

READER'S THEATER SCRIPT:

DEDICATION SPEECH

Dedication ceremony for the Pike Place Market, November 30, 1907 – using actual text of speech - Source: *Seattle Star*, November 30, 1907

Objective: Students will re-enact the dedication of the Pike Place Market that occurred November 30, 1907, using authentic historical text.

Supplies: Top hat, music (John Philip Sousa marches), artificial flowers and bunting (optional), pumpkin (can use a plastic jack-o-lantern or basketball as a substitute), speaker podium or staging area

Class Time: 20-30 minutes

Lesson Opening: The Pike Place Market was created by a vote of the Seattle City Council in early August 1907. The first day was August 17, but the Market wasn't officially dedicated until November 30. City Councilmember Thomas Revelle, who was vital to the positive vote of the council, gave the dedication speech to an enthusiastic crowd. He was an early Market Hero, just as Victor Steinbrueck was many decades later.

To set the scene, play a Sousa march or two as you instruct students. To break up the length of the speech, you may have more than one student be Thomas Revelle. Or, students can take turns being Thomas to read the entire speech.

The student actor portraying Thomas Revelle then approaches the podium, wearing a top hat. Before he gets to the podium, a farmer standing by gives Thomas a pumpkin. He sets the pumpkin in front of the podium and places his hat atop the pumpkin. The crowd quiets as he begins. The following text is the actual speech.

Students can coach the reader by helping with pronunciation and defining words in the speech. The text is for more advanced readers.

THOMAS REVELLE: "The public market is of the greatest possible moment to the householders of Seattle, and it is because they were impressed with its value to the community, especially to the workers of the community, that so many of them are here today. This is a glorious and auspicious occasion, but it is only the beginning of what will be the finest market system in the world..."

Some months ago, in Seattle, the question of how the average man was to get a sufficient supply of vegetables at a price within his means became a serious one. He was the victim of organized greed and, in spite of the fact that there was and is an abundance of all



good things in the country, his children were deprived of vegetables and fruit. Wages were, and are, good; but no matter how liberal an employer might be, he could not in those days pay money enough without going into bankruptcy to give his men's families a reasonable quantity of vegetables.

I saw this condition and it appealed to me, and I felt that I must do something to obtain a public market that would make conditions as they then existed impossible of perpetuation. I knew not how the matter could be accomplished, but I was determined if it took the whole of my public life to have a market; and this, you see, with the assistance of loyal citizens of all shades of political opinion, is the result.

The benefits have already proved to be immeasurable. Food products are reduced in cost. The man who could not feed his family properly a few months ago can give them more to eat, even if he has to work for less wages. The Market will in the future be the direct cause of the cultivation of immense tracts of land and cause apparently sterile fields to blossom as the rose; manufacturing industries will come as a result, because provision must be made for the multitudes who will grow vegetables and cultivate the soil.

The only trade that will not be benefited by the Market is the trade of graft. Every other trade will receive an immense impetus and the whole city, in fact the entire Puget Sound country, will reap a rich harvest from this enterprise. It is here to stay and there is no influence, no power, no combination and no set of either political or commercial grafters that will destroy it.

This market is yours. I dedicate it to you, and may it prove a benefit to you and your children. It is for you to defend, to protect and to uphold, and it is for you to see that those who occupy it treat you fairly; that no extortion be permitted and that the purpose for which it was created be religiously adhered to. This is one of the greatest days in the history of Seattle, but it is only a beginning for soon this city will have one of the greatest markets in the world."

The crowd applauds. Another Sousa march plays.

QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES:

1. Ask students if they have ever been to the dedication of a new place. Why do we have such ceremonies? Are they a tradition?
2. How important was the creation of the Pike Place Market to Thomas Revelle? What does he say in his speech that tells you this? Was he a Market hero? Why or why not?
3. How hard do you think it was for workers to feed their families before the Market started?

