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### Pelsma, John R., Collection, 1894-1958

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## **Pelsma, John R., Collection, MS 151**

### **John R. Pelsma Collection**

<b>Collection Number</b>	MS 151
<b>Title</b>	The John R. Pelsma Collection
<b>Name and Location of Repository</b>	Pittsburg State University, Special Collections & University Archives, Pittsburg, Kansas
<b>Dates</b>	1894 – 1958
<b>Collection Size</b>	2 linear feet
<b>Creator</b>	John R. Pelsma
<b>Scope and Content</b>	John Reinder Pelsma was a Professor of Public Speaking at the State Manual Training Normal School (now Pittsburg State University) 1920 – 1950. He taught students how to utilize different speaking styles through debate, extemporaneous speech, poems, and dramas. The collection contains correspondence, biographical information, education materials, writings by Pelsma and others, printed speeches and publications, clippings, photographs, and miscellaneous items. This collection focuses on Pelsma’s work at Pittsburg State University, with some documents relating to his previous spots of employment. A majority of the collection are his personal writings and the writings of others.
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	This collection is open for access
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Biographical Note</b>	John Reinder Pelsma was born on April 26, 1878 in Nappanee, Indiana to Reinder and Dora Pelsma, natives of Holland. He attended Nappanee High School, Valparaiso University, Nevada State University, De Pauw University and the University of Chicago. He graduated from Valparaiso in 1901 with a degree of S. B. and from De Pauw in 1908 with a degree of A.B. He received a Ph.M. from Chicago in 1910 and worked at the University of Nevada, Department of Assaying and Metallurgy. Pelsma married Maud Penland in 1904 and they had a daughter, Elizabeth. Pelsma was an instructor, principal, and superintendent for several high schools. He taught several courses as a high school teacher, but he did not completely abandon his love of speech and taught debate at several schools. He left public school teaching when he accepted a position as a public speaking instructor at the University of Texas in 1914. During his tenure there, he also went on speaking tours with John Lomax, a teacher, musicologist, and folklorist. In 1916, Pelsma took over the Speech Department at Oklahoma A. and M. College in Stillwater(now Oklahoma State University). During this time, he was a private in the Payne County Home Guards, and even had the authority to arrest persons suspected of being draft dodgers. He also created the first national drama fraternity, Theta Alpha Phi, with other drama and speech professors in the country. Pelsma was also a lecturer on the Chautauqua circuit in 1919 and 1920.

## **Pelsma, John R., Collection, MS 151**

In 1920, Pelsma became a Professor of Public Speaking at State Manual Training Normal School in Pittsburg, Kansas (now Pittsburg State University). He remained at the college until his retirement in 1950. He remained active in Theta Alpha Phi by being the editor and manager of "The Cue," the organization's national magazine. He was an active writer and wrote several small publications while at S.M.T.N. By misrepresenting his age, he retired at the age of 72, rather than the required age of 70. After he retired, he took over the sponsorship of the J. Luther Taylor Oratorical Contest in 1954. Pelsma died on October 7, 1962 at the age of 84. He is buried in Sedan, KS. His pallbearers were all former students: Lemione B. Carlyon, Robertson I. Strawn, Jack Overman, Raymond Letton, H. Francis Short, Maynard W. Angwin, Alvin H. Proctor, and Joseph Skubitz.

### **Series**

There are 11 series in this collection:

**Correspondence, Biographical, Education, Organizations, Writings, Writing by Others, Publications, Programs, Clippings, Photograph, and Miscellaneous.**

The **Correspondence** series consist of two letters with multiple copies of each. This series is arranged chronologically.

The **Biographical** series contains a biographical paper written by Joe French. This paper is about Pelsma's professional life and the impression he left on his students. There are also Picture Awards that Pelsma earned in elementary school.

The **Education** series includes materials that Pelsma used during his teaching career. There are several aids to help students prepare their speeches and outlines. The majority of this series are student papers, including exams, scholarship information, and miscellaneous materials.

The **Organizations** series comprises of the organizations that Pelsma belonged to. Delta Sigma Rho is for men and women who competed in intercollegiate debate and oratory competitions. Phi Kappa Delta is a United States professional organization for educators and those invested in education. Theta Alpha Phi is the National Honorary Dramatics Fraternity for both men and women. This series is organized alphabetically.

The **Writings** series contains Pelsma's lectures, speeches, articles, and poetry. Many of these writings are drafts and do not have any publication information. Some of the writing are handwritten. This series is organized by quantity of material and then alphabetically.

The **Writings by Others** series consist of poems, plays, and essays that were not written by Pelsma. These writings were most likely used by Pelsma in his speech and debate classes. All of the materials are typed and slightly faded, but are legible. This series is organized by quantity of materials and then original order.

The **Publications** series includes some of the publications in which Pelsma contributed articles, and others. "A Child's Vocabulary and its Development" was one of Pelsma's first papers, and the subject of the paper was his daughter, Elizabeth, when she was a toddler.

The **Programs** series consist of programs of events that Pelsma either went to or was involved with, including plays, musical acts, commencements, and art and paper collections. This series is arranged alphabetically.

The **Clippings** series contains three general clippings.

The **Photograph** series is comprised of undated portraits of Pelsma as a younger man.

The **Miscellaneous** series includes book reviews, a flyer for two houses that Pelsma was selling, a check, four different menus, several business cards, and personal stationary for Pelsma.

## **Pelsma, John R., Collection, MS 151**

### **Folder List**

#### **Box 1**

##### Correspondence

f. 1 1937; Undated

##### Biographical Materials

f. 2

French, Joe. "J. R. Pelsma and the Educational Insitution." 1973.

f. 3 Picture Awards

##### Education

f. 4 Aids, Devices, and Handouts for Debate

f. 5 Outlines for Speeches

f. 6 Speech Suggestions

f. 7 Student Papers

f. 8 Student Plays

f. 9 Student Papers

f. 10 Student Papers

f. 11 Student Papers

f. 12 Exams

f. 13 Exams

f. 14 Exams

f. 15 Scholarship Information

f. 16 Miscellaneous educational materials

f. 17 Lectures and Readings

##### Organizations

f. 18 Debate

f. 19 Debate

f. 20 Debate

f. 21 Debate

f. 22 Debate

f. 23 Delta Sigma Rho

National Association of Teachers of Speech

Pi Kappa Delta

f. 24 Theta Alpha Phi

##### Writings

f. 25 Apple Day Revisited

The Boy Convict Story

Buy a Liberty Bond

Commencement Speech

f. 26 Evolution of Man

The Forum

f. 27 Flux de Bouche

The Man Who Wins

## Pelsma, John R., Collection, MS 151

- f. 28 Poetry: Lecture-Recital
- f. 29 Pronunciation
- f. 30 Voices I Have Heard
- f. 31 Miscellaneous Speeches
- f. 32 Poetry

### Writing by Others

- f. 33 Poetry
- f. 34 Poetry
- f. 35 Plays

### **Box 2**

- f. 36 Plays
- f. 37 Plays and Poetry
- f. 38 Plays
- f. 39 Plays
- f. 40 Plays
- f. 41 Essay
- f. 42 Miscellaneous

### Publications

- f. 43 Pelsma, John R. "A Child's Vocabulary and its Development." Pedagogical Seminary 17, 1910, 328-69.  
Lessons in Public Speaking and Oral Reading
- f. 44 Pelsma, Joh R. "A Symposium of Extemporaneous Speaking Methods." Platform News. 3.4, 1936, 12-24.  
"Types of Debating." The Gavel 18.4, 1936.  
"Floux De Bouche." The Forensic 24.4, 1939.
- f. 45 Cordts, Anna D. "America and the New Era." 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League, 6 May 1921, Warrensburg, MO. Contestant.  
Geneva, William B. "America's Better Policy." 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of State Normal Schools, 5 May 1916, Springfield, MO. Contestant.  
Moore, Helen Stuart. "The Builder." 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of State Normal Schools, 5 May 1916, Springfield, MO. Contestant.  
Frye, J. Grant. "The Challenges of the East." 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of state Teachers Colleges, 5 May 1922, Normal, ILL. Contestant.  
Imlay, Ruth Egbert. "Defeat, the Progenitor of Victory." Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, IA.  
Lynch, Gladys E. "Education for Peace." 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Interstate League of State Teachers Colleges, 25 April 1924, Cedar Falls, IA. Contestant.  
"An Examination of the Proposed Twentieth amendment to the Constitution of the United States: The so-called 'Child Labor' Amendment." pp. 3-25.  
Bess, Charles E. "The Frontier of Democracy." 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Interstate League of State Teachers Colleges, 4 May 1923, Cedar Falls, IA. Contestant.  
Campell, Lee H. "The Future of the Race." 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Interstate League of State Teachers Colleges, 4 May 1923, Cedar Falls, IA. Contestant.

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- Wilson, Jeannette. "The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Deep Water-Way." 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League, 2 May 1924, Stevens Point, WI. Contestant.
- f. 46 Bright, Melville. "The Implements of Progress." 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Interstate League, 4 May 1923, Cedar Falls, IA. Contestant.
- Griffiths, Claude H. "Individual Responsibility and Democracy." 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of State Teachers Colleges, 5 May 1922, Normal, ILL. Contestant.
- Nelson, Lottie Mabel. "Inter-National Peace through Education." 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League, 2 May 1924, Stevens Point, WI. Contestant.
- Start, James R. "John Smith and Henry Jones and War." 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of State Normal Schools, 5 May 1916, Springfield, MO. Contestant.
- Levine, Ralph H. "Modern Nationalism." 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of State Normal Schools, 5 May 1922, McComb, IL. Contestant.
- O'Brien, James E. "A Nation's Obligation." 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League, 6 May 1921, Warrensburg, MO. Contestant.
- Baugh, Russell H. "The Outlawry of War." 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, State League of Teachers Colleges of Missouri, 28 March 1924, Maryville, MO. Contestant.
- Duff, Joseph P. "Pan-Germanism: A Menace." 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of State Normal Schools, 5 May 1916, Springfield, MO. Contestant.
- Tabunar, Gabino. "The Philippine National Problem." 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League, 6 May 1921, Warrensburg, MO. Contestant.
- Sheen, Fulton J. "The Philosophy of Communism." Light Your Lamps, The Catholic Hour, 9 February 1947, Washington D. C. Address.
- Matthews, Joseph. "The Problem of Prison Reform." 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Oratorical Contest, Inter-State League of State Normal Schools, 5 May 1916, Springfield, MO. Contestant.
- Butler, Frank A. "The Soul of America." State Normal School, Oshkosh, WI.
- Dinerstein, Isadore. "The Unhappy Americans." Wisconsin State Orator, 1916, Milwaukee, WI.
- "The White Slave." Presented to English Department of OAMC, 1914.
- f. 47 *Common Sense* no. 6. Ex. Sec. Willam A. Black, The Singletax League of Texas, July 1917, San Antonio, TX.
- Common Sense* no. 7. Ex. Sec. Willam A. Black, The Singletax League of Texas, Oct. 1917, San Antonio, TX.
- Pamphlets on tax systems
- Journal of Expression* vol. 1, no. 3, Dec. 1927.
- Kansas University Quarterly* vol. 3, no. 2, Oct. 1894.
- McNaught's Monthly*, May 1927.
- f. 48 *The Public Speaking Review*, Oct. 1911.
- The Public Speaking Review* vol. 2, no. 2, May 1912.
- The Public Speaking Review* vol. 3, no. 3, Nov. 1913.
- The Public Speaking Review* vol. 3, no. 7, Mar. 1914.
- The Public Speaking Review* vol. 4, no. 1, May 1914.
- The Public Speaking Review* vol. 4, no. 3, Nov. 1914.
- Speech News* vol. 3, no. 1, Apr. 1938.
- f. 49 *The Straus Investors' Magazine* vol. 17, no. 9, Sept. 1926.
- Theatre and Drama* vol. 4, no. 7, Dec. 1926.

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*Theatre and Drama* vol. 4, no. 12, May 1927.

f. 50 Anonymous Papers

f. 51 Miscellaneous publications

f. 52 Lockyer, J. Norman. *Elements of Astronomy: Accompanied with Numerous Illustrations, A Colored Representation of the Solar Stellar, and Nebular Spectra, and Celestial Charts of the northern and the southern Hemisphere*. D. Appleton & Co., 1870.  
Stedman, Edmund C. and Thomas L. Stedman, editors. *The Complete Pocket-Guide to Europe*. William R. Jenkins, 1899.

### Programs

f. 53 “And Home Came Ted,” A Comedy of Mystery in Three Acts

Artist’s Recital (Apr. 30, 1920)

High School Commencement (May 19, 1937)

Religious Art of the Western World (1958)

f. 54 The DeGolyer Western Collection

Handel’s Messiah (April 30, 1920)

Madame Schumann-Heink at the Horner Kansas City Conservatory

Summer Sessions at the Horner Institute-Kansas City Conservatory

Inauguration of Charles Edwin Friley as President of Iowa State College

Music programs

### Clippings

f. 55 Undated

### Photographs

f. 56 John R. Pelsma

### Miscellaneous

f. 57 Book Reviews

Flyer for Two Houses

Check

Menus

Business Cards

Stationary