Volume 4 No. 3 THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION FOUNDATION Spring 2001

OLMSTED CENTER BEGINS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE STUDY

Work on the Cultural Landscape Report for Angel Island Immigration Station is now underway. The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, a program of the National Park Service, is working with the Immigration Station Project Partnership – Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, California State Parks and the National Park Service – to complete this project; the first cultural landscape report to be undertaken for California State Parks. Mark Davison, historical landscape architect with the Olmsted Center and project lead for the report, is in the process of finalizing the first phase of work, historical research. Analysis of the collected data should be concluded by the end of June. A workshop will be held sometime after this to discuss the results and to determine what direction to take. The Olmsted Center will then incorporate these suggestions into a plan to be presented and discussed at a second workshop. The final plan will be turned over to the Immigration Station Partnership to implement as it best sees fit.

What is a cultural landscape? In the broadest sense, a cultural landscape represents the influence of human beliefs and actions over time on the natural landscape. Cultural landscape reports document the fabric of the landscape, the habitation, and how the people who lived there interacted with the environment. The reports guide park management decisions regarding treatment and use.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Angel Island Immigration Station Landscape

A preliminary report on the Immigration Station was done by Angel Island State Park for the State back in 1979. The General Management Plan, as it was called, gave a historical analysis of present-day conditions at the Immigration Station, examining the historical significance of what is there now. It also looked at treatment alternatives (conservation, preservation, stabilization, renovation, and restoration). The plan formulated guidelines for what to restore and from what period of the Immigration Station. 1910? 1925? 1940? This type of secondary information, combined with primary research and fieldwork, is used to produce the cultural landscape report. At the end of the study the products will include a historical narrative, existing conditions survey, schematic treatment plan, and narrative guidelines for landscape management and protection of the complex.

A key piece of the cultural landscape work is the utilization of a Grid Information System (GIS). Davison lays a topographic survey of the island over a three-dimensional model by digitizing an aerial image. This gives a three-dimensional component to any map, allowing Davison to see the site from any angle or vantage point. He can then lay plans from any time period on the model and compare changes over time. Using the GIS as an analytical tool, Davison has been able to unearth some interesting discoveries. One example: in examining a 1910 plan of the main road he noticed it was on a different alignment to the present day road. Further investigation revealed that the 1910 main road became a path for pedestrian use, eventually becoming a garden path after planting with trees and shrubs by the station's gardener, Mr. Silva. From this discovery the research can therefore affect the treatment alternatives for that particular area of the site.

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LOEB FELLOWS BRAINSTORM ACCESS ISSUES FOR ANGEL ISLAND

The end of March found ten very special visitors on Angel Island – Harvard University's Loeb Fellows, who came to lend their expertise to the work at the Immigration Station. The Loeb Fellows, currently in residence at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, are mid-career professionals from the design fields, focusing on improving the natural and built environments. AIISF was thrilled when the Loeb Fellows accepted its invitation to visit Angel Island. Their participation in the project marks the first time in the history of the Fellowship that the group as a whole has done pro bono work. This year's fellows have backgrounds in architecture, design, public-private partnerships, landscape design, transportation, ecology in design and communications.

During their week at Angel Island, the Loeb Fellows met with various stakeholders to consider the future of the Immigration Station with a focus on access and transportation.

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Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation is a non-profit organization whose primary goals are:

a) to lead the effort to preserve, restore and interpret Angel Island Immigration Station, a National Historic Landmark, as the Pacific gateway for U.S. immigration; and

b) to promote educational activities that further the understanding of Pacific Rim immigration in American history.

President's Message

Dear Friends:

If friends are the true treasures of life, this past quarter has been a wealth of riches. Angel Island Immigration Station has enjoyed the attentions of many new and old friends.

We have been able to contact old friends and open discussions with new ones through the strategic planning process, especially through contacting other National Historic Landmarks, museums, and educational programs with whom we would like to collaborate, model after, or learn from.

Prestigious friends have come to call. The Loeb Fellows of the Harvard School of Design came in March to study transportation and access issues for the Immigration Station. Our exhibit, "Gateway to Gold Mountain," is being shown at The Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C this summer, preceded by an installation at California State University Hayward campus during Asian Pacific Heritage Month.

Organizations have chosen to feature the Immigration Station in their fundraising and promotional work, including Save Angel Island League (SAIL) and San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR). In April, SAIL brought the Immigration Station to the attention of Oscar-winning director Ang Lee and 1500 supporters. SPUR is featuring AIISF as the centerpiece to their annual fundraising cruise on May 21, this year going to the Immigration Station.

The press, both English- and Chinese-language, have been friends in spreading the word about the preservation needs of the Immigration Station.

And, you our long-time friends, we want you to save a date for us to get together again: October 4, 2001 for a celebration and fundraising event. We'll keep you posted.

We at AIISF have been showered with such riches of friendship. May it never end!

Sincerely,
Kathy Lim Ko

BEN HAMILTON-BAILLE

Loeb Fellows Katy Warner and Paul Okamoto on Angel Island with State Parks Interpreter II Darci Moore

Loeb, continued from page 1

Their findings will now serve to guide AIISF and its partners in the work ahead. Among the recommendations for transportation to the site: better visibility for existing ferry service as well as increased ferry service to Angel Island, a water taxi service carrying passengers to a reconstructed pier at the Immigration Station's China Cove, improvements to the walking path and signage between Ayala Cove and the Immigration Station, and a free or low-cost bike program.

The Loeb Fellows also suggested ways of making the Immigration Station experience more notable. A public arts program on the island and at mainland embarkation points would serve as an artistic way to draw visitors to the Immigration Station. On site, in the footprint of the Administration Building, a garden maze could be planted in its foundation, recreating the sense of enclosure while preserving the serene, contemplative nature of the place today. Finally, the Loeb Fellows suggested that Angel Island become a model of ecological sustainability: using wind and solar power, recycling, composting and green purchasing.

All these ideas are creative suggestions for AIISF and its partners to consider as they work to create an educational, memorable, and accessible experience at the Angel Island Immigration Station. Ultimately, AIISF and State Parks will need to determine ideal capacity for the site – how to get more people to the site while still maintaining its atmosphere of contemplation. Thanks to the Loeb Fellows' report, there are many more possibilities on the table for realizing this goal.

State Parks Update: New Writings Found

By Angel Island State Park Superintendent Nick Franco

Mark Davison, Landscape Architect with the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, has been finding a number of exciting documents during his research for the Cultural Landscape Report. He recently found a document from a Surgeon at the station that states: "the patients have already mutilated the walls by writings, by smudges made by (drawing?) mud or other substances against them and by digging away plastering in some places."

State Park staff went into the hospital and did, in fact, find some pencil writings and drawings in some upstairs rooms of the hospital for which we can find no other documentation. It is unknown if these are from the same time period as the carvings in the barracks, Japanese POW writings or writings and drawings from a later time period. The darkness and condition of the interior of the hospital makes the visibility and access in the rooms difficult.

We will be developing a plan to identify and document the writings in the hospital and to evaluate their significance to the site. It is potentially a very exciting find and demonstrates all too clearly why the research and reports on the buildings and the site need to be completed before we actually begin any on-the-ground restoration work.

PASSAGES

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$50,000 from the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund • $25,000 from the San Francisco Foundation • $500 Leslie Supporting Foundation

AIISF & SPUR Fundraiser

On May 21, AIISF held a joint fundraising event with the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR). Attendees cruised the bay on a Blue & Gold ferry and took a VIP tour of the Immigration Station. We are grateful to our sponsors for making the cruise possible.

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In the News

"Gateway" Going to the Capital

AIISF's traveling exhibit "Gateway to Gold Mountain" will be going to the Smithsonian's Arts and Industries Building in Washington, D.C. this summer. The exhibition will run from July 9 to August 27, joining two other exhibits on the Chinese-American experience: the Autry Museum of Western Heritage's "On Gold Mountain" and the Museum of Chinese in the America's "Fly to Freedom."

"Gateway" is currently on display at California State University at Hayward's library. For more information visit: www.library.csuhayward.edu/Noteworthy.htm

AIISF's New Website

Visit AIISF's new website at: www.aiisf.org

Olmstead, continued from page 1

At the National Archives in Washington, D.C., Davison found detailed individual floor plans for each building and three general plans for the site. Looking at the floor plans, Davison could see where amendments were made to each building as they were "red penciled" in over the original blueprints. The three general plans were dated 1909, 1913, and 1940, and included trees, roads, pathways, fences and building footprints. These details can then be incorporated into the GIS to view how the landscape changed over time from the beginning to the end of Immigration Station's years of operation.

Earlier this year, Davison visited the station with former detainees Dale Ching and Albert Wong. For Wong it was the first time he had visited the island since his detainment nearly 70 years ago. Many people know about the emotional experience of former detainees – this time Davison asked about what the physical experience was like for them. How did they inhabit the space, where did they go, what was their routine? Taking this different tack and asking new questions has uncovered valuable information. Wong remembered playing ball in the yard as a boy there and accidentally throwing the ball over the fence. He recalled lifting up the fence, under the watchful eye of the guard, and while retrieving the ball, picking plums and cherries to eat. From this anecdote, Davison learned there were fruit trees at the station.

Davison notes that much has already been documented on the experience of the detainees at the Immigration station. "The ultimate goal is to have the three main project areas – poem conservation, historic structures documentation and cultural landscape documentation – working together," said Davison. When completed, the cultural landscape report will guide long term care of the Immigration Station landscape.

The Many Faces of the Immigration Station

While the largest group of immigrants detained at the Immigration Station was Chinese, many other nationalities passed through Angel Island on their journey to the United States. Currently very little is known of their stories. AIISF welcomes you to share any information you have on this important subject.

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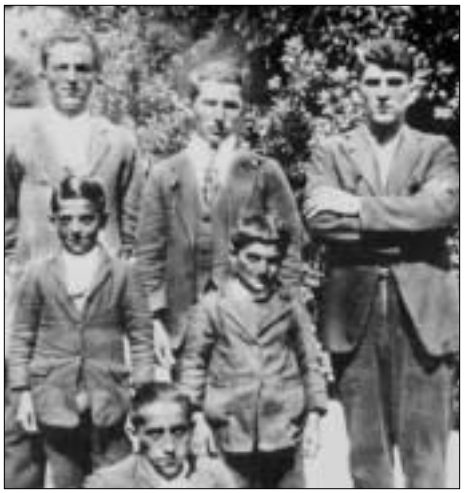

History Corner

Commemorative T-Shirt

Proceeds from the sale of the commemorative t-shirt honoring Angel Island Immigration Station as a National Historic Landmark will go toward the docent training program for the Immigration Station. Please contact the Angel Island Association at (415) 435-3522 for more information.

Wear a landmark! Specially designed for the Landmark event, these t-shirts are silkscreened in four colors and are 100% cotton. Available in adult sizes S, M, L, XL for $12.00 and XXL for $14.00 (plus sales tax and shipping).

Would you like to plan a special visit to the Immigration Station? Please call AIA Volunteer Co-ordinator Ellen Loring at (415) 435-3522 and she will be happy to make the arrangements for your group.

Become a Friend

Become a "Friend" and receive quarterly issues of our newsletter and/or exclusively designed items that show your support of Angel Island Immigration Station and its rich historical legacy.

Student or Teacher Friend – $25
- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year (Please enclose a current copy of your student or teacher I.D.)

Friend – $50
- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year

Heritage Friend – $100
- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year
- Commemorative t-shirt

Legacy Friend – $250
- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year
- Commemorative t-shirt
- A choice (please indicate) between the book, ISLAND by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim and Judy Yung ***OR*** the video "Carved in Silence" by Felicia Lowe

Landmark Friend – $500
- Receive the quarterly newsletter for one year
- Commemorative t-shirt
- The book, ISLAND by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim and Judy Yung ***AND*** the video "Carved in Silence" by Felicia Lowe

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