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 M, L and XL for $15.00 (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 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 newsletter for one year (Please enclose a current copy of your student or teacher I.D.)

Friend – $50
- Receive the newsletter for one year

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

Legacy Friend – $250
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- 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

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- 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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Volume 5 No. 2 THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION FOUNDATION Winter/Spring 2002

CHINESE POETRY SCHOLARS VISIT IMMIGRATION STATION

On January 25, 2002 a group of Chinese poetry scholars took a special tour of the Angel Island Immigration Station to examine the writing carved into the barrack walls by detainees once housed there. The participants included: Wan Liu, Assistant Professor of Asian Languages at Stanford University; Newton Liu, poetry scholar and Vice President of Bridge to Asia; Xing Chu Wang, poet and editor of East West forum; and Charles Egan, Assistant Professor of Foreign Languages and Literature at San Francisco State University. Led by personnel from Angel Island State Park, the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), Architectural Resources Group (ARG) and Daniel Quan Design, this group of experts explored the interior of both the Hospital and Detention Barracks, using flashlights to look at the various inscriptions covering the walls.

The book "Island" (University of Washington Press, 1980) by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim and Judy Yung first brought to light a wealth of Chinese poems on the barrack walls. However recent studies by ARG have uncovered many new writings. There may be more than twice as

DANIEL QUAN

Newton Liu and Darci Moore (California State Parks) examine poetry

many poems yet to be documented. The poetry scholars were invited out to Angel Island to offer a fresh perspective and help define the new, expanding, scope of work. At this point, with just a few writings fully visible and legible, the poems offer only hints or clues as to who exactly wrote them and how. There is still a wide range of possible interpretation, reflected among the viewpoints of the visiting scholars.

Newton Liu emphasizes the power and importance of poetry in Chinese tradition, noting that it "is almost a Chinese religion." He believes that creating the poems was an organized effort because of the craftsmanship of the calligraphy and the similarities of story and style in much of the writing. There is a long tradition of poetry clubs in China: groups of people who would gather and write poems together. He suggests that there may have been a community among the detainees where the young Chinese men learned poetry as a form of self-expression from the elders, "falling back to this thousand year old Chinese tradition."

Wan Liu offers another possibility: that the similarity of the writings reflects another tradition of poems written in response to other poems. Immigrants reading the poetry of past detainees were, perhaps, inspired by these writings to create poems themselves. Inevitably in doing so,

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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.

AIISF WELCOMES DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: ERIKA GEE

AIISF is proud to announce the hiring of Erika Gee for the newly created Director of Education position. Erika joined current staff, Katherine Toy and Adam Wimbush, in AIISF's Presidio office on March 4. She will responsible for directing and implementing AIISF's education plan: developing programs and resources for schools and teachers, and working with California State Parks on interpretation strategies for the restored Angel Island Immigration Station. She will also develop public programs for audiences of all ages in partnership with local and national organizations.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Erika is a third-generation Chinese American. She received her B.A. in History/Art History at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and is completing her Master of Science in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education. Working in museum education positions for nearly ten years, her start in programming was through an internship at the UCLA Wight Art Gallery sponsored by the J. Paul Getty Trust, designed to introduce college students

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McCA

AIISF's new Director of Education Erika Gee

President's Message

Dear Friends,

Happy Year of the Horse! On the occasion of Lunar New Year, I think of the Chinese values that my immigrant parents instilled in us: those of family, respect of elders, and education. Education is an important part of AIISF's programs. This issue of *Passages* introduces many new features of our Education Program, including our new Director of Education, Erika Gee. We are so pleased to have her on the staff.

Education crosses over into our Historic Preservation Program in the recording, conserving, and interpreting of the poems on the walls of the Detention Barracks. It was exciting for AIISF to invite Chinese scholars to inspect the poems. We all learned so much from their valuable insights. The information and interpretation which will continue to be revealed in the preservation and conservation work will help us understand better the lives of the detainees and how they may have organized themselves.

Lastly but certainly not least, we need to recognize the leadership role of the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) in underwriting half of our Educational Programming planning and the first stages of implementation. Without the important support of MCF, our education work would be much more incremental; we would not be able to forge key partnerships nor develop timely educational programming to reach a national audience.

And, thanks to you our supporters, all of our program work continues and succeeds, to preserve the site, to develop educational programming, to find and document the experiences of former detainees, and to promote knowledge of the Immigration Station so that we can all learn from its lessons.

Gung Hay Fat Choy!

Kathy Lim Ko

Features (cont.)

continued from page 1

she suggests, "they had echoes of the previous poetry in their own."

The poems also challenge stereotypes of who was coming from China to America. While most Chinese immigrants were young men coming here to do manual labor for a living, the relative sophistication of the poems suggest that they may have been fairly well educated having received at least four or five years of private tutoring. Charles Egan believes "this breaks the usual idea of Chinese immigrants being lower class labor types." He notes "the great cost to send someone overseas may have resulted in communities sending their best – a student doing very well."

DANIEL QUAN

Wan Liu, Xing Chu Wang, Charles Egan and Nick Franco (California State Parks) in the barracks

The thoughts and ideas that came from this visit will help inform the poem preservation and interpretation work. Xing Chu Wang emphasizes: "the poems are a part of the historical piece of Angel Island. Our responsibility is to impart the history of the immigrants and their feelings and their hardships…we don't want to repeat this sad history." The next steps for this project include:

1. Matching poems translated to date to a matrix of poem locations on the barrack walls.
2. Identifying which poems remain that are readable, but not yet translated, and those that are not readable in their current state.
3. Select two sections of the walls that contain some translated and some readable, but not yet translated, poems. Invite a group of scholars to translate and re-examine the poems in their context as a group.

The hope is that in seeing each poem as a piece of a larger puzzle, a better understanding of the detainee experience can be put together. The walls, and the multi-layered messages they hold, can then be preserved. As Wan Liu says, the poetry will become "a monument to the people who came here and brought Chinese cultural tradition to this country."

continued from page 1

of color to the world of museums and other arts presenters. Since then Erika has worked on programs at a range of museums – Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and most recently at the Museum of Chinese in the Americas in New York City. In her spare time, Erika likes to visit museums, see movies, play mah-jongg with her grandmother, and attempt to sing karaoke songs.

We asked her why she took the position at AIISF: Like many people, I have been eager to learn more about my heritage and the stories of the places my ancestors and relatives have lived. Last summer I accompanied my grandmother along with my mom on a doctor's visit. While in the waiting room, my mother brought up the subject of Angel Island and the Immigration Station there. I had always assumed that because my grandmother had purchased papers from an American citizen that she did not spend any time on Angel Island, unlike some of my other family members. To my surprise, Grandma shared with me the story of her overnight stay at Angel Island including her experience serving as a Chinese interpreter for women in the morning before she departed.

As a Chinese American woman, I had to find these moments to learn about my history. My family and our families are participants in a larger American story – part of an on-going quest for increased freedom, whether personal, political, or economic, and community building. Organizations like AIISF play a role as facilitators in society to provide places and experiences where we can better understand the past and use individuals and community stories to inform us about aspects of our own lives and American history.

PASSAGES

A newsletter published by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation

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Design • Melinda Lau Donaker

In the News

Gateway Opens at MoCA

The "Gateway to Gold Mountain" exhibit had its opening at the Museum of Chinese in the Americas on January 28. Two days later, AIISF board member and filmmaker Felicia Lowe held a special screening of her documentary "Carved in Silence" to a packed house at New York University. The "Gateway" will be at MoCA through the end of May.

AIISF at NARA Conference

In cooperation with the National Archives and Records Administration, the Chinese Historical Society of America, the Filippino American National Historical Society, the National Japanese American Historical Society and other community agencies, AIISF is proud to sponsor:
Reclaiming the Legacy: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in U.S. History
Saturday, May 4, 2002, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
University of San Francisco's Lone Mountain Conference Center

This major conference-symposium will promote wider recognition of the true and vital contributions to our country made by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders – groups traditionally underrepresented in the teaching of US history.

The conference will present three sets of concurrent presentations in four tracks:

- Academic history
- Family history and public education
- Resource access and use
- Media and performance art

In conjunction with the conference, AIISF will be hosting special tours of the Immigration Station on Sunday, May 5. Call AIISF for more information about the conference or tour: (415) 561-2160.

Earth Day

Angel Island State Park needs volunteers to help on Earth Day, April 20th, 2002 from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Earth Day activities this year will be focused at the Angel Island Immigration Station. Volunteers are needed to help clear trails and prune overgrown shrubs and trees. This will provide visitors better access around the Immigration Station by exposing historic brick pathways and walkways that were located in front of the employee cottages and behind the Central Heating Plant. If you are interested in a day of physical activity and fun, contact Darci Moore for more details at (415) 789-1384. Volunteers should wear long pants, boots, and bring lunch and water.

Thank You

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Angel Island Timeline: A Linear History of the Immigration Station

adapted from a work created by Jeffrey Ow

1882–1910	Chinese immigrants held at the Pacific Mail Steamship company warehouse in SF
1904	Commissioner General of Immigration authorizes a study recommending construction of Immigration Station (IS) on Angel Island (AI)
1906	Earthquake halts work on IS and destroys Chinese immigration records creating the "paper son" loophole
1910	January 21, IS site opens
1912	**Methodist Deaconess Katherine Maurer begins working at station (photo 1936)**
1912	Tye Leung asst. to matron and interpreter, marries Immigration inspector Charles Shulz and is fired from her position due to anti Chinese pressure
1919	Food riot breaks out, federal troops restore order
1920	October, 3 month meningitis epidemic breaks out
1922	Dept. of Labor declares facilities to be obsolete and firetrap
1922	Angel Island Liberty Association, organized by Chinese detainees, is formed
1924	Asst. Secretary of Labor investigates charges of improper conduct by station employees
1931–1932	Smiley Jann & Tet Yee copy poetry on walls
1940	August 12, **Fire destroys administration building**

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

History Corner

1940	Nov 5, IS relocates to 801 Silver Ave, SF
1941	IS site reverts to military use
1946	AI is turned over to State of California
1963	Dept. of Parks and Recreation receives full title of AI
1970	Alexander Weiss discovers poetry in the barracks shortly before scheduled demolition
1976	AIISHAC is founded
1977	Stabilization of Barracks begins led by architect Philip P. Choy
1983	Detention Barracks opened to public
1983	**Paul Chow and others form AIISF from AIISHAC**
1996	Gateway to Gold Mountain display premiers at SF Main Public Library
1997	IS named National Historic Landmark
1998	**National Historic Landmark celebration**
1999	IS named one of "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Sites"
2000	Proposition 12 passes dedicating $15 million for site preservation
2001	Gateway to Gold Mountain at the Smithsonian

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