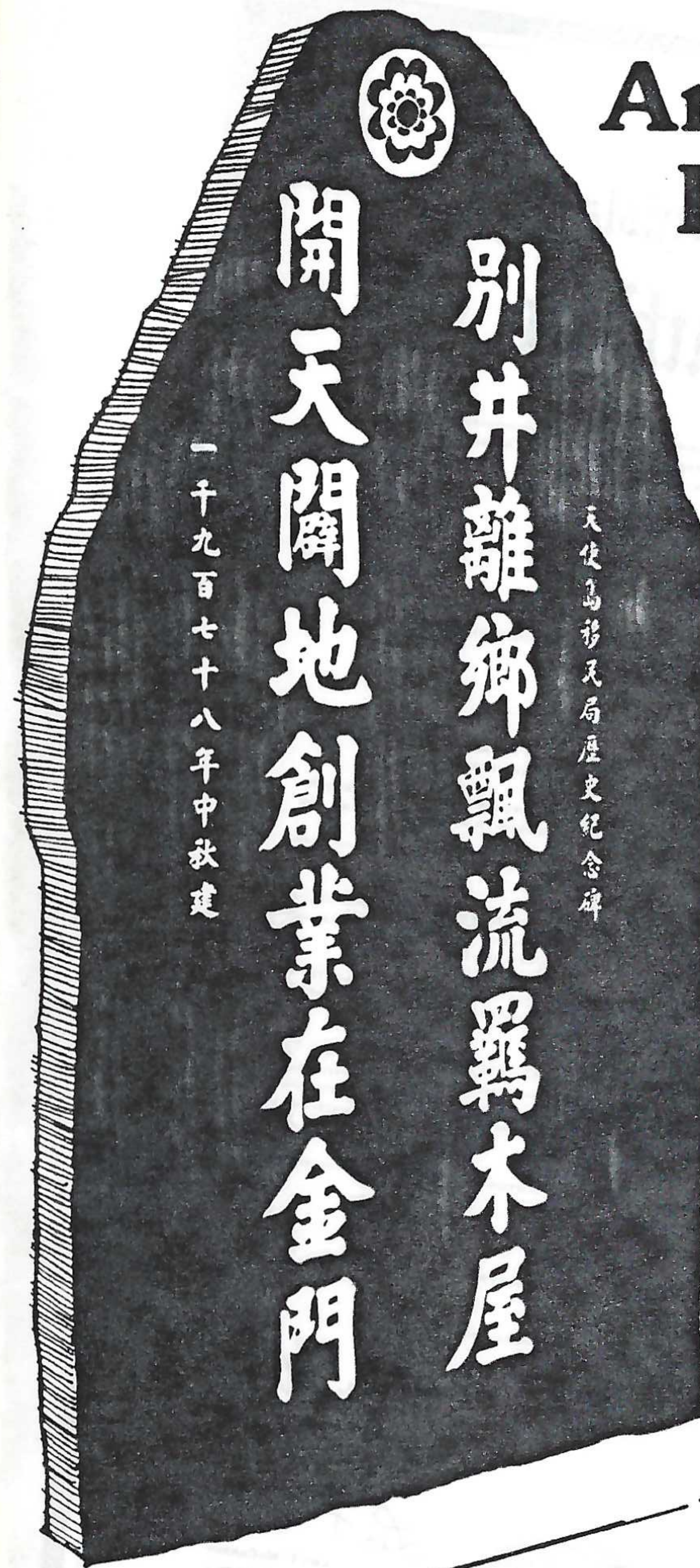


Angel Island Immigration Station 1910-1940

An Historic Commemo
April 28, 1979
Angel Island State Park



別井離鄉飄流羈木屋

開天闢地創業在金門

天使島移民局歷史紀念碑

一千九百七十八年中秋建

"Leaving their homes and villages, they crossed the ocean
Only to endure confinement in these barracks.
Conquering frontiers and barriers, they pioneered
A new life by the Golden Gate."

California Legislature Resolution

BY THE HONORABLE JOHN F. FORAN, 6TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT; THE HONORABLE MILTON MARKS, 5TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT; THE HONORABLE LEO T. MCCARTHY, SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY; THE HONORABLE ART AGNOS, 18TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT; AND THE HONORABLE WILLIE L. BROWN, JR., 17TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

RELATIVE TO THE DEDICATION OF THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION
ON APRIL 28, 1979

WHEREAS, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ASIAN IMMIGRANTS PASSED THROUGH THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION BETWEEN 1910 AND 1940, SEEKING ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES; AND

WHEREAS, COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF ASIAN MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN WERE REQUIRED TO ENDURE ARDUOUS AND PROTRACTED PERIODS OF DETENTION WHILE AWAITING PERMISSION TO ENTER THE COUNTRY; AND

WHEREAS, THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION PROCESS WAS A DEBILITATING ONE, TO BOTH BODY AND SPIRIT; AND

WHEREAS, THOSE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRANTS WHO DID EVENTUALLY ENTER THE UNITED STATES PROVIDED A LAUDABLE EXAMPLE OF COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE, AND AN INDOMITABLE WILL TO PREVAIL, AND IN SO DOING, PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN ENRICHING THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE; AND

WHEREAS, THE FORMER SITE OF THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION IS BEING DEDICATED ON APRIL 28, 1979, TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE ASIANS WHO PASSED THROUGH THE FACILITY IN SEARCH OF A BETTER LIFE ON THESE SHORES; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED BY THE JOINT RULES COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND THE ASSEMBLY, THAT THE MEMBERS, BY THIS RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZE THOSE ASIANS WHO PASSED THROUGH THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION BETWEEN 1910 AND 1940, AND URGE OTHERS TO TAKE PART IN THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES OF THE STATION ON APRIL 28, 1979, IN MEMORY OF THOSE COURAGEOUS AND PERSEVERING IMMIGRANTS; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT SUITABLY PREPARED COPIES OF THIS RESOLUTION BE TRANSMITTED TO THE AUTHORS FOR APPROPRIATE DISTRIBUTION.

RESOLUTION NO. 109
APPROVED BY THE JOINT RULES COMMITTEE

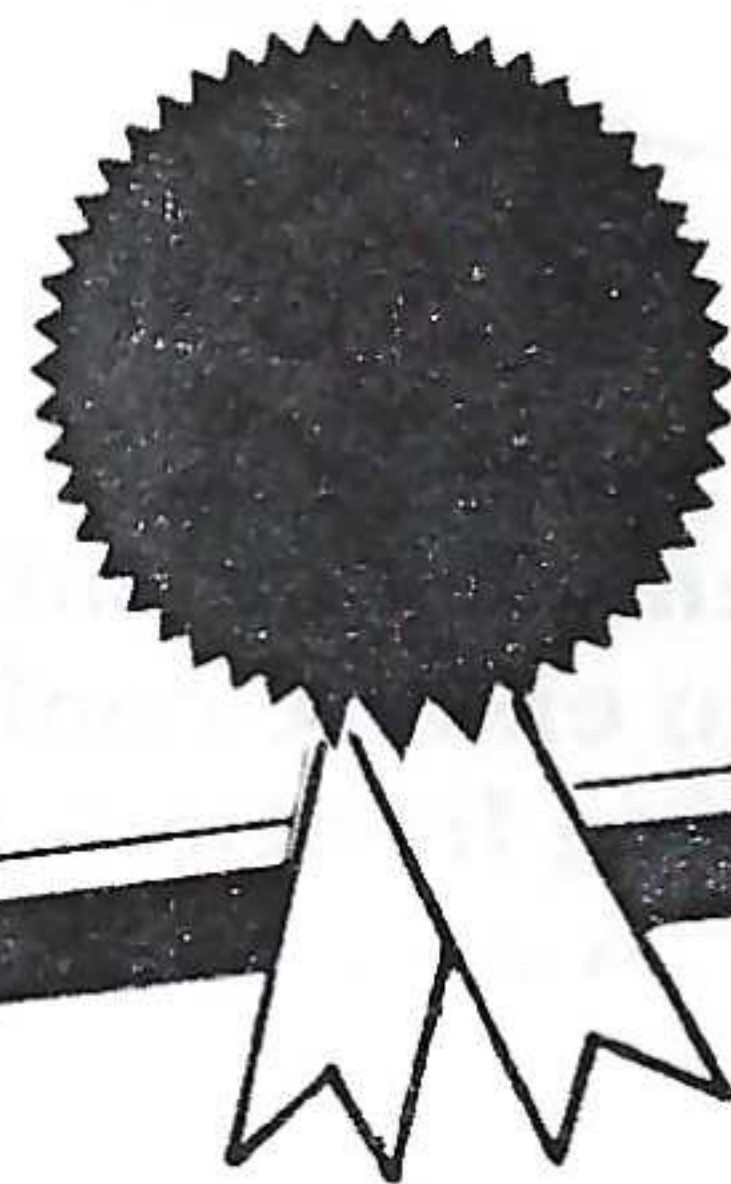
SUBSCRIBED THIS 28TH DAY OF MARCH, 1979

James R. Mills
JAMES R. MILLS, CHAIRMAN
SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

Mike Curb
MIKE CURB
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Louis J. Papan
LOUIS J. PAPAN, CHAIRMAN
ASSEMBLY RULES COMMITTEE

Leo T. McCarthy
LEO T. MCCARTHY
SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY



ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

by Connie Young Yu

For many Asian immigrants who came to America, the first stop was the dreary North Garrison on a small island in San Francisco Bay. Between 1910 and 1940, tens of thousands of Chinese, Japanese and Koreans were questioned, processed, quarantined and frequently held for long periods of time in detention barracks at the Angel Island Immigration Station. Their confinement on the island might last from three weeks to more than a year.

Beginning in the 19th century, resistance to Chinese immigration affected Asian immigrants. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 forbade the immigration of Chinese laborers or the naturalization of Chinese to U.S. citizenship. Twenty-five years later, the Root-Takahira Treaty of 1907 (also called the "Gentlemen's Agreement") further restricted Asian immigration when Japan agreed not to issue passports to laborers.

That same year President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order prohibiting Japanese and Korean laborers — whose passports had been issued to destinations other than the U.S. — to enter the country through American territories, Canada or Mexico.

"Picture Brides"

Many Japanese women came as "picture brides," married by proxy to Japanese men in America, and they were held in the Administration Building of the Immigration Station until their papers were processed. In 1920 Congressional hearings aimed at further restricting Japanese immigration were actually held on Angel Island. The resulting Immigration Bill of 1924 prohibited the immigration of Japanese "picture brides" and excluded Japanese from naturalization to U.S. citizenship. Under this law all aliens "ineligible for citizenship" were forbidden to enter the United States. This ruling also caused great hardship for the Chinese, as China-born wives of American citizens were not permitted to join their husbands already here.

"Paper Sons"

Struggling to reunite their families, or simply seeking a future in America, many Asians tried to contravene what they regarded as unjust laws by using false papers, which gave rise to the term "paper sons" — immigrants trying to enter the country posing as the offspring of American-born Asians.

To thwart this growing practice, immigration and naturalization authorities evolved a method of intensive interrogation that usually lasted two to three days. An inspector would ask a father or another relative to recite a greatly detailed family history. He would then question the detainee separately. Typical questions later asked of the detainee were: "Where was the village school located? Who lived on the right side of you? Who on the left? Did they have a cat? What color was it?"

One interpreter recalls: "I had a case where the kid was 12 years old, and the hearings took 87 pages of testimony. Finally the child was denied entry. The decision of the appeals court, however, was that anyone could make a mistake in 87 pages of testimony, and it admitted the boy."

It was the long, arduous wait for appeal decision that caused considerable hardship for the would-be immigrants. In 1924 the widow of an American citizen waited at the Angel Island Immigration Station barracks for nearly a year-and-a-half for an appeal decision which finally admitted her. Those less fortunate were deported, and there are a few documented cases of frustrated and discouraged Asians who took their own lives. Some detainees had borrowed money for their passage, and the hopes of their families rested upon them. For them, deportation was the ultimate humiliation.



The "Chinese Detention Barracks"

Building #317 (which is due to be restored) became known as the "Chinese Detention Barracks." Hundreds of poems, carved in beautiful calligraphy remain visible on the walls, eloquent testimony to the trials of the hopeful. On the second floor of the barracks an immigrant from Canton carved this poem several decades ago:

"I have always admired America as a land of promise
 Immediately I raised money and set out on my journey
 I endured rough winds and waves for more than a month
 Now I am trapped in this prison place
 I look out and see Oakland so close, yet
 I cannot go there
 I wish I could go home and be a farmer again
 My heart is filled with sorrow and I cannot sleep
 I write these words to express my sadness"

Substandard conditions and other inequities grew so intolerable that detainees organized protests, some of which ended in mess hall riots.

Finally, by the mid-1950's, government officials decided to relocate the Immigration Station to the mainland, recognizing it as both a fire hazard and an inconvenience. Before this could be accomplished, a fire in 1940 gutted the Administration Building and destroyed thousands of immigration records. The Station was transferred to San Francisco and the old North Garrison of Angel Island was returned to the U.S. Army. During World War II the buildings held prisoners of war.

The history of the Angel Island Immigration Station became a buried chapter, until in the early seventies a new generation of Asian-Americans began to probe their heritage. Many learned that their roots in America began on Angel Island. And older Asians, many of them still fearful of the immigration authorities and reluctant to discuss the humiliation endured on the island, were now encouraged to talk about their experiences.

State-Aided Restoration

In 1974 the Angel Island Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee (AIISHAC) was formed to make recommendations to the Department of Parks and Recreation on the restoration of Building #317 as a memorial to those Asians who had been detained there. In 1976 a bill was introduced by California State Senator John F. Foran (then Assemblyman for the 16th District) and signed by the State's Governor, Edmund G. Brown, Jr., which initially appropriated \$250,000 for the restoration project.

AIISHAC researched the history of the Immigration Station and launched a program to conduct tours of the facilities for student and community groups. Its ultimate goal is to make the site into a national historical monument.

In 1978 Victor "Trader Vic" Bergeron, internationally famous restaurateur and artist who has employed a great many Asians (some of whom underwent the Angel Island experience), conceived and donated a magnificent, eight-foot, 6,000-pound black granite monument which will be dedicated April 28, 1979 in tribute to those who were detained at the Angel Island Immigration Station.

The inscription on the monument was chosen from among many entries in a San Francisco Chinese community competition sponsored by the Chinese Times newspaper. The final choice was made by the AIISHAC group. Translated, the couplet reads:

"Leaving their homes and villages, they crossed the ocean
 "Only to endure confinement in these barracks
 "Conquering frontiers and barriers, they pioneered
 "A new life by the Golden Gate."

The commemorative ceremony of April 28, 1979 honors not only the Asian immigrants who were detained on Angel Island, but also memorializes those who suffered and died in their quest for a better life in America.

**An Historic Commemoration
Angel Island Immigration Station 1910-1940**

Co-sponsored by
Angel Island Immigration Station
Historical Advisory Committee
and
California State Department
of Parks and Recreation

Angel Island State Park
April 23, 1979

Welcome	Paul Q Chow, Chairman Angel Island Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee (AIISHAC)
A Brief History	Connie Young Yu, Secretary, AIISHAC
Remarks	Victor Bergeron, Sculptor Angel Island Monument
Monument Unveiling	Look Lowe and Pon Chew Former Detainees Angel Island Immigration Station
Dedicatory Reading	Ngoot P Chin, Author Angel Island Couplet
Ceremonial Lion Dance	Wah Keung Chinese Cultural Group
Closing Remarks	Paul Q Chow
Tour of Barracks #317	
Luncheon for Invited Guests	
Courtesy of: Kee Joon's Cuisine of China, Burlingame Yamato Sukiyaki House, San Francisco Trader Vic's, San Francisco	

Reproduced below are translations of a few of the poignant writings found on the walls of Barracks #317, the "Chinese Detention Barracks" of the Angel Island Immigration Station. The authors remain unknown.

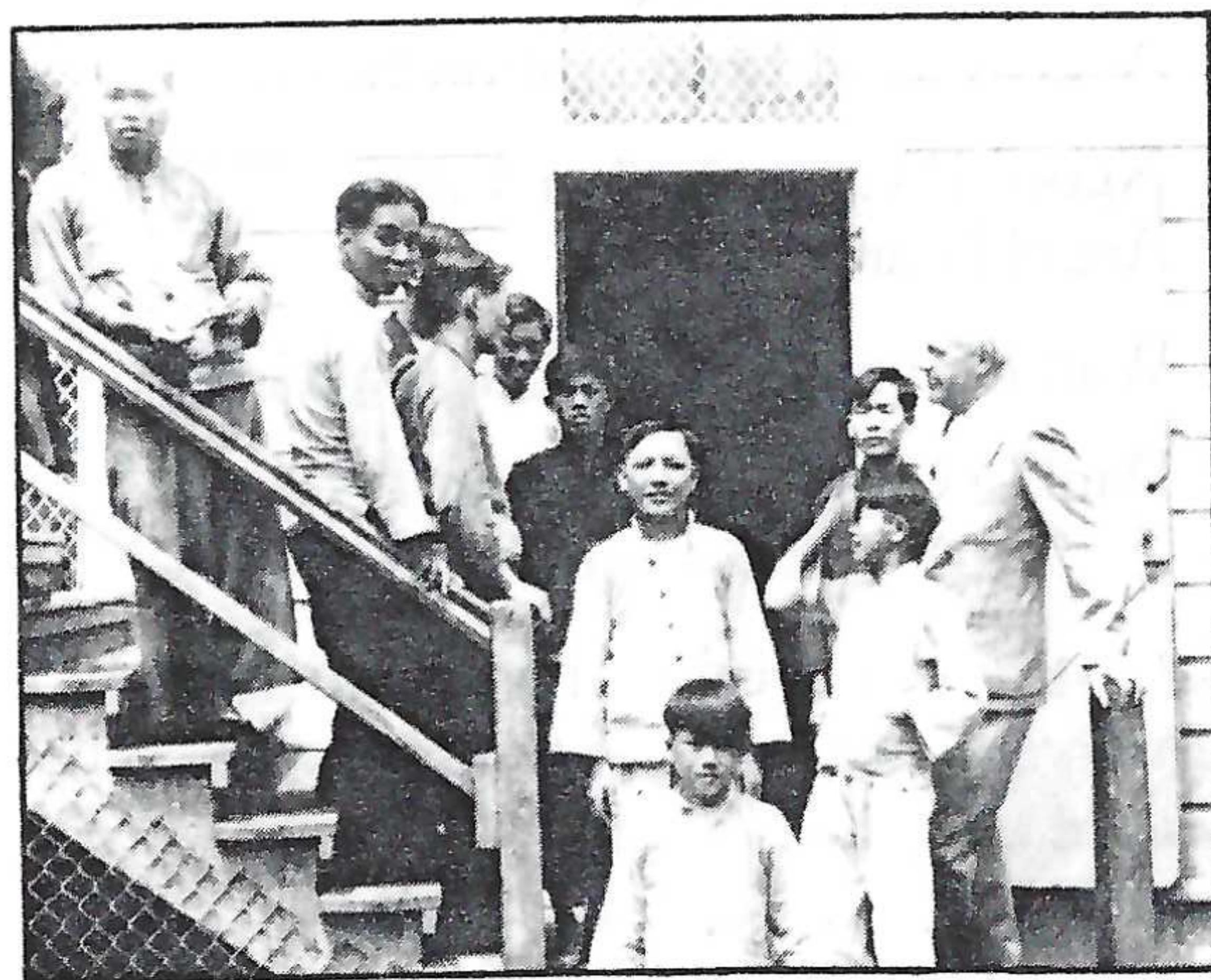
The small building with 5 beams
is just sufficient to shelter the
body.

It would be unbearable to tell the
truth about the happenings on
these slopes.

Wait until the day I am successful
and can fulfill my wish;

I will not be benevolent and will
level and uproot the station.

(The first four characters of the poem
form a title: "The Island Awaits
Leveling.")



Why do I have to sit in Jail?

It is only because my country is
weak and my family is poor.

My parents wait at the door in
vain for news;

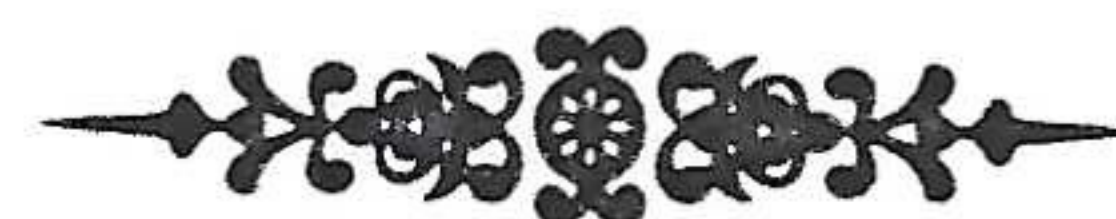
My wife and child wrap themselves
in their quilt, sighing with
loneliness.

Even should I be allowed to enter
this country,

When can I make enough to return
to China with wealth?

Since the ancient days, most of
those who leave home become
worthless;

Heretofore, how many had ever
returned from the wars?



My family is poor and suffers from
shortages of firewood and rice.

So I borrowed money to come to
the Golden Mountains.

But it is difficult to escape from
the interrogation of the immi-
gration officer.

And I was sent to the Island like
a prisoner.

Arriving here, I sighed deeply in a
dark room.

When a country is weak, others often
treat it with contempt.

She is like a domesticated animal
passively awaiting destruction.

Detained in this wooden house for
several tens of days
Because of the Mexican exclusion laws.
It's a pity heroes have no place
to exercise their prowess.

Waiting for news of my release,
I am ready to snap my whip
and gallop.

All my kinsmen and housemates
will be happy for me.

But don't deny this Western grandeur,
this imposing facade
For behind the jade carvings,
there lies a cage.

Angel Island Immigration Station
Historical Advisory Committee

Chairman: Paul Q Chow
Secretary: Connie Young Yu
Event Chairman: Lawrence S Jue

Members: George Araki; Christopher
Chow; Philip P Choy; Henry Der; Katheryn
M Fong; H Mark Lai; Genny Lim; Russell
Lowe; George Leong Suey; Ling-chi Wang;
Po S Wong

Acknowledgement

The Committee wishes to thank its many friends who have generously contributed their support in making this commemoration possible.

The State of California

The Honorable Edmund G Brown Jr, Governor
The Honorable John F Foran, State Senator, 6th Senatorial District
The Honorable Milton Marks, State Senator, 5th Senatorial District
The Honorable Leo T McCarthy, Speaker of the Assembly
The Honorable Art Agnos, Assemblyman, 16th Assembly District
The Honorable Willie L Brown Jr, Assemblyman, 17th Assembly District
Gene Cone, Information Officer, Department of Parks and Recreation
Jack Hesemeyer, Area Manager – Marin Area, Department of Parks and Recreation
Deborah Weldon, Landscape Development, Department of Parks and Recreation

The Business Community

Kee Joon, Kee Joon's Cuisine of China, Burlingame
Joe Ishizaki, Yamato Sukiyaki House, San Francisco
Victor Bergeron, Trader Vic's, San Francisco
Robert Van Amburg, Harbor Tours Inc, San Francisco

The Asian Community

Joe C Yee, Chinese Community Liaison
Wes Doi, Japanese Community Liaison
Franklin Chow, Reception
Janet Ting, Cameron House, Presbyterian Community Center
Francis Leone, Chinatown Resource Center
San Francisco Senior Escort Program
Larry Young, Wah Keung Chinese Cultural Group

The Monument

Conceived and donated by Victor Bergeron