesting. Again we were struck with the lack of education for children, but we did visit one Tibetan camp where Peace Corps girls were working with the very young children.

India

One must see India to realize the greatest impact of cultural shock. There is such unbelievable differences in the culture that one can only wonder how anything can save India from complete devastation.

Iran

A surprising contrast to India is Iran. The development of the cities, the apparent well being of the people was a pleasant change for us. Perhaps being in the ancient land of Cyrus added to our appreciation of the shrines at Shiraz where I recalled so vividly the poet Hafiz when we visited his tomb. Of course the tour to the Persepolis forged the visual link and the mental ties with the literature of the ancients that I have taught for so many years here at Mt. SAC. The ruins at Persepolis make one step back 2500 years in history and they help one to see the cradle of civilization.

Isreal

Middle East tension and several days spent in Isreal left us totally confused and brainwashed, first by Jews, then by Arabs. We found this country fascinating in its history, and we found that walking where ancient civilizations had their day was indeed an awakening experience.

Greece

Leaving the Middle East gave us the feeling that we were at last headed home, even though we were stopping to absorb the grandeur of Greece. Here we toured extensively, trying to go to all the places that I had come to love from teaching World Literature. Only sheer exhaustion made us end each day. This is a place I could return to again and again and find a kindred interest in the literature and the glory of the marvelous country. We had a tour of the Peloponnesus Peninsula where we learned firsthand of the hilly nature of the country. Then a seven-day boat cruise of the islands brought us into contact with primitive elements of island living. To me the time slipped away far too quickly. There was never enough time to absorb the materials and lectures in the museums. How grateful I was for my background in literature which made Greece a marvel of discovery.

Switzerland

After Greece we went into Switzerland for a much needed R and R. This was a marvelous opportunity to meet some Swiss people who made our stay memorable. When spirits were once more revived, weary bones less weary, and when we could again face visiting schools, we left for Germany.

Germany

In Gartenberg, Germany, I spent a week visiting "Volkschule" where a former student of mine is vice principal. I spent a most enlightening time discovering what problems these schools have in teaching English as a second language. They have the same problems we have with our Mexican-American students--no real motivation to use anything but the mother tongue except in class which met at most twice a week.

The emphasis of practical education in "Volkschule" tells one immediately there is no place for late bloomers. If they do not go on in lower grades to university class orientation, there is no second chance. At fifteen, students will have had all of their education and then they are in the job market.

England

After leaving Germany, the remainder of the summer we spent visiting friends and returning to England to try to absorb more of the literary atmosphere of the hill and lake country. We had an unheard of three weeks in England with no rain at all; so we found Kew Gardens, Hampton Court, the Cotswold, Bucks, and Winchester more fascinating than we have on previous visits.

By the end of July we could turn our faces west once more, and with real joy say we were glad to be returning to California. Our six months were well spent, and in retrospect we can honestly say that all of our experiences have added something to us as people. Above all, we can and do say with real conviction that the United States is still the only place we would really like to be.

ASSESSMENT OF SABBATICAL IN TERMS OF VALUE TO MY TEACHING

The experience of visiting other countries and seeing their universities and colleges in action gave me an opportunity to assess our direction and attitudes toward universal education. I believe that my experiences have strengthened my belief that our students need to be guided into technical areas of school where they can be not only trained, but can develop pride in their skill. The experience also increased my enthusiasm to try to help develop material for communication in speaking our English language. The need to work with the educationally uninvolved was so evident throughout the world. Our problems in this context are not unique, and this awareness will no doubt be an incentive for me to be alert and to encourage this type of student in our school.

Seeing the struggling attempts at theatre in Australian universities made me more determined to pursue our own growth in this area. There is a real need for the development of a technical skill department within our drama department. We also need to work for better theatre and speech facilities.

I honestly feel that the benefits to personal growth and insight are the essential worth of a sabbatical leave. The regeneration of interest in developing new programs and in adjusting to different student needs is valuable. Anyone becomes entrenched in a single-line performance after years of teaching. Only when one gets away and sees in perspective the values of his school's goals, in contrast to those of other places, can he measure his own awareness and successes as well as failures.

For me, the six months away from Mt. SAC brought me briefly in contact

with other philosophies and systems of training. It helped me to evaluate our goals with less prejudice and helped me to readjust some of my own theories for working with this different generation of college students.

To me the sabbatical leave is one of the most rewarding educational experiences that can be provided for a teacher.