

PASSAGES

GATEWAY OPENS AT SMITHSONIAN

AIISF's traveling exhibit, "Gateway to Gold Mountain," had its grand opening at the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institution on July 10. "Gateway" was featured alongside two other exhibits chronicling the Chinese immigrant experience in America: the Autry Museum's "On Gold Mountain" and the Museum of Chinese in the America's "Fly to Freedom: The Art of the Golden Venture Refugees." It was the first time any museum in the United States had featured three major Chinese-American exhibits together in the same facility.

To honor this special occasion, The Honorable Norman Mineta, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Congressman David Wu (D-OR), and Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA) addressed a gathering of Asian Pacific American leaders and federal agency representatives. Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Lawrence Smalls, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and Dr. Franklin Oda, Director of the Smithsonian Program for Asian Pacific American Studies, spoke as well. Mineta, past Regent and Member of the Board of Directors of the Smithsonian, praised the museum for featuring the exhibits and spoke

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.



Gateway at the Smithsonian: pictured l to r – David Wu, Katherine Toy, Kathy Lim Ko, Nick Franco, Larry Smalls, Jadine Nielsen, Mike Honda, Richard Moe

personally of the country's early treatment of Asian immigrants. Mineta's own parents, who emigrated from Japan in the early part of the century, did not become U.S. citizens until 1952 when the exclusion laws, legal impediments to the Asian naturalization process, were removed. "Only then," Mineta stated, "were they allowed to become under the law what they had already become in their hearts, and that was to become Americans."

Pelosi paid tribute to the pioneering spirit of those who risked everything to come to this country: "we now have an opportunity to acknowledge the courage and determination of those people, to see it in their own words in the poetry that they carved into the walls, and to again make sure that we learn from those lessons." Perhaps the most moving speech came from Jadine Nielsen, current Deputy to the Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, who spoke of her own father's experiences at the Immigration Station. "My father remembered reading the Chinese poems that were carved in the walls by those who were locked up before him. Unsigned poems that told of the misery, the anguish, the loneliness and the outrage of being imprisoned on Angel Island," she said.

Honda presented the Angel Island story as a mirror offering "a good reflection of what this country is really about. It's about wisdom, it's

continued on page 2

ARG BEGINS BUILDING EVALUATIONS

Since the end of June, the San Francisco based architectural firm Architectural Resources Group (ARG) has been conducting fieldwork at the Immigration Station. The fieldwork will inform three historic structures reports on the barracks, power plant and hospital buildings. ARG is coordinating with the Olmsted Center (which is overseeing the cultural landscape study), and also utilizing many of the ideas from the Visioning Workshop, held two years ago, furthering the concepts conceived there and coming up with new recommendations for rehabilitation and reuse of each building.

ARG has completed the first phase of work: the conditions assessment. Measured drawings of the three historic structures have been completed, including floor plans and elevations. With most of the information now gathered, the next phase of work will focus on structural and hazardous materials assessment. To this end, ARG is overseeing a group of specialized consultants that include a Hazardous Materials Specialist, a Cost Estimator, and Structural, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers. This will be followed by a survey of the interior wall elevations in the barracks and photo documentation of the poems.

continued on page 2



ARG's Evan Kopelson and David Westel examine the poetry on site

GINO WANG

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

President's Message

Dear Friends:

This quarter has been one of discovering history and working to uncover special relationships. A key effort underway is to identify as many people as possible who were associated with the Immigration Station during its years of operation – former detainees, immigrants and those who lived at the site. We would like to recognize their journeys at our 25th Anniversary event on Thursday, October 4, 2001, and ask for your help in this very important work.

Those working on the historical studies for the Immigration Station have recently interviewed former residents of the Immigration Station. These families have provided valuable information about how the Immigration Station looked during its period of operation, helping to ensure that the restoration work is true to the period. These families have brought to us a living history from their memories of childhood, adding to our treasure of precious records from the past.

Relationships with partners on the East Coast have been discovered in the past quarter, with our exhibit, "Gateway to Gold Mountain," displayed at The Smithsonian Institution in July and August and now at the National Endowment for the Arts/National Endowment for the Humanities. Later this year, "Gateway" travels to the Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MoCA) in New York City. Our Executive Director, Katherine Toy, had an exciting East Coast tour of Washington D.C. for the Smithsonian opening and meetings with East Coast partners in New York: MoCA, Ellis Island Immigration Station, and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. As part of our education research, she also traveled to Los Angeles and the Japanese American National Museum, Museum of Tolerance and Skirball Cultural Center.

Closer to home, we have re-discovered our strong friendships with longtime supporters such as journalist Bill Wong and his family – Bill celebrated his 60th birthday as a benefit for AIISF – and with the Asian American Journalists Association who visited Angel Island Immigration Station during their annual national convention in August.

Such discoveries are essential in our journey toward preserving the Immigration Station, as well as in developing a national, cutting-edge educational program about the Immigration Station's important history and its relevance to contemporary issues. We hope that you will continue to assist us with these discoveries, referring detainees, immigrants and Immigration Station families to us so that we can recognize them and record their stories. Let us thank you in advance for your help. We look forward to seeing you on October 4, 2001 as we celebrate our 25th anniversary.

Sincerely,
Kathy Lim Ko



ARG exterior elevation drawing of the hospital

ARG, continued from page 1

The final stage of work will come this fall when ARG issues the first draft of the historic structures reports and make recommendations for repair and rehabilitation of the Immigration Station buildings. There will be a floor plan overlay detailing potential uses and recommended alterations. While the barracks clearly will remain used for interpretive purposes, both the power plant and the hospital have potential to be visitor or education centers. Once ARG's plan is approved, they will move ahead with a cost estimate for the recommended work. ARG's reports should be completed by early 2002.

Gateway, continued from page 1

about freedom, it's about dreams. And that reflection will shine more brightly than the mountain of gold that the Chinese were seeking." Wu saw the valuable lessons to be learned from the Immigration Station experience, "The understanding of these issues, of these people, of these policies is vital to understanding the society that we live in today. The story of Angel Island is ultimately a very American story."

In its two months at the Smithsonian, an estimated 288,397 people saw the exhibit; 105% more foot traffic for the Arts and Industries Building than the year before. "Gateway" ended its exhibition at the Smithsonian on August 27. It is now showing at the National Endowment for Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, also in Washington, D.C. "Gateway" will then travel to New York City this winter for an exhibition at the Museum of Chinese in the Americas from December 12, 2001, through February 28, 2002.



Henry Tang and Norman Mineta at the Gateway's opening at the Smithsonian



Nancy Pelosi at the Gateway opening

PASSAGES

A quarterly newsletter published by the
Angel Island Immigration Station
Foundation

P.O. Box 29237
San Francisco, CA 94129-0237
(415) 561-2160
info@aiisf.org

Editor • Adam Wimbush
Design • Melinda Lau Donaker

AIISF is a non-profit organization fully qualified under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions (including Friends payments) are tax deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. For those wishing to make larger gifts or contributions, please contact AIISF for more information.

Thank You

Friends of AIISF

Friends

Christine & William Gammage
Maggie Gin
Patricia Hilden
Concepcion Hiponia
Jacqueline Huey
Kary & Nanette Lafors
Cheryl Thai
Peggy Toy
Jill Troy
Ted Weber

Heritage Friends (\$100)

Kevin Fong, *in honor of Robert & Mary Fong*
Doris & Delbert Gee
Pauline Jue
Mabel W. Jung
William Lim & Sylvia Hom
Sherman & Margaret Louie
Barbara Coffin Moore, *in honor of Darci Moore*

Legacy Friends (\$250)

Wen-Hsiunk Ko & Christina Ko
Katherine Toy

Landmark Friends (\$500)

Asian American Journalists Association
Margaret Wong

Lette Lowe Cooper Memorial Donations

Susan Lam Bargiacchi
Christina Chan
Gerald & Carol Cheang
Rose T.Y. Chen Charitable Foundation
Ken Ellis
Carol Farrer
Marilyn Fong
Shirley K. Foo
The Gan Family
Forrest Gok
Howard H. Jan
Gail Jue
Lillie T. Jue
Marion Lee
Henry Lowe Family
Lanson Lowe
Lee Lowe
Stanley & Faye Lowe
Stuart Lowe & Sueh-Ning Liew
Dale Minami
Raymond & Lily Mow
Richard Saiz
Robert & Ellen Wong

Stephen & Karen Wong
William Wong
Walter & Anna Yeung
Guy & Bernice Young
Judith Yung

Bill Wong's Birthday

Sonya Chan, *in honor of Lincoln Chan*
Allison Chop
Alexandra Close
John Fleming & Patricia Fewer
Lotus Yee Fong
Jacqueline Huey
Ilene Hruby
Alice Lai-Bitker
Robert Lee
Melvin Lan Lew
Cheng & Catherine Liao
Tina Monaco
Mark Morodomi
Jimmy G.S. Ong, *in memory of Boo Yip Ong*
Jan Quan & Floyd Huen
Kent & Julie Shiraishi
John Situ, *in memory of the dark side of U.S. History*
George & Joanne Takata
Lai Webster
Bill Wong
Howard Wong

In the News

AIISF's 25th Anniversary

Make your reservations now for AIISF's 25th Anniversary Celebration: Sharing Stories of Courage and Vision. Honoring former immigrants and families who lived at the Immigration Station, the event will be held at Gabbiano's Restaurant, on the San Francisco Waterfront. October 4 from 6:00-9:00 pm. Tickets are \$125. For more information please call Laurie J. Earp Events at (510) 532-7700.

NARA Update

NARA's National Archives Pacific Region-San Francisco office, located in San Bruno CA and a long-time partner with AIISF on various cooperative projects, recently received approval to hire an unprecedented total of 9 university students for temporary full and part-time work on NARA-San Bruno's huge collection of archival files documenting the Angel Island experience.

The students currently split their time between much-needed archival preservation work and the addition of thousands of entries to an ongoing database index which enables people interested in the files to search by name for records relating to particular Angel Island detainees.

Though this "student hire" program ends as of September 30, the expiration of the Federal fiscal year, the regional archives also has a small group of volunteers who work year-round on the archival Immigration files preservation and indexing project. NARA and AIISF are hoping to beef up the volunteer force for the Angel Island indexing project this fall, with a joint recruiting effort coordinated by AIISF's volunteer Chris Fong. Archives Director Daniel Nealand expressed high hopes for the joint recruiting-indexing effort, as well as optimism regarding support for a possible recurrence next summer of the highly successful "student hires" program. To volunteer please contact AIISF.

Bill Wong Birthday



Sam, Bill and Joyce Wong

Bill Wong held his 60th Birthday Celebration at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center on July 7. Thanks to Bill's generosity, the event raised awareness and funds for AIISF. He donated the proceeds from sales of his new book, *Yellow Journalist*. Thanks Bill!

History Corner

Fence, continued from page 5

The Garcia family: Philip J. Garcia, Bernice Constance Gerland

Interviewed by: Daniel Quan, Katherine Toy (AIISF) and Catherine Petrin (Architectural Resources Group)

When did you live on the island?

We lived on the island for approximately two and one-half years, from 1923 to 1926.

Where did you live?

We lived in one of the three cottages behind the power plant. It was the one closest to the water. It may have been larger than the cottages on the other side of the site. It may have had three bedrooms but we are not sure.

What was your daily routine during school?

Philip and Bernice: Every morning we would go down to the dock to catch the ferry to go to San Francisco. There were two boats – the big one was the *Angel Island* and the small one was the *Inspector*. We took the small one. The ferry would dock at Pier 5 in San Francisco. From there, we took the streetcar (E Train) to Sherman School, a public elementary school located on Franklin and Greenwich Streets in the Marina District. At the end of the day we had to make sure we got back to Pier 5 so that we did not miss the ferry back to the island. There may have been one other child who went to the same school. We don't remember any other kids taking the ferry and going to our school. We also don't remember ever missing the ferry either.

What did you do after school/on weekends/in the summer?

Philip and Bernice: We went shopping at the PX at Fort McDowell. We could also walk along the road to other areas on the island. We would go to the movies at Fort McDowell also.

Where did you play? Where were you allowed to go?

Philip and Bernice: We played in the immediate area behind the house. We didn't really wander off too far. We were not allowed to go to very many places around the station. We did go to the docks and the beach. We were not allowed to run around or make a lot of noise. We were very good, well-behaved.

Philip: We had a tree house in back of the house. We also went fishing down at the docks. We

would drop lines down into the water and catch bass and perch. Our father went fishing every morning before work. He would always catch fish, so we ate fish every day.

What do you remember most about the station?

Philip: Once in the 1920s, there were three detainees who escaped from the Immigration Station. It caused quite a stir but they were found in another part of the island the next day and were brought back. I think one of them was a captain....I also remember taking the *Inspector* to Tiburon to pick up drinking water to bring back to the Station.

Who did you play with? Do you remember any of the families, children, parents?

Philip: There were three engineers at the station. The families were the Mooney, Peery, and the Thau families.

Bernice: There was another person who was in his late twenties who would take the boat to the city with us every morning. His mother was a matron at the station. Their family was McKeaver (*note: this checks with the 1922 list of building occupants at the station*).

Did you go into the immigration buildings?

We were not allowed to go in the other buildings.

Did you talk with immigration staff?

Philip and Bernice: We never talked to anyone on the staff.

Bernice: I do remember the missionary woman. She wore a long black uniform with white trim on the front. (*This was Katherine Maurer*)

Philip: I remember a Dr. Delong.

Did you have any contact with detainees?

Philip and Bernice: No, never.

What did your father do?

Bernice: Our father did the laundry for the hospital (bed linens, towels, etc.). He did this single-handedly without benefit of any help. He had to wash, dry, and fold all the laundry every day.

Philip: Father was also in charge of setting the foghorn clock timer every day.

Where did he work?

Philip: He worked in the laundry behind the power plant.



Bernice and Philip Garcia at the Immigration Station

Bernice: The family moved off the island after 1926, but father continued to work at the Immigration Station until he retired. He would stay there during the week.

Philip: We moved to San Francisco on Lombard Street.

What did your mother do?

Bernice and Philip: Mother was a homemaker.

Do you remember fences, gates, locked areas?

Philip: I don't recall any barbed wire fences, locks or other fences around the site. There was a chain link fence around the recreation yard next to the detention barracks. I remember the detainees playing soccer in the yard.

Do you remember anything about the buildings? Your house?

Philip and Bernice: We don't remember anything particular about the house. It was not furnished and was pretty plain. We brought our own furniture. There was electricity and there was a flush toilet and running water. It possibly had three bedrooms, but we don't really remember our sleeping arrangement. There was a bathtub. When our father would catch fish, they would keep it on ice in the bathtub. There was no refrigeration at the time.

Bernice: We did play with some of the other children at their houses.

Philip: Some of the families had ice cream, so we would go over to their houses.

COURTESY PHILIP GARCIA

The Other Side of the Fence

While many stories of former detainees have been documented, there have been few testimonials from those who lived at the Immigration Station about life on the outside of the fence. This spring and summer, two families, the Garcias and Mooneys, shared their experiences growing up as children of Immigration Station employees. Katherine Keegan, Eugene Mooney, and Alice Curran were children of the engineer for the site's power station. Philip and Bernice Garcia were the children of Philip Garcia, Sr., the staff laundryman. AIISF is excited to share this alternative perspective on Angel Island and, this fall, will be launching a new project to find and preserve first-person accounts of life at the Immigration Station from both sides of the fence. If you or someone you know has a story to tell, please contact us at (415) 561-2160 or info@aaisf.org.

The Mooney family: Kathleen Keegan, Eugene Mooney and Alice Curran

Interviewed by: Mark Davison (Olmsted Center), Daniel Quan, Darci Moore (California State Parks)

Do you remember how you came to be at the island originally?

Yes, my Dad went over in January of 1920. He was a marine engineer and he'd gone to sea. And he had been through two strikes, and had four children at that time, so when he met an engineer who told him about a job opening on Angel Island and said that he should apply for it, he did and that's how we ended up on the island.

Do you remember anything about your father's work?

Oh yes he was in charge of the powerhouse so he was at work all day. And there were night shifts also.

What about the people in other cottages, other families you used to play with?

Some of the guards were there at different times with their children. And other engineers. Also, my father had a brother, Joe Mooney, who also lived on the island a while.

The first house we lived in was right behind the powerhouse. Then we moved to the other side. We lived next to the gardener, Mr. Silva.

What about going to school?

We took the ferry, the *Angel Island*, back to the mainland. Docked at Pier 5 and then we had to walk from there to the ferry building and catch the streetcar. I went to St. Peter's way out at 24th and Alabama in the Mission. That was a long trip.

We were always ten minutes late for school and always left ten minutes early so we were the envy of our classmates. The boat would leave at 8:00 a.m. And it wouldn't wait... A couple of



The Mooney children by the pier at the Immigration Station

COURTESY MOONEY FAMILY

times the boat would be leaving and they would make us jump.

Sometimes it would be very rough and it would be hard to board the *Angel Island*. Someone would have to grab your hand. That was scary.

How long did you stay on the island?

1940. The administration (building) burned. That's really why we left.

Could you describe a typical day on the island?

Oh we were all young. Play. Help with washing. They didn't have gas over there initially. My mother cooked on a coal stove. A couple of times she would get tired of the inconvenience of living out there and we'd come back to the city.

We had a couple of moonlight picnics too. We'd go to the north side of Point Blunt.

Can you describe the house you lived in?

It was very small just four rooms. We'd share a bed. They added a back to the house for the boys. We three girls were always in the same bedroom. We had a garden for flowers and vegetables sometimes.

There was a crabapple tree (*still there*). We were forbidden to eat the crabapples. If our father saw us eat the apples he'd give us a dose of castor oil.

Did you ever meet the detainees being held at the station?

Once in a while, we'd be into knitting or sewing and we'd go to the women's quarters. They taught us or helped us with what we were doing.

Did you actually know what was going on there?

Oh yes, we could see them. There was always someone playing basketball in the yard. They were always playing basketball. And we'd sometimes hear their music.

The kids used to go to the yard behind the hospital and exercise there.

Did anyone try to escape?

There was only one while we were there.

I don't think they ever determined if he jumped or fell off that cliff or what.

continued on page 4

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.



Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation
P.O. Box 29237
San Francisco, CA 94129-0237

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

Board of Directors

Kathy Lim Ko, *President*

Ginny Yamate, *Vice President*

Emily Goldfarb, *Treasurer*

Patty Nishimura Dingle, *Secretary*

Forrest Gok

Felicia Lowe

Elizabeth Goldstein

Jeffrey Ow

Tod Hara

Irene Yee Riley

Phillip Hofstetter

Gale Young

Executive Director

Katherine Toy

Angel Island State Park Liaison

Nicholas Franco, *Park Superintendent*

Advisory Board

Him Mark Lai

Dale Minami

Brian O'Neill

Judy Yung

To become a Friend, send your name, address, and check to:

*Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation
P.O. Box 29237
San Francisco, CA 94129-0237*