Hidden Museum: A Behind-the-Scenes Tour for Contemporary Audiences

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Hidden Museum:  
A Behind-the-Scenes Tour for Contemporary Audiences

Keywords: Museum Studies; Behind-the-Scenes Tours; Multimedia Tour; Museum Film

by
Michael Benjamin Glazier

Capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Museum Studies

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December 15, 2016
I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Stephanie Brown, who was kind enough to remind me that “It is possible” right up to the end. I want to thank my parents, without whom attending this Masters program would not have been possible. To the staff at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s Museum Program, and the GLBT Museum, thank you for the opportunity to work alongside you. And to my fellow classmates I express my sincerest gratitude for your teamwork, and camaraderie. Your friendship has been worth every penny.
ABSTRACT

The mystery of what lies behind a museum’s closed doors has intrigued visitors and perpetuated museum mythology for decades. Whether it’s peeking into collections storage, or being guided through rooms off the exhibition floor, visitors want unique access to museum collections. This Master’s Capstone project investigates the topic of behind-the-scenes tours within museums, asks what they look like today, and how they will develop in the future. Using this research I have created a project proposal to film a behind-the-scenes tour that will solve questions of public visibility and collection access for a San Francisco area history museum. A successful implementation of this project will enable organizations and museums to engage with their audiences in a profound new way.

Keywords: Museum Studies; Behind-the-Scenes Tours; Multimedia Tour; Museum Film
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
The mystery behind the closed doors at a museum is a motivating curiosity for many museum visitors. We see this curiosity engaged in popular culture with the success of films like *Night at the Museum* (2006), and the television series *Mysteries at the Museum* (2010). It is utilized on social media with YouTube channels like The Brain Scoop produced by the Field Museum in Chicago, and on Twitter with the American Museum of Natural History’s @Giant_Dino Twitter feed. And it is addressed inside the museum directly with guided behind-the-scene tours. For this capstone I will be discussing behind-the-scene tours at museums, what motivates these tours, and what makes them successful. I will also look at how museums are utilizing film and media in order to communicate with stakeholders outside the walls of the museum, and how combining these discussions can bring behind-the-scenes of a museum to a contemporary audience.

Behind-the-scenes tours are a popular public program. Museums around the world have found a number of different ways to present information about their collection and institutional history. In London, the Victoria and Albert Museum offers a behind-the-scenes tour of their conservation studios free to the public. In Los Angeles, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County provides behind-the-scenes tours to museum members, and in New York City the Metropolitan Museum of Art offers *Travel with the Met*, where museum fans vacation with museum staff and get behind-the-scenes access to partnered museums from Russia to the Caribbean. The California Academy of Sciences here in San Francisco offers two versions of their behind-the-scenes tour, one that focuses on the museum collections stored away from the public floor, and another that teaches guests about their aquarium. Tours like these help to satisfy visitor curiosity about what is hidden away from the public. This capstone project endeavors to explore the value these experiences provide to the museum and the audiences they serve.
Many collection objects are kept away from the public floor for their own care and protection. They may be too sensitive to the environmental conditions of exhibition, or simply too big to fit in a public gallery. However, as non-profit organizations in the United States, museums have a fiduciary duty to the public to make their collections accessible. (Malaro & DeAngelis, 2012) Behind-the-scene tours fulfill this objective without unduly subjecting sensitive or restrictive objects to the risk of public exhibition. These tours have the potential to be excellent revenue earners for the museum and provide visitors with an opportunity to enhance their traditional visit. These issues are precisely why I have chosen to create this Capstone project on behalf of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s (GGNRA) Museum Program. The GGNRA is a division of the National Park Service (NPS) that is responsible for all national park lands within Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties in California. The division’s Museum Program acts as a working archive and cares for a collection of nearly 6.5 million items in four disciplines: Archives, Archaeology, History, and Natural History. They have almost no public exhibition space, and with the exception of archive researchers, do not have the capacity to cater to visits from the public. Creating a behind-the-scenes tour for the organization will showcase their significant collection, and provide them the opportunity to communicate with a new audience.

The Museum Program and Archive cares for the GGNRA object collection, and supports the landmarks within GGNRA territory, including Alcatraz, Muir Woods, and the Presidio of San Francisco, but has no formal museum. For this reason, the proposed behind-the-scene tour will be filmed. This allows for the greatest amount of access to the collection while under supervision by the Museum Program staff, and accounts for any government restrictions regarding non-employees entering government facilities. The final product will be made
available online on the GGNRA website as a for-purchase download or streaming video. This makes the experience available to the largest possible audience. The archive traditionally focuses on a local Bay Area audience, but an internet-based experience broadens that reach to gain potential global attention.

This capstone is divided into the following four chapters. A literature review is presented in Chapter 2. Here research about museum tours will be discussed along with the used of film and media inside the museum. Combining these two conversations will justify the value of the Capstone’s final product. In Chapter 3 a proposal for the final product is presented. This will include a detailed description of the product, along with the ultimate goals and objectives clearly identified. Chapter 4 will present a detailed project plan of the projects production, including the personnel required to complete the project, a detailed action list, and Gantt chart that covers the project from the beginning of production until completion. Finally, Chapter 5 will conclude with an analysis of the projects potential for success, and what I’ve learned through this process.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW
**Introduction**

After World War II a group of museum professionals, led by Edward W. Gifford and William R. Bascom, took it upon themselves to tour one another’s institutions in order to learn from each other’s practices, and establish better communication in the industry. According to Redman (2015) these behind-the-scenes tours ultimately led to the creation of many standards and practices used regularly in museums today, and helped establish the academic field of museum studies through its study and comparison of different institutions. Behind-the-scene tours look very different now, but it’s intriguing to know that what once began as a process for professional development has now turned into a popular entertainment experience for museum guests.

The behind-the-scenes tours of today are considered ‘specialty’ programs at museums. This means that they are unique to the individual institution, and not a regularly offered program in the majority of museums. Those that do offer behind-the-scenes tours allow them to fulfill a purpose of accessibility and communication with their visitors. In the chapter titled “Walking the Museum,” Leahy (2016) details the history and theory applied to the act of walking, or touring, through a museum. The act was once considered a meditative experience in a space that promoted solitary contemplation. Museums have now evolved to accommodate a more all-inclusive experience for a widespread and diverse audience. Leahy describes this evolution by saying “the contemporary imperative to extend museum access has produced an architectural typology that is designed to remove every barrier to admission, be it physical, social or cultural.” (p. 90) Behind-the-scenes tours are a tool used by museums to assist in the removal of barriers. They bring guests are off the public floor, and grant them entrance to parts of the museum intended for employees only. This breaks the physical barrier of access to the museum collection,
as well as a barrier between guests and staff. Knowledge of museum operations in turn generates guest engagement through a sense of ownership and camaraderie with the museum.

This literature review will research behind-the-scenes tours in museums, what they look like today, and what they can evolve into in the future. Behind-the-scenes tours assist in accessibility and guest engagement. Many museums use interactive and multi-media technology to accomplish similar goals. I will also research the use of technology by museums to engage the public, and look at the potential for a media based behind-the-scenes tour. There are many museums for which the operations of behind-the-scenes tours are not practical. The merger of tours and technology may provide a solution to such institutions.

For the purposes of this project, I define behind-the-scenes tours as guided experiences that show visitors areas within the museum not readily accessible to the general public, and collection objects not displayed in exhibition galleries. These experiences must be exclusive, meaning that they are not included in the general museum visit, but are offered as a separate event to enhance the museumgoers visit.

**Guided Tours**

At the 2014 American Alliance of Museums’ (AAM) annual conference a lecture titled *Behind the Scenes: Inviting Guests into Restricted Areas* was presented. This became one of the most influential sources I discovered in my research, because it directly addresses the practice of behind-the-scenes tours in contemporary museums. Presented at the lecture was an exploratory study of 25 different museums, all of which provided optional behind-the-scene tours to guests. The museum’s websites were reviewed, and the logistical information found was compared with the others in order to provide insight into the trends and outliers of the practice within the museum industry. According to the study, history museums and historical sites are the most
common institutions to provide behind-the-scenes tours, 85% of the researched museums charged an additional fee to attend a tour, and the vast majority of them require preregistration before guests arrive at the museum. Preregistration assists collection management departments maintain the standard of collection stewardship, defined by the AAM as a museum’s effort to implement “appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety and security of people, its collections and/or objects, and the facilities it owns or use (AAM, 2008, p. 46).” For the safety of both objects and guests it is important to be aware of all people entering storage facilities at all times.

Each speaker at the lecture expanded this study by providing detailed analysis of the operations involved in behind-the-scenes tours at their own institutions. Included in the panel were representatives from the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Cranbrook Art Museum, Burke Museum of Natural History, and the Oregon Coast Aquarium. I was struck by the consensus among panelists to promote collaboration with education and curatorial departments during the development of tours. In an interview with the Specialty Tours and Sleepover Manager at the California Academy of Sciences, I learned that tours at that institution are organized under the sales department, and that he and other members of the tour staff structure the tours (B. Papciak, personal communication, October 9, 2016). The education and collections departments are only consulted when necessary. This more insular construction of tours in both development and script is most similar to the Oregon Coast Aquarium tours. In both institutions, live animals are a concern alongside object collections, and therefore flexibility in tour content is strongly discouraged.

Comparisons between different museums teach us that behind-the-scenes tours are adaptable to a variety of institutions with different mission priorities. By examining how
museums of different disciplines plan and implement behind the scenes tours, it is clear that this is a programmatic tool that allows for a more intimate visitor enrichment experience in a variety of disparate institutions. They accomplish the goal of accessing collection items not on display, while at the same time providing institutions the opportunity to demonstrate their uniqueness to guests.

An article by Bartkowiak (2012) discusses the behind-the-scene tours available at Disney World. Gaining a perspective from a for-profit company with more than 16 million annual guests is beneficial to the discussion of tour development, because Disney World does not have the same budgetary restrictions as a non-profit and can therefore provide creative inspiration for new tour possibilities. Most important in this article is the success behind-the-scenes tours at Disney World have at creating an environment of exclusivity for tour guests. Disney recognizes the human desire for individualism and exceptionalism. On several of their tours they create opportunities to tour guests to view the general public from backstage at the park in order to reinforce the value of the experience they’ve purchased. During the “Keys to the Kingdom” tour guests are taken through back doors on Main Street USA while the general public is shopping out front, and they use an alternative entrance to “Pirates of the Caribbean” bypassing the ride’s queue. Adding to the experience is the tour guides, who are trained to consistently emulate the theme park’s mission. No matter how intimate the group, or how long the tour lasts, as representatives of Disney World the tour guides always remain on task, and never break from the approved Disney Cast Member persona. By consistently reiterating the brand’s mission and highlighting the exclusivity of the tour experience, Disney behind-the-scenes tours are a successful example of this programmatic tool.
Bartkowiak and the *Behind the Scenes: Inviting Guests into Restricted Areas* lecture emphasize the importance of properly training tour guides because of the intimate relationship between guide and guest. Best (2012) agrees with acknowledging the importance of this relationship. Tours are an act of engagement with a small audience, and tour guiding is a practiced skill. The tour itself is a unique experience for guests, but it is the guide who acts as the museum’s representative and facilitates a relationship between guest and museum. Therefore, studying the practice best helps museums to capitalize on the opportunity for public engagement that those tours present.

**INTRODUCING TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is changing the visitor’s relationship with museums. Pulh and Mencarelli (2015) teach us that because of Web 2.0 technology visitors are more engaged and more interactive with exhibits than ever before. Web 2.0 is a term used to describe user generated and interactive digital content, and the expansion of social media. Following a museum on Twitter, or using a museum’s mobile app are examples of how a guest can interact with a museum through Web 2.0 technology. Mobile apps, websites, and digital collections provide visitors greater access to museum content, while social media puts guests in direct contact with museum staff to voice opinions about exhibits and their experiences at the museum. This prevalence of technology has re-formatted the museum visit, and changed the way professionals need to anticipate guest needs. New expectations of engagement through technology need to be met in order to satisfy this generation of museumgoers.

Gontar (2015) discusses the new digital practices of museums. Mobile devices and Web 2.0 technology can now provide public access without having the visitor step inside the museum. Museums like The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre are taking advantage of these
technologies, and engaging a global audience through social media, and making their collections available online. This action of accessibility accomplishes a similar goal to that of behind-the-scene tours. Now entire collections can be presented to the public without the restrictions of object care or gallery space.

This conversation about the use of technology in museums is important because it acknowledges a stylistic evolution within museums and the way they communicate with their audience. Tours are traditionally an in-person experience, but advances in interactive technology can provide alternative methods to expand the concept of tours beyond the traditional approach. Naismith and Smith (2009) inform us of a study performed at the Lapworth Museum of Geology in Birmingham, England to test the effectiveness of mobile technology based tours within their museum. They explain that the museum itself is limited in its capacity to update the physical exhibits and gallery spaces due to the historic value of the museum’s building, therefore the goal of the study was “to explore the use of mobile technology to deliver learner-centered experiences to visitors, while retaining the traditional look and feel of the museum” (p. 251) They concluded that technology can be introduced to the museum and enhance the learning experience without sacrificing the aesthetic appeal of the museum, and that the mobile tour exceeded expectations in terms of popularity with visitors.

Behind-the-scenes tours provide museums the opportunity for greater public access to their collections, and intimate engagement with the visitors. Combining this practice with interactive technology can expand that accessibility outside of the museum, and assist to engage a contemporary audience.
**Viewership Theory**

In researching behind-the-scenes tours I wanted to explore options for museums that don’t have the institutional capacity to operate tours on a regular basis. As discussed in the previous section, Web 2.0 technologies and digital media offer solutions to increase collection accessibility, audience engagement, and can be applied as an alternative to traditional guided tours. In order to fully understand how these tools can affectively be applied to behind-the-scenes tours, I wanted to learn about viewership theory within the museum, and compare that to viewership within cinema and screen arts. How does a viewer’s relationship to the institution differ from an in person experience to one provided on a screen?

Connolly (2013) cites the scholarship of Ian White and Laura Marks to explain the similarities and differences between spectatorship of museum exhibition and cinema. White theorizes the similarities between cinema and museum, and suggests that cinema can become a type of museum “based upon the principles of impermanence, immediacy, the temporal and the temporary, manifest in the minds of an audience who experience it in the space and time of the auditorium that is the museum’s permutating exhibition, and who are its active, defining agent (White, 2008, p. 14).” To paraphrase, this means that any exhibition, whether it is an exhibition of objects or cinema, is defined by the spectator’s experience and memory of the content. The viewership activity in a theatre audience is comparable to that of a museumgoer; therefore, programmatic professionals should build experiences with this understanding of an ephemeral and diverse audience in mind.

In her work, Marks remarks that the primary difference between gallery and theatre viewing experiences center on engagement duration. Cinema exhibition creates an immersive experience, because the audience’s attention is devoted to the screen for the full duration of the
experience. There is a single focal point, and a predetermined engagement experience, thereby removing the cinema viewer from any active role in the consumption of the cinematic media.

Gallery viewing in contrast is “a more “cognitive” response, because gallery-goers engage only with the idea of duration (Connolly, 2013, p. 2).” Gallery viewers determine the length of time they choose to spend in an exhibit on their own, as well as which parts of the exhibit they want to engage with. This mode of viewership is more active, and the resulting visitor experience is defined solely by the choices made in the gallery space.

Like the progress of introducing mobile technology into exhibition spaces, the viewership of cinema has evolved from the projector-screen format to now include home theaters, DVDs, mobile devices, and streaming video. Pantenburg (2014) takes readers through this evolution from the 1960’s to the present, and merges film theory with museum theory to evaluate the state of viewership today and how it got there. He argues that viewership inside the museum is ‘distracted.’ Guests have objects, text, and the building itself to draw their attention as they wander through the gallery, while theaters strive to create an immersive experience by creating an environment of focused attention. With the prevalent availability of interactive technology today, that immersive nature of cinema has now changed into a more possessive spectator experience. Home theaters can supply the same sense of ownership to film viewing that the museum gallery does in exhibits. Smart TVs and streaming apps provide at will viewing choices, and provide viewers a distracted but pensive experience.

In contrast to the distracted viewers at home, film experiences in museums are often crafted to be immersive in their presentation. Griffiths (2008) discusses the growth of cinema in museums to include planetarium and IMAX theaters in their facilities. Both of these styles of theaters have large curved screens that give a sensation of movement from the theater seats. They
are the ultimate experience in immersive viewing. The physical theater creates a focused environment, and the film engages senses other than sight and sound. This creation of immersion within museums shows how cinema and museums have learned from each other’s success in the past. Media today is increasingly distracted. Technology allows film viewers to curate their own playlists, while museums want to provide guests exclusivity by utilizing cinematic technology to create immersive experiences.

Behind the scenes tours are where the immersive experience of cinema is emulated in-person. During a tour it is the guide’s responsibility to direct the guest’s attention to a carefully curated selection of objects with the constructed script, and the environment is no longer a distraction to the guest because the subject of behind the scenes tours is the institution itself. This is where gallery viewing marries the cinematic experience.

**Practical Output**

This research leads to the idea of merging behind-the-scenes tours with cinema and interactive technology to create a filmed tour available online. Behind-the-scenes tours are immersive in bringing the unseen to the tour goers, but not a practical option for many institutions due to their invasive nature and operational restrictions. However, by producing the tour as a filmed video, it can still provide museum guests’ accessibility to non-exhibited collection items, and engage the audience from the comfort of their home. Cinema is an immersive experience when presented in a theater, but today’s consumer has the option of spectator flexibility with mobile devices, and Web 2.0 technology. A filmed tour can still provide guest engagement, as well as the flexibility a tech savvy audience desires.

In terms of the project’s value, Kucharska (2014) would argue that film-induced tourism is an increasingly legitimate way to promote a museum. The final product will not be on the
same scale as a Hollywood blockbuster; however, it will be available online to a global audience. “Film,” Kucharska comments, “even as a secondary motivator, may be an important medium for education and promotion, which can be used by a museum (37).” The Smithsonian used this tactic when they created educational worksheets in tandem with the film *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian,* and so did the Museum of Scotland with the premiere of Pixar’s *BRAVE.* In both cases audiences were drawn to the museum by films, demonstrating the potential marketing value for a video tour available outside of the museum.

On a smaller scale than Hollywood, Kehl (2016) tells us about the successful uses of YouTube channels to promote museums. The Field Museum in Chicago, and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, both produce successful YouTube channels that educate a global audience and act as museum marketing tool at the same time. The channels are episodic in the style of a television series, and utilize their museums for content and setting. Should the filmed behind the scenes tour be determined a success, it could act as a precursor to the creation of a YouTube channel. The intended goals of accessibility and engagement remain the same, but YouTube provides the opportunity to continuously update the content a museum wants to share with its audience. If the behind-the-scenes tour finds an audience then a YouTube channel would be a powerful tool on continue that audience interaction.
CHAPTER 3

PROPOSAL OF A MUSEUM SOLUTION
**PROPOSED PROJECT**

I propose the creation of a behind-the-scenes tour for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s (GGNRA) Museum Program. This behind-the-scenes tour will be filmed, and made available to the public online in both streaming and downloadable formats. The GGNRA Museum Program facilities are not accessible to the general public for in-person tours; however, this filmed experience will be formatted to emulate a traditional tour experience. It will feature a host, who will act as the production’s tour guide, and the Museum Program Supervisory Curator and Curator & Reference Archivist will curate the video’s content.

Featured collection items will include rarely exhibited objects, such as the FBI evidence from the 1962 Alcatraz escape, a taxidermy sea lion from the original Sutro Baths structure, and archaeological findings from Fort Mason. The tour will look inside three storage facilities for the GGNRA collection, and it will include interviews with current Museum Program staff members detailing their duties when working with the collection items. The video will be approximately one hour in length.

The final product will be sold as a revenue generator. According to research from the previous chapter, a majority of behind-the-scene tours presented at museums cost guests a fee in addition to the general admission ticket. Therefore, charging audience members for the experience is inline with standard tour practices. All proceeds will go towards the care of the collection. It will be featured on the Museum Program webpage and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy online bookstore, and sold through iTunes. The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy is a non-profit partner of the GGNRA that administers product and gift sales on their behalf.
Copies of the tour will be made available free of charge to all GGNRA departments. This is intended to promote future interdepartmental cooperation by educating staff in unrelated departments about the Museum Program, and creating interest within our own NPS division. The video will also be provided to local high schools and universities to inform them of the archive as an accessible research facility for the local public.

**Organization Details**

The GGNRA is a division of the National Park Service (NPS) that is responsible for all national park lands within Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties in California. This includes such national landmarks as Alcatraz, the Presidio of San Francisco, Muir Woods, and five former U.S. military bases within the lands. The division acts in accordance with the NPS Mission Statement:

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.¹

The GGNRA’s Museum Program cares for nearly 6.5 million objects in four disciplines: Archives, Archaeology, History, and Natural History. It manages all object storage facilities, operates the division’s archive, and collects any new objects related to the GGNRA parks. The *Golden Gate National Recreation Area Scope of Collections Statement* was updated most recently in 2015, and is best summarized by the Purpose of the Scope of Collections Statement:

¹ See Appendix C for References
This Scope of Collections Statement (SOCS) defines the scope of present and future museum collection holding of Golden Gate NRA that contribute directly to the understanding and interpretation of the park’s purpose, themes and resources, as well as those objects that the Service is legally mandated to preserve. It is designed to ensure that the museum collection is clearly relevant to the park. (p. 2)

The collecting and object care practices of the department adhere to the standards established by the NPS Museum Management Program. These published works are available through the NPS Museum Management Program website.²

The greatest challenge of the GGNRA Museum Program is its lack of visibility to the public. The Museum Program is a small organization with only five employees, and has limited exhibition opportunity throughout the GGNRA sites. This means that despite its large and historically significant collection it receives very few visitors throughout the year, and have only rare opportunities to display the collection for public view. The most notable exhibition opportunity is the department’s annual Open House event. Every summer the staff host an Open House to display some of their most unique objects, and to demonstrate what the employees do as museum professionals. The 2016 Open House included displays about caring for aging photographs and documents, rehousing of collection objects, and the dangers of working in facilities conducive to mold and pests. The 2016 event more than doubled the number of visitors from 2015, and the response to the temporary exhibits was overwhelmingly positive. Guests were eager to inquire about permanent viewing opportunities for the collection, and for additional information regarding object care procedures that they can emulate at home. The

² See Appendix C for References
success of the event is important to acknowledge, because it provides evidence that an audience does exist for the GGNRA collection.

Creating greater visibility for the GGNRA collection is the inspiration for this Capstone project. I seek a solution that provides access to the collection and a museum experience for the public audience, while not interfering with the restrictions of a small government organization with no exhibition gallery space available.

**Goal 1: Accessibility**

The first primary goal for this project is to create greater accessibility to the museum’s collection for a wider range of the public. Traditional non-profit museums are required by law to make their collections accessible to public. (Malaro & DeAngelis, 2012) As part of a government organization the GGNRA is not an independent non-profit organization, however, its collection is public record. Therefore, a required standard of accessibility still exists. A behind-the-scenes tour will help to accomplish this requirement by making objects not on exhibition available for viewing. This behind-the-scenes tour is unique because its filmed format allows the institution to accomplish its goal of greater accessibility to a broader audience than traditional tours do by being transferable through technology. This experience is not limited to a physical museum. It can be viewed anywhere a screen and Internet access is available.

**Objective 1:**

Objects restricted from public display will be featured prominently. As a small institution without exhibition space it is difficult to adequately represent the full collection to the public. This tour will allow viewers to know the full extent of the museum’s collection, and allow the staff to feature objects that are otherwise unable to be put on display either
due to restrictive care needs or safety measures. For example, the GGNRA has several military objects in storage that are too large to be moved from storage for exhibition. Tanks and missile parts can’t be responsibly moved into viewing areas for the public, but this tour would allow them to be featured and help the museum retain its duty to the public.

**Objective 2:**

The tour will be available for viewing online. In-person tours have physical limitations to attending the museum. A media based tour provides access to the collection for guests who wouldn’t normally be able to visit. Persons with disabilities and interested audiences who are unable to travel to San Francisco can now learn about the institution, and experience a virtual visit.

**Goal 2: Visibility**

The second primary goal of the video tour is to amplify the visibility of the Museum Program and archive among the local public. The Museum Program staff wants to increase knowledge of their collection, and encourage visitation to the archive. The inclusion of staff interviews, and details about the archive will accomplish this by educating viewers about the archive’s capabilities and the services they provide to researchers. The marketing and viewership of this video tour will increase visibility of the archive, and will therefore potentially increase visitation to the archive. The GGNRA Archive is open to the public twice a week, and an increase of visitors from before the release of the video would factor into qualifying the project as a success.
**Objective 1:**

Copies of the film will be distributed to all departments within the GGNRA. This will educate our own colleagues about the archive, and promote future inter-departmental collaborations for public programming, and exhibitions. The GGNRA is a large organization, and the Museum Program is a small department within it. Educating the whole organization about the archive in a memorable way will remind them about the benefits of working with the archive.

**Objective 2:**

Copies of the film will be distributed to local schools and other educational organizations. This is a market of local researchers that is not directly addressed by the Museum Program. Visibility among these communities has the potential to significantly increase visitor numbers at the archive.

**Goal 3: Revenue**

Currently, the only source of revenue within the department is archive services. This includes copies, scans, and printing of archival materials to be used for research projects or publications. Sales of the video tour will increase the department’s revenue, which will provide greater standards of care for the collection and additional special projects for the department. All proceeds will go towards the care of the collection.

**Objective 1:**

Viewers will be charged $14.95 to purchase the video tour, and $5.95 for a rental. This price was based on the prices of behind-the-scene tours provided at other museums discussed in previous chapters of this report, and compared with the pricing of online
video rentals on iTunes and the pricing of movie tickets on Fandango.com and MovieTickets.com.

**Objective 2:**

Heightened visibility to the local public has the potential to lead to more use of archive services. The tour will address the archive’s assets, and what the archive can provide to researchers. This marketing of the archive will promote its use, thereby generating more income for the department.

The listed goals and objectives will act as the standards by which the project’s success is measured. The project will not be considered complete until each objective has been addressed, and each goal has been analyzed in relation to the project’s final product. This project will help to preserve the GGNRA’s history, and teach viewers how the division’s Museum Program acts to further the mission of the NPS through its collection management, curatorial, and archival practices.
CHAPTER 4

ACTION PLAN
This chapter interprets the goals and objectives from the previous chapter into specific actions, and provides a plan and timeline for the proposed behind-the-scenes tour video.

**Project Title**

Hidden History: Behind-the-Scenes at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s Museum Program

**Background and Strategic Context**

The GGNRA Museum Program wants more visibility within its own organization, local community, and the national museum community. The staff wants a solution to showcase the collection, as well as their skills as museum professionals, without a public exhibition space. Filming a behind-the-scenes tour will attract a wide-ranging audience, and allow them access to the tour from their own home. This gives the Museum Program and the collection visibility, as well as grants the public access to a rarely seen collection.

**Scope of Project**

The scope of this filmed behind-the-scenes tours is only of that which the GGNRA Museum Program is responsible. Storage facilities, objects, archive materials, and employees of the department can be utilized for the project based on approval from the Supervisory Curator. Content involving other GGNRA departments or the NPS as a whole, that is not currently managed directly by the Museum Program is outside the scope of the film’s content. This is a government facility and collection; therefore, all government restrictions such as location specifics and sensitive material will be considered before filming. Details regarding the funding application and approval process will not be discussed here, as that falls under the regulation of
government officials not directly associated with the Museum Program. It will be assumed that
the application process has meet the Superintendent’s approval, and that all required financing
will be included in the department’s budget for the 2017 fiscal year. The Museum Program does
operate offsite storage that is not to be named directly. Inside the facilities may be shown at the
Supervisory Curator’s discretion, but the exterior will not be filmed at any time.

DELIVERABLES

A digital video of the tour titled Hidden History: Behind-the-Scenes at the Golden Gate
National Recreation Area’s Museum Program (approx. 1hr 0min) will be available for purchase
or rental on iTunes. The National Park Service is already approved to sell movies on iTunes, and
the GGNRA video will be offered under their account. The websites for the Golden Gate
National Parks Conservancy and the GGNRA will both advertise the video and provide links to
the purchasing webpage. The video will cost $14.95 for purchase, and $5.95 for a rental. A
limited number of DVDs will be produced for the purposes of educational programming, and
distributed to NPS staff and local educational institutions at the discretion of the Supervisory
Curator. This can be reevaluated at a later date depending on the video’s success, and whether or
not there is a demand for physical DVDs.

TIMELINE

This will be a 7-month project. Project action will begin January 1, 2017, and will
conclude the weekend of July 21st and 22nd at the Museum Program Department’s annual Open
House event. This event will also serve as a release party for the department’s new film.
Distribution of the product will continue past this date; however, all production actions and will
conclude at this time. The contracted Project Manager will conclude employment with the
Museum Program in October 2017, three months after production has concluded. During that time they will oversee the distribution of the video, its social media marketing, and troubleshoot any distribution issues once the video is available to the public.

**Funding**

Special projects for the National Park Service receive funding from outside of the GGNRA annual operating budget. Funding applications must be submitted to the National Parks Service, and approved at least one year in advance. Once approved the project will be included in the following year’s department budget.

**Personnel**

The staff involved with the project will consist of three full-time GGNRA employees, and four contract employees who will be hired on a temporary basis specifically for this project.

**Supervisory Curator:**

Supervising manager of the GGNRA Museum Program. Will have significant input on the tour’s content, and object selection. This position is ultimately responsible for the department’s mission, and the making sure the message presented in the tour meets the standards of the National Parks Service. All stages of the project will need to be signed-off by the Supervisory Curator.

**Curator & Reference Archivist:**

This position is responsible for the daily operations of the archive, and supervises contract employees and interns. The Curator & Reference Archivist will be primarily responsible for the writing of the tour’s script in collaboration with the contracted Director, and with approval by the
Supervisory Curator. Will also be responsible for all scheduling and accessibility concerns within the NPS.

**Museum Objects Specialist:**

All museum objects and facilities will be examined, evaluated, and prepared for filming by the Museum Objects Specialist. They will work with the Curator & Reference Archivist to select the most unique objects to represent the overall collection, and be responsible for their care during the project.

**Project Manager:**

This is a contract position that will be hired by the Supervisory Curator and Curator & Reference Archivist. Their contract will be for a term of 10-months. They will focus solely on the behind-the-scenes tour project, and act as the Production Coordinator for the production. They will manage the project task list, and be responsible for project deadlines. The 10-month contract will surpass production wrap and the July 21st release date in order for the Project Manager to monitor initial video reception, and troubleshoot unforeseen problems with the videos release. They will be primarily responsible for distribution to other NPS department, and local schools.

**Director:**

Contracted to act as the director and editor of the behind-the-scenes video. The Director will be responsible for the actual filming and editing of the product. They will be consulted on script writing, content, and Tour Guide casting. They will be involved throughout the development phase of the project, on-set at all times during filming, and will act as editor during post-production. This contract will conclude on the July 21st video release date.
**Camera & Sound Operator:**
Contracted to operate all camera and sound equipment during the filming process. They will collaborate with the Director for the pre-production planning, and filming. They will be responsible for all equipment, cinematography, and digital files filmed during production. Only contracted for the production phase of the project.

**Lighting Technician:**
Contracted to operate all lighting equipment during the filming process. They will collaborate with the Director for the pre-production planning, and filming. They will be responsible for all lighting equipment used during production. Only contracted for the production phase of the project.

**Tour Guide & Voiceover Performer:**
A performer will be cast to act as the Tour Guide for the production, and will be used as the voiceover artist for the production. They will only be contracted during filming production.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION
**PROJECT RESULTS**

The purpose of this Capstone has been to research behind-the-scenes tours in museums, discover what they look like today, and ask where they can go in the future. This research was then applied to the GGNRA Museum Program, a small museum department within the NPS, to create a tour that will exhibit their collection to the public, and will increase visibility of the organization with audiences near and far. The video tour puts their hidden collection on display, and by involving the employees establishes them publicly as authorities in archive practices and collections management.

The success of this project will be measured by the number of video downloads purchased, and public attendance at the archive’s reference hours following the video’s release. The Museum Program’s only current revenue stream is from archive services, therefore, any sales from the video will benefit the department. Any trend of increased visitation resulting from the marketing of the video can be easily identified, because all visitors attending archive reference hours must sign-in to the building and identify their reason for using the archive. As local schools will be receiving the video for free, tracking visitation numbers is an important metric in determining the success of this project. Video sales and attendance records will be recorded and distributed to the Supervisory Museum Curator and the Chief of Cultural Resources & Museum Management for evaluation. These results will be used in the future when applying for special project funding as a measure of success that the department can accomplish.

This video is also being distributed free-of-charge to all other departments within the GGNRA. The department wishes to increase its involvement in educational programming throughout the parks. This video will serve as a guide to how the Museum Program can
contribute to other department’s events. Any inter-departmental collaboration credited to the video will be marked as a success for the project.

Moving forward after this project I would recommend an active social media presence for the GGNRA Museum Program. The video will provide enough content to jumpstart a new initiative and draw-in a following on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The potential for an episodic YouTube channel similar to those discussed by Kehl (2016) exists as long as the video proves itself to find an audience. The channel can focus on the history of the San Francisco Bay Area, the GGNRA’s collection, and the jobs of the program’s professional staff. How-To tutorials about caring for and preserving your own photos and artwork at home can be made available on this platform. This will increase the programs’ educational content, and begin educational programming specific to the Museum Program. A large-scale YouTube channel would require additional permanent staff members in order to produce the content, and manage the channel. This would need to be considered for future department budgets. The activation of Facebook and Twitter accounts can be accomplished with the current staffing structure of the department.

Expanding on this the video tour can be an asset to NPS Museum Management Program nation-wide. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the NPS Museum Management Program has published the standards and practices used for collections management and record keeping throughout the entire NPS system. This video demonstrates the practical implementation of these standards and practices and can validate their use and effectiveness to viewers. There are NPS collections across the nation that are also without exhibition opportunity and those divisions can benefit from the videos success as well.
CONTINUING RESEARCH

This project solves problems of accessibility and visibility for a small institution limited by the bounds of their affiliation with the federal government. Whereas most museums in the U.S. are able to set mission directives and programmatic direction internally, the GGNRA Museum Program has the direct oversight of the national government. Further research into government regulations surrounding access to the collection objects and storage facilities will need to be done before the project is submitted for funding. If this project were to be adapted for a non-profit museum, further research would be required for funding opportunities. Grants and fundraising options are not applicable to the NPS operations, and were therefore outside the scope of this project.

In a previous chapter of this capstone project, I have proved the theoretical and philosophical value of behind-the-scenes tours. These engagement opportunities reflect the movement towards a museum without barriers; essentially, these tours enable museum stakeholder’s greater access to the collection objects and the stories that make them important. Further research is required to fully understand how these tours impact museum-guest relationships after the tour is completed; how these tours impact membership sales; and how these tours impact museum visitorship. The practice of tour guiding, and the operations of behind-the-scenes tours is discussed, but studying whether or not the intimate engagement of a tour establishes a continued relationship with the guest would answer questions about the practical value of behind-the-scenes tours in museums.

CONCLUSION

As the literature review illustrates, behind-the-scenes tours have a historical resonance within the museum profession. Beginning as a professional development opportunity that led to
the foundations of Museum Studies as an academic field, and progressing to the contemporary educational guide for the general public, behind-the-scenes tours are an valuable tool for museums to communicate with their audience. The evolution in the format of such programs is a reflection of the changing import of these institutions to the communities in which they belong. What I learned from this project is the importance of acknowledging the uniqueness of individual institutions when developing a special program such as a behind-the-scenes tour. Just like the researchers mentioned in Redman’s (2015) article learned, museums have different operations, needs, and restrictions. This means that programs like behind-the-scenes tours need individualized development catered to those specific needs. A video tour available online solves specific problems for the GGNRA Museum Program, whereas in-person tours at the California Academy of Sciences create an exclusive experience to enhance guest’s visit to an already popular destination. What works for one museum does not necessarily fit the needs of another.

During the development of this project I was surprised to learn that film theory research would be so applicable to museum studies. Comparing theories of viewership from the two different areas of study validated the creation of my project’s deliverable. It established how communication with audiences can be developed in both settings, and how film can be used to adapt museum experiences into a different medium. In-person tours are an immersive experience that caters to individualized attention and personal contact with the museum’s collection, and film viewing is immersive because it limits divergent viewer experiences seen in the gallery, and focuses that attention on a singular source – the screen. Merging these is agreeable in both their relationship with the viewer, and their relationship to the institution.

We live in an age of information and technology, and museums must adapt to that reality in order to stay relevant to their audience. At the beginning of this project my primary concern
was creating accessibility to a collection that is valuable to the Bay Area community, but has no opportunity for public exhibition. Behind-the-scenes tours solve the issue of accessibility, but it is the use of contemporary technology for the video’s distribution that makes the collection available worldwide. It is adaptable to different forms of communication technology, and has the potential to inspire greater communication between the GGNRA Museum Program and the public.
APPENDIX A
Annotated Bibliography


In his essay, M. Bartkowiak describes in detail the different behind-the-scene tours available at Disney World. Through first-hand experience and by interviewing tour guides, he analyzes the popularity of the tours and the guests’ motivation for wanting to join the exclusive club of tour-goers. This article helps my research, because it provides specifics about the operating practices for a variety of tour options, and thoroughly explores the audience’s desire for exceptionalism when participating in a behind-the-scenes tour. Motivation for participation is an important factor to consider when creating these experiences, and Bartkowiak provides substantial evidence of Disney World’s success at motivating guests.


Tour guiding in museums is a little studied practice. This article identifies the questions that still need answers about providing tours in museums, and uses what can be found to compile the best practices of tour guides. This is important, because it provides an understanding of what tour guides do and how they best interact with their audiences. Tours are an act of engagement with a small audience, and tour guiding is a practiced skill. This needs to be considered in any discussion of specialty tours within an institution in order to produce consistently engaging experiences for guests.

This article will be helpful to my research because of its discussion of the theoretical differences between museum gallery and movie spectatorship. Connolly’s discussion of theories by Ian White is used to connect the similarities in viewership inside galleries and at the movie theater. In contrast, Connolly uses theories by Laura Marks to distinguish them as different experiences by suggesting theatrical viewing as immersive, and gallery viewing as “cognitive.” These theories will justify the value to my final video tour, and help shape its production.


There is a growing trend for museums to use digitized collections, virtual tours, and even games to encourage personal contact between guests and the museum. I will argue that behind-the-scenes tours provide similar benefits to a museum, and that by making such a tour available digitally a museum can reach a new audience that other forms of digital outreach may not. This article is important because it provides data from museums with a varied digital presence (i.e. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre), and compares the viewership numbers of all digital imprints.


Film experiences in museums are often crafted to be immersive in their presentation. Behind the scenes tours are immersive in bringing the unseen to the tour goers. I plan on combining these two immersive experiences with my final project. *Shivers Down Your*
Spine details the history of the viewer’s “gaze” within gallery spaces, and brings it to the present with the inclusion of IMAX and planetarium theaters in museums.


This lecture was presented at the 2014 AAM Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo. It is crucial to my research, because it is the source that most directly addresses the practice of producing behind-the-scenes tours in museums presently. Speakers from the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Cranbrook Art Museum, Burke Museum of Natural History, and the Oregon Coast Aquarium each detail the tour operations at their institutions, and present an exploratory study of 25 different museums that identifies operational trends and outliers of the practice. The results of the study are discussed with the audience, and best practices are surmised in response.


YouTube channels have proven to be a valuable asset to museums as educational tools that can reach an audience outside the scope of their direct public audience. In her article, Winifred Kehl details the channels produced by the Field Museum in Chicago, and the American Museum of Natural History as examples of successful channels that have engaged an audience outside of the museum. Museums are highly trusted to provide accurate information, and the use of YouTube has demonstrated that these museums can continue to live up to that trust in a way that is relevant to contemporary public. This is important to my project, because it positively demonstrates the use of the internet to create accessibility to museum programming.

The popularity of film tourism is ever growing, and can be used to the advantage of institutions like museums that rely on tourists as guests. As detailed in this article, museums throughout Europe and America have created partnerships with popular films in an attempt to draw in new audiences. The cooperation between museums and film tourism is one of the primary inspirations for my final project. Creating a behind the scenes tour in a media format can draw in and engage a new audience by creating a fan base from insider information of the institution.


The museum experience is separated into 3 phases: pre, during, and post visit. Using technology museums can extend the visitor experience. This essay is beneficial to my research, because it provides practical models to use online methods of engaging visitors. My final project will aim to engage visitors in the pre visit phase, with the ultimate goal of providing a more memorable during phase.


Between 1988 and 1990, Sharon Macdonald studied the behind the scenes activities of the Science Museum, London. This was an ethnographic study, but the resulting book revealed the intrigue of looking at the backstage of a museum, and provided readers an insiders look at the decision making process for what objects were featured in exhibitions and what was kept behind closed doors. This is important for my research, because it
discusses the allure of knowing what’s happening behind the scenes at museums. Macdonald writes about the difference between what is presented to the public and what is not, and provides context to what information should or should not be provided to the general public.


“The primary aim of this study was to explore the use of mobile technology to deliver learner-centered experiences to visitors, while retaining the traditional look and feel of the museum.” (p.251) This article presents a study conducted at the Lapworth Museum of Geology in Birmingham, U.K. that tested the use of mobile apps to lead educational tours. The result of the study is analyzed, and the practical aspect of technology-based tours is discussed. This article provides practical evidence, and demonstrates how educational content can be successfully communicated through technology.


The chapter titled “Walking the Museum” details the history and theory applied to the act of walking through a museum. The act was once considered a meditative experience, however, it has now evolved to accommodate a greater general public. “The contemporary imperative to extend museum access has produced an architectural typology that is designed to remove every barrier to admission, be it physical, social or cultural.” (p. 90) I will argue that behind the scenes tours are also a tool used by museums to remove barriers from the guests walking through the museum. This article is important for historical context of the museum’s relationship with guests, and the cultural
evolution of the walking inside these institutions. Behind-the-scenes tours are a transitional program that moves the museum experience away from the meditative, and into the barrier-less environment.


Classic film theory intersects with museum theory thanks to the invention of mobile media devices (phones, tablets, DVD players, etc.). Film viewers were once considered stagnant in the theaters while museum visitors moved through the space. Now that distinction blurs, and film viewers can be equally as integrated into a physical space as the museum audience. This article is important for my research, because it brings viewership theory for both museums and film to the present. I will use this intersection to argue for the value of a filmed museum tour, and reason its usefulness in a present day museum environment.


The use of handheld technology, social media, and Web 2.0 mobile accessibility has transformed the relationship between museum and guest, and made it possible for visitors to be participatory in exhibits. Web 2.0 access grants more extensive access to collections, and provides greater communication between visitor and museum staff. This article looks at different types of current Web 2.0 technology and analyzes how its use can enhance the visitor experience at a museum. This is important to my research because it provides justification of using commercial practices to promote a museum.

After World War II the landscape of American museums changed drastically in an era of recovery for the American citizens. A group of leaders in the museum community took it upon themselves to tour each other’s institutions and thereby created the standards and practices used regularly in museums today. These tours allowed for the first studies of museums, and this article will provide historical context for museum tours. Tours are important to museums, because they directly assisted in the creation of Museum Studies as an academic and professional field.
The project stakeholders are listed as follows:

- **Golden Gate National Recreation Area**
  A division of the National Park Service that comprises of all national park lands within Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties in California. This includes such national landmarks as Alcatraz, Muir Woods National Monument, NIKE Missile Site, and the Presidio of San Francisco, along with others. The Museum Program that will be the subject of the behind-the-scene tour is a department within the GGNRA. They are therefore invested in the project’s interpretation of their responsible lands, as well as its success to bring in more visitors to the parks.

  **Mission Statement of the National Parks:**
  The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

- **Superintendent of the GGNRA**
  Responsible for all staff, special projects, and public interpretation of GGNRA properties. They will first approve the project and it’s financing from the park’s budget, and will be responsible for the final productions approval before it is made available to the public.

- **Chief of Cultural Resources & Museum Management**
  Oversees the GGNRA’s Cultural Resources & Museum Management department. They are responsible for inter-departmental communication, special projects, and is the point of reference for the Superintendent.

- **GGNRA Museum Program Staff**
  These positions will be responsible for the content of the project. Their day-to-day will be recorded and put on display to the public, and they will be featured in the production through interviews. They will also be responsible for all post-release interactions with the public. They are the most directly affected stakeholders because of this.
  - Supervisory Curator
  - Curator & Reference Archivist
  - Museum Objects Specialist

- **Production Crew**
  - Project Manager
  - Director & Editor
  - Camera & Sound Operator
  - Performer


APPENDIX D
PROJECT TASK LIST
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## Hidden History Action Plan

### Gantt Chart - Development Phase

**January 2017 thru October 2017**

| Task Name | Jan 1 | Jan 8 | Jan 15 | Jan 22 | Jan 29 | Feb 6 | Feb 12 | Feb 19 | Feb 26 | Mar 5 | Mar 12 | Mar 19 | Mar 26 | Apr 2 | Apr 9 | Apr 16 | Apr 23 | Apr 30 | May 7 | May 14 | May 21 |
|-----------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| **Development** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hire Project Manager | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hire production team | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Object and Location pre-check research | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Content brainstorm meeting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Script draft #1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objects review | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Location review | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting w/ GGNRA website IT manager | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting w/ Conservancy about web store partnership | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting w/ production staff to review script draft #1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Object selection FINAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Location Selection FINAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Script draft #2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting w/ production staff to review script draft #2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project update meeting w/ Chief of Cultural Resources | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Script draft FINAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Script approval | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hire Tour Guide/voicenover performer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Object preparation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Location preparation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting w/ GGNRA website IT and Conservancy to confirm internet release schedule | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pre-production plan (lighting and camera plots) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Production staff meeting to confirm filming plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All staff pre-production meeting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
# Hidden History Action Plan

## Gantt Chart - Production Phase
January 2017 thru October 2017

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- ✔️: Task completed
- ☐: Task not completed

### Notes
- Project timeline: January 2017 thru October 2017
- Gantt chart highlights key production milestones, including film tour locations, interviews, and drafting processes.
# Hidden History Action Plan

## Gantt Chart - Implementation Phase

January 2017 thru October 2017

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