The Silk Road: An Exchange in Ideas and Goods

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Individual Exhibit
I remember playing the game “Marco Polo” as a child many years ago. My parents had a pool in our backyard and we really enjoyed it. When I was looking at the History Fair topics list, I saw “Marco Polo.” However, I wanted to do a project with a little more substance than just a biography report. Therefore, I chose the topic of the Silk Road. I remembered watching some television programs a few years ago about the Silk Road. I knew I could incorporate both ideas into one great project.

These days, all research generally begins and ends with the World Wide Web. I originally started by searching for the “Silk Road.” That allowed me to find a few useful websites, but not nearly as many of quality as I had hoped for. Most of these websites had just the basic facts with nothing in depth. However, some of the websites did spend a lot of time describing many of the places along the Silk Road. Unfortunately, I quickly dismissed the idea of place descriptions as boring and turned my searching elsewhere.

A display board full of pictures and words is not really exciting. I wanted my board to stand out, literally. I decided to bring my board to life by placing as many of the trade objects as possible onto it. I went to Michael’s arts and crafts store to purchase whatever items I could. Scrap booking areas wound up being my best bet for most of the items. I searched the store for
two hours just to find only some of the items. I realized that I would never find everything, but I did a pretty good job finding more that half of the items.

Putting together the backboard was a lot of hard work. I never realized how difficult it was arranging and printing everything. I spent the better part of a whole day just organizing the board. Gluing was also not very enjoyable, but I did get some good craft glue at the store which helped a lot.

My project relates to this years theme just by existing. The Silk Road was the major trade route across Asia for hundreds of years. All types of goods were exchanged across the distances via camel caravans. The development of the Silk Road was a large factor in exploring many scientific possibilities. The Silk Road accelerated the end of the Dark Ages in Europe and ushered in the Renaissance. Word count 418.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

   This website had some excellent scans of some pictures from the Louvre in Paris. I got a picture of Marco Polo, Kublai Khan, and the Polo Brothers.

   Marco Polo wrote this book as a description of who and what he saw during his 24 year expedition.

Secondary Sources

   This website described much of the trade that existed along the road.

   This website gave me a comprehensive list of some of the intellectual ideas that were exchanged on the road.

   This book gave a good general overview of Marco Polo and what it was like traveling on the Silk Road.

   This book described what Marco Polo encountered once he reached China.