

中興漢魏
英雄自來
聽惜國屋

今位道威
鄉君其間
此象正興

POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN
ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE

English translation of poem from
cover:

“Detained in this wooden house
for several tens of days, It is all
because of the Mexican exclusion
law which implicates me. It’s a pity
heroes have no way of exercising
their prowess. I can only await the
word so that I can snap Zu’s whip.

From now on, I am departing far
from this building. All of my fellow
villagers are rejoicing with me.
Don’t say that everything within
is Western styled. Even if built of
jade, it has turned into a cage.“

Poem # 69

(*Island*: Lai, Lim and Yung, p. 134)

Victoria A. Prizzia, MFA Thesis Project ©
Museum Exhibition Planning and Design
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POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN
ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE

“No other place symbolizes the Chinese immigrant experience during the exclusion era better than the immigration station on Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay. In fact, Angel Island’s very purpose was to keep America’s gates closed to Chinese and other undesirable Asians.... It became a symbol of exclusion rather than of freedom for many Asian immigrants....”

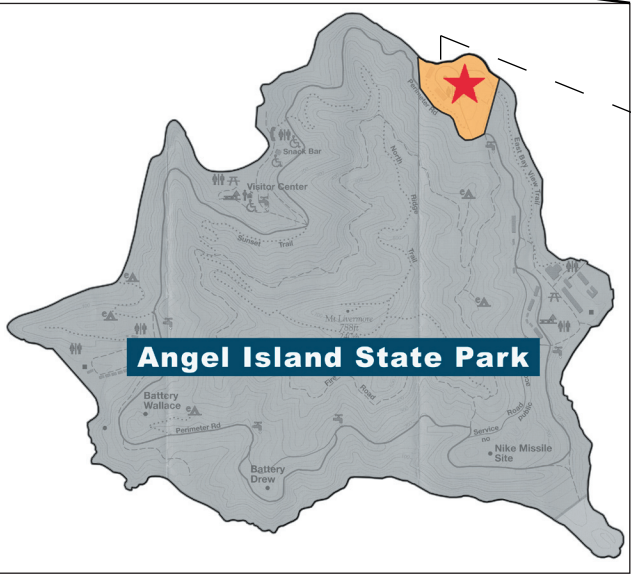
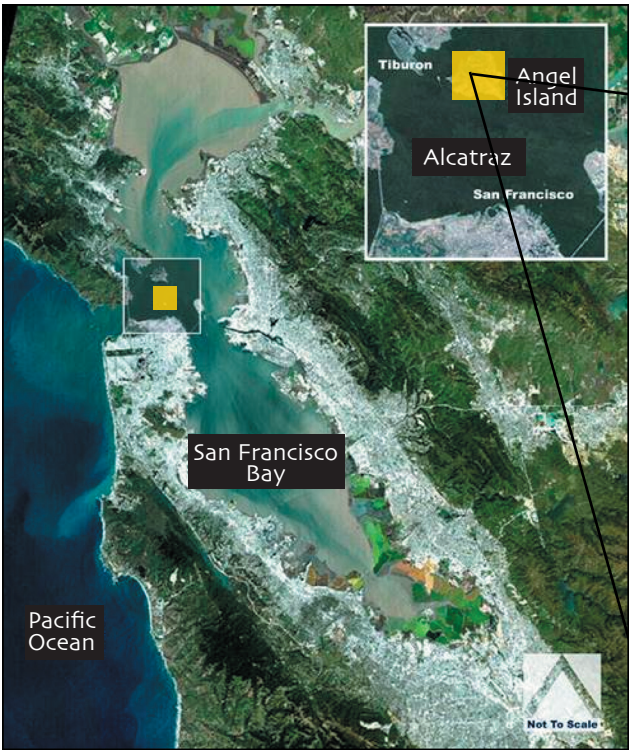
—Erika Lee, author of At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943,

Project Title

Poetry and Family Ties on Gold Mountain*
The Angel Island Immigration Station, Guardian of the Western Gate
*(Gold or Golden Mountain— Gam Saan— a Cantonese term for the United States, initially making reference to the California Gold Rush)

Project Type

Interpretive Plan for the former Immigration Station (14+-acres) located on Angel Island, a 740-acre California State Park situated in the San Francisco Bay. On a clear day,Angel Island is visible from Fisherman’s Wharf and commercial piers— popular tourist destinations.



Aerial Image of the Angel Island Immigration Station Site, 2003 (California State Parks)

"I think that the story about Asians just doesn't get recorded enough and people know more about the story of who came through Ellis Island and I would like for them to know more about Angel Island. It seems to me that I know more about Ellis Island than I know about Angel Island because of the way I was taught in school. I would like for younger people today to know about the difference."

— Elizabeth Chan, Daughter of former Chinese detainees on Angel Island

(Chan, Elizabeth, Interview, 2005)

Mission

To tell the Chinese immigration history as it relates to the former Immigration Station on Angel Island and the experience of the people who were processed there between 1910 and 1940. The exhibition will illustrate the complicated dynamics of the Angel Island Immigration Station, focusing specifically on the Chinese immigrants who experienced the longest and most contentious detainment at the facility. The interpretation will raise questions regarding the current day practices of North America's immigration policies.

Project Summary

As the only standing example of a west coast 20th century immigration processing facility, the Angel Island Immigration Station (AIIS) provides a unique perspective of the immigration policies and procedures created and institutionalized by the United States government to exclude Chinese immigrants in particular from North American society between the late 1800s and the first half of the 20th century. The more than 135 poems written by former Angel Island detainees, "poets of the exclusion era", on the walls of the sub-standard living space of the former Detention Barracks, is the most distinctive aspect of the site today. This historic site functions both as a monument to the power of human nature to overcome injustices and as a living document of the personal experiences of Chinese immigrants (the immigrant population to experience the longest and most contentious detainment at the facility as a result of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* and other anti-Asian immigration policies of the time) who expressed their hope, fear and frustration on the walls of their temporary living space.

This interpretive plan provides multiple ways for visitors to experience the facility and the story being told including a boat ride to China Cove where visitors are presented an orientation film introducing the history of the site and highlighting the primary themes explored throughout the site; a self-guided tour of the grounds of the compound; an abstract reinterpretation of the primary functions of the former Administration Building through the use of 3D vignettes where visitors will literally follow the foot-steps of former detainees; a guided tour of the Detention Barracks providing visitors with a space for contemplation and reflection— combining recreated scenes of life within the walls of the building with voices of the past and present as a powerful example of human preservation and self-expression; a searchable digital



View of Angel Island State Park with Alcatraz in the foreground, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

“My dad in 1925 actually was detained on Angel Island with his paper father, paper step-mother and his paper brother. I guess, I don’t know if any of the family was true blood related to one another but I know my dad wasn’t yet they all told the same story. They all had coaching books and were able to tell the same story during their respective interviews with immigration officials and were admitted into the country.”

— Joseph Chan, Son of former Chinese detainees on Angel Island

(Chan, Joseph, Interview, 2005)

database and “real-time” self-guided character tour of the site through the use of a hand-held PDA to extend the depth and breadth of the visitor experience both on and off the site; and additional recommendations that enhance the overall interpretive plan and intended visitor experiences.

Anticipated visitors include:

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd- generation family members who want to know more about the island that played such a defining role in the lives of their parents and grandparents as they passed through to begin a new life;
- visitors from the general public including school groups who specifically planned a trip to the immigration station; and
- hikers and campers who find themselves at the site with little or no knowledge of the facility or its legacy.

The multiple layers of interpretation can work simultaneously with one another or can stand alone. As a whole, the interpretive elements outlined in the following pages of this proposal will take visitors on a journey of the site (part ruin, part exhibition, part memorial) to better understand what life was like for the people who were processed there— to literally and figuratively walk in the shoes of former detainees.

In addition to the cultural history of the Angel Island Immigration Station (AIIS), this plan also intends to provide visitor access to the unique landscape of Angel Island. The topography of the setting, the flora and fauna, historic views and vistas, all provide additional layers of meaning and engagement with the place providing context for the facility on a natural scale which greatly influenced the design of the site and the human experience of the site as a whole.

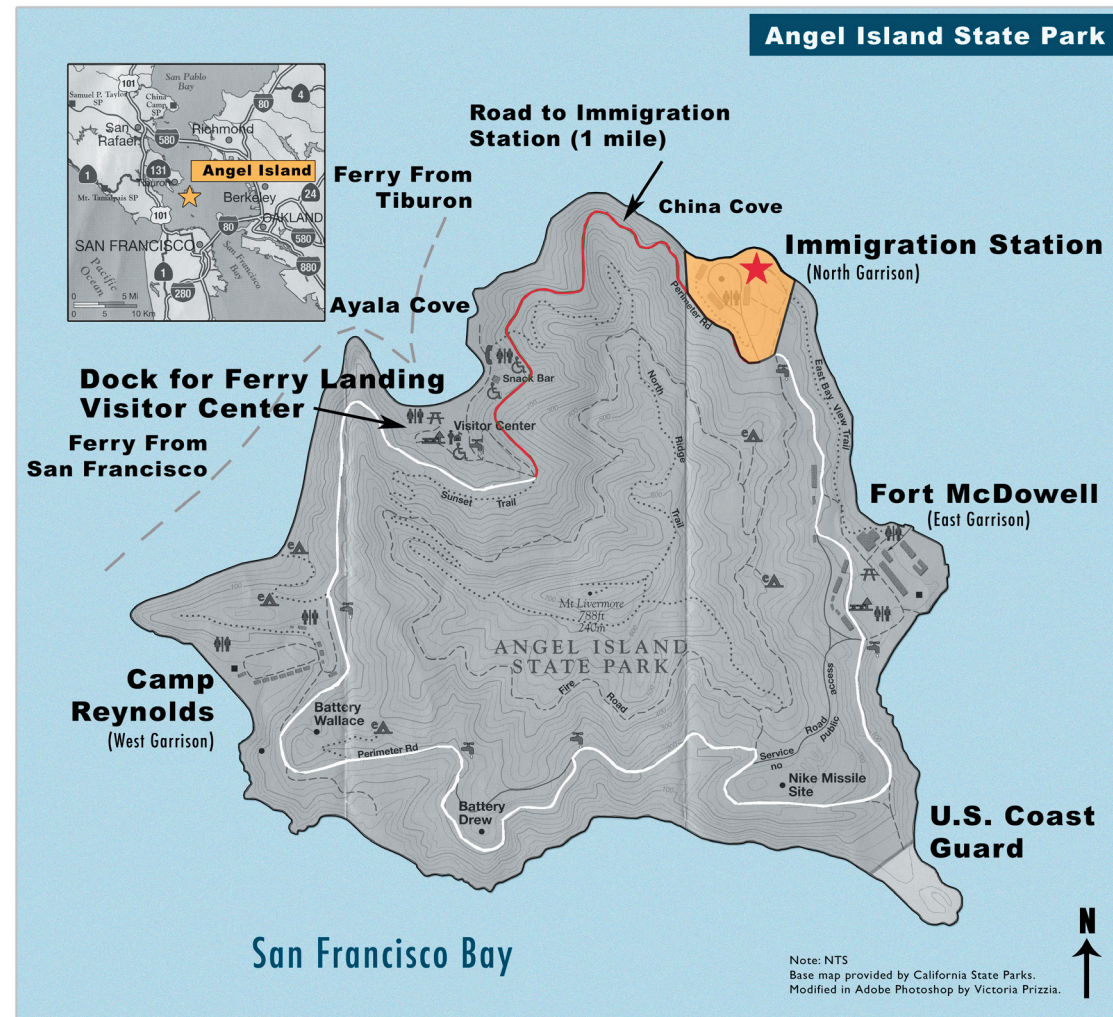
The AIIS provides a rare opportunity to merge time and space through an interpretive narrative grounded in the specific soil from which the story came into being. This interpretive plan aims to let the site speak for itself in the creation of a meaningful and thought-provoking experience.



Angel Island Immigration Station—
view out of the San Francisco Bay,
2005 (V. Prizzia)

POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN

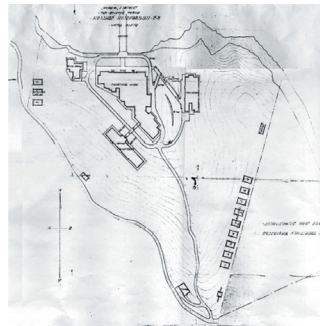
ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE



Site Use/Historical Periods Angel Island

- c. 1000 AD — c. 1830s
Native American Settlement
- 1850 — 1946
Military Reserve, Construction of Camp Reynolds and Fort McDowell
- 1910 — 1940
Angel Island Immigration Station
- 1941 — 1946
North Garrison POW Camp
- 1963 — Present
State Park/Interpretive Center

Over a 30-year period, it is estimated that over one million people immigrated or emigrated through the immigration processing station on Angel Island including people from Africa, China, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Southeast Asia, Spain and others.



General Plan of the Angel Island Immigration Station, c.1911, (NARA DC Archive)

"I abandoned my native village to earn a living. I endured all the wind and frost to seek fame. I passed this land to get to Cuba. Who was to know they would dispatch me to a prison on a mountain."

— Poem 67, AIIS Detention Barracks

(Island: Lai, Lim and Yung, p. 132)

Brief History of the Site

Although the exclusionary aspect of the Angel Island story is an important piece of American history, it essentially exists outside of the collective consciousness of most Americans. In a recent front-end survey conducted to inform the initial stages of this project, only nine out of the 24 people included in the study have even heard about Angel Island (three west coast and six east coast inhabitants). Of the individuals who have some knowledge of the site, few know more than Angel Island's role as an immigration station for the west coast.

The policies institutionalized at the Angel Island Immigration Station not only dictated life on Angel Island, but cultivated a system that deeply affected the make-up of the Chinese family on both continents. During the exclusion era, the laws created Asian bachelor enclaves in America and fatherless/ husbandless communities in China. Family ties in Chinese families extended to a unique network of people working to circumvent the Anti-Asian laws of the time. As a consequence, children of Chinese immigrants processed at Angel Island have a better chance of knowing detailed information about their parent's paper family than that of their biological ones.

Although the Angel Island State Park has become a popular recreational destination, there is very little cultural/historical interpretation regarding the significance of the immigration station at the site at the present time. After the end of World War II when military-related operations ended at the site, the future of the island was uncertain— entangled in the bureaucracies of the military and the State of California. Plans for the use and development of the park were proposed yet nothing came of them. In 1963 the State of California received title to over 517 acres of Angel Island. Over the years of neglect, the natural vegetation of the immigration station became overgrown while buildings deteriorated or were demolished. The remaining buildings of the immigration station were earmarked for

demolition in preparation for proposed camp grounds and recreation facilities. Although the Immigration Station was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, the hospital building was the only existing structure to be referenced as having special significance. That all changed with the discovery of the calligraphy on the walls of the former Detention Barracks by state park ranger Alexander Weiss. The event sparked a movement to preserve and interpret the site — the only standing example of a west coast 20th century immigration processing facility. On December 9, 1997, the Immigration Station received a National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation acknowledging the significance of the site during two independent historical periods— the Immigration Station period (1910-1940) and the North Garrison period (1942-1946). The NHL evaluation of the site determined the following list of buildings and remaining foundations as significant elements including the mule barn, Power House, Hospital, Detention Barracks, pump house, PWE mess hall, North Garrison barracks north, North Garrison barracks south, the foundation of the Administration Building, and the foundations of nine employee cottages.

Fueled by advocacy organizations such as the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), funding is in the process of being procured to fully realize the preservation and interpretive goals of the Angel Island State Park. In March 2000, California voters passed Proposition 12— a \$2.1 billion bond measure for the improvement of California parks, including \$15 million for the Angel Island Immigration Station (AIIS). To date, approximately half of the estimated funds needed to preserve Angel Island Immigration Station have been raised through state, federal and private funding. However, it is estimated that the restoration, interpretation and preservation of the site will not come to fruition for 15 to 20 years.



Immigration Station Guard Tower, c. 1910 (CDPR Archive)

Pity it is that a hero has no way of exercising his power. He can only wait for the word to whip his horse on a homeward journey. From this moment on, we say goodbye to this house. My fellow countrymen here are rejoicing like me. Say not that here everything is western styled. Even if it were built with jade, it has turned into a cage.

Translation of wall carving found in Detention Barracks, Authors remain unknown (Island: Lai, Lim and Yung)

Historical Narrative

Since the discovery of the Americas in the late 15th century, settlers compelled by economic, social or political turmoil in their native countries have driven the ebb and flow of modern settlement in the United States. Consequentially, the influence of immigrants on the development of the nation and its diverse, perpetually evolving cultural identity is immeasurable-- approximately forty percent of all Americans can trace their ancestry to someone who entered the United States through Ellis Island alone (Baicker, 11).

However, America's view of immigrants and immigration is complex and variable— what Roger Daniels, author of *Guarding the Golden Door*, refers to as a “dualistic attitude.” This is where the nation's immigrant past, wrongly referring only to the memories of east coast immigrants —mainly European by birth, is honored and revered while its immigrant present is a source of conflict and tension. The treatment of Asian immigrants on the west coast at the turn of last century exemplifies this tendency (Daniels, 3). Furthermore, the immigration policies of the United States over the last 200 years reflects the country's love-hate relationship with immigration and immigrants.

Since its inception as a sovereign nation, the United States has both encouraged and discouraged immigration through its policies and economic initiatives. Initiatives such as the *Homestead Act of 1862* promising foreigners 160 acres of land in exchange for five years of cultivation attracted foreigners to United States' soil. The nation has garnered a tradition of promoting itself as the land of opportunity, a sentiment memorialized in the last five lines of Emma Lazarus's sonnet *The New Colossus*, that was later

engraved on the Statue of Liberty emphasizing European immigration through Ellis Island— the largest immigration entry gate on the east coast of the United States where more than ten million people were processed over a 60-year period.

“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips, “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breath free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door;” (Baicker, 29).

Nevertheless, anti-immigration initiatives would not begin to be institutionalized in a systematic way until the mid-1800s. For example, in response to the massive influx of Irish immigrants between 1845 and 1860 escaping the potato famine and the general harsh treatment of poor farmers and rural Irish laborers by English landowners, coastal states such as New York and Massachusetts passed laws that would tax immigrants (although the initiatives would be struck down by the Supreme Court implying that state governments could not regulate immigration) (Daniels, 9). The initial laws were instituted on the east coast where the pressures from immigration were greatest. Regarding the settlement of the west coast, similar tensions appeared with Asian immigrants in particular. However, in the case of the latter, authorities sympathetic of, or feeling pressure from, the growing nativist sentiments within their constituents, responded to Asian immigration with the harshest policies in the history

Immigration Timeline 1790— Present



Aerial view of AIIS, 1940, (California Dept. of Parks and Recreation— CDPR Archive)

1790

The Naturalization Act restricts citizenship to “free white persons” who live in the U.S. for five years and renounce their previous citizenship

1840-1850

A decade of turmoil in Europe prompts mass immigration to the U.S.

1848

The California gold rush prompts greater westward movement and a surge in immigration

Forty-Seventh Congress. Session I.
1882. Chapter 126.

An act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese. Preamble. Whereas, in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof; Therefore, Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be, and the same is hereby, suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or, having so come after the expiration of said ninety days, to remain within the United States.

of the United States. Unemployed white workers resented the Chinese for being willing to work hard for low wages. Their reputation for hard work dates back to their early contributions to the development of the transcontinental railroad in the late 1800s.

By 1850, China's population had exceeded 400 million. The agrarian economy—consisting of impoverished farmers indebted to powerful landlords—could not produce enough food to support the perpetually growing demand. According to Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler, authors of *The Chinese American Family Album* (1994), the misery and poverty of the time led to the *Taiping Rebellion* of 1850 to 1864. During the peasant uprising, more than 20 million people died and the chaos continued the decline of the already failing Chinese economy. At the same time, cultural conflicts within disparate groups of people living in the Kwangtung Province (southern part of China) led to further bloodshed and rural destruction. Descendants of original inhabitants of the region clashed with Chinese who moved into the area as China expanded to the south. The rivalry spurred fighting and many villages were destroyed in the process. A majority of the Chinese who immigrated to the United States between 1850 and 1950 came from Cantonese villages from the Pearl River Delta region in the Kwangtung Province. Fleeing famine, poverty and political turmoil, the Chinese began to immigrate to the United States and other places in droves. More than 60,000 Chinese (primarily men) were recorded in the United States census in 1870 with 75% residing in California (Daniels, 12).

The building of anti-Asian immigration sentiment in

the United States culminated in 1882 with the passage of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. Erika Lee, author of *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*, writes,

“The changes in the immigration scene and the establishment of the immigration station on Angel Island coincided with a resurgence of nativism in the U.S. in the early 20th century. Not only did nativists continue to target Chinese and other Asians, but Mexicans and Southern and Eastern European immigrants were also the focus of nativists’ attention who wanted to control and restrict the entry of these immigrants as well,” (Lee, 312).

According to Lee, the growing anti-Asian sentiment sweeping California combined with the “nativist” attitudes of individuals in positions of authority within the United States Bureau of Immigration, “translated into a strict enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws and a crackdown on illegal immigration,” (Lee, 316).

According to historians, the less familiar story of United States’ immigration history of the west coast has shaped immigration law from the late 19th century to the present.

“Prior to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, there was neither a trained force of government officials and interpreters nor the bureaucratic machinery with which to enforce the new law. Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the origins of the modern day immigration agency lay in part with the immigration officials in San Francisco. This while much of United States immigration history is often centered around European immigrants and the East Coast, it was rather Asian

Immigration Timeline 1790—Present

1861
The American Civil War begins. Immigration decreases until the war ends in 1865

1868
The first Japanese laborers arrive in Hawaii. Some migrate to Southern California

1870
A new naturalization law restricts citizenship to people of European and African descent. Asians are excluded

1882
The Chinese Exclusion Act becomes one of the first major restrictions on immigration to the United States

1885
The Statue of Liberty, a gift from France, is erected in New York harbor

1891
Congress establishes the Bureau of Immigration within the Treasury Department



The Wharf, c. 1940 (CDPR Archive)



The Wharf, c. 1915 (CDPR Archive)

immigrants, California and the West that shaped some of the most central events and patterns in United States' immigration history," (Lee, xix).

In 1910, the Angel Island immigration station opened in San Francisco Bay— about one mile off the Tiburon Peninsula— with scenic views of both the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco. When the facility was being developed, the United States Bureau of Immigration promoted Angel Island as the “Ellis Island of the west.” However, the primary function of the facility was to enforce the *Chinese Exclusion Act* and essentially impede the entrance of Chinese immigrants into American society (Baicker, 12). At the time, the exclusionary laws had been in affect for 28 years. Reflecting the powerful anti-immigration sentiment that swept the western United States in the late 1800s, Angel Island functioned as a “Guardian of the Western Gate.” Asian immigrants, particularly the Chinese, became scapegoats for the bitter depression and high unemployment of the 1870s. They were accused of taking jobs away from white workers throughout the west. In 1882, this anti-Asian sentiment was translated into the first *Chinese Exclusion Act* that suspended the immigration of laborers, mainly Chinese, for ten years. A system of government-issued certificates allowed only teachers, students, merchants and travelers entry into the US. Between 1888 and 1943, additional Congressional amendments, treaties, and new acts extended the duration of the first *Chinese Exclusion Act*. For example, in 1892 the *Geary Act* was passed excluding new Chinese laborers for an additional ten years and expedited the deportation of

existing Chinese laborers by requiring them to establish their right to remain in the US during deportation proceedings. A year later, the *McCreary Amendment* blurred the distinction between Chinese laborers and merchants, allowing an expansion of exclusionary practices into other disciplines.

The first *Chinese Exclusion Act* also served as a model for laws to exclude other immigrant groups to suit the current economic and political climate, as the anti-Chinese sentiment also extended to the Japanese. The *Gentlemen's Agreement* of 1907 limited the number of new Japanese laborers, but allowed men already in the United States to marry women residing in Japan by proxy. Marriages were arranged between a man and a woman through the exchange of photographs. It is estimated that between 6,000 and 19,000 Japanese “picture brides” joining their new husbands in the US were processed at Angel Island.

The reality for many of the approximately 175,000 Chinese immigrants landing on America's western shore between 1910 and 1940 was in sharp contrast to the experiences of the twelve million immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954.

Ellis Island, situated off the southern tip of Manhattan was located in view of the Statue of Liberty, an international symbol of liberty and opportunity. Some 5,000 people could be processed per day at Ellis Island, with most European immigrants being processed within a day of entering New York Harbor.

In comparison, for Asian immigrants arriving on the west coast, the process was very different. After entering San Francisco Bay by boat and passing through the Golden

Immigration Timeline 1790— Present

1892

Ellis Island opens, becoming the main doorway for legal immigrants to enter the United States

1907

An informal agreement between the U.S. and Japan excludes Japanese laborers from the U.S. mainland, though they may immigrate to Hawaii. Also, a new law says that any American woman marrying a foreign national loses her citizenship

1910

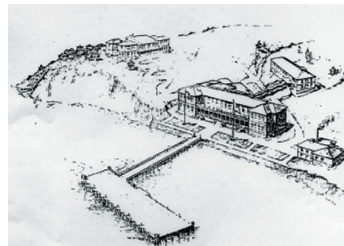
Angel Island Immigration Station begins operation at Angel Island near San Francisco

1918

New quota systems favor British and N. European immigrants

1924

The Immigration Act of 1924 greatly limits the number of immigrants. The new laws, followed by the Great Depression in the 1930s, cause a sharp decline in immigration rates. Almost all immigrants from Asia are officially excluded.



Sketch of Immigration Station, c. 1907 (CDPR Archive)



Female Applicants on the West Slope Path, c. 1925 (CDPR Archive)

Gate, new arrivals were met by immigration officers who inspected their documents. Those with papers, usually from the middle class, were allowed to disembark at San Francisco. The rest were ferried to the Immigration Station on Angel Island. After disembarking at the wharf, in a small bay on the northeast side of the island, the immigrants were processed at the facility's Administration Building.

For public health purposes, immigrants had medical examinations. For many immigrants unfamiliar with the practices of western medicine, the examinations could be humiliating. For those who passed the physical examinations, lengthy and discriminatory interrogations followed. The discriminatory exclusion laws and the prejudiced nature of officials charged with enforcing those laws created an enormous bottleneck, with each arriving immigrant considered suspicious and therefore inscrutably examined in an effort to disprove their credentials. Cultural stereotypes translated into a complex system of profiling and subjective deductions where truth was very hard to ascertain.

"Immigration officials were first suspicious of the claim of citizenship. Secondly, they were suspicious of the relationship claimed. In cases involving wives, the immigration service also suspected Chinese women of being prostitutes. One way in which immigration officials tried to judge cases of Chinese women was through the woman's appearance and demeanor. If for example, a woman was applying for admission as the wife of a merchant, immigration officials would hold her appearance, clothing, and behavior up to the same standards

as those for merchants. They assumed that bona fide wives of merchants would possess fine clothing, a respectable manner, and especially bound feet, a marker of wealth and status in traditional China before the practice ended during the 1920s. Immigration officials in fact weighed the possession of bound feet very heavily in favor of exempt-class woman's claim for admission.... Due to such attitudes and regulations, many Chinese women were humiliated when wrongly suspected of prostitution," (Lee, 328).

Under favorable circumstances the process took an average of three weeks. However, in some cases it could be months and occasionally years, before detainees discovered their fate. The policies institutionalized at the Angel Island Immigration Station cultivated a system that deeply affected the make-up of the Chinese family on both continents. During the exclusion era, the laws created Asian bachelor enclaves in America and fatherless/ husbandless communities in China. Family ties in Chinese families extended to a unique network of people working to circumvent the anti-Asian laws of the time including immigration lawyers, friends and family.

However, the consequences of the process were grave for all parties involved. According to Lee, the methods used by immigration officials at the facility (including intensive interrogations, physical examinations, mapping activities etc.) did help officials detect fraudulent claims. Conversely, these same policies and procedures also caused great hardship for legal immigrants who were unfairly excluded from the United States because of the serious flaws in the system (Lee, 339).

Immigration Timeline 1790—Present

1940
Angel Island Immigration Station closes after fire destroys Administration Building.

1940
The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed

1963
Angel Island State Park is established

1965
The Immigration Act of 1965 changes the quota system. This allows greater immigration from all countries, not just those in Europe

1971
Angel Island was added to the National Register of Historic Places

1980
The Refugee Act allows 10 million permanent immigrants to be admitted legally. It is enacted in response to the plight of boat people fleeing Vietnam.



The Administration Building Burning,
1940 (CDPR Archive)

Without detailed birth records available, immigration officials working at Angel Island subjected immigrants to intense and often unfair interrogation techniques. To circumvent the anti-Asian legislation, Chinese immigrants bought false papers or “coaching books” from middle-men acting as agents, which provided details of the adopted history of the son or daughter of a Chinese American citizen including family history, village life, and geography and other details. However, due to the range and difficulty of the questions asked, (200 to 1000 for Chinese immigrants compared to the 29 standard questions used for non-Chinese at the time), coaching books became a necessity for all Chinese immigrants with both real and false identities as they prepared to be processed at Angel Island.

Additionally, the location of Angel Island off of the mainland provided an isolated area intended to afford the Bureau of Immigration greater security and thus prevent detained immigrants from conspiring with United States citizens. This institutionalized closed-door policy often led to extended stays on Angel Island that lasted from two to three weeks to months and some as long as two years. Despite hardship and the increasing difficulty of immigration for Asian immigrants, stories of wealth and prosperity in the United States filtered across the Pacific Ocean, creating a continuing current of hopeful arrivals.

During detainment, especially in the early years of operation, the conditions at the facility were often unsanitary and cramped. Immigrants spent the majority of their time in dormitories and very small recreation yards, with the Bureau of Immigration providing little in the way of exercise or entertainment. In expressing their

misery, frustration, hopes and fears, as well as looking for inspiration to continue their journey, some detainees carved poems, or even drew simple pictures on the walls of the Detention Barracks and Hospital.

According to Daniels, the *Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882*, “...marked the moment when the golden doorway of admission to the United States began to narrow and initiated a thirty-nine-year period of successive exclusions of certain kinds of immigrants, 1882-1921, followed by twenty-two years, 1921-43, when statutes and administrative actions set narrowing numerical limits for those immigrants who had not otherwise been excluded. During those years a federal bureaucracy was created to control immigration and immigrants, a bureaucracy whose initial *raison d’être* was to keep out first Chinese and then others who were deemed to be inferior,” (Daniels, 3).

Angel Island closed its doors as an immigration facility in 1940 after a fire destroyed the Administration Building. Three years later, the *Chinese Exclusion Act* would be repealed, an act instigated by the diligence of Asian Americans working with lawyers and social activist networks for social change.



Aerial View of Angel Island Immigration
Station, 2002, (OCLP)

Immigration Timeline 1790—Present

1986

The Immigration Reform and Control Act is passed, granting amnesty to illegal immigrants.

1990

Immigration Act of 1990 increases the number of immigrants allowed into the U.S.

1996

The Immigration and Welfare Reform Act strengthens border enforcement. It also reduces many of the rights, protections, and benefits previously granted to immigrants.

1997,

Angel Island Immigration Station designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL).

2001

USA PATRIOT Act is enacted in response to September 11. The legislation grants the government more powers to investigate, detain and deport immigrants.

Arriving at Angel Island— The Immigrant Experience

Just talk about going to the land of the
flowery Flag* and my countenance
fills with happiness.

Not without hard work were 1,000 pieces of
gold dug up and gathered together.

There were words of farewell to the parents,
but the throat choked up first.

There were many feelings, many tears flowing
face to face, when parting with the wife.

Waves big as mountains often astonished this
traveler.

With laws harsh as tigers,** I had a taste of all
the barbarities.

Do not forget this day when you land ashore.
Push yourself ahead and do not be lazy or idle.

Poem #10

*“A Cantonese colloquial term for the United
States.”

**“From “Tangong,” a chapter in the “Book of Rites:
Confucius was passing Mt. Tai and saw a woman
weeping and wailing at a grave. Confucius asked
one of his disciples to ask why she wailing so sadly.
She said, “My father-in-law and my husband were
killed by tiger.” Confucius asked why she didn’t
leave this dangerous place. She replied that it was
because there is no oppressive rule here. Confucius
remarked, “Oppressive rule is surely fiercer than
any tiger.””

(Lai, Lim and Yung, 42)

It is estimated that over one million people immigrated or
emigrated through the Angel Island processing station between 1910
and 1940. Immigrant groups included people from Africa, China,
the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Southeast Asia,
Spain and others.

However, the majority of detainees held at Angel Island for
extended periods of time were the estimated 175,000 Chinese
immigrants who passed through the facility.

For Chinese immigrants in particular, the experience of
emigrating to the United States started well before individuals
set foot on a boat to make the journey to America. Due to the
exclusionary anti-Asian policies of the time, Chinese immigrants
in particular started planning their trip months and sometimes
years before they began their travel. Saving money and memorizing
personal information (for both real and fake identities) took a great
deal of time and effort and involved entire communities working
on both ends (at home and in San Francisco) to see an immigrant’s
paper-work go through to fruition.

Although every case was unique in certain ways, there was a
general process that was followed by administration officials and, in
response, by immigrants that created a sort of battle of the minds
with one group trying to uphold exclusionary policies while the
other tried to circumvent what they perceived as unjust laws. Erika
Lee, author of *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the
Exclusion era, 1882-1943*, writes:

*“The resulting clash between the two groups perpetuated a cycle
of Chinese immigration and American exclusion that is laden with
complexity. Since 1882, Chinese immigrants had found it increasingly*

*difficult to immigrate to the United States. The exclusion laws drastically
reduced the number of Chinese eligible to apply for admission, and as the
laws were amended, new regulations and procedures established, the goal
of being admitted into the United States became even harder to achieve.
As a result, Chinese turned to illegal immigration. Chinese falsely claimed
membership in one of the exempt classes and eventually brought their
children or others posing as their children into the country as well. The
system grew and by the time that the immigration station opened on Angel
Island, the vast majority of immigrants were entering under fraudulent
pretenses” (Lee, 302)*

The intensity of the injustice perceived by Chinese immigrants
in particular lead many people to subvert the law by any means
necessary. It is estimated that for all of the Chinese immigrants who
applied for admission into the United States during the exclusion era,
90% did so under false claims (Lee, 353).

The process outlined below has been written about in a number
of sources but Erika Lee’s doctoral thesis, *At America’s Gates: Chinese
Immigration During the Exclusion era, 1882-1943* has been the primary
resource for the information summarized below and in the following
pages.

General Sequence of Events

- Boat arrives in San Francisco Bay
- Officials board the vessel to examine documents of all passengers. Passengers are separated into groups according to race and gender— Caucasians are segregated from other races and Chinese

POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN

ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE



Immigrants Arriving at Angel Island, 1915
(CDPR Archive)



A Ship Arriving at Angel Island Immigration
Station, 1924 (National Archives)

from Japanese and other Asians. Women and men are segregated as well— husbands and wives are not reunited until they are both admitted into the country. Children under twelve years of age are put in their mother’s care.

- Immigrants with satisfactory paper work disembark the vessel to go ashore to be greeted by family members and friends. All others are transported to Angel Island on a smaller vessel to be processed further. The majority of the detainees are Chinese although some Caucasians and other Asians are held at the facility as well but for shorter periods of time.

- Immigrants arrive at the wharf in China Cove. They check most of their belongings at the baggage shed on the wharf. This storage space can only be accessed once a week by immigrants.

- Next they make their way to the Administration Building for registration and an in-depth medical examination to determine “the physical and mental fitness of immigrants.” The examinations are humiliating to the Asians immigrants unaccustomed to a western style of medicine. In addition to looking for parasitic diseases prevalent in Asian populations (that posed no health risks to the American public), detailed examinations are also conducted in an attempt to determine the age of the immigrant. These physical exams include the examination of all body hair, condition of skin, teeth, development of sexual organs and the individual’s general attitude.

- Those who fail the health exam are immediately admitted into the hospital for treatment. If the illness is serious enough, deportation may have been ordered.

- Immigrants who pass the initial physical exams (those uninfected with any diseases parasitic or other) are sent to the detention barracks to assume a bunk in one of the dormitories to await a formal hearing on their immigration application. The wait for an initial hearing (a session of interrogation and cross-examination) can lapse from weeks to months because of the complexity of the administrative process at the facility. Immigrants have to prove their claim of citizenship, or familial relation such as wife, son, daughter, etc.

- Living in segregated dormitories with no recreation or common areas, in fact, without chairs, the daily life of the immigrant depends on the race and gender of the applicants although all immigrants experience limited mobility and virtually no privacy. In general, recreation consists of an hour or so of activity each day in an outdoor enclosed area and three trips to the administration building, via an enclosed passage, for meals. Little else is available to occupy the time or mind’s of the detainees. People pass the time talking, playing games (including gambling) and writing poetry on the walls of the dormitories. However, much of the time spent as detainees is consumed with worrying about one’s application and the forthcoming interrogation process. Women and children are sometimes allowed to take supervised walks along the paths with their children.

- New arrivals may be greeted by members of the Angel Island Liberty Association, an association formed by detainees in the 1920s to make life easier for immigrants detained on Angel Island. The organization filed formal complaints on behalf of Chinese immigrants, helped to maintain order in the Detention Barracks and Mess Hall, and educated children.

Questions ranged in difficulty including:

- *How many brothers and sisters do you have?*
- *Where are your grandparents buried?*
- *How often do you go to their grave sites?*
- *When was the last you saw your father?*
- *How many steps lead up to your house?*
- *How many chickens do your neighbors own?*
- *How many rows of houses in your village?*
- *Who lives in the 3rd row?*
- *Who is the oldest man in your village?*
- *How many clocks are kept in your house?*
- *When were the windows put in that house?*

- The interrogation procedure consists of a series of questions (200 to over 1,000 for Chinese applicants compared to the 29 standard questions asked of non-Chinese immigrants at the time) regarding the minute details of their families, relationships, homes and village life. Immigration officials have no way of knowing if the answers they receive are true or not, so they devise a witness system whereby the information provided by applicants has to be corroborated with witnesses and family members to determine legitimacy. This process is very time-consuming involving multiple witnesses (that have to travel to Angel Island), interrogation officials and translators to avoid collusion. Applicants are asked to recreate the layout of their home village with wooden blocks noting exact locations of residencies, schools, wells, and etc. Once the block building is complete, officials trace the illustration and compare it with those created by witnesses and family members. Officials also rely on subjective observations to determine the legitimacy of claims made by applicants in terms of likeness of appearance, dress, and mannerisms.

- People claiming U.S. citizenship are judged on their knowledge of the English language, American customs, dress, history and landmarks regardless of the fact many Chinese exist in segregated communities with little or no contact with non-Chinese people and culture.

- Women are also judged on their appearance and mannerisms. Wives of merchants are expected to dress and act accordingly. Bound feet are considered proof of wealth and status and tend to result in a positive response from officials in favor of exempt-class status. Women who do not match the accepted profile are sometimes accused of being prostitutes or of applying under false pretenses.

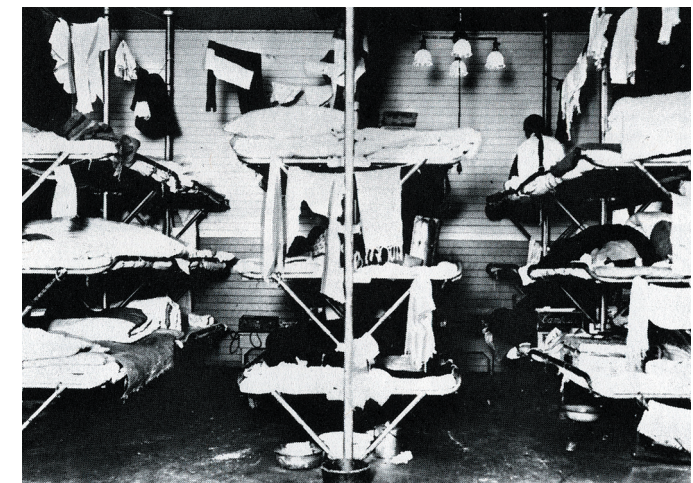
- Husbands and wives who have yet to meet according to arranged picture marriage practices, or who have not lived together for

years, are expected to provide detailed testimony about their lives together.

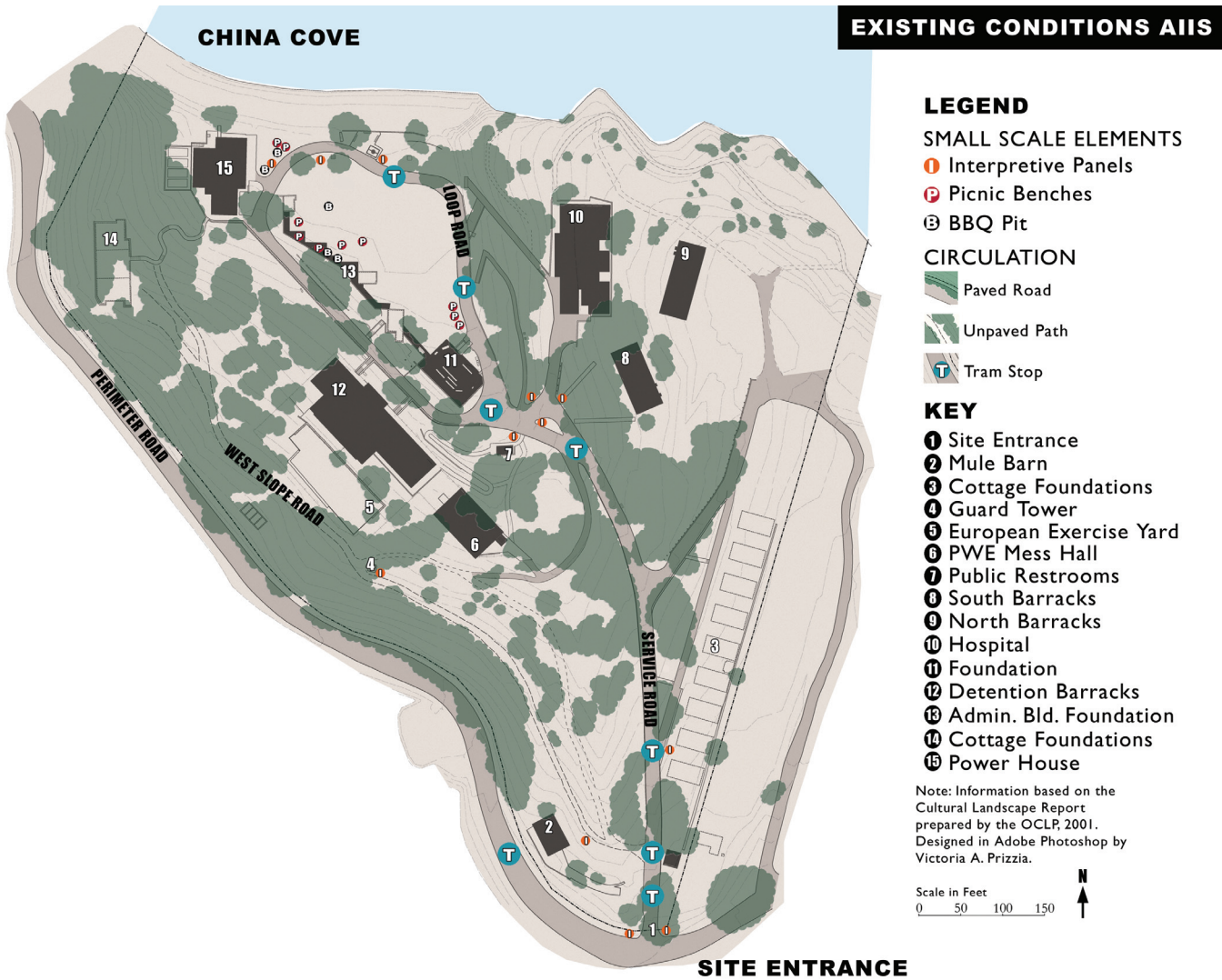
- Children are expected to go through the same process as adults to prove their parent-child relationship.

- If the applicant is approved after the interrogation process, he/she is transported to San Francisco.

- If the application is denied, an appeal process is initiated by the immigrant. The appeal process consists of further interrogations and examinations. Immigrants employ immigration lawyers to help them with their cases— to file all the necessary papers and to bring witnesses and family members in to testify. The appeal process may extend the immigrant's stay on the island to many months and in some cases, years.



Detention Barracks Dormitory (Paul Chow)



Existing Visitor Experience

Visitors arrive at Angel Island State Park by boat from Tiburon and San Francisco landing at Ayala Cove approximately one mile from the site of the former Immigration Station. Day-trippers and overnight campers are greeted by park rangers at the ferry landing. A visitor center and refreshment facility is open seasonally.

Visitors can explore the island on foot, by bicycle or by riding on a seasonal moving tram along a road that loops around the Island. The hour-long tram tour provides an overview of the cultural and natural history of Angel Island making stops at the Immigration Station, Fort McDowell and Camp Reynolds.

Many day-trippers and campers hike to the immigration station on a somewhat strenuous trail that intersects the main perimeter road before arriving at the AIIS boundary at the rear of the site. The overgrown vegetation and the reverse entry point provides a very different threshold experience for current visitors to the AIIS as compared to what former immigrants encountered as they disembarked at the former wharf at China Cove.

The former Administration Building— what was once an intimidating element that dominated the spatial layout of the site— has been reduced to segments of cement foundation after the devastating fire that leveled the building in 1940. The former footprint of the building now consists of an open grassed area that extends from the edge of the beach up to the far end of the loop road. Visitors can wander around the site on the many paths and roads that line the landscape although the majority of the walking paths are currently overgrown and hard to find. Through the flora and fauna, visitors can view vestiges of the facility that are still

standing including the remaining buildings from the Immigration Station period (the Detention Barracks, Hospital, Power House, mule barn and pump house) and the surviving buildings associated with the North Garrison period (two barracks buildings, a PWE mess hall and a guard tower).

Existing interpretive programs consist of guided tours of the barracks for the public and school groups that are arranged in advance; 12 deteriorating and in some cases, inaccurate outdoor interpretive panels installed in 1988*; indoor interpretive exhibits located on the first and second floors of the detention barracks, an orientation room on the first floor of the Barracks Building; an unused automated audio/light program intended to highlight selected poems in the first floor men's dormitory, an unused audio tour, a photography exhibition and the presentation of a documentary film, "Carved in Silence" produced by Felicia Lowe.

Of the 50,000 people who visit the site annually, about 30,000 participate in guided tours of the Detention Barracks— the only accessible standing structure on the site. According to the Angel Island State Park, docents and staff conduct about 1,000 tours per year— 400 school groups and 600 public groups. The tours last between 30 and 45 minutes starting at the Administration Building foundation landing, visitors are taken through the first floor of the Detention Barracks including the women's dormitory; a rest room facility, a "poem room" where two poems are translated; an interrogation room where the scene is recreated through the use of mannequins; and the men's dormitory where several poems have been highlighted with general exhibit panels positioned in the center area of the room.



Interpretive Panel Inside Detention Barracks Men's Dormitory, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

** Outdoor interpretive panels are currently installed at various locations within the central area of the facility. The 19" x 13" panels are constructed of metal and plastic, attached to both wood and metal posts. They stand approximately 3'6" off the ground.*

Existing Structures Inventory



Aerial Image of the Angel Island Immigration Station Site, 2003 (California State Parks)

As stated throughout the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) prepared by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in October 2001, the topography of the site determined the overall layout of the Angel Island Immigration Station (designed by architect Walter Mathews, the principle designer of the facility). Many of the buildings and structures that constitute the facility are located in a central area—the primary hub of activity when the facility was in operation—while others are found in locations around its periphery.

As a result, the road and path system was a very important component of the original design plan for the site—linking buildings and structures to one another—and will continue to play an integral role in enabling visitors to access the diverse resources (cultural, historic, natural) of the former immigration station. Today, most of the original circulation system is intact. Visitors still use the Loop Road to access the buildings and structures within the site. However, with the loss of the wharf and the garden terrace area, the original formal entrance experience has been lost. Generally, the major roads and paths are in good condition however, the minor roads and paths are overgrown by vegetation.

The summaries of the existing buildings and structures listed below and in the following pages are summaries of the data outlined in both the above CLR and the 2003 Master Plan Report produced in 2003 by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation.

Existing Structures: Mule Barn



Original Aerial Image, 2003 (California State Parks)

This two-story wood-framed building is located near the current entrance of the site (via the perimeter road). Although the exterior of the building has not been altered since it was originally constructed in 1911 by the Bureau of Immigration, the function of the building has changed over time. As illustrated in its name, the building was originally designed as a place to house and feed mules. In 1917, the first floor of the building was converted into a garage to accommodate the motorized vehicles that replaced the need for mules on the site. The second floor of the building was remodeled to house employees of the immigration station. In 1942, the Army used the building as a storeroom. In good condition, the exterior walls of the building are covered with wood siding, with a composite tile roof.

Overall Square Footage: 1,900 sq. ft.

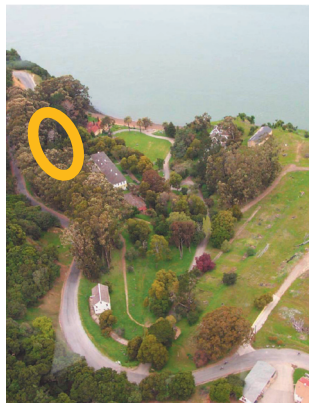


Mule Barn, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

Existing Structures: Cottage Foundations



Cottage Foundations 1-9, Original Aerial Image, 2003 (California State Parks)



Cottage Foundations 10-12, Original Aerial Image, 2003 (California State Parks)

Originally constructed in 1911, the nine cottages that once housed employees of the immigration station were designed by San Francisco Architect, Julia Morgan. The foundations of the domiciles were constructed of wood beams and concrete posts. Other construction materials included wood, plaster and composite shingles on the roof.

When the facility was in operation, the spaces in-between the cottages were transformed by residents into gardens and small recreation areas—privacy was a premium even for employees living at the site. When the Army took over operations of the site in 1941, non-commissioned officers occupied the cottages through 1946— during the North Garrison period. The deteriorating buildings remained deserted until December 1971 when they were purposefully burned during the filming of the movie, *The Candidate*.

The foundations that remain are in fairly good condition and are visible upon inspection underneath the natural grasses that now cover the area.

Dimensions: Each cottage foundation measures 33'x 22'



Image showing garden space between employee cottages when the immigration station was in operation (CDPR Archive)

Existing Structures: North Garrison Guard Tower



North Garrison Guard Tower, 2002 (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, OCLP)

The only guard tower that remains on the site was built c. 1942 as a viewing platform to monitor the POWs being held within the Detention Barracks. However, similar structures were used to supervise the activities of immigrants who were confined within the walls of the Detention Barracks and the former Administration Building as their cases were being processed.

Dimensions: 15' high with a 10' x 10' platform

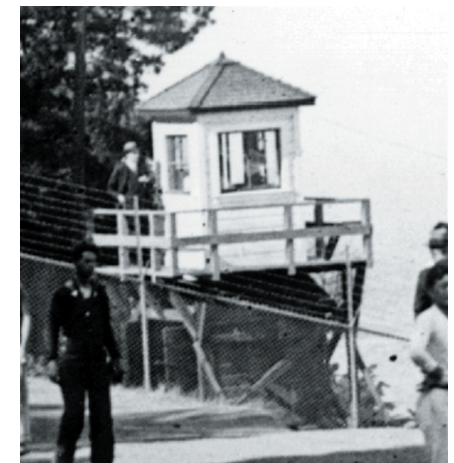


Image showing an Immigration Station Guard Tower, c.1910 (CDPR Archive)

Existing Structures: European Exercise Yard



Recreation Area, 2002 (OCLP)

The mobility of all detainees was limited while detained at the former immigration station. Women and children were at times allowed to stroll the grounds on the many paths while supervised; male detainees experienced very few opportunities for recreation outside of the cramped dormitories of the Detention Barracks. However, for an hour or so each day detainees could use the European Exercise Yard as an active area, accessed by a path from the rear of the Detention Barracks building. The yard can also be reached from a path that follows along the far sides (south and east) of the yard. In fair condition, the yard is currently camouflaged by a layer of grass although the somewhat dilapidated wire fencing that surrounds the yard still outlines the footprint of the space.

Dimensions: 130' x 45'

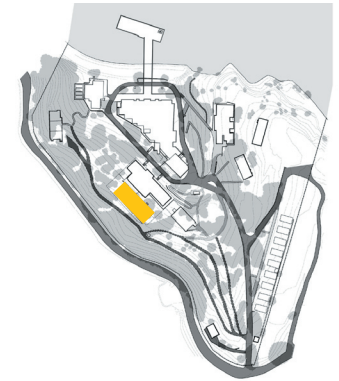


Image showing exercise yard, 1932 (CDPR Archive)

Existing Structures: PWE Mess Hall



Original Aerial Image of the Immigration Station Site, 2003 (California State Parks)

Constructed in 1942 by the United States Army, the PWE mess hall is located on the concrete foundation of the former recreation pavilion utilized while the immigration station was in operation.

In good condition, the “utilitarian” one-story wood-framed building has been vacant since the Army left the site in 1946. Although the interior of the building has been used by the California Department of Parks and Recreation as an indoor space, the exterior of the building has essentially remained unchanged since its construction.

Dimensions: 67' x 40'



Recent image showing the PEW Mess Hall (AIISF)

Existing Structures: Park Rest Room

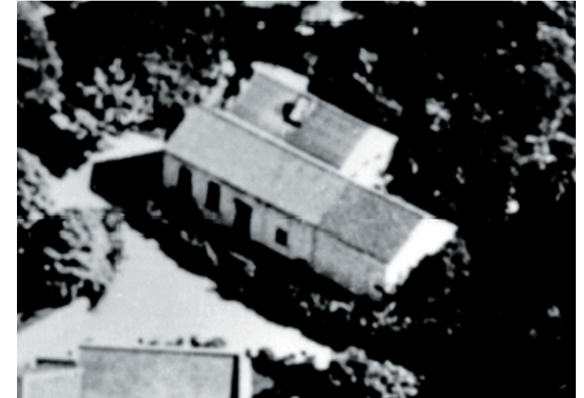


Image showing rest room, water fountain and interpretive sign, 2002 (OCLP)

Visitor related resources are limited at the site to a small rest room facility, garbage and recycling receptacles, picnic benches and barbecue pits. Built in 1982, the park rest room was constructed on the foundation of the former carpentry shed utilized while the immigration station was in operation.

In good condition, the wood-framed structure has separate facilities for males and females with a drinking fountain located out front.

Dimensions: 20' x 10'



Aerial image of former Carpentry Shop, c. 1927 (CDPR Archive)

Existing Structures: North and South Barracks Buildings



Recent Images showing North and South Barracks (AIISF)

North Barracks

Built in 1942 by the United States Army, the “utilitarian” two-story wood-framed structure provided housing for 56 U.S. Troops engaged at the military complex. The troops occupied the seven rooms of the structure located north of the Hospital. Vacant since the Army shutdown the facility in 1946, the building has been stabilized and is currently in fair condition. Construction materials include: concrete piers and wood posts as a foundation; shiplap siding; and composite roof tiles.

Dimensions: 90' x 30'

South Barracks

Built in 1942 by the United States Army, the “utilitarian” two-story wood-framed structure provided housing for 50 U.S. Troops engaged at the military complex. The troops occupied the seven rooms of the structure located south of the Hospital. Vacant since the Army shutdown the facility in 1946, the building has been stabilized and is currently in fair condition. Construction materials include: concrete piers and wood posts as a foundation; shiplap siding; and composite roof tiles.

Dimensions: 80' x 30'



Existing Structures: Hospital



Hospital, 2005 (V. Prizzia)



Image of Hospital Entrance Way, 2002 (OCLP)

Built in 1909 as one of the four main buildings included in the original architectural plans for the immigration station designed by Walter Mathews, the building is an example of the architectural style commonly utilized in the design and construction of government buildings of the twentieth century.

From 1910 to 1940 the hospital facility accommodated both male and female detainees. When the immigration station was shutdown and the Army moved in, the hospital was transformed into additional barracks space. Following many years of neglect, vandalism and decay, an initiative to stabilize the building from further deterioration was instigated when the Immigration Station was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 with the hospital building referenced as the only existing structure to have special significance within the site. Efforts to preserve the building have been on going throughout the last two decades.

The exterior of the two-story wood-framed building is presently in good condition.

Overall Square Footage: 10,630 sq. ft.



Panoramic View of the Facility, See Hospital c. 1920 (CDPR Archive)

Existing Structures: Post Exchange Foundation/Location of the Memorial



Post Exchange Concrete Landing With Memorial, 2005 (V. Prizzia)



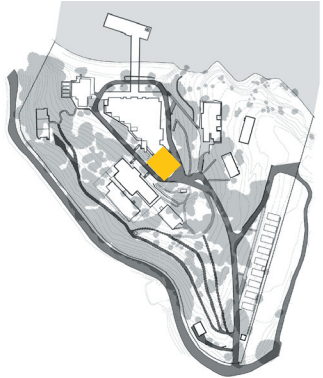
Stairs to Post Exchange Memorial and Gathering Area, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

In 1942 the Army built the Post Exchange building— a one-story high structure with a concrete foundation— within the footprint of the former Administration Building. Two flights of steps made of asphalt were constructed enabling access from the building to the Loop Road.

Demolished in the 1970s by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the remaining concrete foundation is now used by the Angel Island State Park as an informal meeting area for visitors. Docents or park rangers begin their tour of the Detention Barracks within this area. A memorial donated in 1979 by Victor Burgeron, in honor of the immigrants who were processed at the facility, also sits upon the post-exchange foundation. The memorial was formally dedicated on April 28, 1979 and is still in good condition.

The steps and the path still remain and are in good condition, providing access for visitors to the platform area from the Loop Road.

Overall Square Footage: 2,331 sq. ft.



Immigration Station Memorial, dedicated in 1979, 2002 (OCLP)

Existing Structures: Detention Barracks



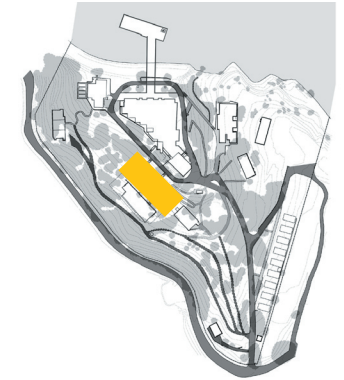
Detention Barracks, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

The most notable building within the site, the Detention Barracks building was constructed in 1909 to house Chinese and Japanese detainees while their immigration cases were being processed. To pass the time, Chinese detainees in particular expressed their frustrations, fears and observations on the walls throughout the building in the form of written or carved poetry as their stay lapsed from days to months and in some cases years.

The wood-framed building is one of the four main structures included in the original architectural plans for the immigration station designed by Walter Mathews. Like the Hospital, the Detention Barracks is an example of the architectural style used in the design and construction of government and institutional buildings of the twentieth century.

After the immigration station closed in 1940, the Detention Barracks was transformed (easily) into a Prisoner of War Camp that was utilized by the United States government until the North Garrison military facility was closed in 1946. Following over 30 years of neglect, the significance of the severely deteriorating structure was re-discovered in 1977 when a state park ranger, Alexander Weiss, became aware of the layers of poetry that could be found throughout the building; with many layers covered with coats of paint. A large portion of the poetry was amassed in the men's dormitory on the first floor of the building where the Chinese detainees resided—the immigrant group who experienced the longest detainments on the island. Weiss' discovery sparked a movement to preserve and interpret the site — the only standing example of a west coast 20th century immigration processing facility. The building was first opened to the public in 1983; and some of the rooms have been recreated through the use of a mixture of artifacts, replicas, found objects, audio components, multi-media presentations, mannequins and theatrical lighting.

Since the late 1970s stabilization and preservation efforts have been



Detention Barracks Entrance, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN
ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE



Universal Access Ramp to Detention Barracks, 2002 (OCLP)



Men's Dormitory, 2003 (California State Parks Website)

initiated and implemented by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, employing the construction techniques used when the building was first built.

A universal access path was constructed in 1980 by the California Department of Parks and Recreation to enable universal access to the Detention Barracks—the only accessible building on the site. The path is currently in good condition but requires regular maintenance to keep the walkway clear of organic debris. An elevator and lift have also been constructed in the front of the building to provide universal access to the first floor exhibits.

Overall Square Footage: 11,900 sq. ft.



Detention Barracks Completed, 1909 (CDPR Archive)



Detention Barracks, 1920 (CDPR Archive)

Existing Structures: Administration Building Foundation, Remnant



Field of Grass Covering Remnants of the Former Administration Building, 2005 (V. Prizzia)



Remnants of the Administration Building, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

The focal point of the layout of the former immigration facility, the Administration Building was designed in 1907. Intimidating by its sheer size and presence within the layout of the facility, the building symbolized the power of the United States government. Situated on the largest naturally flat portion of the site, the administration building dominated views of the facility from the wharf—the original entry point—creating a daunting threshold experience for immigrants and visitors as they disembarked at the ferry landing.

The building housed the primary functions of day-to-day operations of the facility including the main examination room, registry room, chief inspector's office, doctor's office, interrogation room, a waiting room, "Oriental" dining room, "Caucasian" dining room and the kitchen.

In 1940 the building was completely destroyed by fire and any remaining debris or materials were removed in 1941 by the United States Army to make room for five newly constructed buildings and structures including a Mess Hall, Post Exchange, Prisoner of War Enclosure (PWE) office and two others. The California Department of Parks and Recreation, in preparation for the anticipated recreational use of the site by the public, demolished the military-related structures in the 1970s.

The remnants of the Administration Building are visible on the south, east and west sides of the lawn. The footprint of the former building is now covered in grass. It is expected that more fragments of the foundation could be unearthed through archeological techniques. The Loop Road, originally designed by Walter Mathews in 1907, remains in fair condition. Encircling the Administration Building footprint, the Loop Road still provides circulation around the central area of the facility.

Overall Square Footage: 25,000 sq. ft.



View of the Administration Building, 1917 (CDPR Archive)

Existing Structures: Power House and Pump House



Power House, 2002 (OCLP)



Pump House, 2003 (AII SF)

Power House

Built in 1909 as one of the buildings included in Walter Mathew's original architectural plans for the immigration station, the building is an example of the architectural style commonly used in the design and construction of government buildings of the twentieth century.

Along the water's edge and in close proximity to the former Administration Building, the structure retains much of its historic character although it is more prominent now than originally designed due to the absence of the Administration Building. Construction materials include a hipped-roof and reinforced concrete walls.

In good condition, efforts to stabilize the structure (most recently the smoke stacks) and remove hazardous materials from the area have been implemented

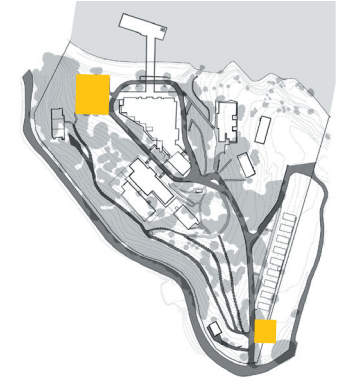
Overall Square Footage: 3,950 sq. ft.

Pump House

Built in 1911, the purpose of the pump house remains unclear in terms of its specific use when the immigration station was in operation. Between 1941 and 1946 the United States Army utilized the building as a tool storehouse. Construction materials include a concrete foundation and wood siding.

Located near the current entrance to the immigration station site, the one-story structure is currently in poor condition with a major portion of the roof missing.

Dimensions: 16'x 15'x 18' tall



Artifact Inventory

Currently, the Angel Island State Park has a very limited collection of artifacts related to the former immigration station. The objects on display within the Detention Barracks building consist of a mixture of found objects, artifacts and replicas.

• Women’s Barracks

- three tier bunk-beds
(about 70 beds, both artifacts and replicas)
- wash basin
- pitcher
- suitcases
- clothes
- blankets
- bowls
- pillows
- mah jong game
- suitcase

• Shower Area

- porcelain sinks

• Upstairs

- glass medicine bottles

• Interrogation Room

- three chairs
- table
- flag
- typewriter

• Women’s Waiting Room

- Certificate of identity for a Chinese Detainee
- Immigration documents for a Chinese Detainee
- glass Bottles
- glass Vials
- 1 glass bottle filled with red pills in a pear shape
- game pieces
- bowls
- 1 button with square center
- 8 chopsticks
- wooden hanger
- 2 knives
- 1 fork
- 2 balls made of white women lace socks
- matches
- cigarette “chesterfield”
- broken pieces of plates and bowls
- a comb for lice
- a red tube shaped box

Possible resources for objects, original documents and documentation:

The Asia Society, New York; The Chinese American Museum, Los Angeles; the Chinese Cultural Center of San Francisco; the California Historical Society; the Chinatown History Museum, New York; the California State Archive, the Hawaii State Archives; the Library of Congress; the Museum of Chinese in the Americas , New York; the National Archives and Records Association, San Bruno; the National Japanese American Historical Society, San Francisco; the Oakland Museum; the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts; the San Francisco Office, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; the San Francisco Public Library; the Sherman Grinberg Film Library; the San Sacramento City and County Archive; and the UCLA Film Archive.

Interpretive Approach

In•ter•pre•ta•tion n:

an explanation or establishment of the meaning or significance of something
— [Webster's Dictionary](#)

a planned effort to create for the visitor an understanding of the history and significance of events, people, and objects with which the site is associated
— AAM

an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information
— Freeman J. Tilden, [Interpreting Our Heritage](#)

Historic sites such as Alcatraz, Auschwitz, the Tenement Museum, Ellis Island, the National Civil Rights Museum and others are charged with the challenge of preserving and providing access to a physical place while also creating a space where visitors can have a meaningful experience making connections between the historic site, the story it represents and the life and experiences of contemporary citizens. Unlike museums such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.— where stories are far removed from where they originated— historic sites provide a different and rare opportunity to merge time and space through an interpretive narrative grounded in the specific soil from which the story came into being.

The challenge for museum professionals in interpreting historic sites is to create ways that allow the site to speak for itself while having a clear vision of the story that needs to be told; to provide perspectives to be included in crafting that story; and to frame, preserve and restore the site's resources without compromising the sanctity or uniqueness of the place.

However, when we look at the past from the present, we are creating a new reality, a new understanding of something that has become intangible and elusive. Almost any event, in its retelling can become controversial. It is within this tension that something real, meaningful, and enlightened can be created.

“Developing a multidimensional interpretation of a site that addresses sensitive or controversial topics can seem risky at first. In fact though, taking risks implies seizing opportunities to expand knowledge and experience. Historic sites must be willing to take risks and present an interpretation that is balanced and honest, because in the end that makes the past meaningful for contemporary visitors” (Levy, Llyod, Schreiber, 6).

The Angel Island Immigration Station functions as a historic site, as a monument to the power of human nature to overcome injustices, and as a living document of the personal experiences of Chinese immigrants (the immigrant population to experience the longest and most contentious detainment at the facility as a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act and other anti-Asian immigration policies of the time) who expressed their hope, fear and frustration on the walls of their living space.

As such, this plan considers the site at its most powerful when the deterioration of the facility is juxtaposed with a view of how it was when the center was operating. As pointed out in the Cultural Landscape Report completed in 2001 by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (OCLP), National Park Service (NPS), the picturesque and well-maintained landscape was “at odds with the inadequate and inhumane features built for human use.” It is this contradiction that has guided the creation of this plan. Interpretive elements will trigger the



Wire Fencing, c. 1915 (CDPR Archive)

intuition of the visitors to make observations about the perseverance and determination of the Chinese immigrants to forge new and better lives for their families as well as the policies that guided the functioning and design of the facility.

At different points, visitors may be uncomfortable following in the footsteps of the immigrant— experiencing limited access to places or having to view interpretive elements through wire fencing— yet evoking that feeling of injustice, exclusion and small personal triumphs in the viewer is a primary aim of this interpretive plan.

The underlying principle guiding this proposal is to let the site speak for itself. This interpretive plan includes the following elements:

1. Orientation Experience: Boat Trip from Ayala Cove to China Cove
2. Restored Circulation System
3. Outdoor Interpretive Panel System
4. Reinterpretation of Administrative Building
5. Guided Tour of the Detention Barracks
6. Digital Database and Real-Time Self-Guided Character Tour of the Site
7. Additional Recommended Site Modifications

The plan juxtaposes the restored with the dilapidated— exemplifying the evolution of the site and the consequences of neglect. To avoid cluttering the physical landscape, and visitors' minds as well as the power of the place, formal interpretation will be kept to a minimum. Furthermore, the design of the site should inherently limit the maximum number of people at the site to a reasonable and manageable number to maintain the integrity and sanctity of the place and to protect the pristine landscape. Maintaining the ambient sounds of the island environment and the unusually quiet setting is a priority.

The content and narrative of the presentations will tell the Chinese immigration history as it relates to the site. The exhibition will illustrate the complicated dynamics of the Angel Island Immigration Station, raising questions regarding the current practices but also injustices of North America's immigration policies while highlighting the universal immigration experience to defy seemingly unsurmountable odds in the pursuit of one's goals.



The Wharf, c. 1915 (CDPR Archive)

Exhibition Objectives

“The existing cultural landscape at the Immigration Station reflects a combination of site development, occupation, abandonment and preservation from 1907 to the present.”

—Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Cultural Landscape Report, 2001

- To merge time and space through a dynamic and engaging tour of the Angel Island Immigration Station
- To tell the Chinese immigration story as it relates to the site reflecting the powerful message of hope and human perseverance that the poetry within the facility symbolizes
- To shed light on the reality regarding the Anti-Asian policies devised and institutionalized by the United States government during the end of the 1800s and into the mid-1900s
- To engage visitors with the personal experiences of a distinct race of people who, among all the nationalities who passed through the facility, were singled out as undesirable and were subjected to exclusionary processing practices at the Angel Island facility from 1910 to 1940
- To illustrate the relationship between race, immigration and American identity
- To highlight the universal immigration experience to defy seemingly unsurmountable odds in the pursuit of one's goals
- To encourage visitors to make associations with the complicated nature of America's immigration policies today
- To create an interpretive program that can be accessed in multiple ways to meet the needs of Angel Island's diverse audience within a park that is accessible to the general public who may or may not know about the site's history
- To enable visitors to better understand the organization and utilitarian goals of the site as a whole including the significance of the landscape and each built feature as it related to the facility as a whole

Themes Guiding Interpretive Approach/Intended Visitor Experience

The intention of this interpretive approach is to present the visitors with physical evidence of Angel Island that begins to tell of recurring themes that defined the experience of Chinese immigrants. They are:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| •Exclusion | •Ambition |
| •Segregation | •Forced Isolation |
| •Self-Expression | •Hierarchy of Freedom/Access |
| •Cultural Ignorance | •Distrust |
| •Perseverance | •The Intersection of “History” and Personal Experience |
| •Tenacity | •Natural Deterioration |



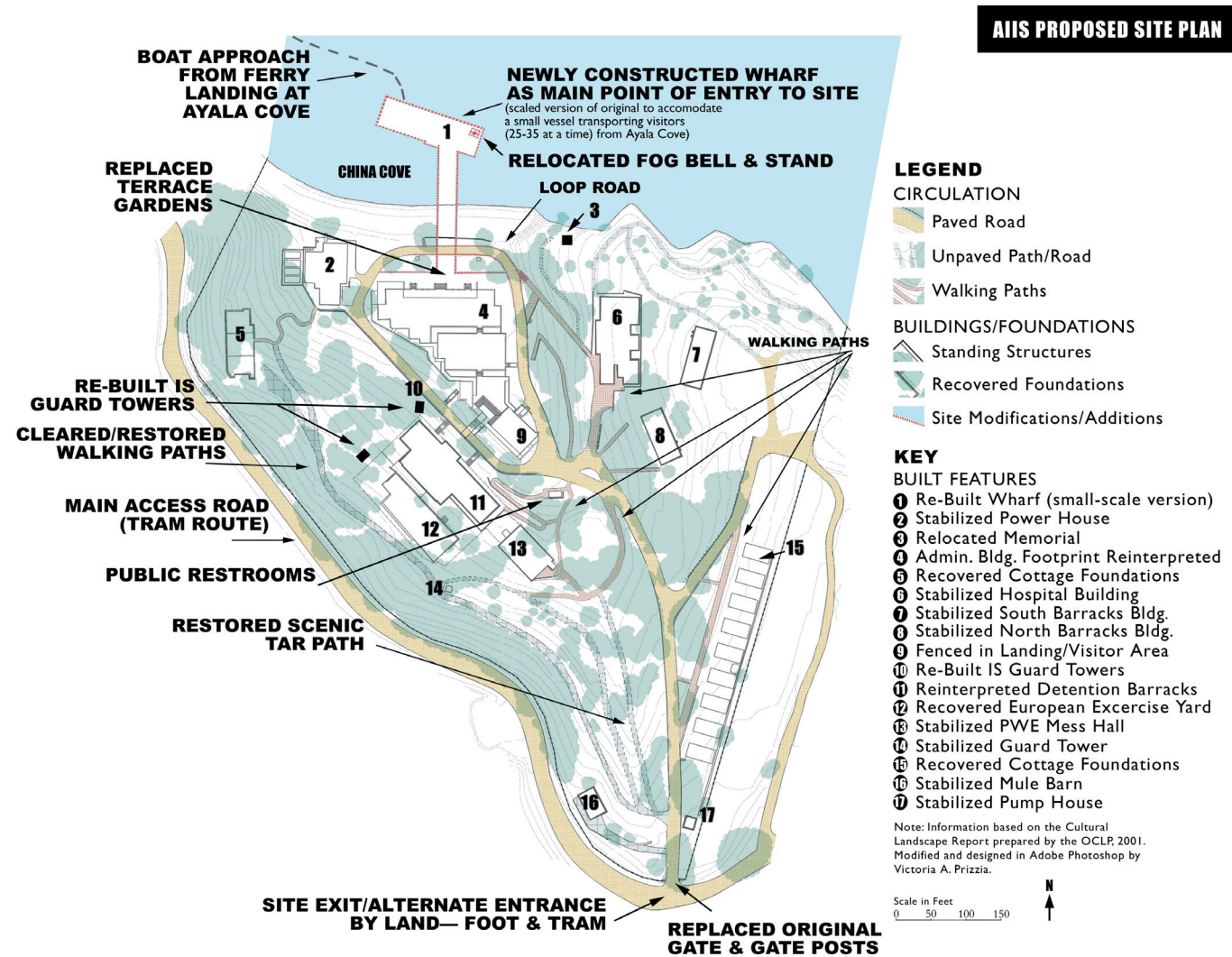
Approaching China Cove from San Francisco Harbor, 2005 (V. Prizzia)



Angel Island Trams, 2005 (V. Prizzia)



Angel Island Immigration Station Memorial upon the foundation of the former Administration Bldg., 2005 (V. Prizzia)



Interpretive History to Date: Building on Previous Work

In 1988, Mary Helmich of the Office of Interpretive Services within the California State Parks, submitted an interpretive plan for the Angel Island Immigration Station. The interpretive elements that exist today at the site can be traced back to her work. Since then, a series of studies and proposals have been conducted to inform the preservation and restoration of the park. Some of the ideas presented in this proposal overlap or build on those of previous reports. The complexity of the physical features of the site as well as the cultural history provide a challenging problem for designers, educators, architects, landscape architects and historians to collectively solve.

Studies and reports used as references and inspiration for this proposal include: the Angel Island Immigration Station Interpretive Plan, Office of Interpretive Services, CSP, 1988; the Angel Island State Park General Development Plan: California Department of Parks and Recreation, July 1979; the Cultural Landscape Report, Part One, Site History: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, October 2001; the Historic Structure Reports, Detention Barracks: Architectural Resources Group, July 31, 2002; the Poem Conservation Report: Architectural Resources Group, November 2001; and the Angel Island Immigration Station Master Plan, 2003: Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation.

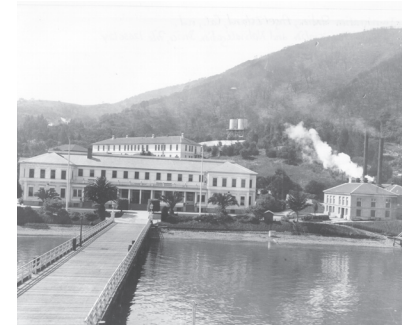
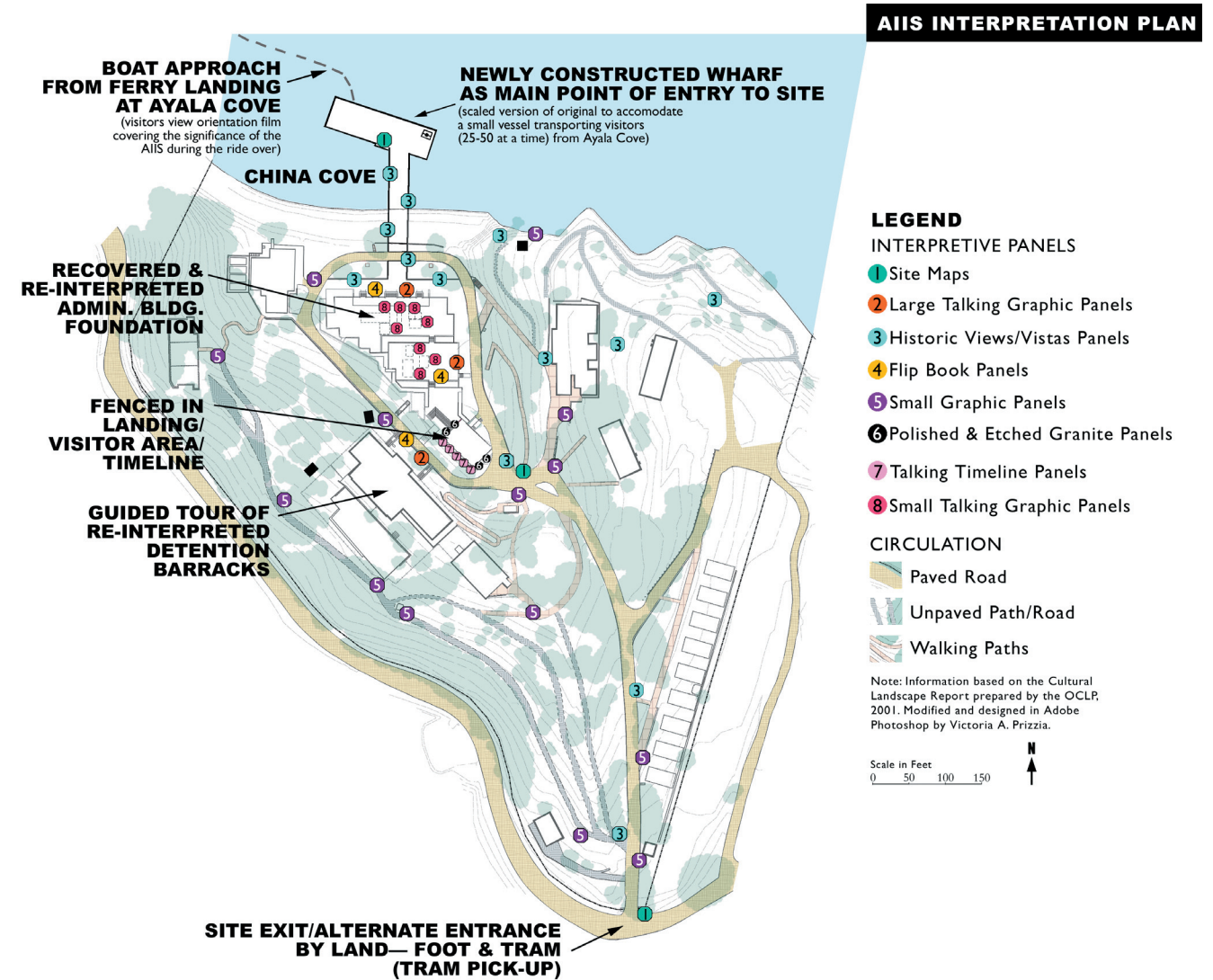


Image Courtesy of NPS Archive

Proposed Points of Engagement

The interpretive plan outlined in the pages that follow consist of seven primary features that constitute the intended visitor experience including:

1. Orientation Experience: Boat Trip from Ayala Cove to China Cove
2. Restored Circulation System
3. Outdoor Interpretive Panel System
4. Reinterpretation of Administrative Building
5. Guided Tour of the Detention Barracks
6. Digital Database and Real-Time Self-Guided Character Tour of Site
7. Additional Recommended Site Modifications



1. Orientation Experience: Boat Trip from Ayala Cove to China Cove—

Visitor Objective:

To simulate the historic threshold experience of the Angel Island Immigration Station (AIIS) through the wharf entrance.

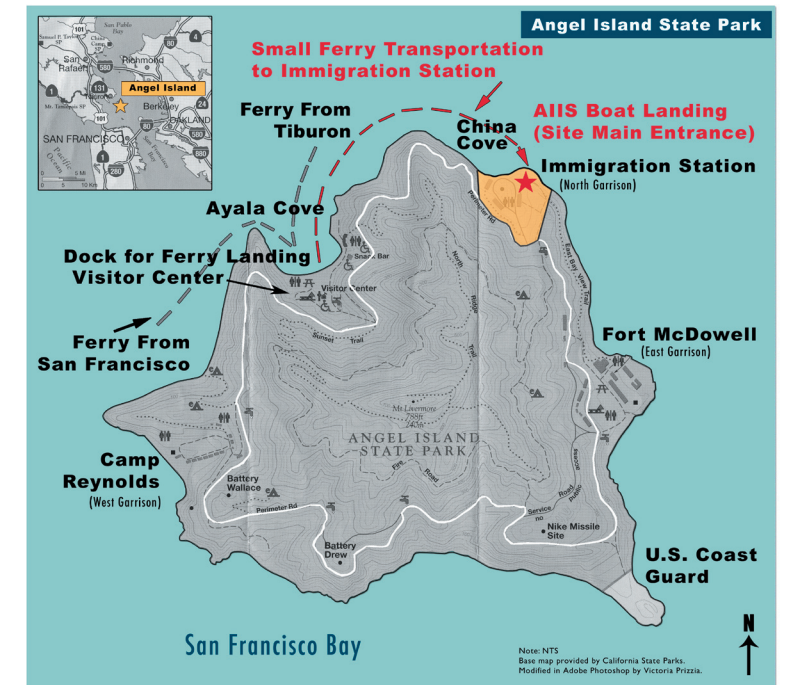


Wharf Approach, 1908 (CDPR Archive)

Visitors will travel on a commercial ferry service from either San Francisco or Tiburon to Ayala Cove on the northwest corner of Angel Island (see map to the right). Greeted by Angel Island State Park Rangers and AIIS guides, visitors will be directed to the small AIIS visitor information booth where they can pick up ferry passes to China Cove, 2D site maps, a schedule of guided tours, and a tram pick-up timetable. Visitors will also be able to make a deposit to borrow a Personal Hand-Held Devices to experience a unique self-guided tour of the facility.

Those interested in visiting the AIIS will board a smaller, more intimate vessel that will transport them to China Cove, the historic entrance to the AIIS site. (The size and occupancy of the passenger ferry will need to be determined after further research is conducted regarding the boating conditions in that area of the Bay including prevailing winds and weather patterns.) On the short journey around the northern end of Angel Island, visitors will be sequestered on the first floor of the vessel (to evoke a feeling of being herded as a group) to view a short orientation film presenting an overview of the site's significance and history. The orientation film will include historic images and video footage as well as excerpts of both contemporary oral histories of first and second generation Chinese Americans whose family members were processed at the facility and poetry from the walls of the Detention Barracks as the voices of the past.

As the film ends, the boat will dock at the newly constructed wharf—the gateway to the facility. Reconstructing the wharf to its original form is estimated to cost over \$13 million requiring the removal of hazardous materials from the beach/bay area and the reconstruction of the historic structure including a baggage shed that would function as an orientation center. According to the 2003 Angel Island Immigration Station Master Plan, provided by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), the wharf is





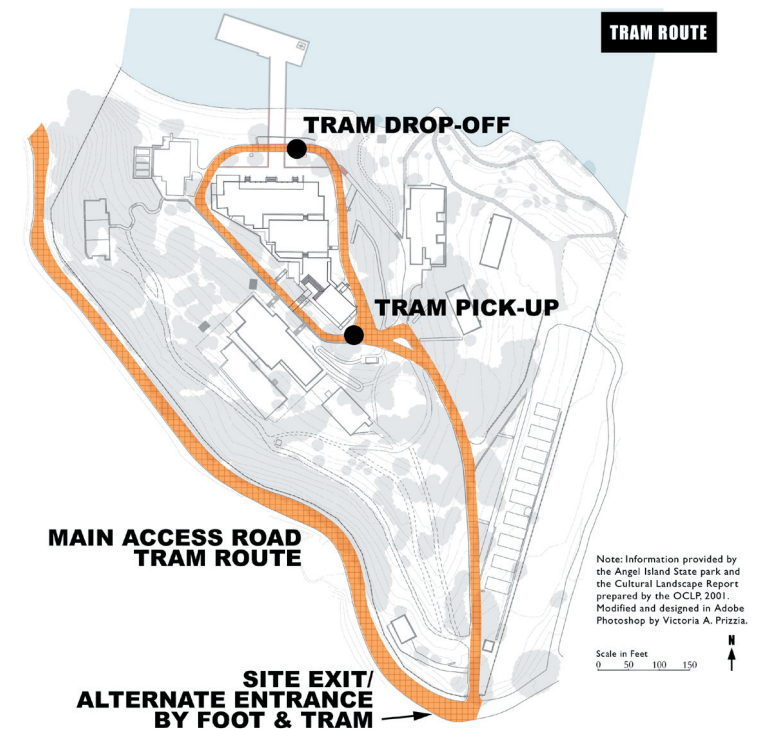
Images of the AIIS, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

scheduled to be dealt with in Phase Four of the five-phases proposed. However, this element should be a priority regarding any restoration and preservation initiative. An alternative solution is to construct a small scale version of the wharf, large enough to accommodate a small transport vessel from Ayala Cove. Instead of having an orientation center on the dock which would be precarious in the most ideal situation, the boat ride from Ayala Cove would be utilized to its full potential regarding the threshold experience—it is the beginning of the journey for the visitors and the first opportunity to present the primary themes incorporated throughout the interpretive plan. Using the emotive medium of the moving image with sound to create a feeling of anticipation and uncertainty in the hearts and minds of the visitors to evoke important aspects of the immigration experience 60 years ago.

Disembarking the vessel, visitors will have a view of the entire facility. There will be a large site map placed on the wharf as well as panels mounted along the pier showing visitors what the original threshold experience looked like. The wharf will meet all ADA requirements although further research is necessary as to what specific EPA standards need to be met.

Visitors will travel back to Ayala Cove when they have completed their visit on the Tram service that will take them around the east and southern tip of the island before dropping them off at the ferry landing. Tram schedules will be listed at various locations throughout the site and within the text of the visitor map.

The Tram System could also provide an alternative mode of transportation to the site if the wharf cannot be reconstructed or when boat travel is ill-advised due to inclement weather. A set of tram cars could be outfitted with overhead monitors to present the orientation film to visitors on their way to the site. The Tram would drop visitors off at the far end of the Loop Road in front of the newly planted Terrace Gardens to again afford a sweeping view of the site from the perspective of the water's edge.



2. Restored Circulation System

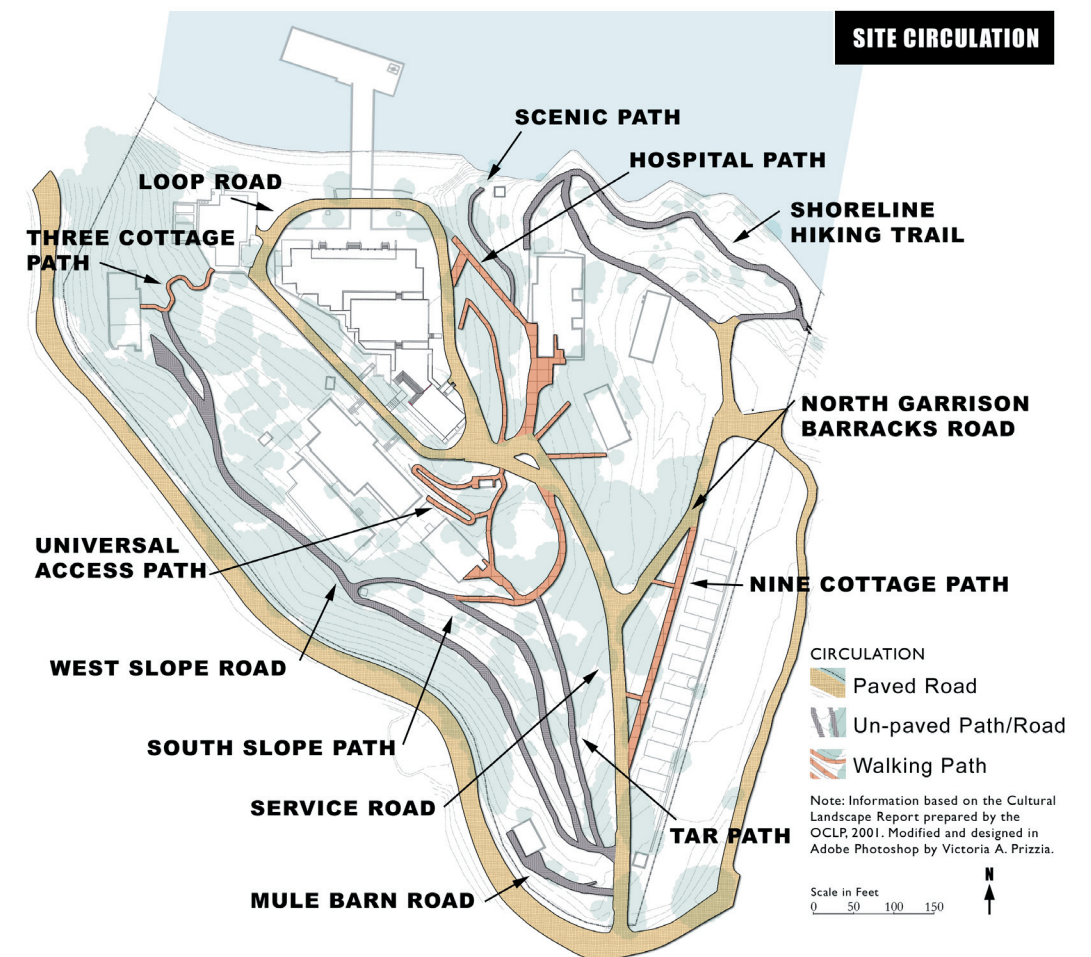
Visitor Objective:

Clearing and stabilizing the roads and paths would provide visitors with multiple ways to explore the site from various vantage points while providing context for how the site was designed in terms of natural landscape characteristics and the intended human experience.

One of the unique and exciting features of the Angel Island Immigration Station is the path and road system that runs throughout the 14+-acre site. The road and path system was a very important component of the original design plan for the facility and will continue to play an integral role in restoring and interpreting the former immigration station. Revitalizing a circulation system throughout the site would once again link significant buildings and structures to one another while enabling visitor access to the diverse resources (cultural, historic, natural) of the former immigration station. A battery operated mini-Tram could be implemented to provide universal access throughout the site along the paths and roads.

The circulation system of the facility provides insight regarding the rationale behind the original design for the facility in terms of natural landscape characteristics and the intended human experience within the site's built features. Walter Mathews, the principal architect responsible for the design of the facility, dealt with the difficult terrain by creating a complex of buildings linked through a series of roads, walkways and passages. The apex of the facility was the Administration Building—the center of human activity and bureaucracy at the station. The following excerpt, taken from the 2001 *Cultural Landscape Report* (CLR) prepared by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (OCLP), describes the relationship of the buildings to the circulation system,

“During the early years of the Immigration Station period, the location of the buildings and major structures guided the layout of the circulation system. The wharf was designed as the gateway to the facility and the area in front of the Administration Building was a paved open terrace that acted as a gathering area. The Loop Road led away from the terrace encircling the Administration Building. From the Loop Road, secondary roads and paths branched off up the slopes of the cove, to connect with the other structures and buildings. Behind the Administration Building, a short road was constructed to provide access to the Hospital. Paths and stairs were also built to connect the Hospital and Detention



Barracks with the Administration Building. The Service Road led away from the Loop Road, up the least steep portion of the ravine, to connect with the Perimeter Road. This was the rear entrance to the Immigration Station, and the Perimeter Road afforded access to the rest of the island and neighboring facilities. In 1911, the original circulation pattern expanded when a path system was added in front of the nine employee cottages to connect these structures with the rest of the facility. Above the Detention Barracks, the West Slope Road was constructed to provide access along the steep slope and to the three employee cottages. Paths were mostly functional to facilitate pedestrian movement between the buildings. However, some paths were used for recreational purposes. The tar path, in the southeast portion of the grounds, was improved to create a strolling route that was used by both employees and detainees alike. The tar path had previously been used as the access road to the Perimeter Road before the Service Road was constructed.... At the end of the Immigration Station period the roads were aligned exactly as they were when the circulation routes were first constructed,” (CLR, 2001, p44).



Loop Road, c. 1915 (CDPR Archive)

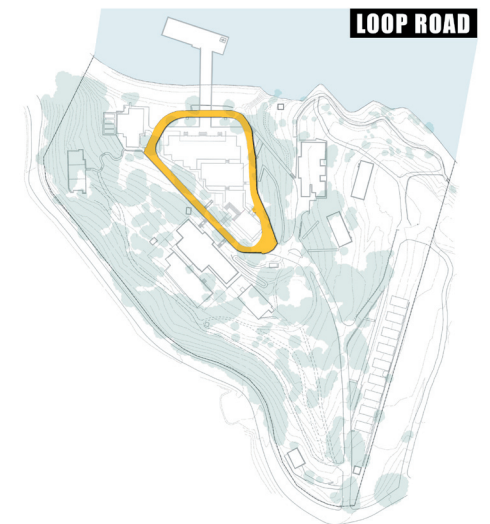
Loop Road

As stated earlier, the Administration Building was conceived in the original plans for the site as the literal and figurative “heart” of the site. The Loop Road encircles the footprint of the former Administration Building, linking the other main features of the site— the wharf, Power House, Hospital and Detention Barracks— to the Administration Building. Restoring the Loop Road, in its original configuration will once again allow Universal Access throughout the central area of the site. As originally planned, the Loop Road will provide visitor access to the roads and paths that branch off from the main area connecting visitors to the other buildings that exist on the site.

In addition to providing access to the original buildings of the site, the road will also provide visitors with a sense of the reasoning behind the site’s original design. Furthermore, access from the newly constructed wharf to the Loop Road will re-create a segment of the original threshold experience that is now lost. The Loop Road and the reinstituted pier will create a space for the re-design and planting of the former terrace gardens in-front of the footprint of the former Administration Building. This garden terrace will serve as a picnic and rest area for visitors.

Today, most of the original circulation system is intact. Visitors still use the Loop Road to access the buildings and structures within the site. Generally, the major roads and paths are in good condition however, the minor roads and paths are overgrown by vegetation .

Particular attention should be given to the Loop Road, the West Slope Road, and the Tar Path due to their historic and cultural significance as well as their potential to enhance the present-day visitor experience. The information listed below regarding each of these three elements summarize the in-depth information provided in the 2001 CLR (OCLP) regarding the original circulation system, the natural character of the landscape and anticipated site use.

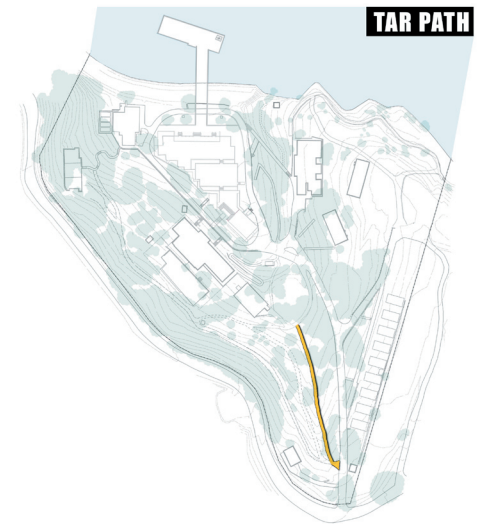




Tar Path, c. 1915 (CDPR Archive)

Tar Path

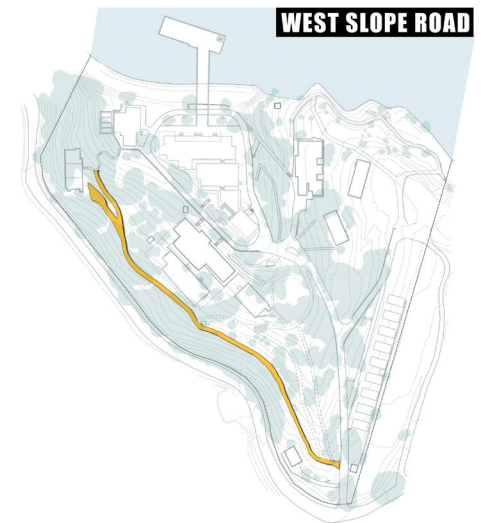
Previously used as an access road to the Perimeter Road, the Tar Path is a distinctive element within the circulation system in that it was densely planted to create a garden-like landscape for relaxation and strolling. Described as “a winding picturesque route,” the Tar Path was utilized by employees and occasionally by female detainees under the supervision of their matrons. The restored Tar Path would offer visitors a scenic avenue for exploring the south slope of the site.



West Slope Road, 2001 (OCLP)

The West Slope Road

The West Slope Road stretches from the back entrance of the Immigration Station property all the way up the west slope to the three cottage foundations. Overgrown with shrubs and small trees, this relatively flat road could provide visitors with universal access up the west slope of the property to enable views of the Recreation Yard (behind the Detention Barracks building) and beyond that would otherwise be impossible. The vantage point from the West Slope Road would allow individuals to see other visitors within the confines of the fenced-in recreation yard. This vantage point is similar to that available from the former elevated platform of the guard towers that once loomed above the activities in the area.



3. Outdoor Interpretive Panel System

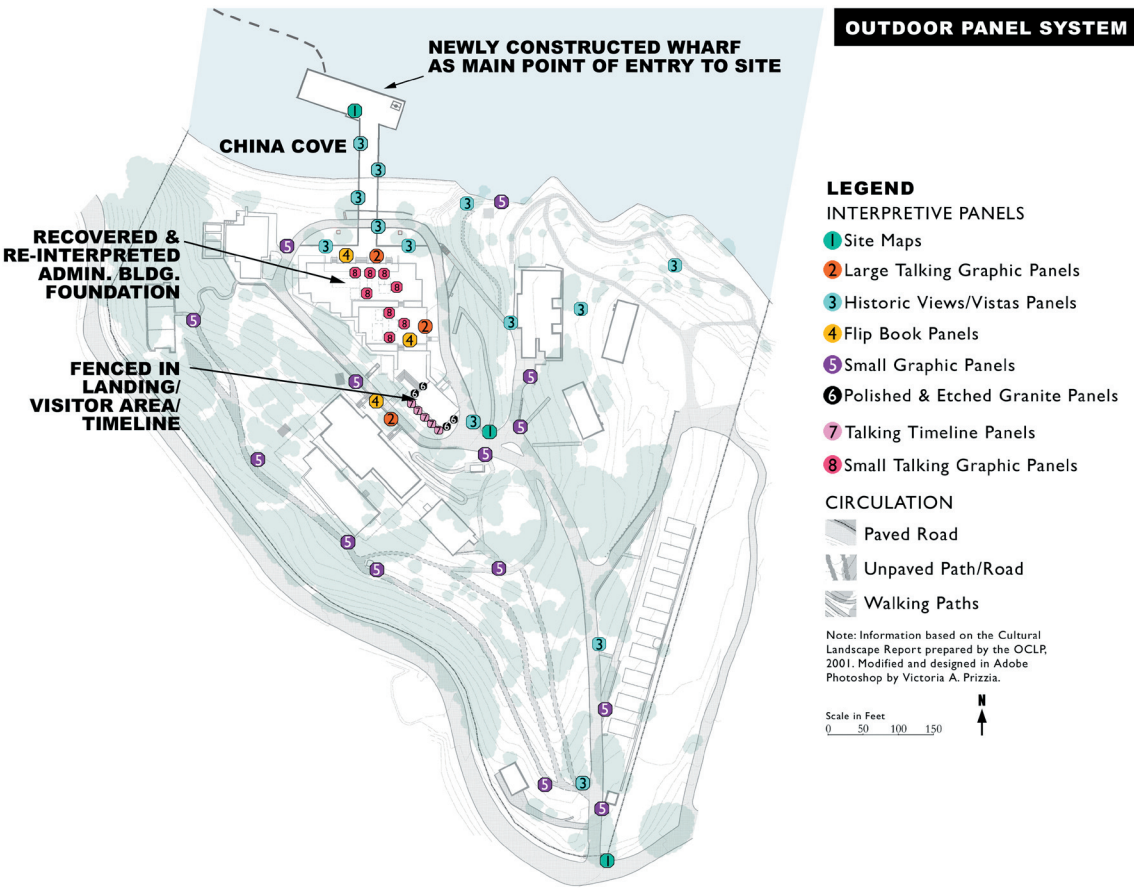
Visitor Objective:

This level of interpretation is designed to accommodate visitors who are exploring the site in an informal and self-guided manner as well as those who are interested in taking advantage of all of the resources available to them.

The panel system will include site maps; “talking” graphic panels; historical views/vistas panels directing the visitor’s attention to particularly significant views of the natural and man-made landscape; flip book panels providing cultural and historical content; a dynamic timeline; and polished granite panels providing visitors with excerpts of the poetry etched on the surface from the walls of the Detention Barracks. In conjunction with a wayfinding signage system throughout the 14+-acre site, visitors will use a water-proof site map provided at the park’s visitor center at Ayala Cove to navigate the landscape. The map will include a poem written in Chinese. The poem will be translated in segments within certain panels found throughout the site. As visitors explore the site, they will translate the poem in the blank spaces provided within the visitor’s guide map.

The “Talking” panels will be constructed of Folia Sun solid phenolic-fused panels that are weatherproof, UV and graffiti proof substance with a textured, semi-matte finish. The Voxsys Portavox System technology— a digital audio chip embedded within the panel— won the best new product award in 2001 at the annual SEGDC conference and expo. The recording capacity is virtually limitless and can be activated by the visitor with a push button on the outside of the panel. The audio presentation is played through a state-of-the-art loudspeaker and the content will be translated in English, Chinese, Spanish and German. The porcelain enamel panels will have embedded high resolution (300 lines per inch) photographic reproduction images. These panels are highly resistant to harsh environmental factors. The porcelain enamel panels will articulate a look and feel of permanence.

Note: More research will be necessary to detail the wayfinding system that would be installed in conjunction with the Panel System. An important component of the overall interpretive plan, the wayfinding system will be used to help visitors navigate the site pointing out visitor resources, roads, paths, general directionals, and distances to the next significant structure etc.

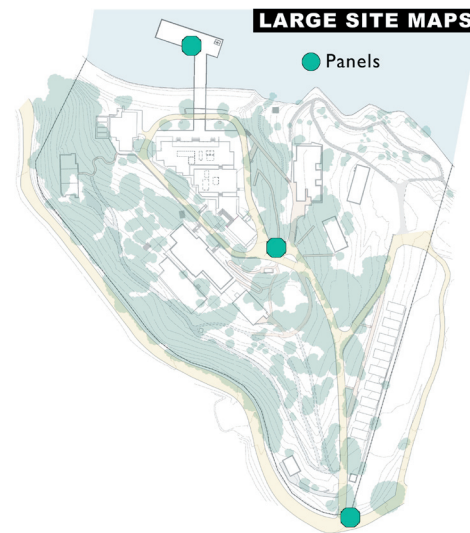


Site Maps

(4'x3.5' porcelain enamel signs with embedded high resolution graphics (300 lines/inch), mounted on extruded aluminum double pedestal)

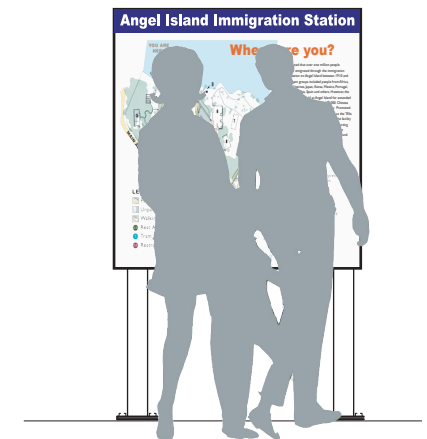
Site maps will be located at the entrance/exit and at the head of the “Loop Road.” These signs will help visitors navigate the landscape and to realize the overall layout of the facility and the spatial relationship between buildings and structures and the utilitarian vision that dictated the design. Water-proof 2-D site maps will also be provided for visitors to carry with them as they move through the site.

These panels will include general information including visitor services.



EXAMPLE

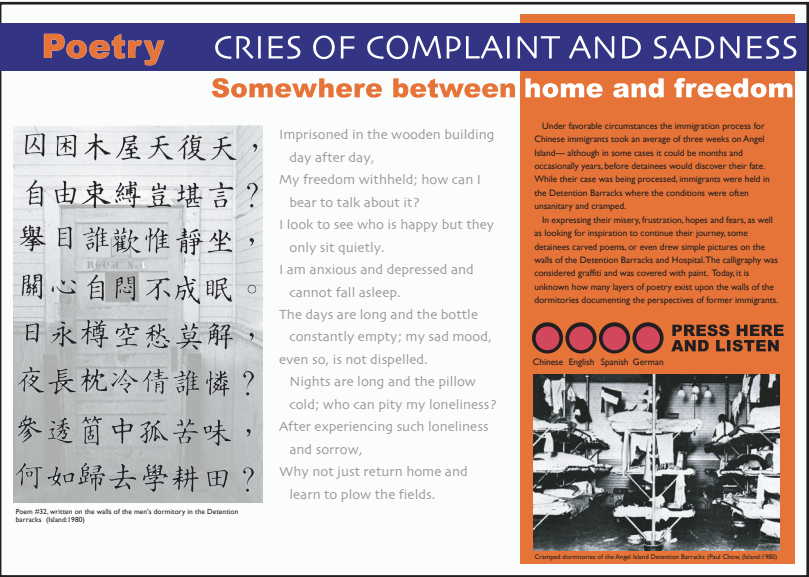
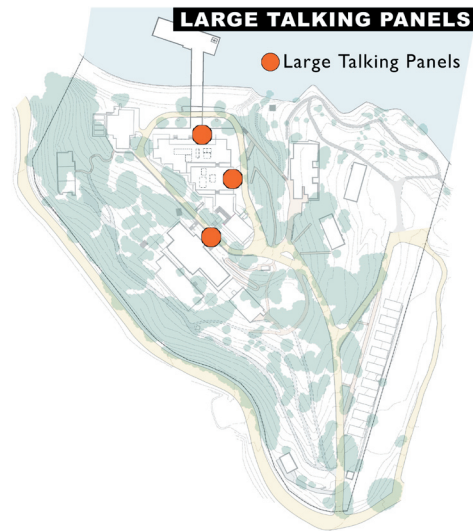
(4' x 3.5')



Large “Talking” Graphic Panels

(3’x4’ Folia outdoor sun solid phenolic-fused panels that are weatherproof, UV and graffiti proof with a textured, semi-matte finish, outfitted with Voxsys press-botton activated award-winning audio technology)

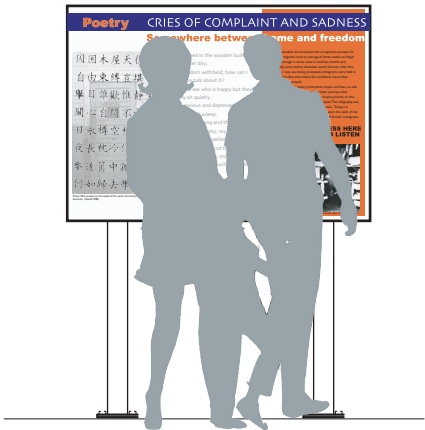
These large graphic panels with audio content will be placed at three significant locations around the border of the Administrative Building Footprint. The dynamic nature of the “talking” panels will provide visitors access to first-hand testimonies and other cultural content to enhance the graphic content and the physical surroundings. These panels will be particularly valuable regarding universal access concerns as well as for the many visitors who will visit the site outside of normal business hours and who would be unable to participate in either a guided or self-guided PDA tour of the facility.



***The poem will be recited in Chinese and translated in English, Spanish and German.**

(3' x 4')

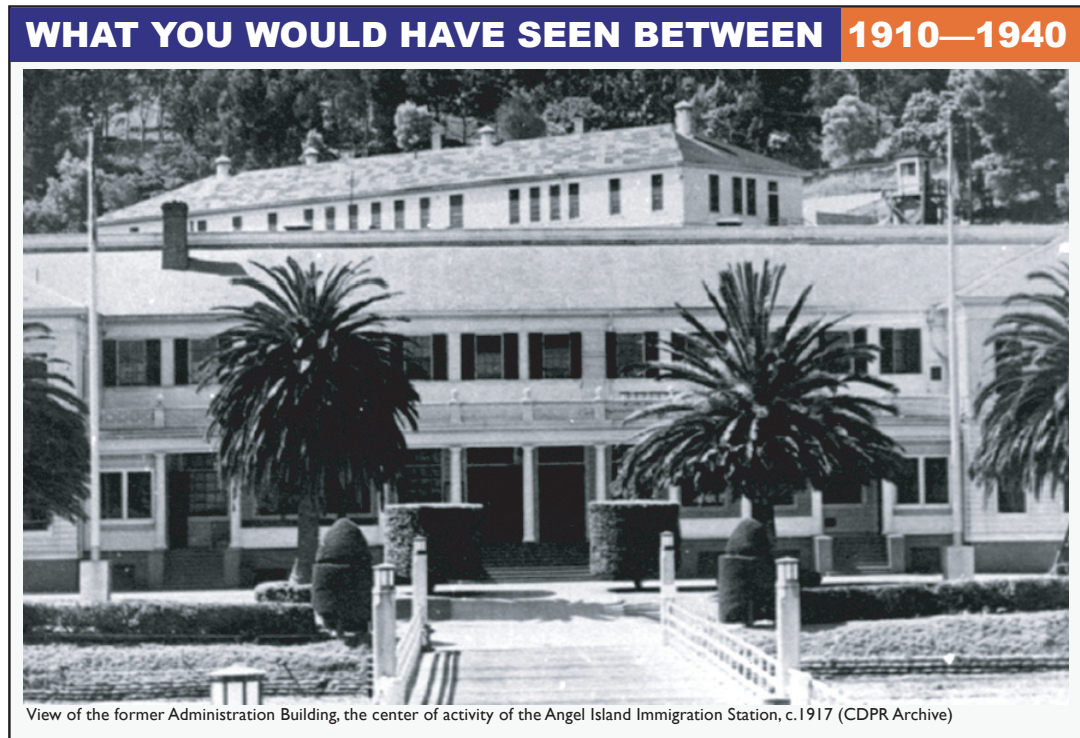
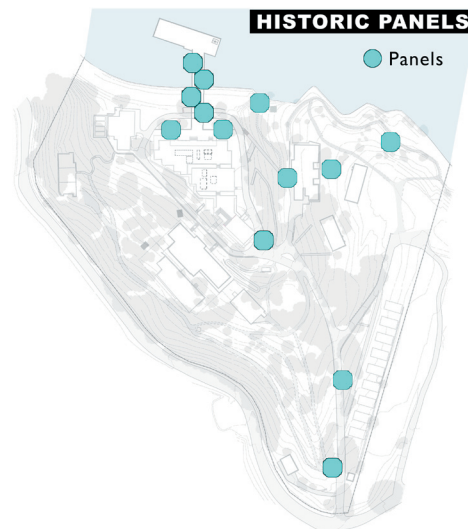
EXAMPLE



Historic View Photo Panels

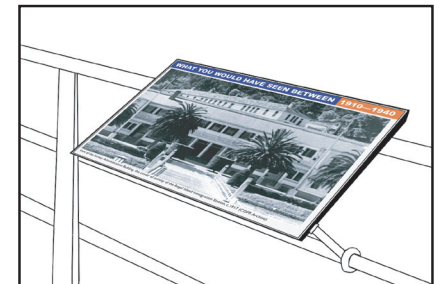
(2'x3' porcelain enamel signs with embedded high resolution graphics (300 lines/inch), mounted on extruded aluminum pedestal)

These photo panels are located along the pier of the wharf and at points of historic interest throughout the site for the vistas they afford. The panels will allow visitors to stand in a particular location to see an aspect of the landscape through time and space— such as a view of the former Administration Building— that have been caught in time to now be juxtaposed with the remnants of the site.



(2' x 3')

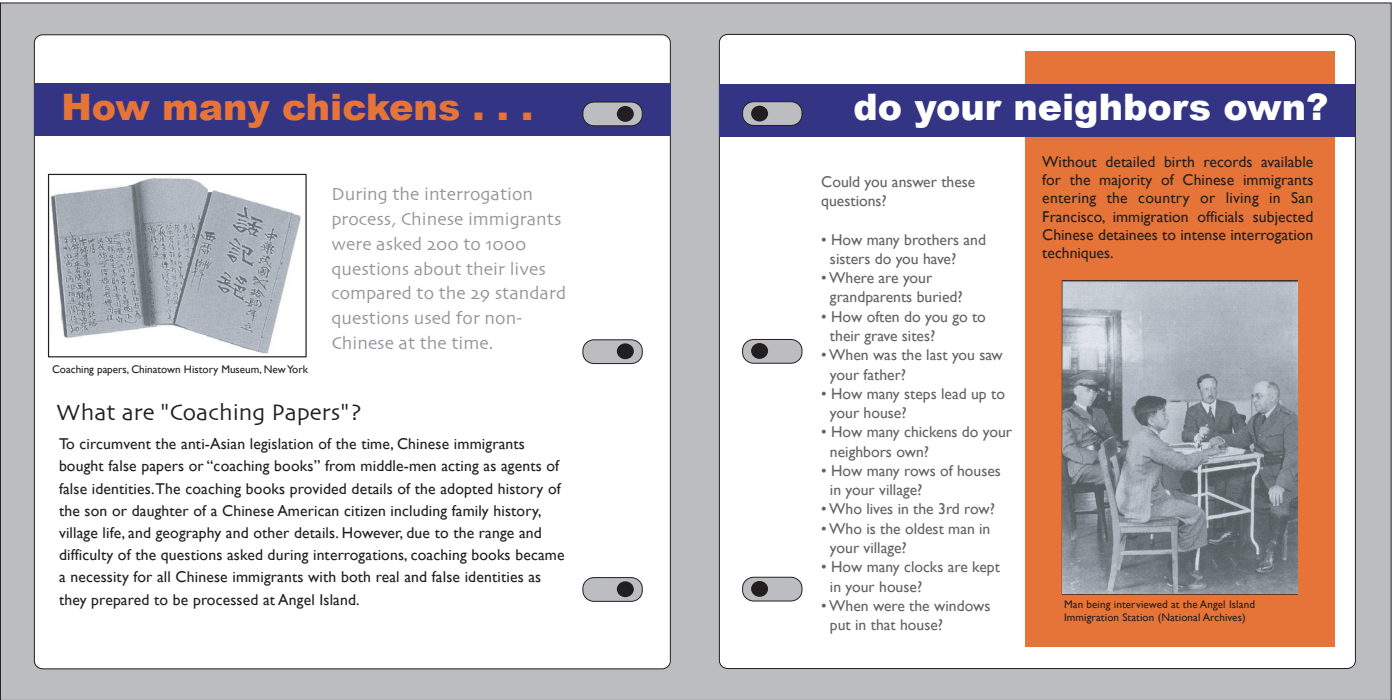
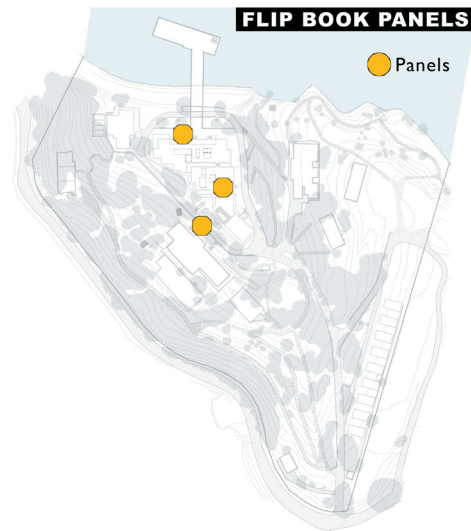
EXAMPLE



Flip Book Graphic Panels

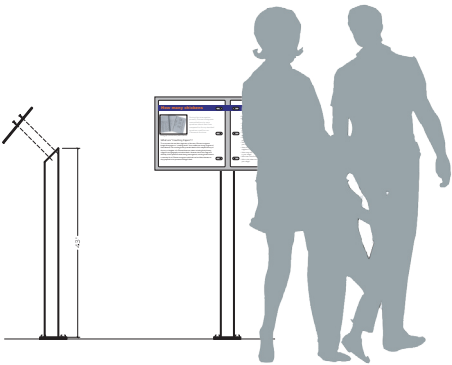
(2'x4' multiple page outdoor flip books constructed of Folia Sun solid phenolic-fused panels that are weatherproof, UV and graffiti proof with a textured, semi-matte finish)

The flip book panels will provide visitors with more in-depth historic information at three significant locations around the border of the Administrative Building Footprint— the center of activity when the facility was in operation. The number of pages in each book will vary, depending on each location. The primary topics explored within the flip books will be the history of Chinese immigration to the United States, the activities of the Administration Building and the Detention Barracks.



EXAMPLE

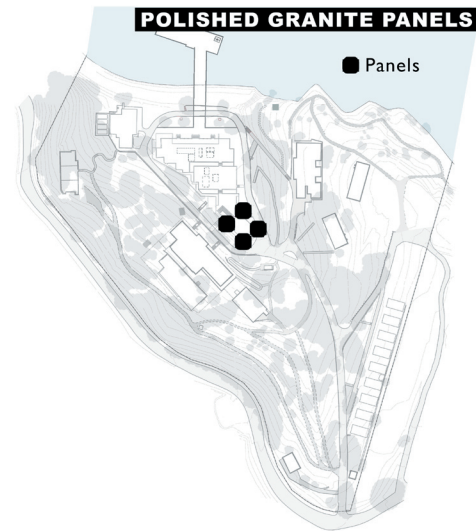
(2' x 4')



Polished Granite Poetry Panels

(4' x 3.5' polished granite poetry panels on a pedestal mount with etched writing in Chinese, English, Spanish and Braille)

These panels are designed to provide an outdoor representation of the poetry carved in the walls of the Detention Barracks. The etched poems will provide visitors access to the most unique and significant aspect of the Angel Island Immigration Station. These panels will be particularly valuable for the many visitors who will visit the site outside of normal business hours (who would be unable to enter the Detention Barracks) as well as for those who are not interested in guided tours.



HOPE

ON THESE WALLS

木屋銘

樓不在高，有窗則明；
島不在遠，烟治埃崙。
嗟此木屋，阻我行程。
四壁油漆綠，
週圍草色青。
喧嘩多鄉里，
守夜有巡丁。
可以施運動，孔方兄。
有孩子之亂耳，
無咕嚕之勞形。
南望醫生房，
西睇陸軍營。
作者云，“何樂之有？”

Poem #33, written on the walls of the men's dormitory in the Detention Barracks (Island:1980)

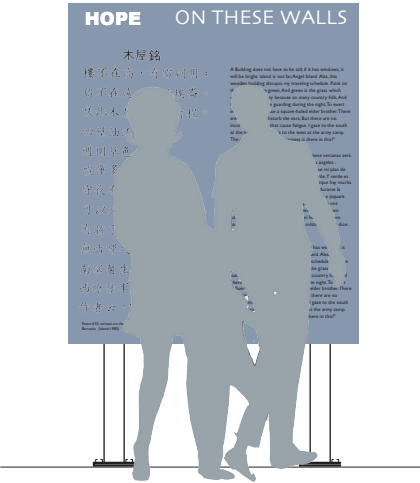
A Building does not have to be tall; if it has windows, it will be bright. island is not far, Angel Island. Alas, this wooden building disrupts my traveling schedule. Paint on the four walls are green, And green is the grass which surrounds. It is noisy because so many country folk, And there are watchmen guarding during the night. To exert influence, one can use a square-holed elder brother. There are children who disturb the ears, But there are no incoherent sounds that cause fatigue. I gaze to the south at the hospital, And look to the west at the army camp. The author says, "What happiness is there in this?"

Un edificio no tiene porque ser alto, si tiene ventanas será luminoso, la isla no está lejos, la isla de los ángeles . Lástima , este edificio de madera interrumpe mi plan de viaje. La pintura de los cuatro muros es verde. Y verde es la hierba de los alrededores. Es ruidoso porque hay mucha gente de mi tierra. Y hay guardias vigilando durante la noche. Para tener influencias, uno puedo usar a (square holed) hermano mayor. Hay niños que molestan mis oídos. Pero no hay sonidos incoherentes que causen fatiga. Miro hacia el Sur donde está el hospital. Y miro hacia el Oeste donde está el campo militar. El autor dice: "¿Qué felicidad hay aquí?"

A Building does not have to be tall; if it has windows, it will be bright. island is not far, Angel Island. Alas, this wooden building disrupts my traveling schedule. Paint on the four walls are green, And green is the grass which surrounds. It is noisy because so many country folk, And there are watchmen guarding during the night. To exert influence, one can use a square-holed elder brother. There are children who disturb the ears, But there are no incoherent sounds that cause fatigue. I gaze to the south at the hospital, And look to the west at the army camp. The author says, "What happiness is there in this?"

*Translations to right of poem in (4' x 3.5')
English, Spanish, and Braille

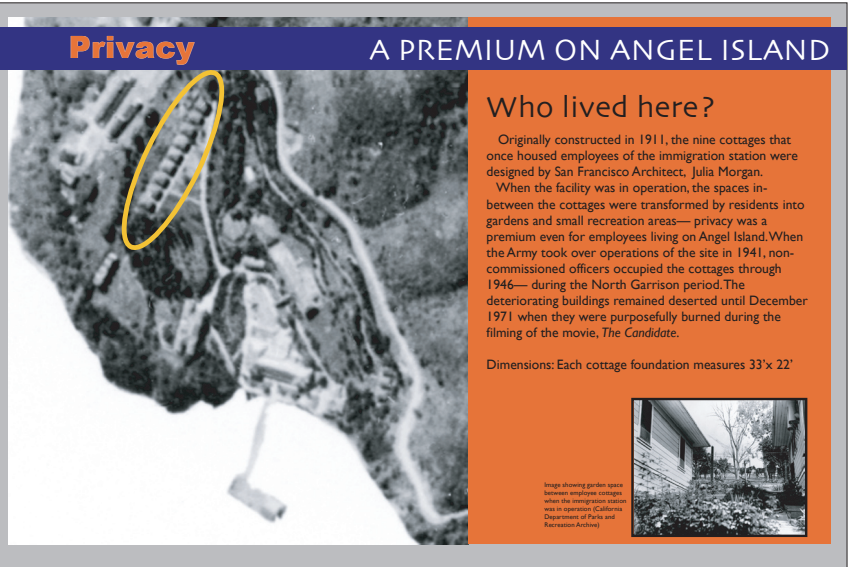
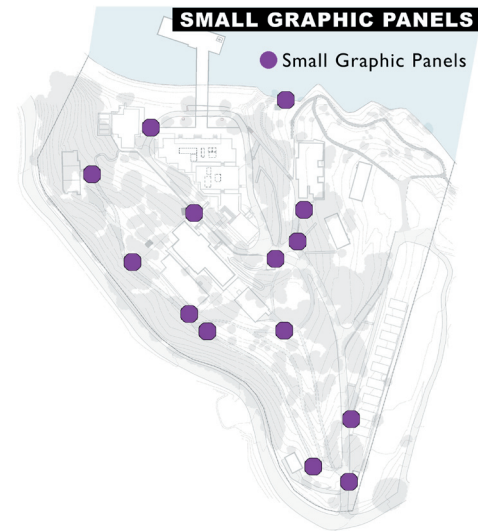
EXAMPLE



Small Graphic Panels

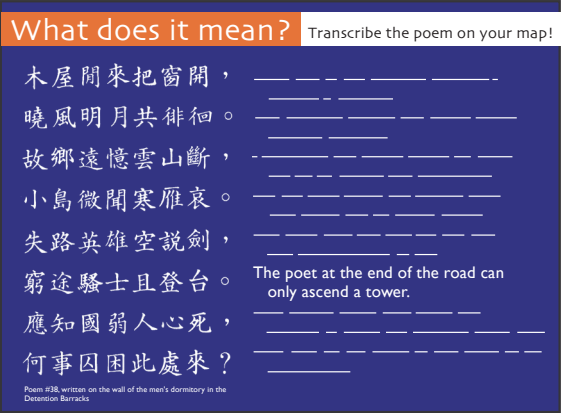
(2' x 3' and 1.5' x 2'— porcelain enamel signs with embedded high resolution graphics (300 lines/inch), mounted on extruded aluminum double pedestal)

These panels will be placed in front of significant structures and buildings located throughout the site. Each panel will give architectural details as well as the relationship of the building to the complex as a whole. Excerpts from oral interviews will also be included if applicable. A second smaller panel will be mounted below the first that will translate segments of a poem written in Chinese that is included in the visitor's guide map.

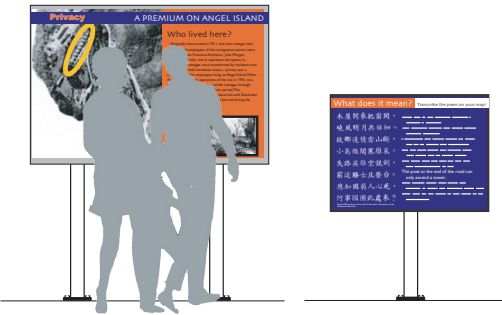


(2' x 3')

EXAMPLE



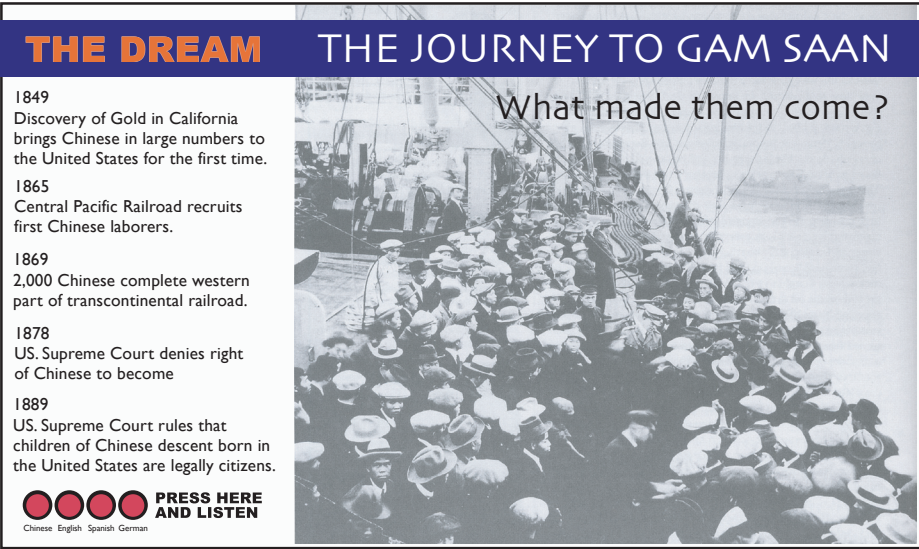
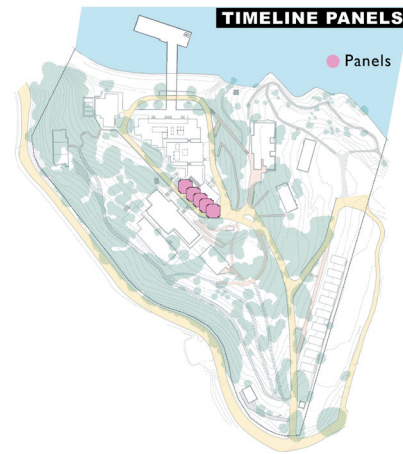
(1.5' x 2')



“Talking” Timeline Panels

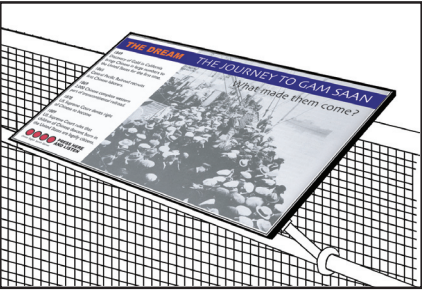
(4’X5’ Folia outdoor sun solid phenolic-fused panels that are weatherproof, UV and graffiti proof with a textured, semi-matte finish, outfitted with Voxsys press-button activated award-winning audio technology— digital audio chip embedded in the panel)

Located on the far end of the Administration Footprint, within a fenced in visitor area, these dynamic panels will provide a graphic timeline of the history of the site and Anti-Asian immigration policies. The dynamic nature of the “talking” panels will provide visitors access to first-hand testimonies and other cultural content to enhance the graphic content and the physical surroundings. The audio content could be broken up into segments — such as the oral history excerpt included below— to allow the visitor to decide how much information he/she wants to consume at each interpretive panel by pressing the button again to hear the next piece of information. After a certain number of seconds, the digital chip could be programmed to cycle back to the beginning.



***Oral History Excerpts will be Audible in English, Chinese, Spanish and German.**

(3' x 5')



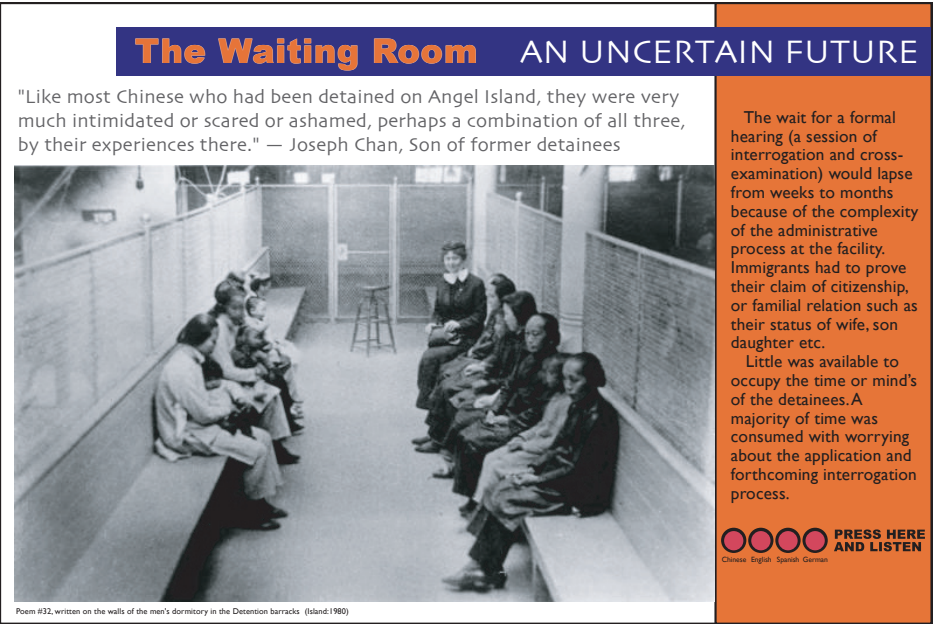
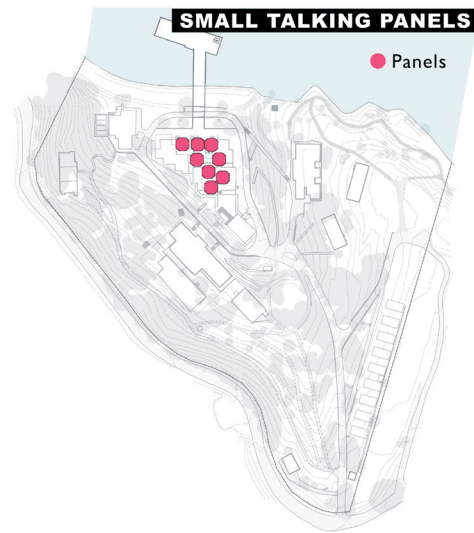
EXAMPLE

They told me that anyone who comes to Gam Saan [Gold Mountain] will make money fast and go home a rich man. Anyone who comes to America is well respected in China. My family pushed me to come. They wanted me to make a better living. They couldn't send my older brother because he was too old to match the age of my uncle's paper son. I studied (coaching papers) for a whole summer at school. It included many, many generations. I had to remember everyone's name, the birthday, and if they passed away, and when. And you had to know the different points of the village, what it looked like. I remember I had an English cap that we picked up in Hong Kong and inside the cap, my father hid some coaching notes, so that once in awhile, I could refresh my memory. But I never had a chance to look at them, because you're among people all of the time and you don't trust anyone. There was no private place where I could be alone to study them. One time, they were playing catch with my cap and they didn't understand why I was so upset. I was scared. — Mr. Wong, age 12, 1933 (Lai, Lim, and Yung: *Island*, p44.)

Small “Talking” Graphic Panels

(2’X3’ Folia outdoor sun solid phenolic-fused panels that are weatherproof, UV and graffiti proof with a textured, semi-matte finish, outfitted with Voxsys press-button activated award-winning audio technology— digital audio chip embedded in the panel)

Located along the “hallways” of the re-interpreted Administration Building Footprint, these panels will provide context including graphic and oral excerpts for the 3-D representations within the footprint of the building. The dynamic nature of the “talking” panels will provide visitors access to first-hand testimonies and other cultural content to enhance the graphic content and the physical surroundings. The audio content could be broken up into segments — such as the oral history excerpt included below— to allow the visitor to decide how much information he/she wants to consume at each interpretive panel by pressing the button again to hear the next piece of information. After a certain number of seconds, the digital chip could be programmed to cycle back to the beginning.



***The oral history excerpt will be recited in English, Chinese, Spanish and German.**

(2' x 3')

EXAMPLE OF PANEL AND ORAL HISTORY EXCERPT

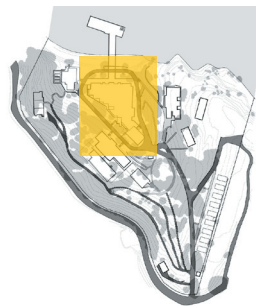
“...And my Dad never told me anything about his experiences on Angel Island. Like most Chinese who had been detained on Angel Island, they were very much intimidated or scared or ashamed, perhaps a combination of all three, by their experiences there. Intimidated in that they were subjected to intense questioning by immigration officials and some people who came to the US had indeed bought paper so they were trying to enter the country illegally and if they were admitted by the immigration officials, if they answered all of the questions satisfactorily, they would still for the rest of their lives be looking over their shoulders, looking for immigration to come after them for illegal entry. Scared, yeah they were scared by the conditions at Angel Island, treated like prisoners I guess. Not a very welcoming atmosphere to a new country. And ashamed, yeah they were ashamed, some of the Chinese immigrants were ashamed. Those who bought papers and had to lie their way into the country might have felt ashamed about having to do that. Others who were perfectly legal immigrants, sons, daughters or even American born citizens like my mother were ashamed they were treated in the fashion that they were by American immigration officials.”

4. Reinterpreted Footprint of Administration Building

Visitor Objective:

To represent the former administration building—the center of activity of the complex—in a way that articulates both the utilitarian aspects of the site as well as the symbolic significance of the building in terms of the underlying principles guiding the operations of the facility including; exclusion, forced isolation, segregation, distrust and cultural ignorance.

The Administration Building will consist of an abstract interpretation of the primary functions of the building laid out on a concrete foot-print of the former site. Visitors will literally follow the foot-steps of former detainees (in the form of shoe prints etched in the foundation) down the fenced-in “hallways” of the area to explore the main rooms of the processing center. The exhibits representing the examination room, interrogation room, registry, waiting area, kitchen, the segregated dinning rooms and others (see historic images to right) will consist of 3-d vignettes made of fiberglass with bronze patina; elements such as a table, chairs and the distinct shoes of the detainee and the interrogators. More research of oral histories, historic photographs and film footage will be necessary to design the vignettes. It is recommended that the Angel Island State Park facilitate a design competition to generate multiple concepts to choose from and general interest in the site within the design field. The few images to the right depict scenes of what happened on the inside of the building. The plan for this series of interpretive panels will be detailed on a site map that can be picked up by visitors to Angel Island at the visitor center at Ayala Cove—the main ferry landing. See page 52 for a summary of the intended layout and design elements for this exhibition component.



Interrogation Room
(National Archives)



Examination Room (National Archives)



Dining Hall (National Park Service)



Asian Mess Hall (California Historical Society)



Female detainees in Waiting Room with
missionary (California Historical Society)

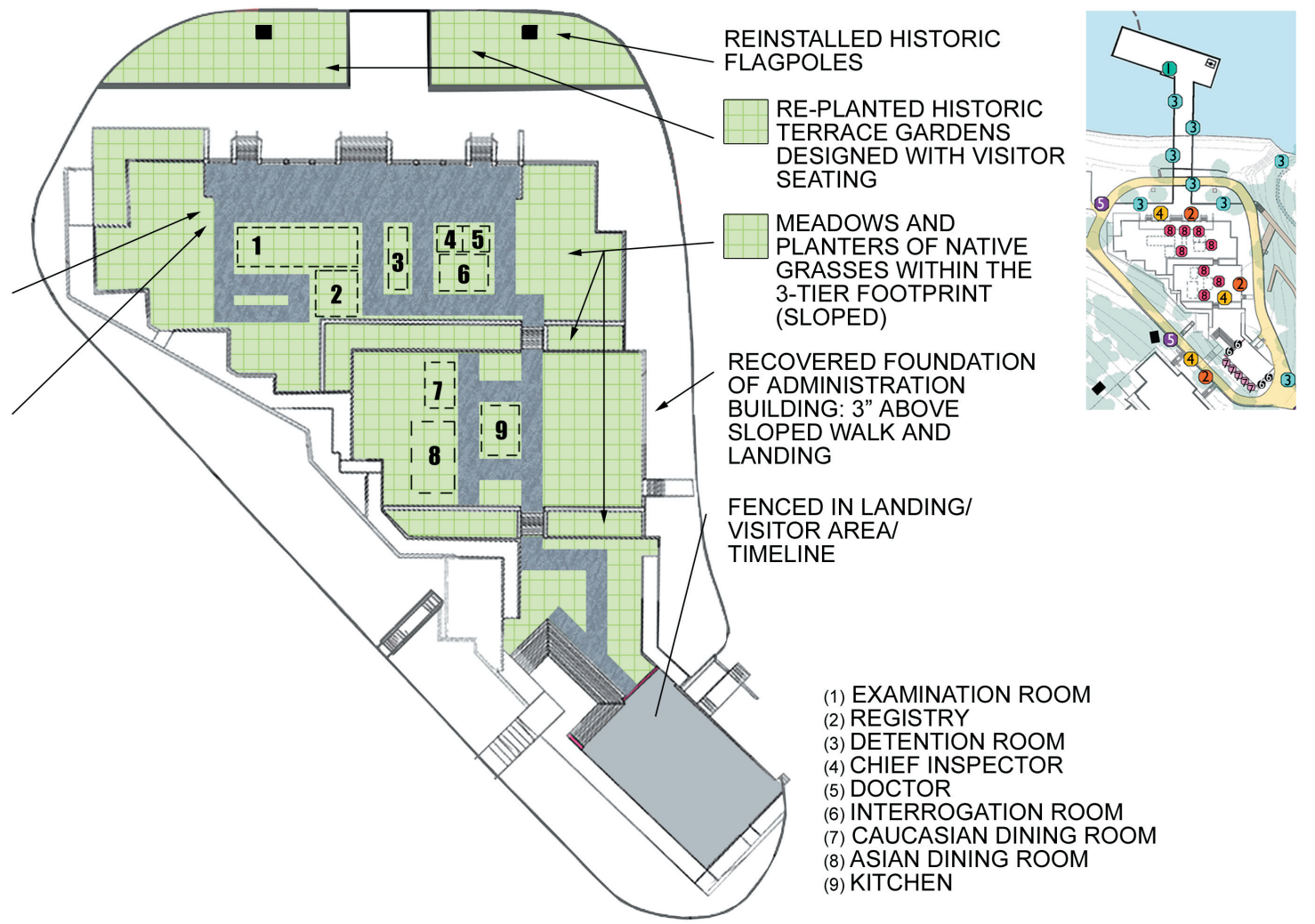
EACH “ROOM” OF THE RE-INTERPRETED SPACE WILL BE REPRESENTED WITH 3-D VIGNETTES MADE OF FIBERGLASS WITH BRONZE PATINA; ELEMENTS SUCH AS A TABLE, CHAIRS AND THE DISTINCT SHOES OF THE DETAINEE AND THE INTERROGATORS

GRAY INDICATES VISITOR PATH— WIRE FENCING LINES BOTH SIDES OF THE “HALLWAY” PROVIDING VISUAL BUT NOT PHYSICAL ACCESS TO THE INTERPRETED SPACES

DISTINCT FOOTPRINTS OF THE PEOPLE WHO “UTILIZED” THE BUILDING WILL BE EMBEDDED IN THE CEMENT FLOOR LEADING TO AND FROM THE ENTRY WAY OF EACH ROOM FOR VISITORS TO FOLLOW. THE FOOTPRINTS WILL SYMBOLIZE THE EXCLUSIONARY ASPECTS OF THE FACILITY, INDICATING WHO SPENT TIME WHERE AND FOR HOW LONG— DEPENDING ON THE DEPTH OF THE VISIBLE TREADS THAT REMAIN.

WORDS WILL BE ETCHED IN THE CEMENT TO GIVE THE VISITOR CUES ABOUT THE MAIN THEMES BEING DEALT WITH SUCH AS EXCLUSION, FORCED ISOLATION, SEGREGATION, FREEDOM, AND DISTRUST

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING FOOTPRINT



"I think the best way for people to learn about the immigration history is through our docents. We have a good group of people who are dedicated to telling the story as it happened. And we are always striving for the truth. And that's why we are always interested in oral histories and talking to detainees although there are fewer and fewer left alive these days as they are getting older and passing on. But we want to try to preserve the detainees' stories as much as we can. "

—Joseph Chan, Son of former detainees



5. Guided Tour of the Detention Barracks

Visitor Objective:

To provide visitors with a space for contemplation and reflection; viewing the more than 135 poems written by former detainees, “poets of the exclusion era”, on the walls of their cramped and sub-standard living space. As the only standing example of a west coast 20th century immigration processing facility. The Dormitories in particular symbolize the power of self-expression to help individuals persevere in times of personal struggle, uncertainty and fear.

AIIS is unique in many ways but the Detention Barracks is the most significant and distinctive element of the facility. Lead by well-trained docents and/or Park Rangers, this visitor experience combines recreated scenes of life within the walls of the building with voices of the past and present as a powerful example of human preservation and self-expression.

All of the rooms of the structure (aside from the first floor men’s dormitory) will be restored to their historically accurate state c. 1930s— a period of great activity for the site. The restored rooms will allow visitors to make observations for themselves regarding the experiences and treatment of the detainees regarding the hierarchy of access, institutionalized segregation and lack of privacy manifested through the function and design of the building. Visitors will see that the dormitories consisting of rows of bunks 3-levels high had no chairs or public recreation space. They will also be able to ascertain the differences in living styles of other immigrant groups detained at the facility in the separate dormitories compared to the Chinese immigrants. Furthermore, to instill life into the dormitories, the ambient sounds of the life and times of the immigrants detained there will be audible to the visitor in the form of whispers that ebb and flow in conjunction with ghostly projections of the people who once occupied the space for weeks, months and even longer on the walls and bunk beds in the room. The tour will start at the center of the building moving to the left end of the structure, up to the second floor, out to the restored European recreation area and then ending in the first floor men’s dormitory.

The first floor men’s dormitory (the Chinese quarters) is the location within the building where the poetry is most dense (see page 58 for elevations showing the location of the poetry within the dormitories of the building). This room will be stabilized in its current form and the poetry preserved according to historic preservation standards. The room will serve as both a memorial and a ruin at



Detention Barracks, 2005 (V. Prizzia)



Detention Barracks Entrance, 2005 (V. Prizzia)

POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN

ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE

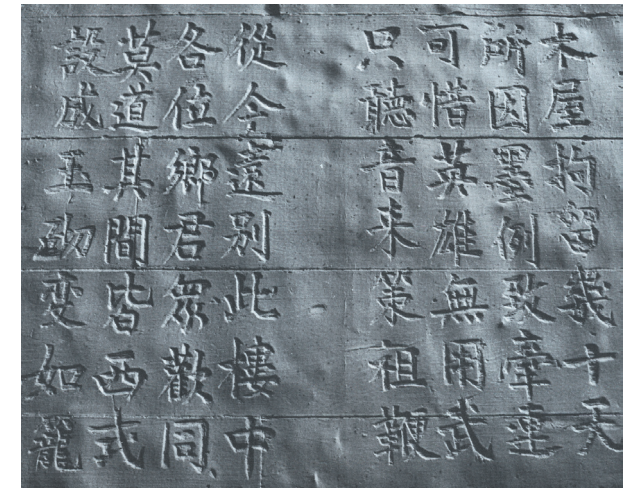
“The poems on the wall. They reflected the difficulties and challenges the immigrants had upon coming into the United States and yet there was all this hope for better opportunities and when you look at the poems and study it you see that it is very artistic it has a lot of depth in it and so it reflected a lot of talent that these immigrants had.”

—Emma Yee, Daughter of former detainee

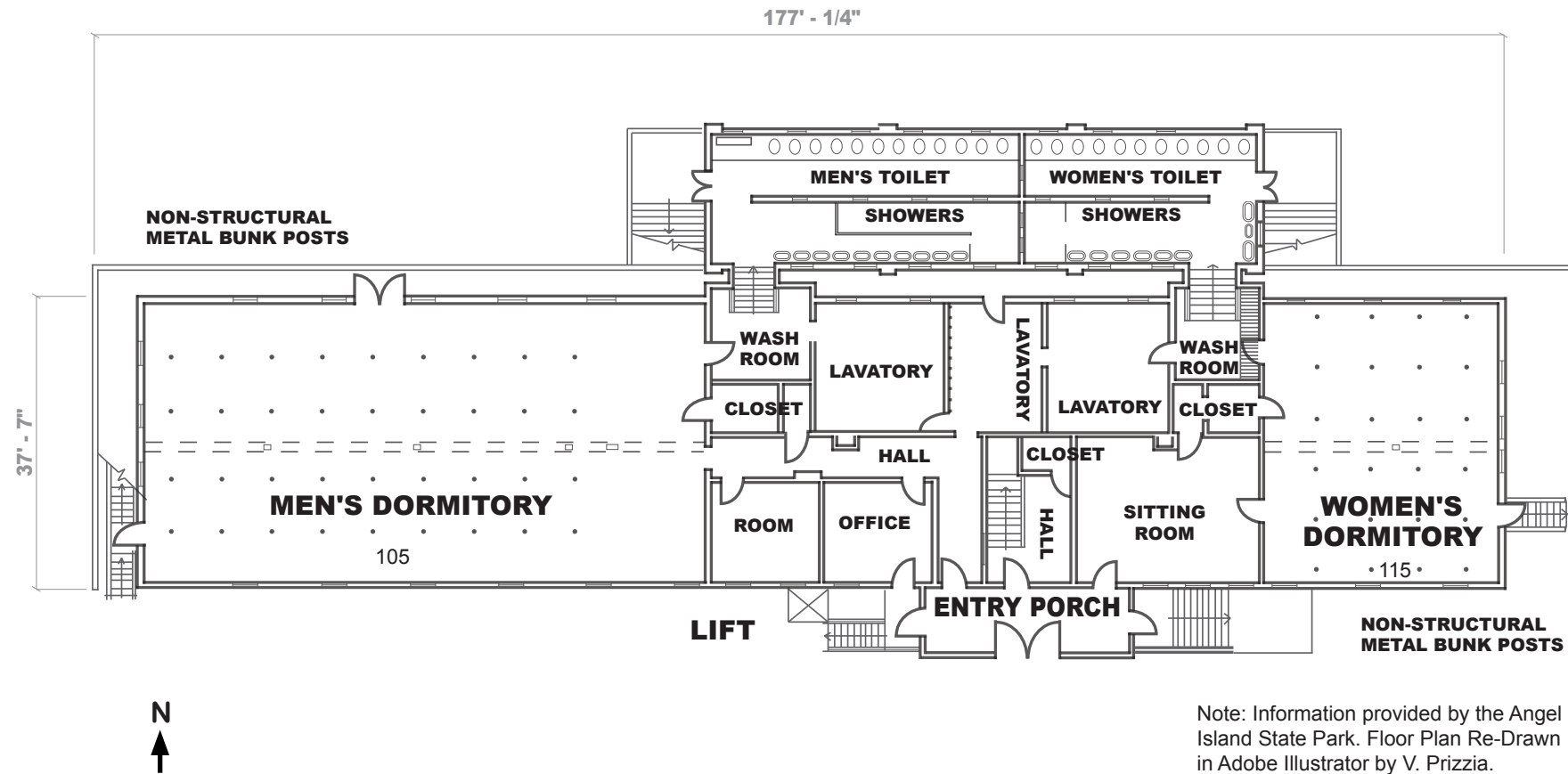
the same time providing visitors with a place of contemplate and reflect on their surroundings and the story being told. Anywhere from 200 to 300 men were detained at the facility at any one time. While awaiting the interrogation and appeal process, men vented their fears and frustrations on the walls of the dormitories and throughout the building. Poems were written in pen or ink and some were written in brush and then carved into the wood. Signs were posted throughout the facility warning detainees not to deface the property of the United States. Layers upon layers of poetry exist that have been covered with coats of paint as officials tried to curb the activity.

The juxtaposition of the restored dormitories with that of the “stabilized” ones will be very powerful in symbolizing the neglect suffered by the site and the story it has to tell— lost somewhere outside of the collective conscience of the American public over the past 60+ years. Visitors will have an opportunity to sit down and listen to the poems being read in Chinese and then translated in English, Spanish and German and to explore the poetry along the walls of the dimly lit room highlighted by floodlights from below.

Following the tour, student groups in particular could be lead through a poetry writing activity by the guide or Park Ranger. A special program could also be created for adult visitors that would engage them in a conversation with a docent. Gathering for example at the location of the former mess hall or within one of the restored rooms in the Detention Barracks, a docent could facilitate a discussion about the events that took place there while encouraging visitors to relate the Angel Island Immigration Station story to their own family’s immigration history.

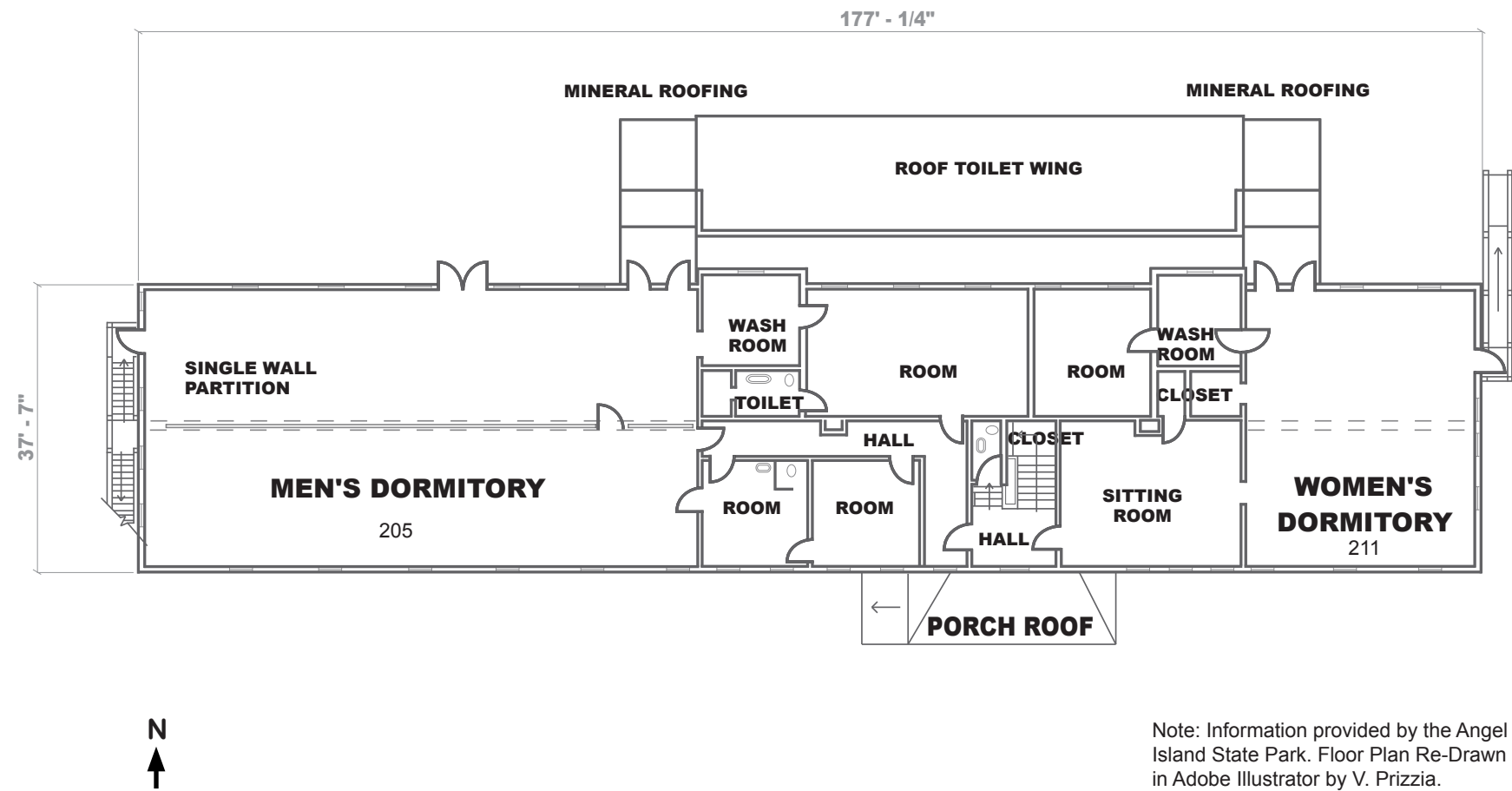


Carving from Detention Barrack Wall, Poem #69, See translation to left (*Island: Lai, Lim and Yung*, p.172)



1
A1 DETENTION BARRACKS FLOOR PLAN
NTS

FIRST FLOOR



1 DETENTION BARRACKS FLOOR PLAN
A2 NTS

SECOND FLOOR

MALE ASIAN DORMITORY— CONTEMPLATIVE SPACE:

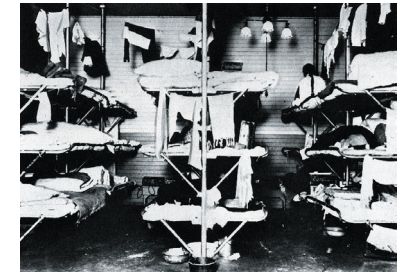
The men's dormitory will be stabilized in its current form and the poetry preserved according to historic preservation standards. The room will serve as both a memorial and a ruin at the same time. The juxtaposition of the restored dormitories with that of the "stabilized" ones will be very powerful in symbolizing the neglect suffered by the site and the story it has to tell—lost somewhere outside of the collective conscience of the American public over the past 60+ years. Visitors will have an opportunity to sit down and listen to the poems being read in Chinese and then translated in English and Spanish and to explore the poetry along the walls of the dimly lit room highlighted by floodlights from below.



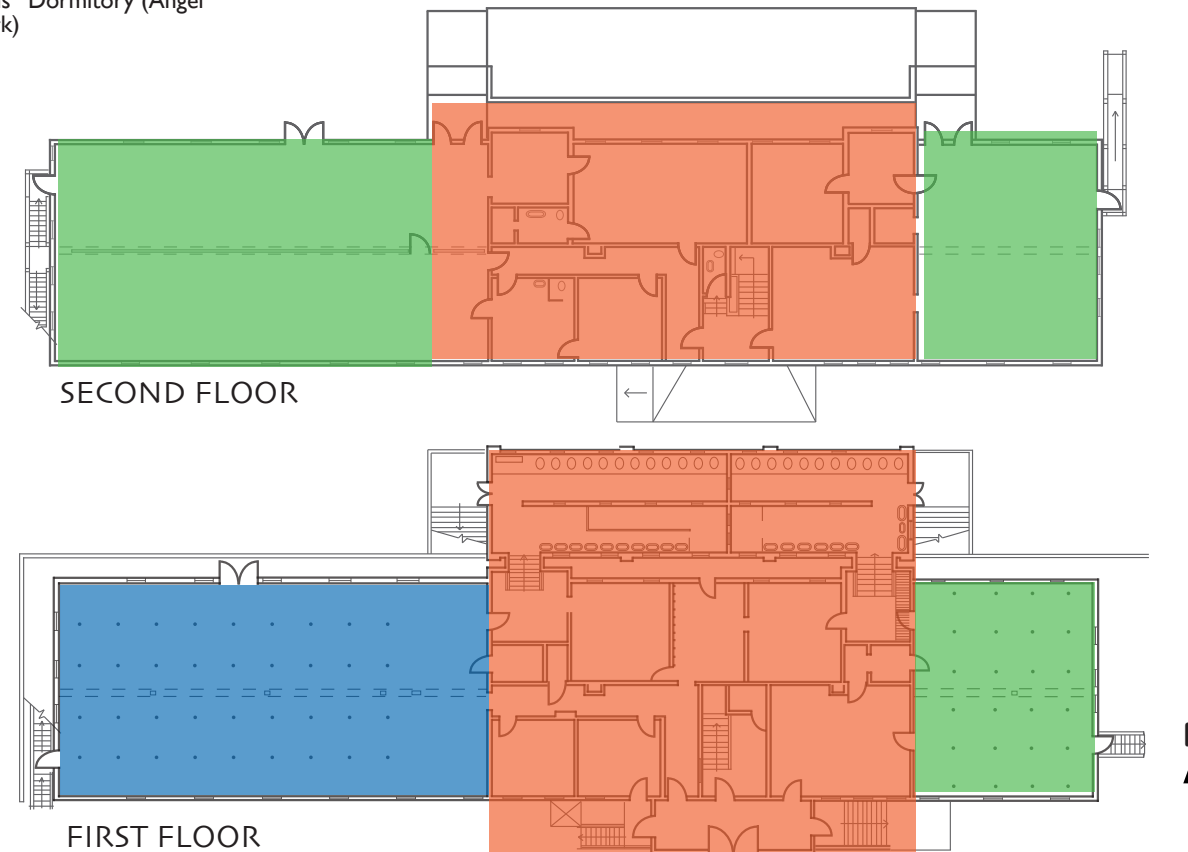
Interior of Mens' Dormitory (Angel Island State Park)

HISTORIC RESTORATIONS:

All of these rooms will be restored to their historically accurate state c.1930s—a period of great activity for the site. More research will be necessary to determine what these rooms once looked like and what activities took place there. The author was not allowed into these areas.



Interior of Dormitory (Paul Chow)

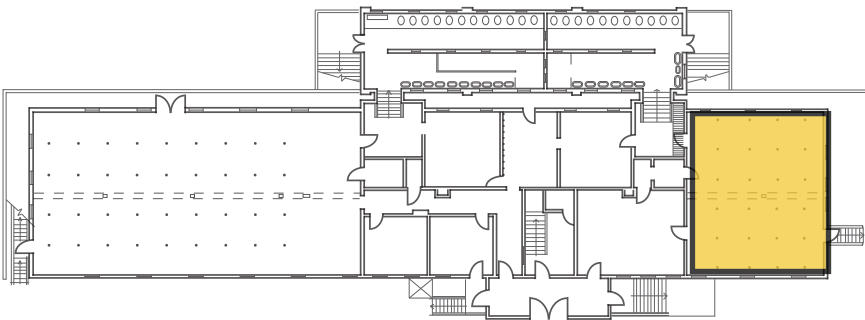
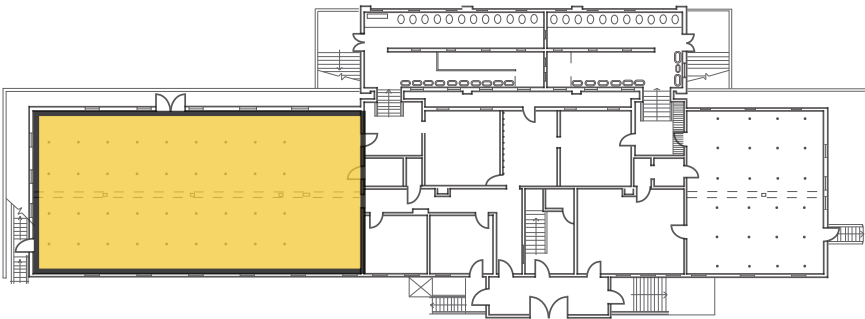
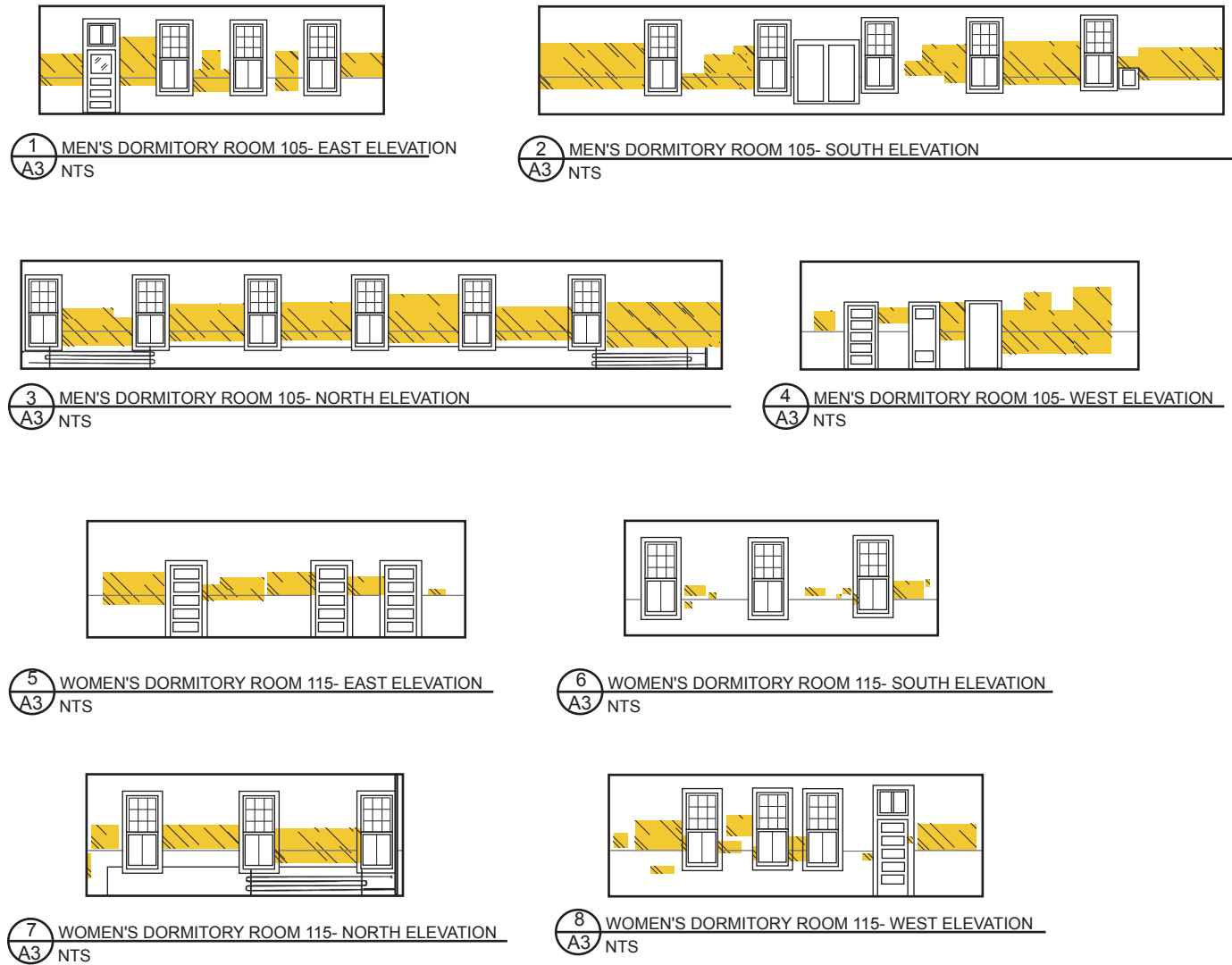


DORMITORY RE-CREATIONS:

The dormitories will be restored to their historically accurate state c. 1930. To bring the room to life for visitors, the ambient sounds of the life and times of the immigrants detained there will be audible in the form of whispers that ebb and flow in conjunction with ghostly projections of the people who once occupied the space on the walls and bunk beds in the room.

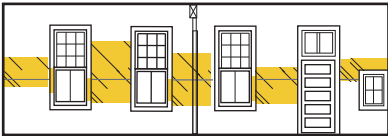
The historic scenes may need to be re-enacted and documented to create the projections and sound recordings needed to create the desired effect.

ELEVATIONS SHOWING THE LOCATION OF POETRY ON THE WALLS OF THE FIRST FLOOR DORMITORIES:

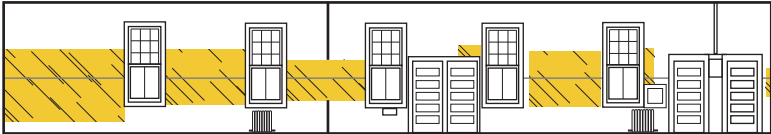


Note: Elevations provided by Angel Island State Park,
Re-drawn by Victoria A. Prizzia in Adobe Illustrator.

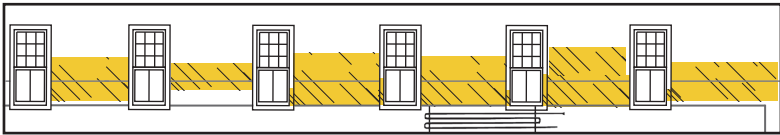
ELEVATIONS SHOWING THE LOCATION OF POETRY ON THE WALLS OF THE SECOND FLOOR DORMITORIES:



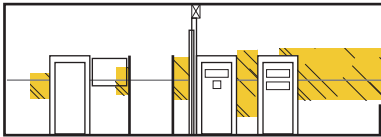
1
A4
MEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 205 - EAST ELEVATION
NTS



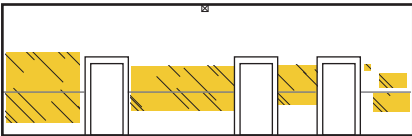
2
A4
MEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 205- SOUTH ELEVATION
NTS



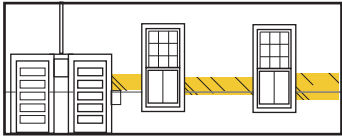
3
A4
MEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 205 - NORTH ELEVATION
NTS



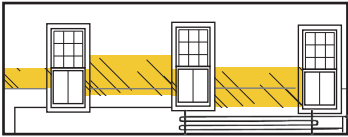
4
A4
MEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 205- WEST ELEVATION
NTS



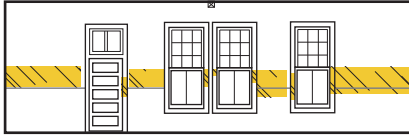
5
A4
WOMEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 211 - EAST ELEVATION
NTS



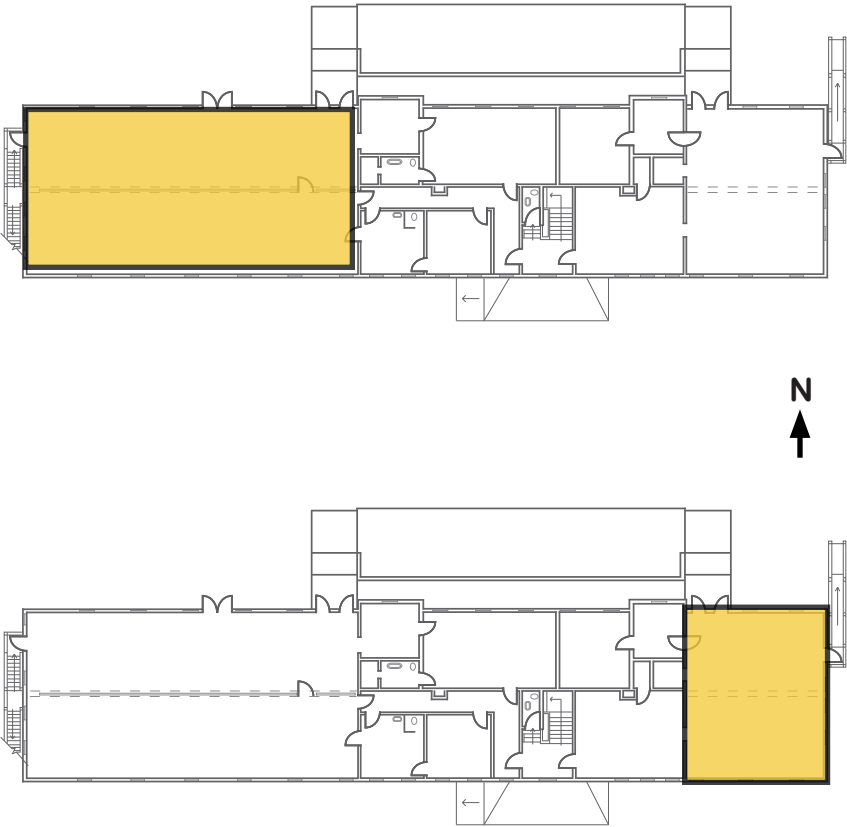
6
A4
WOMEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 211- SOUTH ELEVATION
NTS



7
A4
WOMEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 211 - NORTH ELEVATION
NTS



8
A4
WOMEN'S DORMITORY ROOM 211- WEST ELEVATION
NTS



Note: Elevations provided by Angel Island State Park,
Re-drawn by Victoria A. Prizzia in Adobe Illustrator.

“We have given them, both our son and daughter, copies of all the documents that we copied at the NARA, San Bruno. We copied the actual interrogations of all four of our parents— my wife’s parents and my parents. They are amazing papers. Even though in my Dad’s case it was all about his paper family. Unfortunately, I know more about his paper family than I do about his real family. But we were able to take photographs of the pictures that were taken of them, the mug shots if you will that were taken of them at the time at Angel Island at the immigration station when they were first detained there. It is a wonderful wonderful snapshot in time of what our parents had to go through...It was a great experience, almost like mining for gold and finding these golden documents and pictures.”

—Joseph Chan, Son of former detainees
(Chan, Joseph, Interview, 2005)

6. Digital Database and Real-Time Self-Guided Character Tour of the Site

Visitor Objective:

The purpose of the digital database is to extend the depth and breadth of the visitor experience of the former immigration station both on and off the site. The digital data base will be utilized to:

1. create a resource that can be downloaded (with a PDA, cell phone or an iPod at the site or through the internet off-site) by the visitor for off-site access and use— including digitized immigration records such as transcripts of actual interrogations, identification documents, pictures, oral histories of former detainees and 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation Chinese Americans etc.
2. create multiple real-time self-guided tours of the site that can be accessed through wireless technology that will guide visitors through a “day in the life” of a former detainee.

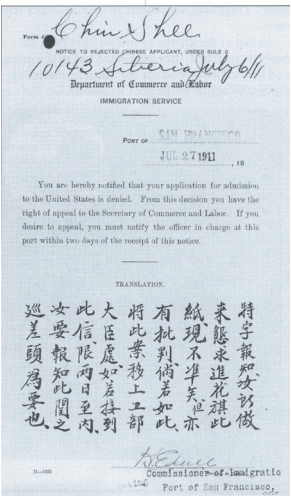
Digital Database:

Creating an extensive digital database will require many hours spent digitizing archival materials with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software. The materials would then be accessible to the public in a downloadable format that can be shared through a personal hand-held digital device such as a digital camera, PDA, cell phone or iPod. A version of the digital database would also be accessible through the internet with a personal computer.

The organization of the information should allow visitors to access the content in multiple ways either through the thematic organization of the data or through an open text search option that could include inquiries according to dates, subject matter or more specific details such as the name of a detainee.

The potential of this sort of database is limitless. It is conceived as a flexible and malleable system that could be adapted in conjunction with changes in technology. The content can also be amended as new materials are located and digitized including contemporary oral histories of 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation Chinese Americans.

One powerful application of this technology would be for the family members of past detainees who are visiting the site. Using GPS, ArcPad and other digital technologies, a son or daughter could trace the experiences of their parents through time and space by reviewing documents where the events actually took place— for example, viewing a parent’s interrogation transcripts while standing in the reinterpreted Administration Building footprint.



Immigration documents denied (National Archives, Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, CA)



Mug-shot of a Chinese Immigrant (National Archives)

Personal History: Mr. Chan

- *Detained at AIIS in 1925 at the age of 15 for less than a week with his paper mother, father and brother*
- *As a paper son, he used coaching books and a false identity to enter the US*
- *Worked in grocery stores and then restaurants to send money to his family in China*
- *Married Mrs. Chan in 1940 in Fort Wayne, Indiana and raised a family together*
- *Became a naturalized citizen in 1952*
- *Helped family members immigrate to the United States by asking his congressmen and senators to sponsor special legislation in relief of the Quota Act of 1943*
- *Became a partner in a successful Chinese American restaurant in Fort Wayne, Indiana*
- *Passed away in 1984*

(Chan, Joseph, Interview, 2005)

Real-Time Self-Guided Character Tour of the Site

Using GPS and ArcPad technologies the digital database content stored on a web server would be utilized to create character tours to explore the immigration station through multiple perspectives. Consisting of five options, the self-guided tour would require a wireless hand-held device such as a PDA, cell phone or iPod. The use of the visitor's personal device as a guide reduces costs of providing or maintaining the equipment at the site. Furthermore, people will already know how to use these devices and the AIIS would just provide details regarding how to access the content. More research is needed including front-end testing of specific devices, interfaces and the general information architecture of the system to determine the most appropriate and user-friendly application of the technology.

Summary of Technology:

ArcPad is software for mapping, data query, and associated digital media applications. ArcPad provides spatial location information through GPS integration to users via handheld mobile devices. Data dissemination with ArcPad is fast and easy and improves data base type queries in association with digital media applications.

ArcPad visualizes data from various software applications while having the capacity to display information in either a spatial or tabular format. It can run on any handheld unit. A GPS device can be attached to the handheld unit if visitors do not have GPS technology already available in their device. Real time display is achievable and the site is managed via a wireless network. The web based application offers the potential for use beyond the exhibit, in the home or school, for pre and post site visits.

ArcPad offers the following capabilities:

- Support for industry-standard tabular, vector and raster image display.
- Exploring data using input from the mouse pointer or keypad.
- Map navigation, including pan and zoom, spatial bookmarks, and center on the current GPS position.
- Locate individual assets of interest in the exhibit.
- Map measurement of distance, area, and bearings to customize tour of exhibit.
- GPS navigation through tour on preplanned routes.
- Data query to identify assets and associated information (both tabular, and image based), as well as displaying hyperlinks to multi-media applications.

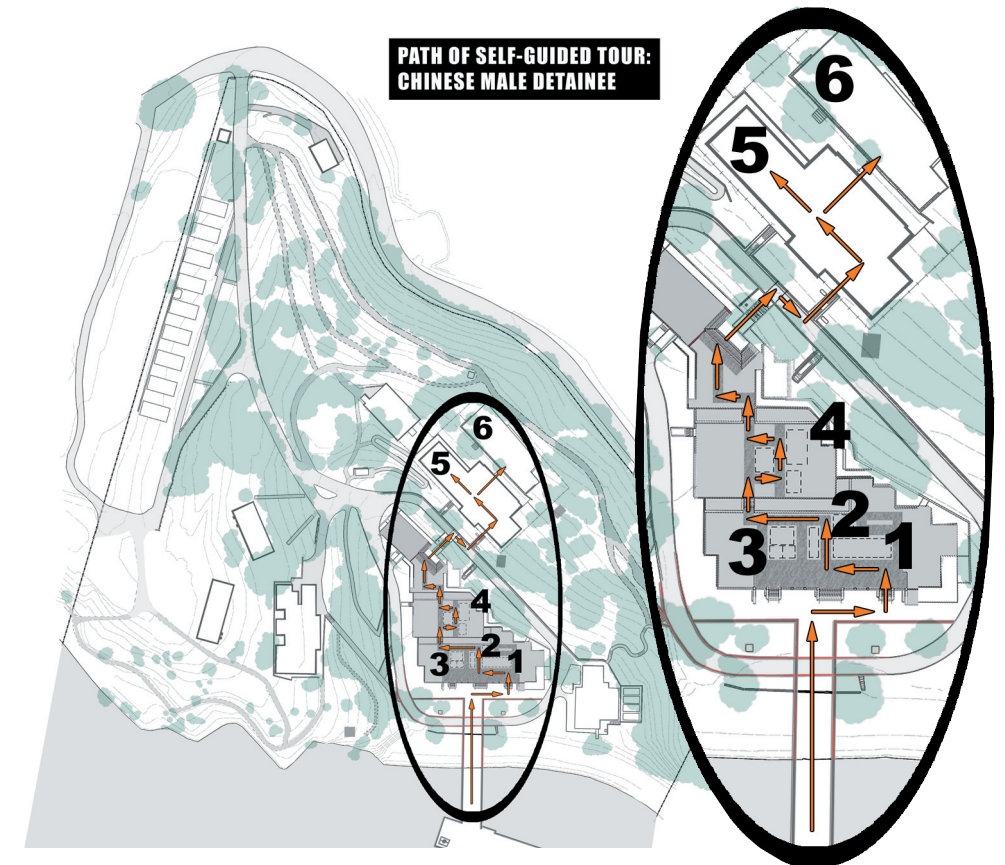


An example of a possible vessel for the PDA tour.

The self-guided character tour will provide visitors with a choice regarding how they would like to explore the site. The hand-held wireless device will serve as a dynamic compass leading visitors through “a day in the life of” a male Chinese detainee, a wife of a Chinese merchant, a young Chinese “paper son”, an interrogation official, and the resident gardener of the facility. Each character offers the visitor with a unique experience of the site, allowing individuals to only travel where the character would have traveled when the station was in operation. When a visitor enters a zone that is off-limits to the character he or she has chosen, an alarm will ring within the PDA until the visitor re-enters the accessible area. Each tour will have a unique set of obstacles and problems to solve for the visitor.

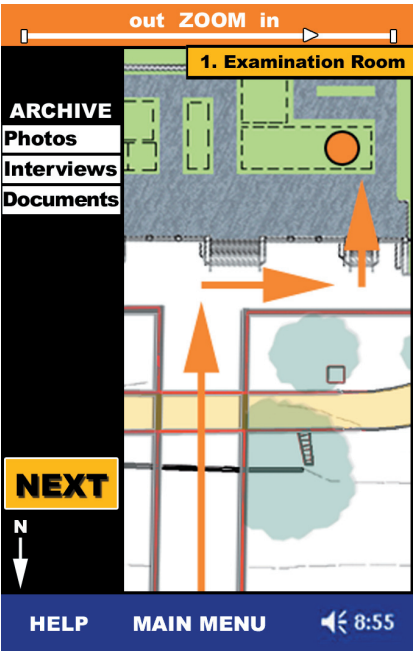
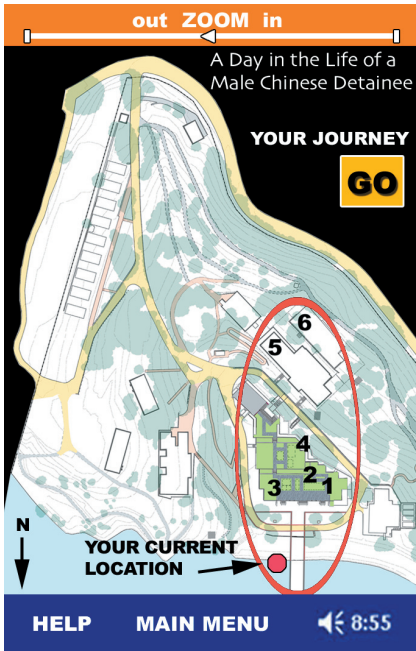
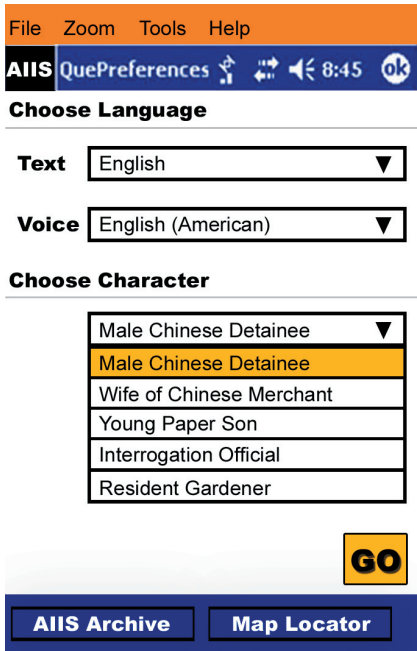
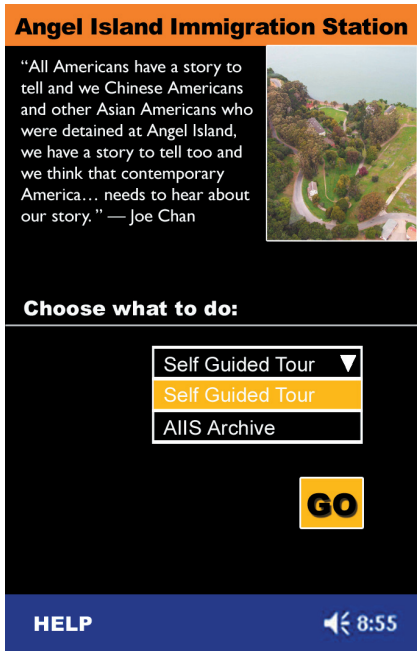
As visitors move between buildings, they will have access to character composites that detail personal information about the chosen character. Brief audio and video content will provide the visitor with additional information to enhance the visitor experience and understanding of the human experience at the facility. For example, at the interrogation room within the Administration Building, visitors will be asked a sample of questions that his/her chosen character would have been expected to answer. Witnessing these types of interactions will enable visitors to better grasp the obstacles and consequences of preconceived cultural notions that different characters faced on Angel Island. The individual tours will illustrate the nature of life on the island according to a hierarchical system of institutionalized racism in the form of segregation and isolation. Depending on what characters are chosen by individual members of a group on the tour, the family experience may parallel that of the former detainees where men and women were separated (including husbands and wives) and different races were segregated while freedoms depended on your status. Male Chinese detainees experienced the most limited freedoms regarding traversing the site. However, the ability for visitors to change perspectives during their visit and tour of the facility will cultivate a better understanding of how the site was designed and functioned to manipulate and control the lives and fate of the detainees. More research will need to be conducted to create the content for each character tour. However, the duration of each tour will be approximately twenty minutes and will start and end at one predetermined location so that family members know where and when they can expect to meet the other members of their group following the experience. See the illustrations to the right for a sample regarding what the visitor may encounter.

NOTE: The use of adapted Flash audio MP3 players and motion-sensitive sensors and lights could provide visitors with a less high-tech alternative character tour of the site. However, more research and planning would be required to avoid compromising the landscape or the intended visitor experience.



CHINESE MALE DETAINEE PATH: 1. Examination Room; 2. Registry; 3. Interrogation Room; 4. Asian Mess Hall; 5. Chinese Male Dormitory; 6. Recreation Yard

EXAMPLE OF THE LOOK AND FEEL OF THE DYNAMIC INTERFACE



7. Additional Recommended Site Modifications— concepts that overlap or build on ideas previously submitted

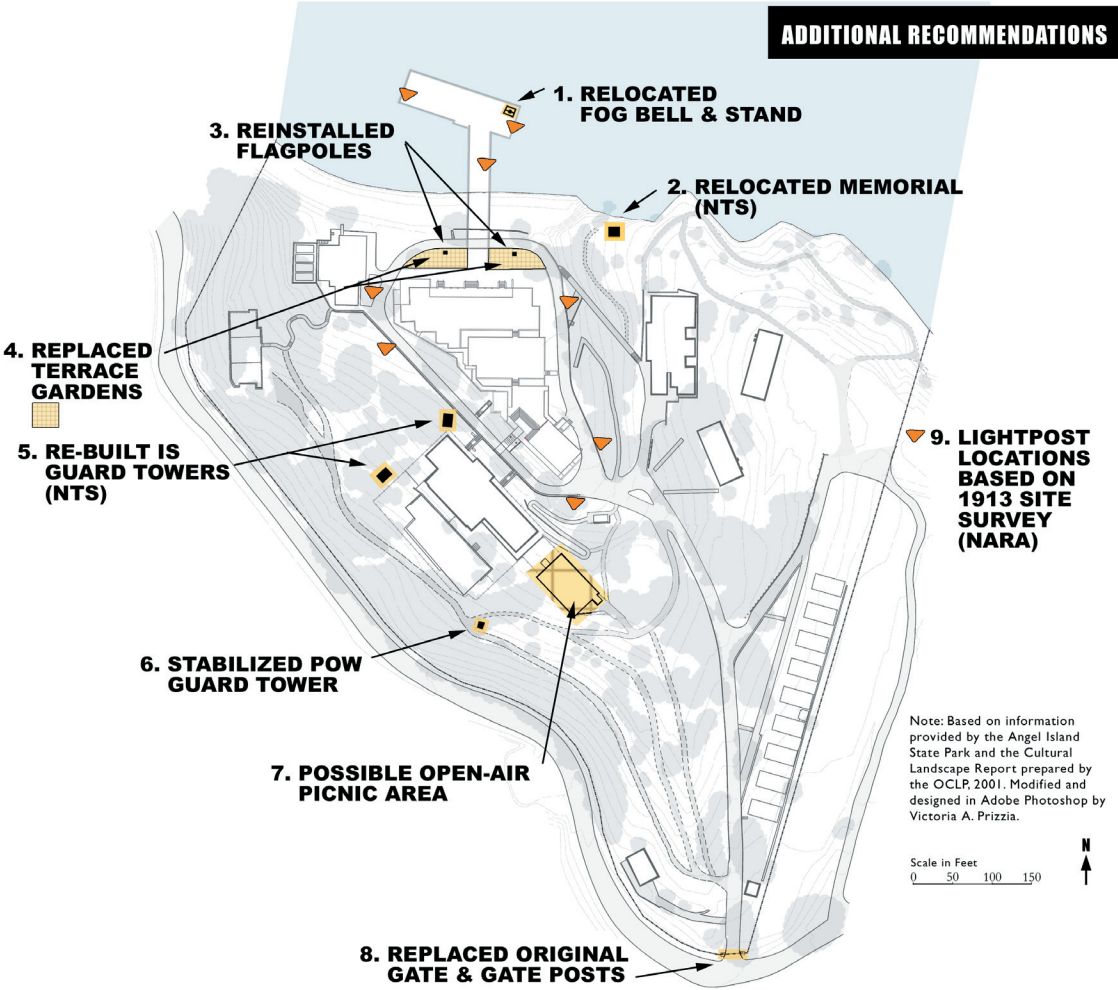


Fog Bell, 2005 (V. Prizzia)



Immigration Station Memorial, 2002 (CDPR Archive)

- 1. Relocate fog bell to reconstructed wharf—
The fog bell is currently situated on the edge of the beach on the far side of the Loop Road
- 2. Relocate the Immigration Station Memorial
The immigration station memorial was donated to the Angel Island State Park in 1979 by Victor Burgeron in honor of the immigrants who were processed at the facility. The memorial currently sits upon the post-exchange foundation. Moving the memorial to a more contemplative location (that was identified by the OCLP) will provide visitors with reflective space to appreciate the significance of the monument and the legacy of the site.





Original Flagpoles in Former Terrace Gardens, c. 1914 (CDPR Archive)



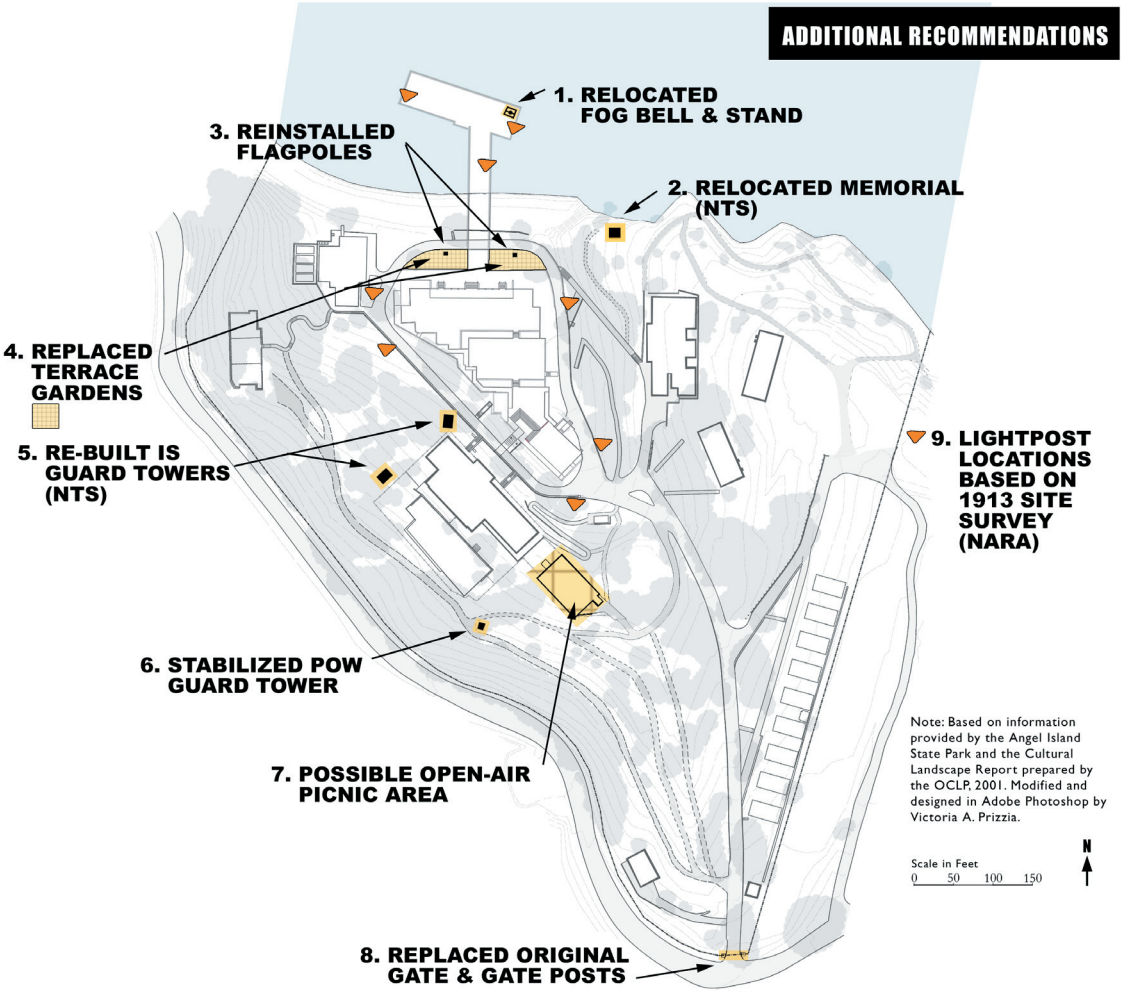
Terrace Gardens, c. 1914 (CDPR Archive)

3. Reinstall historic flagpoles within the footprint of the Administration Building

Installed in 1910, the wood flagpoles (one holding the US flag and the other the emblem of the Bureau of Immigration) were included in the original plan for the facility measuring 50’ tall. The flagpoles added to the “official” and “formal” character of the central area of the facility. In the late 1970s, the flagpoles were removed and now only the concrete bases remain.

4. Replace Former Terrace Gardens

More research and planning in conjunction with architects and landscape architects is required to determine the most viable plan for replacing the former terrace gardens. According to the 2001 CLR (OCLP), the former terrace gardens, situated in front of the former Administration Building, were planted in a “formal style” to emphasize “the institutional nature of the facility and to articulate the power and authority of the US government and the Bureau of Immigration.”





Immigration Station Guard Tower, c. 1910 (CDPR Archive)



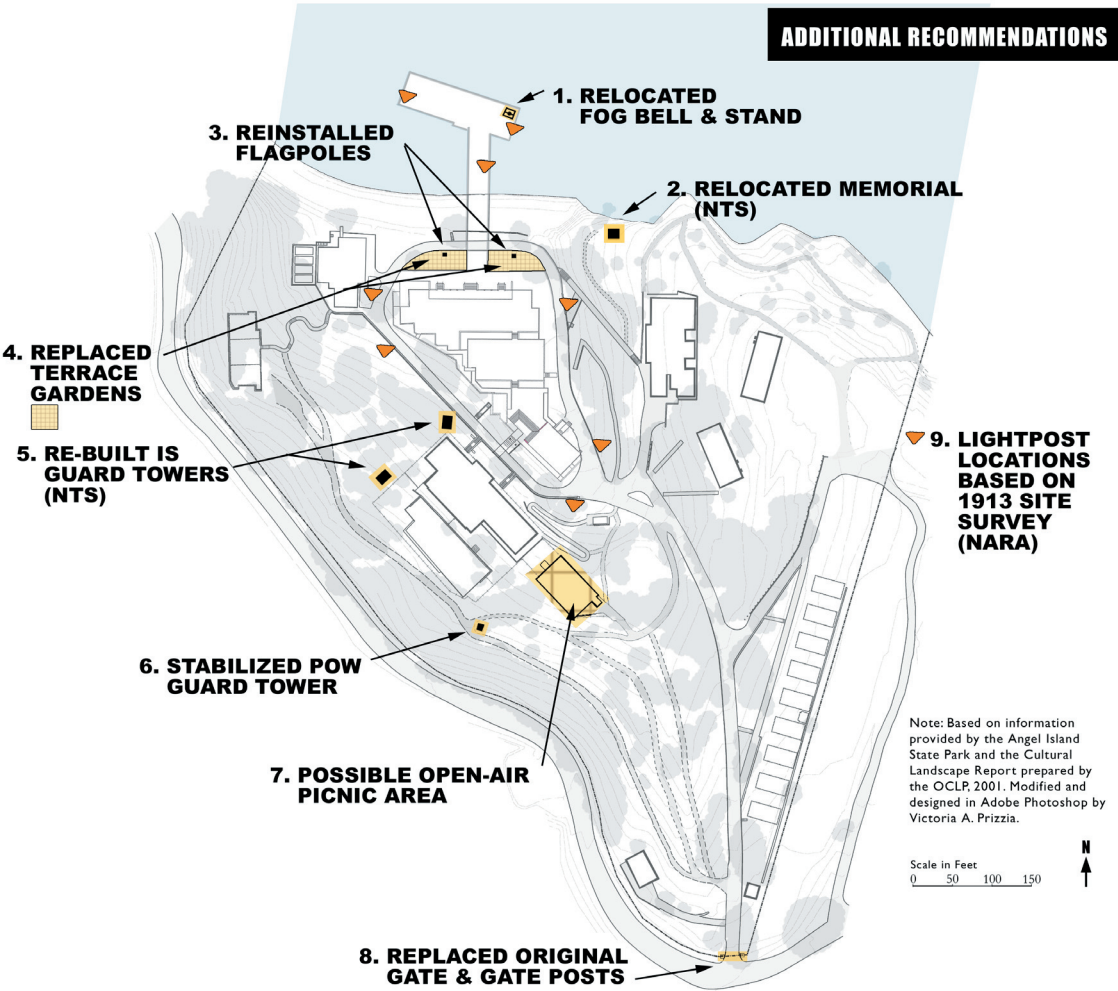
North Garrison Guard Tower, 2002 (OCLP)

5. Rebuild Immigration Station related Guard Towers

Built in 1930, the former immigration station guard towers were utilized by the Bureau of Immigration to supervise the activities of immigrants. The guard tower shown in the image to the left was located to the northwest of the Detention Barracks overlooking the European playground.

6. Stabilize POW Guard Tower

The only guard tower that remains on the site was built c. 1942 as a viewing platform to monitor the POWs being held within the Detention Barracks.





Recent image showing the PWE Mess Hall (AIISF)



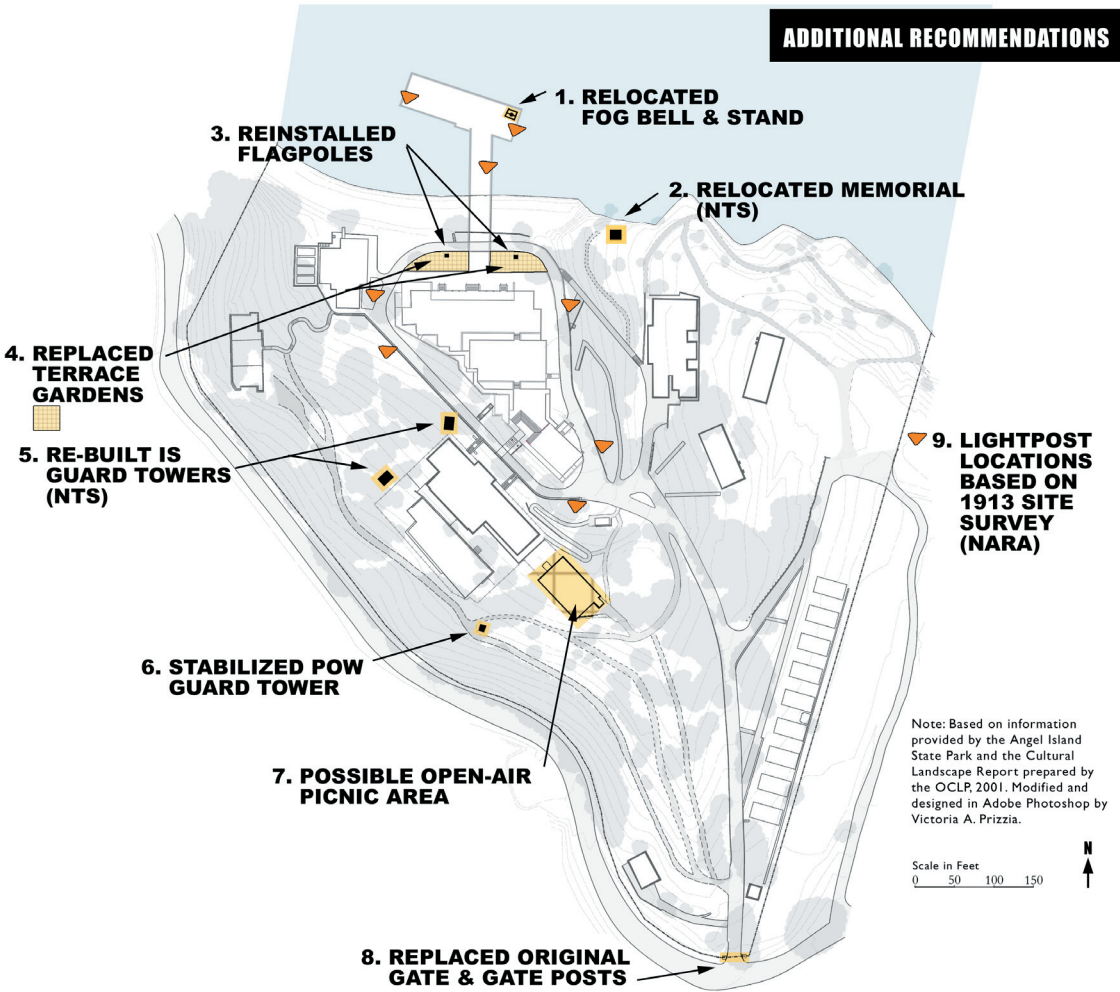
Original Gates Located at the Rear of the Facility, c. 1909 (CDPR Archive)

7. Create Visitor Picnic Area

More research and planning in conjunction with architects and landscape architects is required to determine the most viable plan for creating a visitor picnic area— taking into consideration the natural geography of the landscape. One possibility is the PWE Mess Hall. The building is situated at the former site of the Immigration Station Recreation Pavilion that covered an area of 2,400 square feet. The walls of the structure could be removed to create an outdoor open air pavilion where picnic tables and seating could be situated for visitors.

8. Replace original gates at the rear entrance of the site

The original pillars and gates, erected in 1910, were located at the rear entrance to the facility. The gates will help contribute to the intended visitor experience by providing a physical and symbolic boundary to the facility.



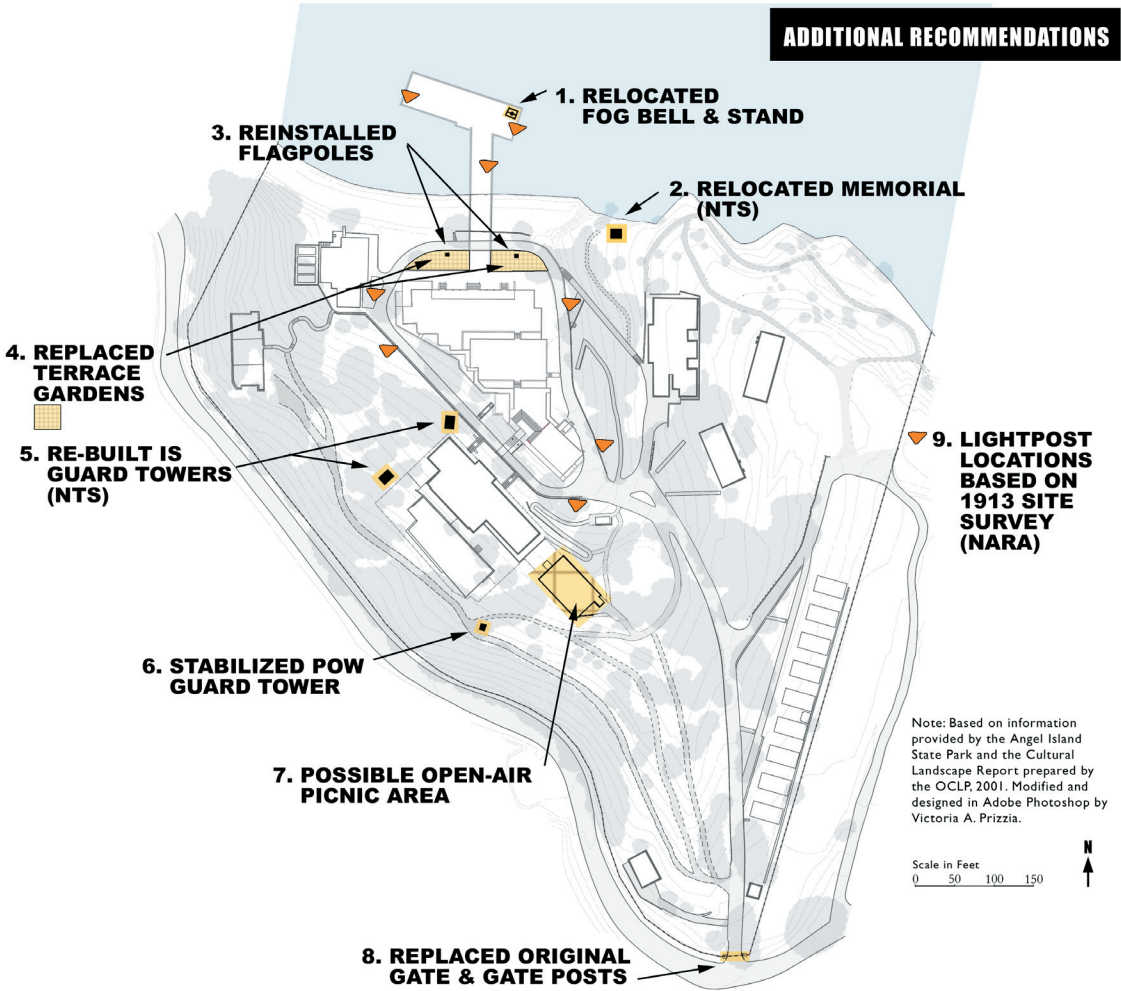


Original Street Lamp, c. 1909
(CDPR Archive)

9. Install historic replicas of light posts that lined the central area of the site

The light post locations are based on a site fixture plan c. 1913. Additional lighting may be necessary depending on the future plans for the site including after-dark programming. However, lighting should be kept to minimum to maintain the rustic and unmodernized character of the place. Relative darkness at night would highlight the isolation of the site through the relative brightness of the populated areas across the Bay.

10. Install unobtrusive and comfortable seating throughout the site



BUDGET

* \$ In millions

As stated earlier, the proposed points of engagement that make up this interpretive plan can work simultaneously with one another or can stand alone. As such, the elements proposed can be phased in according to the availability of funding.

The main priorities of this plan are:

- To restore/conserve and interpret the Detention Barracks
- To stabilize all other existing structures on the site
- To recreate missing elements
- To revitalize the landscape and circulation system
- To develop multiple opportunities for visitors to engage with the Angel Island story

Additionally, the budget listed here is a rough cost estimate for each visitor experience proposed based on industry standards as well as information provided by the Angel Island State park and the 2003 master plan report produced by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. Further research and development is required before a more accurate budget can be created.

1. Orientation Experience	13.8
Wharf Reconstruction	3.5
Haz-Mat Removal	9.0
Multi-Media Development	.1
Ferry Boat	1.2
2. Restored Circulation System	4.2
Landscaping/Hardscaping	
3. Outdoor Interpretive Panel System	.1
Panels	.05
Graphic Design	.05
4. Reinterpretation of Administrative Building	1.525
Landscaping/Hardscaping	1.5
Fiberglass/Bronzed Patina Vignettes	.25
5. Guided Tour of the Detention Barracks	8.6
Building Restoration	5.2
Poem Conservation	3.2
Multi-Media Production	.2
6. Digital Database and Real-Time Self-Guided Character Tour of the Site	.45
Digitizing and Scanning	.2
Content Production	.1
Programming	.05
Hardware Development and Research	.1
7. Additional Recommended Site Modifications	.5
ESTIMATED TOTAL	\$29.175

“What happened at the immigration station was just another chapter of overt racial discrimination in America. And it is something in the past. Something that we only want to talk about and not see in the future. I think it is important for people to discuss Angel Island every time that they talk about Ellis Island.”

— Emma Yee, Daughter of former Angel Island Detainee

Outreach

As stated earlier, the Angel Island immigration story is an important piece of American history and yet it essentially exists outside of the collective consciousness of most Americans. One of the primary challenges facing the Angel Island State Park in regards to promoting the Angel Island Immigration Station, is to overcome a lack of knowledge regarding the history or significance of the site in the general public. More research and planning is required in collaboration with other experts in the field to create appropriate and effective outreach programs. The following examples listed below provide potential programs that could be developed further.

- Create a small traveling exhibition to awaken public interest in the history and legacy of the US Immigration Station on Angel Island. Extending the reach of the specific place, the exhibition would provide a glimpse of the remains of the 14-acre site including the vestiges of human experience left behind— most notably, the poetry that covers the walls throughout the Detention Barracks. The primary themes of the exhibit could be illustrated through exhibition elements including the reproduction of poetry carvings juxtaposed with artifacts, images and the voices of Chinese immigrants from the past and present. The exhibition would enable the Angel Island State Park to bring this important piece of American history to public venues (such as libraries, cultural centers, small local museums and education facilities) around the country— introducing a broad public to the unique and important story that the 135+ poems exist to tell.
- Utilize internet and digital technology to its potential

to create a powerful and far-reaching online presence for the Angel Island Immigration Station. Make the digital archive accessible to the public through the World Wide Web enabling remote virtual visitors to have access to the extensive online database detailed within this report to view and download immigration records such as transcripts of actual interrogations, identification documents, pictures etc. as well as oral history excerpts of contemporary and deceased Chinese Americans to learn more about this chapter of American history.

- Embark on an oral history project that includes 1st, 2nd and 3rd-generation Chinese Americans throughout the United States. The initiative would promote the preservation, restoration and interpretation efforts of the Angel Island State Park to a primary target visitor population while building the facility’s archive of intangible and tangible material culture at the same time. Oral history interviews would provide content for the cultural interpretation of the site, the digital archive and any multi-media projects pursued by the park. Contacts with Chinese American communities throughout the United States could also lead to the discovery and collection of artifacts that could be included in the interpretive exhibits at the site or within the proposed traveling exhibition.

- Create a teachers packet to be distributed to schools across the United States using poetry and perhaps “coaching books” to initiate activities and discussions about the history and significance of the Angel Island Immigration Station.

“My father didn’t have much to share and so there wasn’t much said, not much to be thought of. And something to think about is that this happened 60 years ago when I asked him about it. And for 60 years basically it was hush hush— to be quiet about it. And if you are going to be quiet about something for 60 years, you are pretty much conditioned to be that way.”

— Emma Yee, Daughter of former Angel Island Detainee

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS : JOSEPH CHAN: SPRING 2005

PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH.

I am Joe Chan. I was born in Fort Wayne Indiana. My birthday is June 5th, 1942

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ETHNIC HERITAGE?

I am Chinese Born in America. Commonly known today as an ABC, American Born Chinese.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR ETHNIC HERITAGE IS PRESENT IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE?

I guess quite a bit really since I married another ABC, my wife Elizabeth. She was born in Louisville Kentucky. We have traveled extensively in China and we have picked up a few trinkets here and there so our house is decorated with a few Chinese artifacts. And everyday when I look at myself in the mirror to shave I realize that I am Chinese American and proud of it.

HOW HAS YOUR ETHNICITY INFLUENCED YOUR LIFE?

That is interesting being born in Indiana and being a one of kind ethnic in the schools I attended as a youngster; I never really thought about it because no one else really thought about it either. The only Chinese in the elementary school, junior high and high school, I was not a threat to anybody. There wasn't enough of us around to threaten anybody so I was accepted by most people and I actually didn't think of myself as being Chinese. It is very hard when there aren't other Chinese around. It wasn't until I got to college that I realized that hey, you aren't accepted immediately at face value. Isn't that a funny term, face value. You have to prove yourself to others that you are an American that you aren't a Chinese just off the boat. I find that to be true today. When I introduce myself to a stranger; I make sure that they get the impression that I am a fellow American.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND?

I guess in the late 70s or early 80s, my wife, two children and I came out to California to visit my parents who relocated from Kentucky to Oakland and they had scheduled a trip to Angel Island. We actually went to Angel Island with both my parents to the immigration station and that was really the first time that I realized that both my mom and my dad had been detained there at separate times when they entered the country. My dad had never talked about it when I was growing up and my mother had never talked about her experience or my dad's experience growing up so it wasn't until relatively late in the life that I found out that they both had come through Angel Island, the immigration station.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THAT YOUR FATHER CAME THROUGH ANGEL ISLAND AS IMMIGRANTS?

My Dad came over in 1925 at the age of 15. He had bought papers or his family had bought him papers so he came over as a paper son. And after going to the National Archives and Records Administration in San Bruno and looking up my dad's records, oh this has been maybe five years ago, my dad passed away in 1984 so I didn't go to San Bruno to learn about his immigration history until 1990. The staff there at the archives helped me to find his records and I was really surprised about some of the things I learned. I learned all about his paper family. My dad in 1925 actually was detained on AI with his paper father, paper step-mother and his paper brother. I guess, I don't know if any of the family was true blood related to one another but I know my dad wasn't yet they all told the same story. They all had coaching books and were able to tell the same story during their respective interviews with immigration officials and were admitted into the country. I think they were on AI for less than a week comparing the dates of the ship arrival versus the immigration service issuing a certificate of identity to people admitted into the United States. My mother on the other was born in Detroit MI in 1922, at the age of 9 her parents took her and her brothers and sisters back to China. My grandparents, my maternal grandparents, her mother and father, had entered the US raised 7 children in Detroit and took them all back to China at the start of the depression. I guess the cost of living was cheaper in China and they had sort of lived the great Chinese dream of the time to come over to Gam Saan, which is Cantonese Chinese for Gold Mountain, that's what many Chinese called the United States, the gold mountain, from the gold rush days. But it was the dream of many Chinese to come to the United States to make a relative fortune and to return to China where that relative fortune would last them a lifetime or at least go a lot farther than it would here in the US.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIENCES AT ANGEL ISLAND (WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN AND HOW)? HOW LONG WAS YOUR FATHER THERE? WHAT STORIES DID HE SHARE WITH YOU ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND?

So my mom was taken back to China at the age of 9 in 1931 and after the Japanese invaded China, big war going on there between the two countries... my mother was able to return to the United States as a picture bride to marry my father. They had never met at the time but the two families had arranged the marriage in Hong Kong. My mother returned by herself by ship to San Francisco where she was detained on Angel Island until the immigration authorities were convinced that she was indeed a Native born American citizen. She was only there for a weekend in January 1940 and after she was released by the immigration officials, she proceeded to Chicago and met my Dad and they were married. My mother never told me anything about AI until fairly recently, in the last five years let's say. And my Dad never told me anything about his

experiences on Angel Island. Like most Chinese who had been detained on Angel Island, they were very much intimidated or scared or ashamed, perhaps a combination of all three, by their experiences there. Intimidates in that they were subject to intense questioning by immigration officials and some people who came to the US had indeed bought paper so they were trying to enter the country illegally and if they were admitted by the immigration officials, if they answered all of the questions satisfactorily, they would still for the rest of their lives be looking over their shoulders, looking for immigration to come after them for illegal entry. Scared, yeah they were scared by the conditions at Angel Island, treated like prisoners I guess. Not a very welcoming atmosphere to a new country. And ashamed, yeah they were ashamed, some of the Chinese immigrants were ashamed. Those who bought papers and had to lie their way into the country might have felt ashamed about having to do that. Others who were perfectly legal immigrants, sons, daughters or even American born citizens like my mother were ashamed they were treated in the fashion that they were by American immigration officials.

HOW DID HIS DEPARTURE FROM HIS HOME IN CHINA AFFECT HIS PARENTS AND EXTENDED FAMILY?

Well, money is always a big issue amongst the Chinese to come to the United States. Many of the Chinese who came to the US say in the first 40 or 50 years of the 20th century came from one province or one state of China and that is Canton or Guangdong Province in Southern China sort of north and northwest of Hong Kong. That area had been wracked by famine and wars and all sorts of bad things that happened there. And the grinding poverty led people in Guangdong Province to want to go to other places to try to make a living. So, much of the immigration out of China for more than 100 years I guess was primarily from Guangdong Province and they went all over the world not only to the United States but great numbers to the Philippines, to Indonesia, to Thailand, to Vietnam.

WHEN DID HE START HIS OWN FAMILY?

That is sort of a hard question. The racial barrier was always there I guess. It is sort of hard to deny our ethnicity. Unlike, let's say European immigrants who once the first generation American born learn their English, they pretty soon assimilate very very readily into American society, because they are Caucasian and are in the mainstream of society. But Asians, like we Chinese, have a little more difficult time of it even though my wife and I were both born in the US and I speak with a Hooser twang and my wife has a southern accent from Kentucky. People don't always accept us immediately as Americans. When they first look at us of course they think oh gee, I wonder what country they come from? So this is a barrier that has been constant with all of us, through all of our lives, both my wife and I, our parents, and our kids for that matter.

HOW DID HIS EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES AFFECT YOUR OLDER SIBLINGS AND MOTHER?

Like many immigrants from China to the US in the early part of the 20th century, my Dad was expected to make money and help the family back home, which he did. He faithfully sent money to his mother and his brothers living in China. And after my Dad became a naturalized citizen in about 1952, without the threat of deportation over his head anymore since he was a naturalized citizen, he actually helped his nephews and several cousins immigrate to the United States by asking his congressmen and senators from Indianan to sponsor special legislation... the legislation was roughly entitled, special legislation let's say for Joe Chan to enter the United States. This is in relief of the quota act of 1943. At that time there was an immigration quota from China of 105 immigrants per year starting in about 1943. Of course many thousands and thousands wanted to enter the US but were held up by the quota system. So one way around the quota system was to have a special law, an individual law if you will, passed by congress, for the relief of Joe Chan or whoever to enter the United States in spite of the quota or over and above the quota. So my Dad was instrumental in helping relatives and friends enter the US legally. They didn't have to lie about who they were or why they were coming. They just had to overcome the quota system that was in affect in the US.

WHEN DID HE START HIS OWN FAMILY?

Mom and Dad were married in 1940 after my Mom came from China to meet my Dad for the first time. They were married in Fort Wayne Indiana and that is where I was born in 1942.

HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER LEARNING ABOUT YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIENCES?

Well I am one lucky José obviously to be born here in the United States. My dad came from relatively poor peasant stock in China. He was born in a farming village. And he had the gumption to immigrate to the US and once he got here, of course as a teenager he worked fro others in Oakland and moved to Chicago switching from the grocery business, working in grocery stores, to a restaurant. By the time I was born he was a partner in a successful Chinese American restaurant in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Dad was in the restaurant business for 50 years. And my mom, coming back from China to the US as an American born citizen, obviously without both of them, both my mom and dad having come to the United States in their own ways, I'd be a poor peasant boy in China today perhaps or worse.

HOW DID HIS IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES AFFECT YOU AND YOUR SIBLINGS?

Well I feel very proud that they had the gumption to come to the US, to make a success of it, to be good d citizens of this country. Both Mom and Dad were very very patriotic and they raised me in a similar fashion in Indiana.

HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER LEARNING ABOUT YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIENCES?

Yes, they were very proud of their heritage. They never denied their heritage and even though they didn't teach me to read and write Chinese, they did teach me to speak Chinese. I grew up speaking Chinese. My Dad and I conversed our entire lives in Chinese because his English wasn't that good. And later in life I have become very interested in all things Chinese, Chinese culture, Chinese history. I am not a Chinese scholar by any stretch of the imagination but I do have an interest in things Chinese.

WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION AS A VOLUNTEER?

I guess it has been for or five years now, after Liz and I moved to California, and my Mother was already living here in Oakland CA. She got invited to an Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation dinner, honoring former detainees of the AIIS. And so my mother showed me her invitation, she was invited at no cost and she could bring one guest. And if we wanted to bring another guest, my wife Elizabeth, it would cost us \$150 or maybe it was \$125 that year. So we decided to go. The dinner was held in San Francisco. It is a benefit dinner to raise money for the foundation. And we had a really good time, a very interesting program and we learned more about the immigration station and the workings of the Immigration Station Foundation. That's where I learned about the docent opportunities at Angel Island, with the Angel Island Association and since I was already retired at the time I thought gee, that sounds like something I ought to look into. So I volunteered, went through the training class and now I am an Angel Island docent.

WHAT IS THE MOST POWERFUL ELEMENT/ASPECT OF THE ANGEL ISLAND SITE IN YOUR OPINION?

Well, obviously, I am prejudiced; I think the immigration station is the big draw. At least that's what interests me the most for obvious reasons. Since both of my parents were detained there. Both of my wife's parents were detained there. My maternal grandmother was detained there in 1917 when she entered the US. So our family has a lot of history there at Angel Island and I want other people to know about the history of the immigration station, I think there is a story to be told and I enjoy telling it.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION PRESERVED? IF SO, HOW?

Well, of course. Of course the foundation and the CA state park service have gotten together to hire people to do the plan for the restoration of the immigration station, obviously they cannot rebuild the Administration Building which burned down in 1940 but they are going to try to recreate the footprint for the building so people can see through signs and plaques what the building looked like and what went on in the building. I guess I am pretty much in agreement with the plan for restoration as such. I sure hope we get

enough money to complete the plan. We need another 30 or 40 million dollars to go with the 15 million that has already been put up for it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND? AND, HOW SHOULD THEY LEARN ABOUT THIS SEGMENT OF AMERICAN IMMIGRATION HISTORY?

A lot of things happened on Angel Island besides immigration and we try to tell all the visitors a little bit about the civil war history, the US army history, the US public health service history as well as the immigration station history of the island. I think the best way for people to learn about the immigration history is through our docents. We have a good group of people who are dedicated to telling the story as it happened. And we are always striving for the truth. And that's why we are always interested in oral histories and talking to detainees although there are fewer and fewer left alive these days as they are getting older and passing on. But we want to try to preserve the detainees' stories as much as we can. Of course we can see the poetry on the walls but to hear the voices of actual detainees and to read their stories it is important that we preserve those and pass them on to future generations.

WHAT RELEVANCE DOES ANGEL ISLAND HAVE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY?

Yes and no. No because the Chinese Exclusion Act, and the other acts excluding other Asians as well racially and economically based. We haven't seen that kind of discrimination in recent immigration policies. We see more focused right now on anti-terrorism and personally, I see a need for that. And I know that whenever the country feels threatened, politically, economically, racially, or now threatened by terrorism, the likelihood that one or more groups of immigrants will be discriminated against.

Well, I guess like all minorities in the US we want our story to be told. . . . All Americans have a story to tell and we Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans who were detained at Angel Island, we have a story to tell too and we think that contemporary America. . . needs to hear about our story.

HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY TO YOUR OWN CHILDREN? IF SO, HOW DID THEY RESPOND?

We have given them, both our son and daughter, copies of all the documents that we copied at the NARA, San Bruno. We copied the actual interrogations of all four of our parents— my wife's parents and my parents. They are amazing papers. Even though in my Dad's case it was all about his paper family. Unfortunately, I know more about his paper family than I do about his real family. But we were able to take photographs of the pictures that were taken of them, the mug shots if you will that were taken of them at the time at Angel Island at the immigration station when they were first detained there. It is a wonderful

POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN

ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE

wonderful snapshot in time of what our parents had to go through...It was a great experience, almost like mining for gold and finding these golden documents and pictures. And our kids of course are, I think, very proud and very much aware that without the perseverance of their grandparents coming into the United States under diverse sometimes very stressful circumstances, they wouldn't be enjoying the lives that they do.

HAVE YOU VISITED ELLIS ISLAND? WHAT DO YOU THINK DIFFERENTIATES THE ELLIS ISLAND STORY FROM THAT OF ANGEL ISLAND?

Yes, we have been to Ellis Island several times and in fact Liz's brother who lives in Brooklyn...he got my wife's family involved in donating money to put their parents names' on the wall of honor there at Ellis Island. It was a fund-raising effort to help pay for the restoration of Ellis Island. And I got interested and my parent's names are on the wall of honor at Ellis Island as well even though they didn't come through Ellis Island when they immigrated to the US. The wall there honors all immigrants regardless of what country they came from or whether they actually came through Ellis Island or not. But they have done a wonderful wonderful job in restoring the immigration station at Ellis Island. With the computer terminals there one can look up one's forefathers' and foremothers' and look up their actual immigration documents and so on. And we hope to do the same thing here at AI someday if we can raise enough money and get enough volunteers to computerize all the records down in San Bruno, perhaps someday people will be able to visit the IS at AI and get online and look up the records that exist at San Bruno and make copies right there. It would be a wonderful opportunity for us to open up the history of Asian immigration to the United States, at least that portion of it that came through AI.

Most immigrants to Ellis Island were only detained on Ellis Island for a matter of hours. I think the average was three or four hours for a stay. Just a cursory check of paper work and people were sent on their way to NY City. The average stay on AI however, was three and a half weeks, vastly different treatment.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS : ELIZABETH CHAN: SPRING 2005

PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH.

My name is Elizabeth Wang, now Chan. I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, August 3, 1941.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ETHNIC HERITAGE?

I am Chinese. It is hard not too be anything but Chinese.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR ETHNIC HERITAGE IS PRESENT IN YOUR
EVERYDAY LIFE?

It influences me in all of my decisions.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND?

I heard about Angel Island I guess when I first came out to CA. Well actually I had heard about it from my parents but I didn't hear about it as Angel Island.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THAT YOUR FATHER CAME THROUGH ANGEL ISLAND AS
IMMIGRANTS?

I had always heard them talk about the stories.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIENCES AT ANGEL ISLAND (WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN
AND HOW)? HOW LONG WAS YOUR FATHER THERE? WHAT STORIES DID HE SHARE WITH YOU
ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND?

Well my father didn't ever say very much about Angel Island because I gather when he came over in 1916 he was only about 8 years old and didn't remember very much. My mother was much older when she came and she came about age 25. March 2, 1939. She would have bad things to say about AI. She claimed that the customs people had stolen things from her and that she didn't trust them and she didn't think that they worth a dime.

HOW DID HIS DEPARTURE FROM HIS HOME IN CHINA AFFECT HIS PARENTS AND EXTENDED
FAMILY?

Well my father was always busy working so he never had much to say but my mother once we were growing up in the house, she would talk about some of the things that had happened and she would talk about some of the things that bothered her. She would always talk about what a terrible time that she had at AI and about when they searched her and took away certain things from her— her valuables and that she thought they were dishonest and she was upset about it. She did not have a good experience.

Well, my father never ever talked about his experience I guess because he was about 8 years old but my mother talked about her family and about that she lived in a village home back in China and I gathered that her older brother had come to the US and had sent money back to China and they had built a new house. She said it was sort of on the narrow side but it was newer than most houses and that many people envied her there.

WHEN DID HE START HIS OWN FAMILY?

Well my father went to China and married my mother back in 1934 and she had her own child Edward and I remember that she was very very sick with him, the child was very sick and she had taken him to the doctor. But she said that times were hard and she was able to grow a crop and sell it and get the hospital money to care for my brother at that time. But I gather that even though she was married she didn't always receive shipments of money from Dad to pay obviously to help her out so she had her own family help her out. But mom I remember did have a servant girl. A servant girl that her parents had purchased for her that she took with her to her family to help her with her child when she was raising him.

HOW DID HIS EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES AFFECT YOUR OLDER SIBLINGS AND
MOTHER?

Well, actually it seems to me that their life really started in the US once they all came over here because my brothers, well there was one child, my brother Ed, my sister Mary K and then myself and then my three other brothers came within two years. The rest of us were all separated by two years apart and we were all...

WHEN DID HE START HIS OWN FAMILY?

Mom and Dad were married in 1940 after my Mom came from China to meet my Dad for the first time. They were married in Fort Wayne Indiana and that is where I was born in 1942.

HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER LEARNING ABOUT YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIENCES?

Well I had always known that mom and dad had come from China and I never really thought about it. I guess I put aside their life.

WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION AS A
VOLUNTEER?

I guess I got involved with AI as a volunteer, because my husband was a volunteer and I wanted to be with him. So when I quit working full time I volunteered.

WHAT IS THE MOST POWERFUL ELEMENT/ASPECT OF THE ANGEL ISLAND SITE IN YOUR OPINION?

I have a tough time with that one but I think that the immigration side is probably the most important site.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION PRESERVED? IF SO, HOW?

I would like to see it preserved. I would like to see it put back into its natural states so that people can go through it like my parents did and I have.

WHAT DO YOU THINK PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND? AND, HOW SHOULD THEY LEARN ABOUT THIS SEGMENT OF AMERICAN IMMIGRATION HISTORY?

I think people should know about AI because people go through the IS there in NY and I have been through it too and Europeans always seem to think that it is so important... and hey this is the Asian part of the story and it should be recorded too.

WHAT RELEVANCE DOES ANGEL ISLAND HAVE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY?

I guess I don't see it in the fact that at one time the US did not want Asians but now they do but perhaps the softening is due to your politics. Well, the Asians didn't have much of a history but then that's because the numbers were so down but now that there are more, I think the history will be recorded.

HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY TO YOUR OWN CHILDREN? IF SO, HOW DID THEY RESPOND?

Well I try to tell my history to my children and I think that they were listening.

HAVE YOU VISITED ELLIS ISLAND? WHAT DO YOU THINK DIFFERENTIATES THE ELLIS ISLAND STORY FROM THAT OF ANGEL ISLAND?

Yes I have visited Ellis Island and I have taken my kids to visit Ellis Island and I think that they have, that they can see a difference in the fact that so many people went through Ellis Island but they were all Europeans and the ones at Angel Island were all Asian, not all Asian but a majority of them were Asian and they can see the difference, and the difference in numbers.

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY?

I think that the story about Asians just doesn't get recorded enough and people know more about the story of who came through Ellis Island and I would like for them to know more about Angel Island. It seems to me that I know more about Ellis Island than I know about Angel Island because of the way I was taught in school. I would like for younger people today to know about the difference.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS : EMMA YEE: SPRING 2005

PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH.

My name is Emma Yee and I was born in San Francisco on may 4th 1952.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ETHNIC HERITAGE?

I am first generation Chinese American.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR ETHNIC HERITAGE IS PRESENT IN YOUR
EVERYDAY LIFE?

As far as physical appearance, 100%. I haven't made any changes. As far as the inner me, it think it is still very much me when I was a child. But it doesn't surface unless the situation arises, for example, when I go to a funeral where it is because one of my parents' contemporaries, I have my old Chinese coming out of me. Because I am in America with people who are non-Chinese, and non-Chinese speaking it is more American.

HOW HAS YOUR ETHNICITY INFLUENCED YOUR LIFE?

A lot of it has to do with my parents emphasizing education. How important it is for us to have an education because they didn't have an education. And since they didn't speak much English in fact my mother didn't speak any for a long long time. My dad spoke very little and it was broken English, the emphasis was on math. And so because of that I became very strong in math and then I realized that math wasn't going anywhere, I went into Science and that may be the reason why I work in a research lab now. And so, it seems like the obvious ethnic influence is the emphasis on education and that is something that has become very much in me too because when my children were growing up I emphasized education too. There is the subtle part about ethnic influence. It seems that I carried myself somewhat distant from people, not intentionally. Like I play soccer and I kind of stand by myself. When I talk to people at work-- it is more at the beginning of a situation rather than after when I know them better—but at the beginning I am comfortable not saying anything or just interjecting a little at a time. And so if you see a lot of Chinese, it may be stereotyping, but it seems like it is very common for Chinese to be distant or at least the Asian and that is still very much in me. Other influences include marriage. When I was a teenager my parents used to talk about marrying Chinese but I didn't have to marry Chinese as long as I married somebody who spoke our Chinese language so in a way that is marrying Chinese. Another one is growing up as a girl. I was the only girl among four brothers. I had to stay home, they got to go out. And it seems like I was the physically active person. Today I am the only one going out playing soccer, volleyball and going hiking and my brothers just stay home. So I don't know if it has influenced me to rebel or if it was something always in me and just had to hold off until my parents were gone or and my children were grown and now I have time for it.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND?

I was in my 20s. I went on a picnic and then that was it. And then in my 30s, I bicycled around Angel Island and that's when I discovered the immigration station.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THAT YOUR FATHER CAME THROUGH ANGEL ISLAND AS
IMMIGRANTS?

After learning about the immigration station at Angel Island, I asked my dad if he knew anything about it and he said, I was there.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIENCES AT ANGEL ISLAND (WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN
AND HOW)? HOW LONG WAS YOUR FATHER THERE? WHAT STORIES DID HE SHARE WITH YOU
ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND?

It seemed rather uneventful. The only comment that he made was oh, when I got off the ship I saw— he gave a name of his paper brother and he waved to him and he also noticed that the immigration officer saw him waving to him and so because of that he felt that the hearing went quickly because the officer knew that they were related. That is all he said. What I did is that I went into the national archives at San Bruno and found his transcript and it turned out that he arrived here on December 1st, 1926. His attorney applied for a hearing on the 4th of December then the hearing was from the 17th through the 20th and he was admitted into the United States on that day, the last day of the hearing. My dad was really twelve but on his papers it said thirteen. He came across the Pacific Ocean and arrived here with his biological uncle who was his paper father. And after when he was admitted to the US, they both went down to Santa Barbara where my dad stayed. He mentioned a few things about Santa Barbara like he slept on the shelves of the laundry where he worked and when he went to school there was one time where he wore a pair of pants that a customer had brought in and this kid went up to him and said, hey, that is my pair or pants and he said no that's mine, what makes you think it is yours. So then after wearing it, he went home and washed it and returned it to the customer.

Another story that he mentioned, and this is during the depression era, and most of the students did not wear shoes. And because their feet got so muddy the principal would hose their feet down before they went into the classroom.

HOW DID HIS DEPARTURE FROM HIS HOME IN CHINA AFFECT HIS PARENTS AND EXTENDED FAMILY?

It provided hope for better opportunities.

WHEN DID HE START HIS OWN FAMILY?

In the 1930s he went back to china to marry my mother and while he was there he impregnated her and came back to the United States and because of the tightening of immigration laws, he did not see his wife and first son until 1947 when I brother was then around 13 or 14.

HOW DID HIS EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES AFFECT YOUR OLDER SIBLINGS AND MOTHER?

My mother was basically a single parent for over a decade.

WHEN DID HE START HIS OWN FAMILY?

Mom and Dad were married in 1940 after my Mom came from China to meet my Dad for the first time. They were married in Fort Wayne Indiana and that is where I was born in 1942.

HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER LEARNING ABOUT YOUR FATHER'S EXPERIENCES?

Indifferent. My father didn't have much to share and so there wasn't much said, not much to be thought of. And something to think about is that this happened 60 years ago when I asked him about it. And for 60 years basically it was hush hush— to be quiet about it. And if you are going to be quiet about something for 60 years, you are pretty much conditioned to be that way. And so not much was said and because of that I don't have much of a response to it.

WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION AS A VOLUNTEER?

Well since my dad didn't say much about it I thought the best way to learn more about it was to volunteer at the immigration station so that I could get a feel of what it was like for the Chinese immigrants going through Angel Island.

WHAT IS THE MOST POWERFUL ELEMENT/ASPECT OF THE ANGEL ISLAND SITE IN YOUR OPINION?

The poems on the wall. They reflected the difficulties and challenges the immigrants had upon coming into the United States and yet there was all this hope for better opportunities and when you look at the poems and study it you see that it is very artistic it has a lot of depth in it and so it reflected a lot of talent that these immigrants had.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION PRESERVED? IF SO, HOW?

Of course. And I think the most important part is the poetry on the walls. Being a volunteer there I just talk about the place and people have been polite but it is so different than actually seeing it. You can get the feel for what it was like when you actually walk in there and look at the dormitory. So that is very important. I don't know how to preserve it but that is very important to preserve. And something else to keep in mind is to preserve the archives, I noticed when I went and got my dad's transcript, it was something that was given to me. I took out the individual sheets and made my own photocopies and it seems like it is something that anybody could just take and I hate to see that lost. I would like to see that computerized and the public would have access to all of that information.

WHAT DO YOU THINK PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND? AND, HOW SHOULD THEY LEARN ABOUT THIS SEGMENT OF AMERICAN IMMIGRATION HISTORY?

What happened at the immigration station was just another chapter of overt racial discrimination in America. And it is something in the past. Something that we only want to talk about and not see it in the future. I think it is important for people to discuss Angel Island every time that they talk about Ellis Island.

WHAT RELEVANCE DOES ANGEL ISLAND HAVE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY?

There is the immigration process part and there is the human behavior part. The immigration processing part, during the immigration station era, people came into the US for the most part, would be admitted. But then there is that small percentage who would be deported. So they invested and put in a lot of hope into coming to the US and if they were deported they were turned away and it was a big disappointment. Whereas today, all of the processing is done from the country that they are leaving from. So there is less of an investment and there is also the comfort of discussing things within your own culture so there is less misunderstanding and so when they are approved they get to come into the United States. As far as the human behavior part, it seems like whenever there is regulations or restrictions put upon them, they are going to find a way to overcome that. For the Chinese, they went through the paper son paper daughter route to become citizens of the United States. For today, I don't know how people so call lie about coming into the United States for employment or because they are part of a family.

HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY TO YOUR OWN CHILDREN? IF SO, HOW DID THEY RESPOND?

I have and there wasn't much of a response but my younger son did volunteer Angel Island Immigration Station for a little but so there was some interest but it is not a big thing.

POETRY AND FAMILY TIES ON GOLD MOUNTAIN

ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION, GUARDIAN OF THE WESTERN GATE

HAVE YOU VISITED ELLIS ISLAND? WHAT DO YOU THINK DIFFERENTIATES THE ELLIS ISLAND STORY FROM THAT OF ANGEL ISLAND?

Yes I have visited Ellis Island and I see a lot more similarities than differences. For example there are the wooden buildings, the 3-tier bunks and I always like to tell my visitors as a volunteer that the bathrooms are very similar in that the men only got to take showers and the ladies got to take baths and showers. But what differentiates the two is that Ellis Island was a big process center. They processed more ten million people over a 60-year period. Whereas for Angel Island, we are talking about half a million over 30 years. Another thing that really differentiates the two is that the average stay over at Ellis Island was a day or two but for Angel Island we are talking about three weeks. And that is because of the Chinese immigrants going through there who had to go through the hearing and that is why it was longer. So it is two things. The massiveness of Ellis Island, hard number. And the longer stay at Angel Island.

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