



Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote a greater understanding of Pacific Coast immigration and its role in shaping America's past, present and future. Through an array of interpretive programs and educational partnerships, the Foundation preserves the Immigration Station site, a National Historic Landmark, as a place that honors the complex story and rich cultural heritage of Pacific Coast immigrants and their

descendants.

Dear Friends,

As we get ready for the new year, we pause for a moment to mark the 65th Anniversary of the Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. On December 17, 1943, Congress passed the Magnuson Act, which allowed Chinese immigration for the first time since 1882. While it ended a shameful era of racial exclusion, the new law only allowed 105 Chinese immigrants to enter each year. Throughout the 40s, 50s, and early 60s, Chinese immigrants were still subjected to interrogations, detention, and deportation much as they experienced on Angel Island between 1910 and 1940. Conditions have improved immensely for Chinese immigrants, but we see remnants of unjust immigration policies even today.

Here at AIISF, we are looking forward to 2009. We start the year off with the long-awaited reopening of the Immigration Station on February 15, 2009, which will usher in a series of activities that will culminate in the Angel Island Centennial in 2010. Think of all the opportunities we will have to tell the story of this unique national historic landmark, which stands as a symbol for the perseverance and contributions of all immigrants.

Our effectiveness as an educational organization depends on your generous support. Please consider making a contribution to support our work. All donations are tax-deductible. Please visit our redesigned website, www.aiisf.org, and click on the donate button. It's easy and you'll feel great knowing that AIISF will be able to continue doing its work in 2009 and beyond.

Enjoy the holidays.

All the best,

Eddie Wong
Executive Director

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Christmas Eve at Angel Island

The following article, "Christmas Eve at Angel Island," was written in December 1927 by Edna Deu Pree Nelson, who was the editor of the Foshay Spot Light, a monthly publication of a utility company headquartered in Minneapolis. She accompanied a friend on a visit to San Francisco and wrote this article for her company's magazine. We want to thank her niece Marilyn Felland for submitting this article to AIISF.

Readers should note that in the 1920s it was still common to refer to Chinese and Chinese Americans as "Chinamen", a term many find offensive today. While Ms. Deu Pree Nelson uses this term in the article, she projects a sympathetic view toward the detained Chinese. Since there are relatively few accounts of life at the U.S. Immigration Station on Angel Island, we share this article in the spirit of adding another layer of interpretation to the documentation of the Angel Island story.

Christmas Eve At Angel Island

by Edna Deu Pree Nelson

I have no idea how "Peace on earth good will to men" looks in Chinese, but it is quite possible to say it in that language, and have it understood. It is done regularly each Christmas eve at Angel Island, that stretch of land, - the immigration station of the Pacific Coast - that lies midway of San Francisco Bay. Angel Island is to the West what Ellis Island is to the East, but it is much more attractive to the eye, and the congestion is not there. Neither are the crowd; even on the busiest day one finds freedom to stretch and fresh air to breathe and plenty of beauty to look upon, - hills, tropical flowers, trees, grass and a long quite pier.

Not quite on Christmas eve though, as anyone who went that way on the evening of evenings would soon discover. For the visitor, the pilgrimage begins with a rough half hour boat ride from pier five in San Francisco to the Island. The government vessel is small and in December the Bay is often choppy, sometimes uncomfortably rough. But that is part of the sport. Once within the capacious building where the festivities are to be held one will find a merry group already busy with the preparations. In fact, contributing their energy to the welfare of the alien is nothing new for this industrious company.

On this particular Christmas eve the boat had brought to the Island a fresh boat load of aliens. It was later afternoon, and the group, old and young Chinese, were a dejected lot as they set their feet on the pier and sorted out their luggage. They shuffled their way up the path without seeing the beauty of their surroundings. California palm trees, pepper trees, green lawns, a eucalyptus covered hill were lost on them. Their eyes were set moodily ahead, and they entered the receiving room as hopeless people who expect the

worst.

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Experiencing the New Immigration Station - An Interview with Daniel Quan, Museum Designer

By Eddie Wong, December 5, 2008

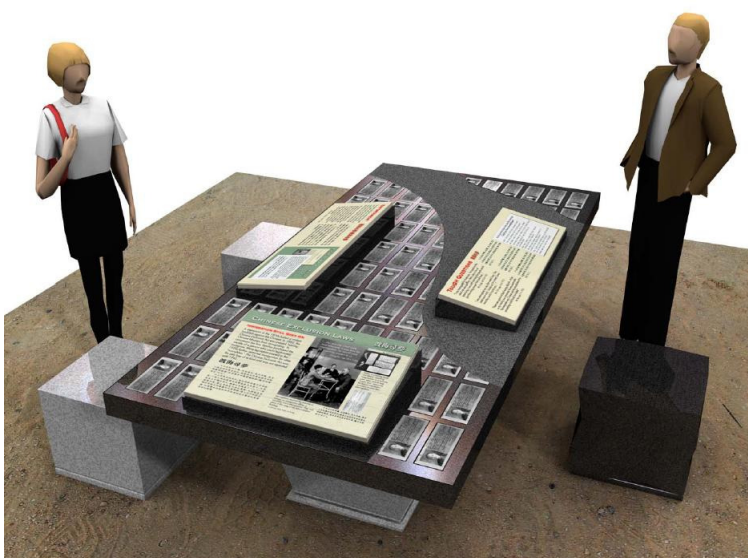
EW: What will the visitor encounter when one goes to the new site? What are some highlights of the new Administrative footprint?

DQ: The whole point of developing the administrative footprint is to give visitors a better idea of the of the arrival and processing experience of immigrants. Without a true representation of the wharf or the administration building (note: it burnt down in 1940), we developed a plan with terraces that represent the actual footprint of the Administration building. The idea is that you arrive at the wharf down by the water and you're greeted with an overall exhibit that talks about how immigrants came from 80 countries.

The first terrace is a representation of the main examination room and what you'll see are medallions in the ground that describe the function of each room. There will be a topographical, touchable model of the entire Immigration Station site.

Adjacent to that is a wing of the building where the interrogations took place. We will have a large interrogation table, an exhibit/ sculpture. We have about 40 Certificates of Identity, cards which Chinese had to carry with them to prove their legal entry, embedded on the surface of the table and superimposed on that are typical questions that were asked during the hearings.

The next terrace would be the dining hall. There were several, one for Asians, one for Europeans, and one for staff. There are benches and tables that will give you a sense of the table layout of the Asian dining room.



There will be a number of interpretive panels as well to guide you through the building giving you information about the dorm rooms on the second floor of the Administration building where women and children were housed.

Spaced throughout the terraces are low retaining walls. Between the terraces, there will be sayings and words etched into the walls. They're all key words taken from the poems and they give visitors an idea of the different feelings that immigrants had and experienced while they were

here. Some are dark, and some are very hopeful.

As you get to the third terrace of the Administrative footprint, you are greeted with a covered stairway that leads straight to the barracks and that is the beginning of a journey into enclosure. The covered stairway was recreated because we felt it was an extremely powerful element that should be added to the site. As you enter the stairway and walk up to the barrack, you see the grillwork that encloses the sides of the stairwell and once you're in the barrack, you're there for keeps.

The tour of the barrack starts on the second floor. Visitors will be taken into a dorm room that is partially furnished with tiered bunks and contains many suitcases, clothing, and personal effects of different immigrants from all around the world. Stories about different immigrants will be told by docents. It will be reinforced by a soundtrack where you will hear multiple dialogs from people from different parts of the world. It will give you an idea of the huge mixture of people who were here at the same time.

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Volunteer at the U.S Immigration Station on Angel Island

After three years of closure for renovations the historic site will reopen to the public on February 15, 2009. To create the best visitor experience possible for the months and years following the opening, we will need continuing support from volunteers. Training will include a tour of the site and barracks building, orientation to the site facilities, as well as information about the renovation process.

We are looking for people who have interest in gardening, maintenance, leading formal group tours as well as volunteers that would answer questions in our self guided section of the museum. Minimum time is one day a month, and there is no maximum to the amount of time you can volunteer.

Volunteers will also need to attend one Angel Island State Park New Volunteer Orientation held monthly at the park.

For sign ups and further information please contact Angel Island State Park's head of interpretation, Casey Lee at calee@parks.ca.gov or (415) 789-1384.

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...and help us accomplish our mission of preserving and restoring the station and educating the public on the role of this Pacific gateway to America.

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FEATURE ARTICLES:



Detainee Stories

In the summer of 1997 and 1998, several former detainees returned to Angel Island where they were interviewed in the detention barracks. Here are clips from interviews with Wing Young, Robert Fon Yee, and Harmen Guan Wu.

[Read article...](#)



The Dragon's Child: Laurence Yep & Kathleen Yep Interviews

The Dragon's Child is a touching portrait of a father and son and their unforgettable journey from China to the land of the Golden Mountain.

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Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation is currently accepting online donation through paypal at www.aiisf.org. Please visit our [website](#) for more detail.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The exhibit Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900-1970, which features the works of Angel Island detainee Gary Woo, and others will be on display at the de Young Museum from October 25, 2008 to January 18, 2009.



Chinese Culture Center's current exhibit: Icons of Presence: Asian American Activist Art, A de Young Museum satellite exhibition with artist Nancy Hom, Jim Dong, Leland Wong, Curated by Margo Machida will be on display from October 23, 2008 - January 3, 2009 at the Chinese Culture Center on 750 Kearny Street, 3rd Floor of the Hilton Hotel, San Francisco, CA 94108. Gallery Hours: Tues - Sat 10 AM - 4 PM. For more information: www.c-c-c.org

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