

TRAUB DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Complete Museum Exhibit Design Services

"THE EISENHOWER BIOGRAPHICAL GALLERY"

Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum; National Archives and Records Administration; Abilene, Kansas
(Completed while Don Traub was an Exhibit Designer at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.)

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Dwight D. Eisenhower's military and political careers spanned over 60 years of public service. The Eisenhower Library and Museum had collected 90,000 museum objects and millions of archival documents and photographs from that period. The original exhibit installation was incapable of incorporating new materials and several security/conservation issues had developed.



During the two year planning and design stages for the new Biographical Gallery, library archivists assisted the museum's exhibit designers in identifying key documents that were integrated into the historical/biographical narrative. The documents coupled with objects from the museum's collection tell the biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The new Biographical Gallery included: the Eisenhower Family history, Dwight's boyhood years in Abilene, his military career from West Point to commander of NATO forces, his years as President (1953 – 1961) and his private family life. Also included were key historical events and major personalities that contributed to the Eisenhower legacy. Because of the size and scope of the project two

exhibit designers were assigned to develop the overall presentation. Each was assigned specific periods of Eisenhower's life to research and design the individual exhibits so that they blended into the overall presentation.

The reality was that there was incredible depth of archival and museum resources in some historical periods, and very little in others. The challenge of the design process was in telling details of the story when there were few resources to do so. Large graphics and fine art objects were used when historical materials were not available. For example, political memorabilia, often small and colorful ephemera was



combined with large graphics to document the 1952 campaign. Labels were not lengthy and, since Eisenhower wrote many books detailing his life, we used direct quotations allowing Ike to tell his own story, or at least to embellish the historical event. Presentation techniques varied from large cases (40' x 10' x 4') that contained many objects, documents and photographs, to individual floor and wall cases, interspersed with large graphics and fine arts. The displays were linked by structural arches, a common color scheme for walls, case interiors and label graphics, and a timeline that ran throughout the exhibit. Security and conservation concerns were addressed through the use of acrylic glazing and low-tech, psychological barriers.



PROJECT DATE: 1980

EXHIBITION SIZE: 4,200 sq. ft.

DELIVERABLES:

Preliminary & Final Design Drawings

SERVICES RENDERED:

Planning, Collection and Archival Research, Label Writing, Exhibit Design, Fabrication & Installation

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