Theaters of Memory: Placing the Past on the San Francisco Bay

By

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"Place is a leaky container."

-- Rebecca Solnit, *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*

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Introduction

The San Francisco Bay Area is known for its progressive politics and picturesque vistas. This image, however, belies a landscape marked by histories of dispossession, incarceration, exclusion, militarization, and conquest, the specter of which haunts the region's scenery. Driving west across the Bay Bridge one sees the rocky crags of the former federal penitentiary, Alcatraz, to the right and, to the left, the Port of Oakland, beyond which lies the now defunct Alameda Naval Base. On entering and then traversing San Francisco, one passes through the Presidio, the former home of Spanish, Mexican and U.S. militaries and now home to families, tech companies, and non-profits. Leaving the Presidio and crossing over the Golden Gate Bridge towards Marin County, to the right one sees Angel Island, where immigration officials enforced the restrictive and racially exclusive immigration policies that resulted in the detention of thousands. At the northern end of the Golden Gate Bridge, one sees the green hills of the Marin Headlands, a former military fortification, now popular with hikers, littered with abandoned bunkers and missile batteries. Continuing along the north edge of the Bay, one passes streets named for explorers and settlers—Sir Francis Drake, for example—as well as countless Spanish names, recalling the Spanish settlement of California. Leaving Marin across the Richmond–San Rafael Bridge, one catches a glimpse of the famed San Quentin State Prison, perched at the edge of the water. Over one hundred years old, San Quentin is still in use despite almost constant calls to develop the waterfront. These remnants of state violence are built into the material landscape of the region. Some of these former prisons, military bases, and detention centers have been physically repurposed as memorials, museums, parks, and mixed-use spaces. Their discursive meanings have been repurposed as well. Through years of meaning-making, these

sites have come to stand for more than themselves, working in the service of national ideologies of democracy, equality, and multiculturalism, while making banal the violence embedded in the landscape.

Examining four such sites on the San Francisco Bay, "Theaters of Memory" traces the intersecting processes of memory-making and place-making to reveal how histories of violence were remembered and forgotten in the late twentieth century. Through material and discursive processes of remembrance, the histories of state violence and racialized exclusion—upon which the region has been built—have been elided in favor of more palatable narratives.[1] I examine national policies of prison expansion, militarization, immigration, and land dispossession, revealing how they have been remembered at four California places: the former sites of the Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary, the Angel Island Immigration Detention Center, the Presidio of San Francisco, and the Emeryville Shellmound. Using these four Bay Area places, my dissertation illustrates how histories of state violence and racialized exclusions have been recalled and effaced, which in turn has helped to construct overlapping and mutually constitutive regional and national identities. In the restaging of these places, racial exclusion and state violence have come to be subsumed under national tropes of progress, equality, and democracy. By teasing out the details of this memory-making process, "Theaters of Memory" works to unsettle our easy embrace of progress.

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[1] According to Hayden White, historical narratives are modes of analysis that translate "knowing into telling." This concept helps expose the multiplicity of historical interpretation. See Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 5-27. See also "The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation," *Critical Inquiry* 9, no. 1 (Autumn 1982): 113-37. My use of discourse follows that of Michel Foucault, who explains that discourse is a system of producing knowledge, its circulation always mediated by power and social relations. Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

These four sites of memory all became newly legible in the late twentieth century, as they transformed into museums, memorials, nature preserves, shopping centers, or mixed-use spaces. The place memories that materialized during this period echoed the historical moment in which they emerged—a period marked by the unraveling of civil rights legislation and a simultaneous increase in rhetorics of equality and multiculturalism.[2] During this period, the city of San Francisco and the surrounding area—long associated with progressive politics, sexual liberation, and environmental stewardship—came to epitomize an ethos of multiculturalism. Because of this, these Bay Area sites speak to regional as well as national phenomena. By examining these place-making narratives, constructed at these four San Francisco Bay Area sites, my dissertation illustrates how, during the late twentieth century, histories of state violence and racialized exclusions were remembered and elided in order to construct regional and national identities that were always already democratic and multicultural. These spaces of remembrance, and the processes by which they were created, helped to shape understandings of citizenship, and in doing so, constructed ideologies of national belonging.[3]

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[2] As Nikhil Pal Singh explains, in the post-civil rights era conservatives co-opted the discourse of civil rights liberalism: "conservatives changed the debate about race from an argument about how to best redress the economic and political injuries of racism to one that equates ending racism with eliminating racial reference within juridical discourse and public policy." The rubric of "color-blind universalism" seeped into the dominant discourse of the late twentieth century, and it corresponded with rollbacks of federal civil rights legislation. Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 9-14 (quote on p. 10).

[3] National belonging does not only correspond to legal citizenship forged in the context of political or economic jurisdictions; rather, ideas of citizenship and notions of belonging are generated within social and cultural realms as well. While formal citizenship has increasingly evolved in the United States to ensure equal rights regardless of race, sex, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, or class, cultural understandings of citizenship mediate this right, delimiting who is understood to be an American and who constitutes the "other." Suiana Maira, "Citizenship, Dissent, and Empire: South Asia Muslim Immigrant Youth," in *Being and Belonging: Muslims in the United States Since 9/11*, ed. Katherine Pratt Ewing (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008), p. 16. As Lauren Berlant suggests, "citizenship is a status whose definitions are always in process. It is continually being produced out of political, rhetorical, and economic struggle over who will count as 'the people' and how social membership will be measured and valued." Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 20. Working alongside citizenship, ideas of belonging create the boundaries that "sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into 'us' and

By telling stories about specific localities, we transform them into places, sites invested with meaning and memory. In many ways, this process is ubiquitous or even universal, a way we respond to and mark the world around us. As individuals and as groups, we use stories to convert the backdrops of everyday life into recognizable places.[4] Place-making is intimately connected to our understandings of self, both individual and collective. To borrow a phrase from historian Philip Ethington, in "placing the past," we assign new meaning to both our world and our histories.[5] As anthropologist Keith Basso explains, "If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of *doing* human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions, and, in the process, personal and social identities. We *are*, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine."[6] While place-making may be an ephemeral process, it has real and profound consequences for our understandings of self, region, and nation. The collective memories and imagined communities forged in this process help to create all of the wide-ranging collectivities we inhabit—from the local, to the regional, to the national, to the global.[7] By

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'them.'" Nira Yuval-Davis, *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* (New York: Sage Publishing, 2011), p. 20.

[4] Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in this Place: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), pp. 4-5.

[5] Philip J. Ethington, "Placing the Past: 'Groundwork' for a Spatial Theory of History," *Rethinking History* 11, no. 4 (December 2007): 465-93. Ethington argues that the past can only exist as a set of places, and thus he calls on historians to do more than just integrate "place" into the study of history. Rather, Ethington asks historians to reconceive of the nature of the past. He explains that knowledge of the past is "literally cartographic: a mapping of the places of history indexed to the coordinates of spacetime" (quote on p. 466). My dissertation title borrows his phrase "placing the past," understanding that the past can only be conceived through the places that human experience have made manifest. At the same time, I explore the ways in which individuals, regions, and the nation come to understand a place through its past, assigning meaning to both.

[6] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in this Place*, p. 5 (emphasis in original).

[7] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983; New York: Verso Press, 2006).

exploring the process of place-making, by telling the story of how we tell stories, my dissertation teases out the intersections of memory and place, region and nation, citizenship and belonging.[8]

The San Francisco Bay Area

There are, of course, many ways to know a place, but with a few notable exceptions, scholars have failed to produce sustained studies of the San Francisco Bay Area as a region. While not a monograph, Rebecca Solnit's *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* provides one way to understand the region. Her atlas provides cartographic artistic renderings of San Francisco and its surroundings, juxtaposing seemingly disparate histories and politics. While the majority of the maps, and their attendant essays, focus on San Francisco, a number cast a wider net, providing a new lens for understanding the region as a whole. For instance, in one map entitled "Poison/Palate: The Bay Area in Your Body," cartographer Ben Pease and artist Sunaura Taylor overlap places famed for gourmet cuisine—dairies, wineries, and farms—with current and former mines, refineries, and EPA Superfund sites. In "Shipyards and Sounds: The Black Bay Area Since World War II," cartographer Shizue Seigel maps African American political and musical landmarks alongside World War II shipyards and population statistics, illustrating the pull of wartime shipbuilding jobs and the effects of job losses at the end of the war.[9] Separately,

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[8] William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992):1347-76. In telling these "stories of stories," I heed and extend Cronon's call to environmental historians to tell "stories about stories about nature," those narratives about nature that can profoundly illuminate the human experience. "Stories of stories" about memory, place, and culture can similarly expose the human experience and narrative construction.

[9] Rebecca Solnit, ed., *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). The other maps that explore the region include "The Names before the Names: The Indigenous Bay Area, 1769," "Green Women: Open Spaces and Their Champions," "Right Wing of the Dove: The Bay Area as

these maps provide unique perspectives on a city and a region, but taken together they illustrate the "infinite" ways we can see and reimagine a familiar place.[10]

Historians have also written about the sites and cities of the Bay Area, but very few have taken on the region as a whole. Environmental historians, anchored by their commitment to explaining the human dimensions of ecological relations, have begun to close this gap. Mathew Morse Booker, for instance, looks at the Bay Area through the lens of its most imposing natural element, the bay itself. By connecting industry, settlement, and the natural environs, Morse knits together the region's environmental histories.[11] Taking a different approach, geographer Richard Walker looks at the environmental activism that helped to establish the Bay Area's famed parks and green spaces in the shadow of development, sprawl, and industry.[12] Each in their own way,

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Conservative/Military Brain Trust," and "Dharma Wheels and Fish Ladders: Salmon Migrations and Soto Zen Arrivals."

[10] While historians are just starting to write about the San Francisco Bay Area as a region, the cities of San Francisco and Oakland have begun to amass rich and critical twentieth-century historiographies. On San Francisco, see, for instance, Tomás Summers Sandoval, *Latinos at the Golden Gate: Creating Community and Identity in San Francisco* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Chester Hartman, *City for Sale: Transformation of San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters, eds. *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1998); Elizabeth Armstrong, *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Nan Alamilla Boyd, *Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Susan Stryker and Jim Van Buskirk, *Gay by the Bay: A History of Queer Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996); Josh Sides, *Erotic City: Sexual Revolution and the Making of Modern San Francisco* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). On Oakland, see, for instance, Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Chris Rhomberg, *No There There: Race, Class, and Political Community in Oakland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland California* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Frédérick Douzat, *The Color of Power: Racial Coalition and Political Power in Oakland* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

[11] Mathew Morse Booker, *Down by the Bay: San Francisco's History between the Tides* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

[12] Richard Walker, *The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

these texts illuminate the Bay Area as a region, one marked by particular relationships between its human inhabitants and natural surroundings.[13]

Building on the work of these scholars, I suggest another approach to understanding the Bay Area's history and culture. In knitting together four disparate sites in and on the bay, I illustrate how memory has worked to produce past and present understandings of the Bay Area. "Theaters of Memory" expands the historiography of the twentieth-century San Francisco Bay Area by exploring how state violence has come to be remembered at Alcatraz, Angel Island, the Presidio, and the Emeryville Shellmound. Although these places each have their own histories, they are unified by their geographic location as well as by their political location, as places where regimes of power enacted violence. While historians and other scholars have written about each of these sites, this dissertation looks at and beyond each place's active use to explore how they have been remembered, and how those memories have contributed to place-making. While at times these places have contributed to a national ideology favoring militarism or incarceration, at other time they have presented a more subtle understanding of their own histories of detention or violence.

This dissertation pays close attention to the San Francisco Bay Area as a region, but the places that I examine tell stories about the nation as well. They are places where federal policies of incarceration, exclusion, militarization, and dispossession occurred and, in their most recent incarnations, they serve as state or national parks or as sites for national retail chains. With each situated in a highly visible location, they have become visual and symbolic representations of the

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[13] The Oakland Museum of California has further illuminated the relationship between how people and nature have contributed to making the San Francisco Bay Area. In 2013, on the 75th anniversary of the Bay Bridge, the museum opened the exhibit "Above and Below: Stories from Our Changing Bay." Organized around the three-mile connector between San Francisco to Oakland, the exhibit looked at 6,000 years of human and natural history, exploring how area residents have interacted with the bay and it surroundings.

nation. As such, the narratives put forth at these sites work to construct national ideologies of belonging while reinforcing American tropes of progress.

Beachheads

The four sites that sit at the heart of my dissertation are connected by their geography, their continual usage, their tangled relationship to violence, and by contestations over their meanings. Located in and on the San Francisco Bay, situated on the very edge of the region, the state, and the nation, these four sites can be thought of as beachheads, footholds and places of expansion. Over the centuries, various historical actors have wielded power at these places, providing them with a diverse set of meanings. From Ohlone mound builders to Spanish soldiers who built the Presidio, the earliest inhabitants of these places endowed them with meaning. As these places became sites of leisure and tourism in the twentieth century, this meaning making continued. By the end of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, visitors to Alcatraz or school groups on Angel Island continued to make meaning at these places and of their interwoven histories. Like military beachheads, these sites have seen both physical and cultural violence; historically, they have been fundamentally violent places. Each has seen state policies that mandated exclusion, incarceration, imperialism, or even obliteration, much of it directed at people and cultures marked as racially different and inferior. Their legacies have helped to shape the California we know today. As beachheads, they provide both real and metaphoric ways to enter both the Bay Area and the nation, and to witness their intersecting pasts.

The first of these footholds is Alcatraz Island. Located just off the coast of San Francisco, and visible from both the Golden Gate and Bay bridges, from 1934 to 1963, the island was home to the infamous Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary. Although popular authors have written dozens of accounts of the prison, its famed inmates, and their escape attempts, only a handful of scholars have engaged with this site as a key example of American carceral history or with its transformation into a museum.[14] Those few scholars who have considered the site as a place of memory—looking at its prison past or the 1969 Indians of All Tribes Occupation—have overlooked the historical period when the museum grew in popularity.[15] By interrogating memory-making narratives at and about Alcatraz in the late twentieth century, I bring the contemporaneous carceral state into the discussion as well.[16]

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[14] For a comprehensive examination of the prison and its history, see David Ward and Gene Kassebaum, *Alcatraz: The Gangster Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). On the prison's architecture and the island's landscape, see Donald MacDonald and Ira Nadel, *Alcatraz: History and Design of a Landmark* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2012). For a long history of Alcatraz, see James Delgado, *Alcatraz: Island of Change* (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Park Association, 1991). On the nineteen-month American Indian occupation of the island, see Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne, eds., *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Troy R. Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996); Adam Fortunate Eagle, *Alcatraz! Alcatraz!: The Indian Occupation of 1969-1971* (Berkeley: Heydey Books, 1992).

[15] On Alcatraz in the American imagination, including its time as a museum, see Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation:' Alcatraz Island the American Imagination," *Radical History Review,* no. 78 (Fall 2000): 27-56. On the museum's engagement with the Indians of All Tribes Occupation, see Cynthia Duquette Smith and Teresa Bergman, "You Were on Indian Land: Alcatraz Island as Recalcitrant Memory Space," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials,* ed. Greg Dickinson, Carol Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010); and Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, "Holding the Rock: The 'Indianization' of Alcatraz Island, 1969-1999," *Public Historian* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 55-74.

[16] While the literature on the carceral state is ever expanding, there is a surprising dearth of material on the practice of tourism in active or former penitentiaries. Not only does the study of prison museums and tourism uncover how American culture, in given historical periods, has thought about incarceration, but as scholars become increasingly interested in the history of the prison industrial complex, it is crucial to understand museums as a part of that same phenomenon. On prison museums and tourism, see Jacqueline Z. Wilson, *Prison: Cultural Memory and Dark Tourism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Melissa Schrift, "The Angola Prison Rodeo: Inmate Cowboys and Institutional Tourism," *Ethnology* 43, no.4 (Autumn 2004): 331-344; Carolyn Strange and Michael Kempa, "Shades of Dark Tourism Alcatraz and Robben Island," *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 2, (2003): 386–405; and Loo and Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation.'"

To the north of Alcatraz is Angel Island, the largest island in the San Francisco Bay. A number of rich and critical histories have been written about Angel Island, focusing on its time as an immigrant processing center, when exclusionary laws were enforced, in part, through invasive medical examinations and harsh interrogations.[17] My story picks up where these histories leave off, examining how Angel Island's Asian immigration history continued to circulate even after the station closed. In analyzing how the processing center has been remembered both on and off the island, I expose the reverberations of exclusionary laws and the ways in which those laws have come to be recuperated for the sake of the nation.[18]

Just south of the Golden Gate Bridge, the San Francisco Presidio is perched between the bay and the Pacific Ocean. The Presidio has been home to the militaries of three different countries—first Spain, then Mexico, and then the United States. In 1994, when the Presidio joined the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, it did so with the stipulation that it would be

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[17] For a comprehensive history of Angel Island, see Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). See also Robert J. Barde, *Immigration at the Golden Gate: Passenger Ships, Exclusion, and Angel Island* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008); Shah, *Contagious Divides;* Robert Barde and Gustavo J. Bobins, "Detention at Angel Island: First Empirical Evidence," *Social Science History* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 103–36; Judy Yung, "'A Bowlful of Tears': Lee Puey You's Immigration Experience on Angel Island," in *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology,* eds. Shirley Hune and Gail Nomura (New York: New York University Press, 2003), pp. 123-37. For a long history of the island, see John Soennichsen, *Miwoks to Missiles: A History of Angel Island* (Tiburon, CA: Angel Island Association, 2001). For discussions of the Chinese Exclusion Acts and immigration during the exclusion era, see Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 18, 38, 204-6; Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and Lucy E. Salyer, *Laws as Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[18] Geographer Gareth Hoskins has written about place-making and memory at Angel Island. I build on Hoskins's scholarship, expanding the time period he examines as well as his source base. See Gareth Hoskins, "Memory and Mobility: Representing Chinese Exclusion at Angel Island Immigration Station" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2000); Tim Cresswell and Gareth Hoskins, "Place, Persistence, and Practice: Evaluating Historical Significance at Angel Island, San Francisco, and Maxwell Street, Chicago," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98, no. 2 (2008): 392–413; Gareth Hoskins, "Poetic Landscapes of Exclusion: Chinese Immigration at Angel Island, San Francisco," in *Landscape and Race in the United States*, ed. Richard H. Schein (New York: Routledge, 2006).

financially self-sufficient by 2013. In order to complete this mandate, administrators rented and leased preserved army buildings, selling both its environmental and military history. Historians, environmentalists, and geographers have examined the military and natural histories of this place as well as the political history of moving from "post to park."[19] These studies, however, have neglected the Presidio's important cultural politics, including the ways in which its natural and martial histories have been joined and commodified in the service of making this public-private park.

Sandwiched between the cities of Oakland and Berkeley, across the bay from San Francisco, Emeryville was once the location of the region's largest shellmound, the remnants of which today reside beneath the Bay Street mall. Once close to three stories high, the mound contained burials as well as debris from everyday life. Since the late nineteenth century, anthropologists and archeologists have studied this and other shellmounds' contents in order to understand the Ohlone people who built and sustained it. Excavations of the Emeryville Shellmound stopped in 1924 when the site was leveled to make way for industrial development, but scholars have continued to write about the mound, its contents, and its builders.[20] While

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[19] Lisa M. Benton calls her study of the Presidio a "biography of place." I build on her place-making narrative using the lens of memory and memory-making. Benton, *The Presidio: From Army Post to National Park* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998). See also John Phillip Langellier and Daniel B. Rosen, *El Presidio of San Francisco: A History Under Spain and Mexico, 1776-1846* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, 1996); Erwin N. Thompson and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Presidio of San Francisco: An Outline of its Evolution as a U.S. Army Post, 1847-1990* (Denver: National Park Service, 1992); Pete Holloran, "Seeing the Trees Through the Forest: Oaks and History in the Presidio," in *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture*, eds. James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), pp. 333-352; Barbara L. Voss, *The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis: Race and Sexuality in Colonial San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). On the San Francisco Presidio's transition from post to park, see Benton, *The Presidio,* pp. 67-177; Hal Rothman, *The New Urban Park: Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Civic Environmentalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), pp.177-98; Amy Meyer, *New Guardians for the Golden Gate: How America Got a Great National Park* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 252-79; and Walker, *The Country in the City*, pp. 94-98.

[20] See, e.g., Jack M. Broughton, *Resource Depression and Intensification During the Late Holocene San Francisco Bay: Evidence from the Emeryville Shellmound Vertebrate Fauna* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

these anthropological and archeological reports do much to help us understand Ohlone communities before contact with European settlers, little else has been written about this place.[21] By examining the shellmound's material and discursive destruction—and challenges to that destruction—I show how this memory-making continued a centuries-long process of Indigenous cultural removal.

Like beachheads, each of these four places have been sites of state violence. While they each have their own unique histories and place-making narratives, taken together they assist us in looking beyond the places themselves, helping us to enter, understand, and define the cultural contours of the San Francisco Bay Area and of the nation.

Memory-Making in the Late Twentieth Century

Memory-making is a long, uneven, and continuous process that, at these four sites, has come together in the late twentieth century. Nationally, regionally, and locally, a variety of forces and trends have shaped the process: conservative attacks on progressive movements working towards redistributive social policy; pro-business activism that has tried to consolidate economic power; shrinking public institutions and the expansion of private ones; and the "culture

[21] The exception to this rule is a group of four short articles published in a local historical society journal. While these articles begin to piece together the mound's long history and place it in the local context of Emeryville, their limited source base and short chronology leave room for additional research, study, and analysis. See Seth Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Gold Rush: Natural Landscapes, Ohlone Settlement, and Spanish Conquest," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 18, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 3-26; Sandra Sher, "Shellmound Park (1876-1924): The Bay Area's Premier Amusement Resort," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 7, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 4-11, "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 1," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 5, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 4-14, and "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 2, The Destruction of the Emeryville Shellmound," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 4-10.

wars," which have allied social conservatism with particular brands of Christianity. A range of scholars group these forces and trends together under the heading of "neoliberalism."[22] But too often these scholars examine only the economic consequences of neoliberal politics. While it is crucial to interrogate the ways in which governments and businesses have worked together to promote free market ideals, economic policies cannot be severed from cultural politics. As historian and cultural critic Lisa Duggan explains, "in practice contemporary neoliberal policies have been implemented in and through culture and politics, reinforcing or contesting relations of class, race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, or nationality."[23] Accordingly, I look at how the memory-making process at these four sites both reflected the era and reproduced its ideologies.

The San Francisco Bay Area was, in the late twentieth century, emblematic of those trends that fall under the broad category of neoliberalism. Steeped in a rhetoric of equality and multiculturalism, the region was and continues to be a symbol of inclusion and progressive identity politics. Towards the end of the century, the Bay Area's economy became dominated by a technology industry that purported itself to be a free-market driven force for good, facilitating a frictionless exchange of information and capital. As home to the first privatized national park at the Presidio, the region also led the way in the collapsing of the private and public spheres.

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[22] I have chosen to use this phrase, but only sparingly. While the concept can be useful, scholars continue to attach diverse and multiple meanings to the term, making it more slippery than helpful. For a "top heavy" economic approach, see David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). On the diffuse and malleable nature of neoliberalism, see Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). On how ideas about "America" circulate globally through consumer practices, see Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisims, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). Taken together, these scholars help to tease out the important connections among markets, cultures, and politics, but their disparate approaches to neoliberalism speak to the diffuse nature of the term.

[23] Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), p. xiv.

While this confluence was by no means exceptional or exclusive to the region, the Bay Area was and continues to be a highly visible representation of the intersection of free-market and multiculturalist ideologies. As a result, the region provides an example that illuminates both regional and national trends.

The four sites of memory that sit at the heart of my dissertation collectively house a discourse of democracy that recuperates dissent for the purpose of inclusion, while effacing real challenges to and critiques of the nation. As political theorist Wendy Brown explains, since the mid-1980s there has been a rise in "tolerance talk"—that is, a rise in political discourse that appears value-free but uses the language of acceptance to establish norms and consolidate power.[24] In the same way, the ideal of multiculturalism trumpets U.S. culture as a particularly democratic terrain, in which all people have equal access and equal representation. But as cultural critic Lisa Lowe argues, multiculturalism masks historical and present-day inequities by relying on a "forgetting [that] exacerbates a contradiction between the concentration of capital within a dominant class group and the unattended conditions of a working class increasingly made up of heterogeneous immigrant, racial, and ethnic groups."[25] Thus, not only does multiculturalism flatten difference, but it does so by necessarily forgetting present-day inequities and by selectively remembering historical ones.[26] This forgetting, I argue, is an active process, one that produces ideas about citizenship, belonging, and the nation.

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[24] Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[25] Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University, 1996), p. 86.

[26] Jodi Melamed furthers this point in her discussion of how literary forms have helped to produce "liberal and neoliberal multiculturalism." She explains that "the triumphs of multiculturalism [have distracted from] an active politics of transformation." Thus, not only has multiculturalism masked inequality, as Lowe contends, but also for some it has provided an alternative to sweeping social and racial change. See Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence and the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

Questions of Memory

These questions of memory and forgetting sit at the heart of this dissertation. As a theoretical tool, memory helps us understand how a culture comprehends itself in its given historical moment. Scholar Marita Sturken, in *Tangled Memories,* argues against the idea that the United States embodies a "culture of amnesia," a culture that easily forgets important facts and events in the nation's history. She explains, "The 'culture of amnesia' actually involves the generation of memory in new forms, a process often misinterpreted as forgetting. Indeed, memory and forgetting are co-constitutive processes; each is essential to the other's existence."[27] Thus, remembering and forgetting necessarily work together in a dialectic, producing and cultivating each other. "Theaters of Memory" examines why and how the nation remembers, exploring how new ideas about the past are generated, not through the process of loss, but through the active process of "forgetting."

By looking at the national ideologies that are produced through memory and memory-making, I also aim to disrupt historical narratives that have come to seem natural. In this, I follow the lead of scholar Lisa Yoneyama, who in *Hiroshima Traces*, looks critically at how discourse facilitates memory-making:

> [Memory] cannot be divorced from the contexts within which retrospections on the past occur… Historical "reality" can only be made available to us through mediations of given categories of representation and processes of signification. We must therefore suspend

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2011). For other critical perspectives on multiculturalism, see Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism," *Social Text*, no. 28 (Winter 2006): 1-24; David Theo Goldberg, ed., *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1994); and Ella Shohat and Robert Stamm, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 338- 62.

[27] Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 2.

> the belief that past events and experiences can automatically manifest themselves and their meanings prior to discourse.[28]

Historical memory, then, is profoundly about the relationship between history and power. As scholar Michel-Roth Trouillot explains in *Silencing the Past,* the remembrance of certain events, places, or stories is always an active process, one contingent upon a present historical moment.[29] In each of the chapters of "Theaters of Memory," I explore memory as a discursive and political process, always serving the dominant discourse of the periods in which it is produced.

My dissertation also builds on the work of U.S. historians and American Studies scholars who employ memory as their object of analysis revealing, in part, the instability of the "nation" as a unified category. As Michael Kammen explains in his foundational text, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, "For much of our history we have been present minded; yet a usable past has been needed to give shape and substance to national identity."[30] The connection between a useable past and national identity has informed much of the recent scholarship on memory. In *Race and Reunion*, David Blight examines the competing memories and legacies of the Civil War, as seen through commemorations, memorials, literature, and the work of public intellectuals, illustrating

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[28] Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 28. Yoneyama draws on Joan Scott's warning to scholars not to see experience as a true replica of an event but rather to question why and how some experiences appear natural and authoritative while others appear false or invented. This analysis helps Yoneyama explore how power works to produce historical knowledge, and in the context of memory studies, explains "what exactly is at stake in remembering and forgetting past events in certain ways and not in others." See Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 773-97.

[29] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), pp. 14-30. Historian Nikhil Pal Singh's study of the long Civil Rights movement is instructive, providing an example of how memory and power intersected to create a lasting historical narrative that disavowed more radical visions of democracy. Singh, *Black is a Country*.

[30] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 6.

the struggle over national consensus.[31] Focusing on memorials built more recently, Erika Doss explains in *Memorial Mania* that they "represent interest in defining, and redefining, the terms of national belonging."[32] Other historians have examined the more performative aspects of historical memory, studying public history and historical reenactments at places like Colonial Williamsburg, Civil War battlefields, or antiquarian houses, to illustrate how dominant narratives circulate through public history projects.[33] Building on this work, I explore the histories at Alcatraz and Angel islands, the San Francisco Presidio, and the Emeryville Shellmound, looking at the process of memory-making alongside the process of place-making to examine how memory works to create national as well as regional identities.[34]

Scholars of memory use a wide range of terms to describe the object of their analysis. From collective memory, to popular memory, to public memory, to personal memory, each of these terms conjures a specific set of meanings.[35] I employ the term "cultural memory" in this

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[31] David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[32] Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 53.

[33] See, e.g., Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History: and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); and Tony Horowitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998).

[34] The study of memory and history has grown tremendously over the last twenty-five years. For a retrospective on the use of memory in historical writing, see Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations*, no. 69 (Winter 2000): 127-50.

[35] These are not neatly bounded categories; rather memory can shift in meaning and move in context. The term personal or individual memory, influenced by Sigmund Freud, refers to memories stored in the unconscious. While one cannot recall all of one's memories automatically, they are always present. On Freud and individual memory, see Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, pp. 3-4. The term collective memory, on the other hand, implies that memory is a social phenomenon, rather than a personal one. Maurice Halbawchs, one of the most influential scholars of collective memory, explains that an individual's memories are shaped and molded according to others' recollections. Maurice Halbawchs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). "Collective memory" often points to remembrances or narratives that have taken hold among individuals with shared membership in a group. As Susan Lee Johnson illustrates in her discussion of the California Gold Rush, collective memories are neither unilateral nor uncontested, and ideas about race, gender, and social relations mediate

study because it connects memory and memory-making to cultural products and practices. Marita Sturken explains that cultural memory exists "outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning."[36] In "Theaters of Memory," I critically examine the ways in which prison expansion, militarization, immigration, and land dispossession have been remembered in museums, memorials, plays, memoirs, the built environment, civic rituals, and artifacts. Through the process of representation, these technologies come to embody and generate cultural memory.[37] Cultural memory-making, then, is not a passive process, but rather one that works through the technologies of memory—those objects, representations, and processes through which memory is created and circulated.[38]

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the stories that eventually take root in collective memory. Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000). I rely on the idea of collective memory to understand shared conceptions of national, regional, or local pasts, cognizant that power is always at work to mediate remembrance.

[36] Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, p. 3.

[37] See Erica Rand, *The Ellis Island Snow Globe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). Rand explains that through trinkets, such as snow globes, back scratchers, and erasers, the Ellis Island gift shop commodified the place's history. Ellis Island products, through the global consumer marketplace, allow visitors to return metaphorically to their museum visit, as well as to the very past the museum seeks to replicate. See pp. 24-26.

[38] Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, p. 9. On cultural memory, see also Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer, eds., *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999); Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): 179-97 (esp. pp. 182-83); Jan Assaman, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," trans. John Czaplika, *New German Critique*, no. 65 (Spring-Summer1995): 125-33 (esp. pp. 129-33). In *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, the authors make critical connections between collective and cultural memory. Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg, eds., *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999).

Memory and Place

At Alcatraz and Angel islands, the Presidio, and the Emeryville Shellmound, historic actors have wielded power in order to shape the memories that have circulated on and off of these sites and the meanings attached to each place. I build on scholars of the U.S. West who have long understood the intersections of power and place. In their edited volume *Power and Place in the North American West,* for example, Richard White and John Findlay explain that place is "spatial reality created by people."[39] Space, to Findlay and White, is not merely a neutral background upon which action happens. Rather, as Henri Lefebvre explains in *The Production of Space,* space is produced through people's intentions and actions. Lefebvre argues that by limiting access to certain spaces, institutions of power have been able to constrain social reproduction. "The space thus produced," Lefebvre explains, "also serves as a tool of thought and of action, in addition to being a means of control, and hence domination, of power."[40] These dynamics are of particular interest to scholars of region. As the essays in White and Findlay's

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[39] Richard White and John Findlay eds., *Power and Place in the North American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), p. x.

[40] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), p. 26. Lefebvre understands space as a trialectic of real, lived, and abstract space. The result of the relationship of these three kinds of space is the production of "social space" – that form of space in which we all function, and that is always in flux. Geographer Doreen Massey explains that space is never static, but rather "constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales." These scales are wide reaching, "from the global reach of finance and telecommunications, through the geography of the tentacles of national political power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household and workplace." Furthermore, understanding the dynamic nature of space helps us to see place as unfixed as well. Massey explains that while places may be defined by a specific social relations, place is more than *just* these relations. Rather, it is constructed, in part, "through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections." In the same way, the place-making that happens at the sites considered in my dissertation affect and are affected by the policies, politics, and culture that occur at all levels—from the regional, to the national, to the global. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994), pp. 4-5.

volume demonstrate, the exercise of power, whether legal, political, economic, or discursive, mediates the meaning of place.

By examining the process of place-making as my method, I interrogate the multiple, overlapping, and often contradictory ideas that have developed about the places at the heart of my dissertation, and in doing so, reveal the ideologies of difference that have helped to create those ideas. While power mediates notions of place, scholars have demonstrated that historical actors of all types influence and contribute to the place-making process. Looking at Los Angeles's most invisible residents in *The Power of Place*, Dolores Hayden interrogates public history projects and the historical preservation of urban places to explore how they have been represented and remembered by urban planners, architects, and historians, and understood by Angelenos. Explaining that all spaces have history, Hayden shows how through place-making narratives one can retrieve and recuperate the histories of "invisible Angelenos."[41] Historian Monica Perales's *Smeltertown* also examines the relationship between identity, memory, and place, albeit in a different manner. While Hayden looks at what can be gleaned from public history projects, Perales explores how the residents of Smeltertown, an ethnic Mexican community in El Paso, Texas, created multiple and overlapping social spheres.[42] In Perales's study, residents, as well as the company that employed them, produced and reproduced the place and its past. Following these scholars, my dissertation interrogates the points at which place, memory, and identity converge.[43]

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[41] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 82-96.

[42] Monica Perales, *Smeltertown: Making and Remembering A Southwest Border Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[43] In her article on the making of Filipinotown in Los Angeles, Cindy I-Fen Cheng explains that place and place-making narratives help to construct subjectivities and "the various contexts that produced these places offer a

Using the language of historian and theorist Pierre Nora, I conceive of these four places as "sites of memory." Nora introduces the term *lieux de mémoire,* or sites of memory, to describe the material and discursive places where memory is embodied at a particular historical moment. Technologies of memory—such as memorials, museums, civic rituals, artifacts, or the built environment—are indeed memory sites, but Nora's formulation is particularly helpful in thinking about how place is a generator of memory as well. Nora explains that while memory sites have their own pasts, they necessarily illustrate more than their own histories, holding a "capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications."[44] They come, he argues, to represent the times in which individuals or collectivities imbued them with meaning—forever open to reinterpretation—and thus hold a range of shifting meanings. Each of the places considered herein has come to embody versions of the past, while at the same time creating new meanings.

These four places have served as physical and discursive theaters, stages for the creation, contestation, and circulation of memory. As philosopher Edward Casey explains, "As much as body or brain, mind or language, place is a keeper of memories – one of the main ways by which the past comes to be secured in the present, held in things before us and around us."[45] Place memory, then, is constituted by more than just the physical markers and remnants of a place.

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compelling look at the politics of shifting identities." Cindy I-Fen Cheng, "Identities and Places: On Writing the History of Filipinotown, Los Angeles," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 12, no.1 (2009): 1-33 (quote p. 7).

[44] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989), 7-25, (quote on p. 19). This essay is Nora's introduction to his multivolume work on French collective memory, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). See other essays in Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, *Representations,* no.26 (Spring 1989).

[45] Edward S. Casey, Remembering: A Phenomenological Study (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 213. On place memory, see also Hayden, *The Power of Place*, pp. 45-48.

Place memory also encompasses the stories we tell to make legible a place, its history, and the people who populated it.[46] In my dissertation, I treat memory sites both as geographic locations and as places where memory has been produced. In this way, a central component of my analysis is exploring how place-making narratives work to produce ideologies that fit their current moment.

My dissertation title, "Theaters of Memory" invokes the dual meanings of the word "theater." A theater is a space where dramatic performances are presented; it is also a space where military operations are conducted. Theaters, then, are both places of passive enjoyment and locations of contest and violence. In theaters of memory, historical memories are both observed and enacted, contested and reevaluated. They are spaces of performance, where violent histories haunt notions of belonging.[47]

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The four chapters of this dissertation are each organized around one of four memory sites. In each chapter, I analyze how place has been produced through the memory-making process. In Chapter One, "In the Shadow of the Prison Boom," traces the history of Alcatraz

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[46] For a good historical study of memory and place-making, see Phoebe A. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). Like my dissertation, Kropp's study of Southern California also examines four interconnected sites: El Camino Real, the Panama-California Exposition, Rancho Santa Fe, and Olvera Street. Using the built environment and ephemera, Kropp examines these four places and the making of a racially exclusive Southern California past. For another example of western history working at the intersection of memory and place, see Bonnie Christensen, *Red Lodge and the Mythic West: Coal Miners to Cowboys* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

[47] This reference to "haunting" recalls Ann Stoler's *Haunted by Empire*, a collection of essays that trace the vestiges of empire in both familiar and unfamiliar places. Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Haunted By Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

Island since it joined the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972. First open to the public in the early 1970s, Alcatraz rose in the American popular imagination in the 1980s, when it became one of the nation's most visited tourist attractions. While interest in the gangsters of the 1930s drove crowds to the island, park service personnel attempted to mediate the glorification of crime and punishment through a focus on alternative histories, including those of the natural landscape, the 1969 Indians of All Tribes Occupation, and civilian life on the island. Alcatraz came of age in the American imagination just as the country's own prison system was undergoing major changes that included a building boom and stricter laws that helped to fill those new structures. In this chapter, I argue that even as the Alcatraz museum and Alcatraz-centered popular culture focused on crimes and criminals of the past, they reinforced prevailing notions of safety and security that comforted those who dwelled outside prison walls in the late twentieth century.

Chapter Two, "Inclusion Acts," examines Angel Island, starting with the 2010 festivities that commemorated the one-hundredth anniversary of immigration to its shores. I look backwards from this twenty-first-century moment to the Cold War period, when the site's immigration history was neither acknowledged nor discussed. From 1940 to 1970, Angel Island's future—both how it would be utilized and how its history (indigenous, natural, military, and immigration) would be remembered—was still to be determined. The veritable silence around its immigration past would not be broken until 1970, with the discovery of poetry etched into the detention center walls, which spurred a grassroots movement to save and commemorate the island's immigration and detention history. Based primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area's Chinese American community, activists worked to save the poetry and commemorate the history

of the island. These activists, like the developers before them and the museum and park service professionals after them, also shaped the memory of this racialized space.

In Chapter Three, "From Khaki to Green," I examine the San Francisco Presidio's history of use as a military installation and then a park and the uses to which its military past has been put. I focus specifically on the period from 1988, when the Department of Defense decommissioned the Army base, to its entrance into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and its subsequent management by the Presidio Trust, starting in 1996. The GGNRA legislation that brought the site into the newly formed park system stipulated that the Presidio would need to be financially self-sufficient by 2013. In order to meet this challenge, the Trust rented out former military barracks and homes where soldiers and their families once lived. Not everyone in the city supported the Presidio Trust and many residents believed that renting or leasing the Presidio's newly empty buildings would contribute to the rapid gentrification that San Francisco experienced in the mid-1990s. I argue that the Presidio's most recent stewards capitalized on its military past to attract visitors and tenants to the newly vacant army buildings, while simultaneously constructing the Army as both peaceful and "green."

In my final chapter, "Exhuming Histories," I examine the long history of the Emeryville Shellmound. Used by Ohlone Indians as a refuse and burial ground, the shellmound was at one time close to three stories high. Over the course of the twentieth century, the mound served as an amusement park, an archeological dig, and an industrial site. Since 1999, the remaining burials have resided beneath the pavement of the Bay Street mall. As the shellmound's use shifted, it simultaneously depleted in size. As early as 1924, the mound was no longer a legible feature on the landscape and its contents had been thoroughly disturbed. In this chapter, I argue that even

as the physical mound shrunk, it continued to gain meaning that served the historical moments in which it transformed.

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Today, these four sites blend into the landscape and daily life of the San Francisco Bay Area. Residents of the surrounding cities and visitors to the region can see Alcatraz and Angel Island, the Presidio, and the Bay Street mall from various vantage points around the bay. Hundreds of shoppers visit Bay Street each day, buying clothes and watching movies. Angel Island is popular destination for hikers and school groups. The Presidio serves as a home to city residents, non-profits, and tech industry start-ups. And Alcatraz, in the middle of the bay, is one of the area's most popular tourist attractions. The chapters that follow examine the violent histories of these sites and the historical processes by which they have come to be remembered. In their present and continued use, these places remain sites of contest and struggle, whereby historical meanings and legacies shape the present around a reflection of the past.

Chapter One:

In the Shadow of the Prison Boom: Remembering Alcatraz Island in the Age of Mass Incarceration

When Alcatraz Island opened to tourists in 1973, visitors met the opportunity to visit the famed island with excitement and curiosity. The tours were free and the ferry ride to Alcatraz cost just two dollars.[1] As one article, eagerly titled "At Last, We Can Go to Alcatraz," stated:

> …across the water, the people in the city looked at The Rock, in the sunshine and through blowing fog, with a curiosity they couldn't satisfy. Out there, in our own front yard, the bad guys, the hardened, the famous and the infamous, languished in their iron cages and we could know practically nothing about them. Our boats couldn't approach closer than 200 yards off Alcatraz, without peril to life and craft. We could train our telescopes on the ominous brick buildings and steel fences, and we knew that Scarface Capone was out there somewhere and Machine Gun Kelly, and the old Birdman – but what were they doing? What were they thinking? What did they hear of us? We never knew. [2]

San Francisco residents and tourists alike could now see where famous Alcatraz inmates had once lived, finally able to explore by foot what they had only seen from afar. By definition, a prison is a closed-off space. With few exceptions, only those sent to receive or give punishment have the opportunity to see the inside of prison grounds and cell blocks. The history of Alcatraz prison exemplifies this to the extreme. During its tenure as a federal penitentiary, wardens and prison administrators controlled outgoing information and manipulated media coverage to

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[1] "Now… You can Visit Alcatraz Island," California Promotional Literature, box 3, folder: San Francisco Tours and Excursions, Ephemera Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. The opening of Alcatraz made news across the country; see, for instance, "Alcatraz Tours Begin Next Week," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 19, 1973; and "Park Service will Open Alcatraz to Public this Fall" *New York Times*, June 3, 1973.

[2] L.F., "At Last We Can Go To Alcatraz," *Motorland/California State Automobile Association,* (November/December 1973):12.

suggest that the island was much farther away from the mainland than it actually was. Such coverage also suggested that it was always rainy and foggy, helping to foment an air of mystery around the prison island. With the veil of secrecy lifted, the public now had the chance to see "the Rock" for themselves.[3]

While tourists explored many features of life on Alcatraz, exhibits and brochures often focused on the most sensational aspects of the prison experience. In the late 1980s, the museum started to use an audio tour featuring the voices of former guards and inmates. Listening to the sounds of prison life, tourists were invited to understand the past through their own embodied experiences of this legendary penitentiary: touching the walls, walking the cell block, and feeling the dampness of the island air. One of the most dramatic moments of the audio tour occurred three-quarters of the way through when the narrator asked listeners "to walk in and sample the worst room in the house," a tiny dark cell used for solitary confinement. Once inside, the audio tour dispensed with words, evoking the loneliness of "the hole" with the sound of winds and waves, bad weather, the closing of two doors, and finally, the silence of a person unmistakably alone, only the resonance of a heartbeat and breathing to fill the empty space.[4] While visitors to the island experienced the auditory and visual aspects of solitary confinement, any fear or claustrophobia was tempered by the realization that it was only a tour; the cell doors would open soon.

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[3] Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation:' Alcatraz Island the American Imagination," *Radical History Review* no. 78 (Fall 2000): 27-56, (esp. pp. 31-32); and David Ward and Gene Kassebaum, *Alcatraz: The Gangster Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), pp. 3-6.

[4] "Alcatraz Audio Tour Version May 5, 1987," box 4, folder: AZ Waysides, 1986-1987, Alcatraz Documents, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Park Archives and Records Center, San Francisco, CA [herafter GGNRA PARC], San Francisco CA.

The tourist experience of the island was, and continues to be, based on the ability to experience the prison's physical space, from the cell blocks to the recreation yard to "the hole." [5] What makes a visit to a prison museum like Alcatraz exciting is the novelty of the experience—the ability to see inside a place that is otherwise off-limits. But key to this tourist encounter is the implicit assumption that visitors are otherwise well-behaved and law-abiding citizens.[6] As media scholars have argued, depictions of prison life on television and film give the viewer a false sense of familiarity with what life might be like behind bars.[7] Alcatraz's prison museum worked (and still works) in this same manner. Just as classic modes of tourism are steeped in ideas of authenticity, Alcatraz attempts to present "real" life at one of the most famously brutal prisons in the United States. [8]

Since the island opened to the public in 1973, Alcatraz has been administered by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), an arm of the National Park Service (NPS). Although Alcatraz has over the centuries served as a military prison, a federal penitentiary, and a stage for social protest, the central historical narrative put forth by the GGNRA has revolved around the island's federal penitentiary years. At the same time, the GGNRA and Alcatraz park

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[5] There is a surprising dearth of material regarding the practice of tourism in active or former prisons. However, see Jacqueline Z. Wilson, *Prison: Cultural Memory and Dark Tourism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Melissa Schrift, "The Angola Prison Rodeo: Inmate Cowboys and Institutional Tourism" *Ethnology* 43, no.4 (Autumn 2004): 331-344; Carolyn Strange, and Michael Kempa, "Shades of Dark Tourism Alcatraz and Robben Island," *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 2 (2003): 386–405; and Loo and Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation.'"

[6] Cynthia Duquette Smith and Teresa Bergman, "You Were on Indian Land: Alcatraz Island as Recalcitrant Memory Space," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials,* ed. Greg Dickinson, Carol Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), p. 165.

[7] Bill Yousman, *Prime Time Prisons on U.S. TV: Representation of Incarceration* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009). See also selected essays in Frankie Y. Bailey and Donna C. Hale, eds., *Popular Culture, Crime, and Justice* (New York: West/Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1998).

[8] Visiting a prison museum is not unlike other tourist experiences in which individuals visit or see something as outsiders, looking for an authentic experience. See, e.g., Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1989; rep., Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989).

rangers have tried to complicate the island's prison past by adding exhibits about the site's natural and civilian histories, as well as the 1969 Indians of All Tribes occupation.

In addition to the GGNRA on-site interpretation of the island's past, a handful of guards and their children produced popular histories and memoirs about their time working and living on the island. Published at the same time that Alcatraz became one of California's most popular tourist destinations, these memoirs attempted to provide a new angle on the island's past, introducing the stories of the guards and families who lived there. Unlike the museum, however, the memoirs focused specifically on the men working in the prison and the families living on the island; the prison and prisoners became an active and important backdrop to these families' own stories of success and happiness. By juxtaposing prison life to that of the nuclear family, guards and their children presented violence as isolated among inmates and kept squarely inside the prison walls; by contrast, safety was insulated in the family. The gift shop on Alcatraz sold these memoirs and popular histories alongside T-shirts, mugs, pencils, pins, pens, shot glasses, and magnets. These books, as well as other souvenirs, has helped visitors to return metaphorically to the museum, allowing their tourist experience to continue off the island as well.[9]

Alcatraz's reputation as a tourist attraction grew during a time when California and the nation witnessed the emergence of a new prison system, one defined by mass incarceration and high-tech isolation**.** The law and order politics of this cultural moment helped shape the place that Alcatraz would become, and Alcatraz, in large part, reinforced those same values. During this period, three distinct place-making narrative emerged around Alcatraz: the prison experience, which focused on the prison's famous inmates, escape attempts, and its harsh

[9] Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 9; Erica Rand, *The Ellis Island Snow Globe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 24-26.

punishments; the alternative to the prison experience, including the island's natural world and the 1969 Indians of All Tribes occupation; and, finally, the stories put forth by guards and their families, which positioned Alcatraz as a workplace and neighborhood. With different visions of the island, these place-making narrative were at times in conflict with each other, at other times in conversation with each other, but the prevailing politics of the moment shaped each.

As with the other sites at the heart of this dissertation, the place of Alcatraz has meant many things to many different people. And, as with Angel Island and the San Francisco Presidio, Alcatraz occupied, and continues to occupy, a vaunted place in the American imagination. For the tourists who visited the island and the historical actors who sought to shape its memory, Alcatraz has been a site of entertainment, reflection, and macabre fascination. Beneath the escape attempts and famous inmates, however, embedded in the history of Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary, are questions of punishment and rehabilitation, captivity and freedom.

The Prison Boom

The Alcatraz museum, and writings about the former penitentiary, rose in popularity in the shadow of a changing prison system and a new discursive landscape regarding crime, punishment, and fear. Between 1982 and 2000, California's prison population grew by 500 percent. Since 1984, the state has built twenty-three new major prisons. In contrast, it built only

twelve new prisons between 1852 and 1964 (and none between 1964 and 1982).[10] California's prison boom was mirrored in the rest of the nation. Concurrent with this prison growth was a transformation in modes of imprisonment nationally. In the first half of the twentieth century, the central purpose of incarceration in the U.S. was to confine criminals securely and "rehabilitate" them whenever possible. By the mid-1970s, however, the logic of incarceration narrowed to focus primarily on securely confining criminals, along with a new focus on retribution and punishment. The emphasis on rehabilitation had been all but eliminated.[11] Prison architecture changed to accommodate these shifts in philosophy. Since 1982, architects have designed new prisons with a focus on inmate isolation.[12]

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[10] Prison growth occurred even though crime declined after its 1980 peak. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prison, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 7. Scholarship on the prison boom and mass incarceration is rightfully expanding tremendously. On the history of imprisonment in the United States, see Rebecca McClennan, *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). On the important connections among the California Prison Officers Union, the growth of the prison industry, and the rising prison population in California, see Joshua Page, *The Toughest Beat: Politics, Punishment, and the Prison Officers Union in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). On the effects of mass incarceration on postwar urban spaces, see Heather Anne Thompson, "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History," *Journal of American History* 97, no. 3 (December 2010): 703-734. On the lasting effect of mass incarceration and the ways in which it is supported by laws, policies, and customs, see Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2010). See also Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prison Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003); Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999); and essays in *Prison Nation: The Warehousing of America's Poor,* ed., Tara Herivel and Paul Wright (New York: Routledge Press, 2003).

[11] Page, *The Toughest Beat*, pp. 16-19. On the early years of the California State Prison System, see Shelley Bookspan, *A Germ of Goodness: The California State Prison System, 1851-1944* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

[12] See, e.g., the description of a day in the life of a maximum security prison, including the architecture and lay out, in Norval Morris, "The Contemporary Prison: 1965-Present," in *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society,* ed. Norval Morris and David J. Rothman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 202-30. On the history of prison architecture, see Norman Johnson, *Forms of Constraint: A History of Prison Architecture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006). As a maximum security, minimum privilege prison, Alcatraz resembled the high security prisons built in the last thirty years in its emphasis on frequent isolation, a control regime, and only the very basic needs of those incarcerated. On daily life on Alcatraz, see Ward and Kassebaum, *Alcatraz*, pp. 98-119.

These shifts in penal philosophy occurred as sentencing laws grew increasingly harsh. One of the most notable changes came with the "three strikes and you're out" laws, versions of which would eventually pass in twenty-three states. In 1994, President Bill Clinton endorsed a federal "three-strikes" bill, which ultimately created dozens of new federal capital crimes, mandated life sentences for three-time offenders, and authorized an increase in spending for both prisons and law enforcement.[13] While the "three strikes" laws may be the most widely known, they were not the first to contribute to the growing prison population. The act that started the new sentencing trend was the 1977 Uniform Determinate Sentencing Act. Under this act, the state overturned indeterminate sentencing laws (under which the prison terms were flexible). Those found guilty of crimes were given determinate prison terms and parole became increasingly difficult to achieve.[14] In 1986, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, which set long mandatory minimum prison terms for low-level drug dealing and possession of crack-cocaine (a drug more common in African American communities). Someone caught with crack-cocaine faced much harsher penalties than those holding its drug cousin, powder cocaine (a drug more prevalent in white communities). This type of sentencing inequality ultimately contributed to the grave racial disparity that still exists in prisons today.[15]

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[13] Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, p. 55; Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, p. 108. On sentencing laws, see Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, pp. 54-94.

[14] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, pp. 88-92.

[15] Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, pp. 86-88; and, Doris Marie Provine, "Creating Racial Disadvantage: The Case of Crack Cocaine," in *The Many Colors of Crime*: *Inequalities of Race, Ethnicity, and Crime in America,* eds., Ruth D. Peterson, Lauren J. Krivo, and John Hagan (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 277-94. This is not to say that associations between blackness and crime have not had a much longer and entrenched history. As Khalil Gibran Muhammad explains, by 1890, a generation after slavery, social scientists used prison statistics to link blacks with innate criminality, and to justify laws, punishment, and surveillance that ultimately suppressed black freedom. Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). On the late nineteenth century as a starting point for understanding racial criminalization, see also Jeffrey Adler, *First in Violence, Deepest in Dirt: Homicide in Chicago, 1875-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 120-58; and Kali Gross,

The "law and order" politics of the 1980s and 1990s also fostered a culture of increased policing and harsher sentencing. Starting with Richard Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign, law and order became a rallying cry among white voters, in the midst of a changing social, racial, and economic landscape. Coming on the back of urban rebellions and civil rights protests, Nixon's campaign united white voters by appealing to white stereotypes and fears of urban black centers. Conservatives who saw the federal government as wasting money on services for the poor, while failing to protect its citizens from crime and criminals, took up the call.[16] Law and order politics helped to elect Nixon, and while this rhetoric receded from the national spotlight during his presidency, his anti-crime legislation and "war on drugs" would start a wave of incarceration.[17]

In the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan continued Nixon's legacy of exploiting white fears and promoting law and order at the expense of people of color. While Reagan spoke in the "colorblind" parlance of the era, his crime policies were no less aggressive or racially motivated than those of Nixon.[18] While ongoing policies continued to conform to this rhetoric, on a national level, law and order reemerged as an important piece of the 1988 presidential campaign, when Republican George H.W. Bush's infamous Willie Horton television ad blasted the

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Colored Amazon: Crime, Violence and Black Criminality in the City of Brotherly Love, 1890-1910 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

[16] Michael Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Tali Mendelberg, *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 95-98. The 1968 campaign was not the first in which Republicans embraced conservatism, but it was a turning point whereby Republicans became newly linked to this politics. Nixon's appeal to white voters, through the rhetoric of law and order, worked to differentiate him from the Democratic nominee, Hubert Humphrey. Simultaneously, Nixon maneuvered to defeat George Wallace as well. Law and order signaled to Wallace supporters in the South, as well as across the country, that Nixon would defend the same racial politics. On the 1968 campaign, see Flamm, *Law and Order*, pp. 163-79.

[17] Parenti, *Lockdown America*, pp. 3-28.

[18] Ibid., pp. 45-58. On the Reagan presidency and its legacy, see Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008).

Democratic challenger, Michael Dukakis, as being lax on crime.[19] Horton, a black man who had been sentenced to life in prison on a first-degree murder charge, assaulted a white couple in their house while he was on a weekend pass during Dukakis's term as Massachusetts governor. Horton became the symbol of black criminality enabled by permissive liberalism.[20] As president, Democrat Bill Clinton in the 1990s continued in line with his Republican predecessors, branding himself a "New Democrat," one who was tough on crime.[21] And, indeed, Clinton made good on his promise, tightening sentencing laws and expanding policing.

Beyond presidential politics, this rhetoric had concrete effects on the ground, subjecting urban communities to increased policing and, ultimately, to draconian sentencing laws. As Steve Macek explains in *Urban Nightmares,* fears of the "out-of-control city" came together at the intersection of middle-class anxiety about the transformation of the heteronormative family, street crime, and race relations.[22] In Oakland, California, this played out through massive suburbanization and the so-called tax revolt of 1978, when the East Bay suburbs surrounding Oakland fought for Proposition 13, the nation's first property tax limitation measure. In freezing property taxes, voters were willing to trade public services for the fiscal advantages that racially segregated suburban homeownership provided. Tax measures like Proposition 13 passed across

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[19] Flamm, *Law and Order*, pp. 259-60.

[20] Ibid., p. 260; Parenti, *Lockdown America*, p. 60; Mendelberg, *The Race Card,* pp. 134-64. Mendelberg explains that while race may have been an implicit aspect of this campaign tactic, it was not until Jesse Jackson called that ad racist and Dukakis's running mate affirmed it, that the racial undertones became overtones.

[21] Flamm, *Law and Order*, p. 261-65; Parenti, *Lockdown America*, pp. 62-66.

[22] Steve Macek, *Urban Nightmares: The Media, the Right, and the Moral Panic over the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. xv-xvi. For connections between moral panics and the emergence of strict drug laws, see Michael Tonry, *Thinking about Crime: Sense and Sensibility in American Penal Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 137-39. On the origin of the "urban crisis" see Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Post War Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

the country in 1979, whereby property owners asserted opposition to liberal social reform policies funded through federal and state taxes. As Robert Self explains in *American Babylon*, these tax reform policies ultimately signaled a shift away from the liberalism of the previous era, illustrating the importance of class and racial segregation to the shaping of postwar politics in California.[23]

With crime and punishment at the center of public discourse, prison and racialized criminality grew in the public imagination. As Michelle Alexander explains, "for black men, the stigma of being a 'criminal' in the era of mass incarceration is fundamentally a racial stigma."[24] Alexander argues that as mass incarceration disproportionality affected, and continues to affect, the African American community, it is the "new Jim Crow." With a disproportionate segment of black men subjected to disenfranchisement and legalized discrimination due to felony convictions, the prison boom has had very real consequences for the legal and cultural citizenship of black men.[25] While the personal experiences of visitors to Alcatraz were diverse and multiple, this historic context of prison expansion shaped their perceptions of the exhibits as well as the production of the exhibits themselves, reinforcing the prevailing law and order politics of the moment.

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[23] See Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 291-327, esp. pp. 325-26. See also Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[24] Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, p. 193.

[25] Ibid. Legalized discrimination has many facets including, for example, the inability to sit on a jury, those convicted of drug offenses cannot receive federal public assistance, and employers can discriminate against those convicted of a crime.

The Isle of the Pelicans

Even before Alcatraz opened to the public as a park and prison museum, it had long captured the American imagination. During its tenure as a military prison, from 1861 to 1932, rumors circulated throughout the city, the state, and the nation that the prison's buildings featured dark tunnels and cavernous rooms used only for purposes of violent retribution.[26] When the island changed hands in 1933, from the Army to the Department of Justice, Alcatraz once again found the national spotlight, this time as a federal penitentiary slated to imprison a new generation of criminals deemed by J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, as "public enemies." These 1930s gangsters had found ways to avoid and evade the police, helping to erode the nation's trust in law enforcement. In an effort to regain the faith of the American public, the federal government opened Alcatraz in 1934, hailing it as escape-proof.[27] Its authoritarian rules were meant to scare criminals into reform and reassure citizens that the government was serious about cracking down on crime.[28] Through careful public treatment of the penitentiary's inmates and its administration, the government helped to mold Alcatraz's reputation as a "bastille."[29] It was difficult, however, to squash entirely the voices of those who opposed Alcatraz's strict rules.

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[26] James Delgado, *Alcatraz: Island of Change* (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Park Association, 1991), pp. 27-28. In an effort to curb these critiques, the Army reclassified Alcatraz in 1915 as "Disciplinary Barracks," emphasizing a program of rehabilitation. Ibid.

[27] Ward and Kassebaum, *Alcatraz*, p. 2.

[28] Ibid., pp. 2-4; Loo and Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation,'" p. 31.

[29] Loo and Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation,'" pp. 31-32. For example, the first warden, James A. Johnson, only spoke publically in the most general of terms about the prison or its prisoners. As at other penitentiaries, staff at Alcatraz would censor inmates' outgoing and incoming mail, but at Alcatraz, letters would be entirely retyped so as to emphasize the administration's vigilance at censorship. In addition, stock footage of the prison island emphasized its distance from the mainland and highlighted the typical rain and fog, meant to enhance the air of mystery that surrounded the island. Ward and Kassebaum, *Alcatraz*, pp. 3-6.

Former inmates published memoirs and essays that publicized the harsh treatment imposed by the first warden James A. Johnson, describing a "silent system," damp "dungeons," "alimentary rape" (force feeding) to suppress hunger strikes, and the use of blackjacks to "subdue" prisoners.[30] Rumors of escape plagued the prison and piqued the public's curiosity. Even as the government, prison administrators, and former inmates tried to mold the prison's reputation, the island was always visible from the mainland. Residents and tourists alike could, and still can, see Alcatraz. From the bay's bridges to San Francisco's piers, from the shores of Marin to the docks in Oakland, one could peer out onto the bay and see the ubiquitous island's rocky crags.

After Alcatraz closed as a federal penitentiary in 1962—due to crumbling infrastructure, rumors of escape, and high maintenance costs—the island spent the next eight years as "government surplus property" under the jurisdiction of the General Service Administration (GSA). During this period, there was an active struggle over what this place would become both materially and within the public imagination. In the early 1960s, the U.S. Senate and President John F. Kennedy developed the Presidential Committee on the Disposition of Alcatraz, inviting suggestions from the public on the island's future. Hundreds of ideas poured in, ranging from an amusement park named for the prison's most famous inmate, "Capone's Place," to a space needle modelled on the Apollo 11 rocket.[31] Arguably one of the most incongruous and popular

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[30] Loo and Strange, "'Rock Prison of Liberation,'" p. 32.

[31] William Turnbull, "Capone's Palace," William Turnbull/MLTW 200-9, Environmental Design Archives University of California, Berkeley [hereafter EDA]; H.R. 3356, January 25, 1965, folder: S.F. Islands, Alcatraz. Monument Legislation, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, [hereafter SFHC SFPL]. The needle was to be accompanied by a replica of San Francisco in 1890, preservation of much of the prison buildings, and a small museum dedicated to space and space travel. Sponsored by Lamar Hunt, founder of the American Football League, this plan gained the most popularity. Press Release, July 28, 1969, box 3, folder J-Calif U.S. Penitentiary, Alcatraz Island, San Francisco California, Correspondence and Documents File 6 of 16, General Records of the General Service Administration, Region 9, San Francisco; Records Relating to Disposal of Alcatraz Island, 1961-73, RG269, National Archives Records Administration, San Bruno, CA [hereafter SFNARA].

proposals was to build a peace monument dedicated to the United Nations. Arguing against this venture, the Department of State stated, "Alcatraz cannot be expected to live down its reputation as a penal institution for some time….The underlying intentions to mark the United Nations would be subordinated by superficial controversy."[32] While supporters hoped to shift the island's reputation, the Department of State saw the irony of building a peace monument on the site of a notorious prison.

While some wrote letters to the editor and proposals to the mayor regarding the future of the island, other Bay Area residents decided to take matters into their own hands. In 1964, a group of five Bay Area Sioux Indians landed on the rocky shores of Alcatraz and claimed the island as their own under an 1868 treaty that entitled Sioux peoples to surplus government land. This island invasion grew out of frustration with government Relocation Programs that moved American Indians from rural to urban areas, guaranteeing jobs, housing, and training, but failing to make good on any of their guarantees.[33] For this group, Alcatraz was a symbol of broken promises and a site of protest.

The plans to occupy the island first emerged when Belva Cottier, a Sioux Indian and wife of Allan Cottier, one of the occupiers, saw in the newspaper that there was no plan for what to do

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[32] Daniel MacArthur and Charles L. Schultze, June 28, 1966, box 2, folder J-Calif. U.S. Penitentiary, Alcatraz Island, San Francisco California, Correspondence and Documents File 4 of 16, General Records of the General Service Administration, Records Relating to Disposal of Alcatraz Island, 1961-73, RG269, SFNARA. Arthur Goldberg and Jospeh Sisco, June 28, 1966, box 2, folder J-Calif. U.S. Penitentiary, Alcatraz Island, San Francisco California, Correspondence and Documents File 4 of 16, General Records of the General Service Administration, Records Relating to Disposal of Alcatraz Island, 1961-73, RG269, SFNARA. Douglas MacArthur and Arthur Goldberg, "Government Opposition to UN Peace Memorial," June 28, 1966, box 2, folder J-Calif. U.S. Penitentiary, Alcatraz Island, San Francisco California, Correspondence and Documents File 4 of 16, General Records of the General Service Administration, Records Relating to Disposal of Alcatraz Island, 1961-73, RG269, SFNARA. For a discussion of various proposals and the decision by American Indians to occupy the island, see Troy R. Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp. 16-25. On the peace monument and other proposals, see Loo and Strange, "Rock Prison on Liberation," pp. 33-36.

[33] Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island,* pp. 17-19.

with the island, and remembered hearing about the 1868 treaty. She said, "We looked up all the history and found out that many Indians had been prisoners there, so in a way it already was Indian land."[34] The occupiers offered the government a price of 47 cents per acre and then proceeded to sign a formal claim statement that they would later file with the Bureau of Land Claims in Sacramento, California.[35] Activists only stayed on the island for four hours, but in that short period they drew wide media attention. The story appeared prominently in the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Oakland Tribune*. Even though the coverage was not always positive—the *Examiner,* for example, called the invasion "wacky"—it brought important attention to the political struggle of Bay Area urban Indians.[36] The federal government did acknowledge that the Sioux claim merited "some discussion," but ultimately denied it.[37]

Five years later, in 1969, another American Indian occupation took place on Alcatraz, continuing the island's presence in the public spotlight. This time the occupiers were from a

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[34] "Indian in the City," *Catholic Voice*, March 15, 1973. Quoted in Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, p. 17.

[35] Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, p. 16.

[36] On the "wacky" raid, see "Wacky Indian Raid -- Alcatraz 'Invaded,'" *San Francisco Examiner*, March 9, 1964. Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island,* p. 16 and Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996), p. 11. See also "Aftermath of Alcatraz Invasion," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 1964; "Alcatraz Incident: Sioux May Sue," *Oakland Tribune*, March 10, 1964; Sam Blumenfeld, "Sioux on the Warpath," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 8, 1964.

[37] Quoted in Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, p. 21. Ramsey Clark to Senator Edward V. Long, May 15, 1964, box 1, folder J-Calif U.S. Penitentiary, Alcatraz Island, San Francisco, California, Correspondence and Documents File 1 of 16, General Records of the General Service Administration; Region 9, San Francisco, Records Relating to Disposal of Alcatraz Island, 1961-73; RG269, SFNARA. On the 1964 Sioux occupation see Ibid., pp. 16-27; see also Troy Johnson, Duane Champagne, and Joane Nagel, "American Indian Activism and Transformation: Lessons from Alcatraz," in *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk* eds. Troy Johnson, Duane Champagne, and Joane Nagel (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), p. 25; Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*, pp. 10-12; Adam Fortunate Eagle, *Alcatraz! Alcatraz!: The Indian Occupation of 1969-1971* (Berkeley: Heydey Books, 1992), pp. 14-18; Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, "Holding the Rock: The 'Indianization' of Alcatraz Island, 1969-1999," *Public Historian* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 55-74 (esp. p. 56).

group called Indians of All Tribes, and their occupation lasted nineteen months.[38] While the importance of Alcatraz amounted to more than the physical space itself, the material realities of the former prison island loomed large, including an uneven and dangerous terrain, crumbling buildings, lack of fresh water, and unsanitary conditions. The group's proclamation noted these constraints, drawing comparisons between the inhospitable prison island and reservation life, stating:

> We feel that this so-called Alcatraz Island is more than suitable as an Indian reservation, as determined by the white man's own standards. By this we mean that this place resembles most Indian reservations, in that:
>
> 1. It is isolated from modern facilities, and without adequate means of transportation.
> 2. It has no fresh running water.
> 3. The sanitation facilities are inadequate.
> 4. There are no oil or mineral rights.
> 5. There is no industry and so unemployment is very great.
> 6. There are no health care facilities.
> 7. The soil is rock and non-productive and land does not support game.
> 8. There are no educational facilities.
> 9. The population has always been held as prisoners and kept dependent upon others.[39]

[38]Activists and historians often cite the 1964 occupation as an important seed for the later 1969 occupation. See, e.g., Smith and Warrior*, Like a Hurricane,* pp. 12-16; Fortunate Eagle, *Alcatraz! Alcatraz!*; Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*, p.14.

[39] Indians of All Tribes Proclamation, in *Alcatraz: Indian Land Forever,* Troy Johnson ed., (Los Angeles: Edward Brothers, 1994) p. 35.

Activists cited the island's prison history as a way to stress their own grievances against the United States government. In addition, occupiers made the island their home by reappropriating prison buildings for daily use. Even while the island transformed into a place of protest, the penal history—symbolic and material—was never too distant from the Alcatraz the occupiers were creating.

The Indians of All Tribes occupiers made Alcatraz an "Indian place," as Robert A. Rundstrom explains, by reappropriating prison buildings for revolutionary usage. They also named the island "Indian land" through graffiti, claiming this place as their own. But perhaps most importantly the island became a touchstone for the community. Individuals traveled from across the country to participate in the occupation and stayed on the island for various amounts of time. Alcatraz became a potent symbol of unity, hope, and self-determination. Even after the last occupier left the island, the place continued to have a hold on the political and cultural imagination of the larger Red Power movement. [40]

Over the course of the nineteen-month occupation, activists' ideas for how to use Alcatraz progressed, from their initial hope of making the island a community center to later visions of a more multi-purpose space, including a Center for Native American Studies, ecological center, spiritual center, and museum, and, finally, an elaborate plan for a Thunderbird University. As Earl Livermore, an integral member of the occupation, stated, "many of the buildings are suitable for our programs, but the cell block is not architecturally valuable…The cell block is a symbol of despair. We wish to change the symbol of the island to one of hope."[41]

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[40] Robert A. Rundstrom, "American Indian Placemaking on Alcatraz, 1969-71," eds. Johnson, Nagel, and Champagne, pp. 186-206.

[41] Lynn Ludlow, "Indians Demand U.S. Cash," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 25, 1969.

For a year and a half, the occupation sparked intense local interest, and news of the take-over splashed across papers around the country.[42] While the activists developed plans and maintained their presence on the island, the GSA continued to negotiate with the occupiers. Ultimately, the GSA wrested back control of the island on June 11, 1971, when military personnel removed the remaining occupiers.[43] Soon after, the GGNRA took over Alcatraz and decided to open it up for the first time to the public.

The Prison Experience

Stories of place are rarely only narrative and on Alcatraz, the built and natural environment contributed to place-making. The very first tourists to Alcatraz Island in 1973, like today's tourists, stepped off the ferry boat and experienced a spatial disjuncture: epic views of the San Francisco Bay Area—the city's skyscrapers to the south, the university town of Berkeley and the industrial port of Oakland to the east, the bucolic hills of Marin to the north and west, and unobstructed views of both the Golden Gate and Bay bridges—juxtaposed to the crumbling

[42] For instance, "Indian Rally Behind the Seizure of Alcatraz Island," *New York Times*, November 30, 1969, p. 80; "Indian Power Flag Flutters at Alcatraz," *Chicago Tribune*, November 24, 1969; "Indians Stage Jail-in on Alcatraz," *Hattiesburg American*, November 25, 1969.

[43] On the history of the 1969 Alcatraz Occupation, see essays in Johnson, Nagel, Champagne, eds. *American Indian Activism*; Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*; Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*; Fortunate Eagle, *Alcatraz! Alcatraz*!. Troy R. Johnson edited a collection of documents from the occupation including photos, art work, poetry, and Indians of All Tribes document; Johnson, *Alcatraz: Indian Land Forever*. On memory of the occupation, see Loo and Strange, "Holding the Rock," and Smith and Bergman, "You Were on Indian Land."

buildings that littered the island. In contrast to the nearby Angel Island, which from a distance might appear pastoral, Alcatraz was and is dominated by concrete structures.

Still, the interior of Alcatraz was, and is, full of visual contradictions. The cement prison buildings, symbols of institutional brutality, are covered with revolutionary graffiti from the American Indian occupation. The island's rocky shores are covered with colorful foliage. One of the most visually arresting aspects of the island is the ruins of the warden's home, destroyed by fire on June 1, 1970, during the occupation.[44] Since the fire, plants and flowers have taken over the skeletal remains of the warden's former residence, pushing through the cracked foundation and up the charred remnants of beams and walls. On the opposite side of the island, the earliest tourists may have noticed an empty cement tract known as the "parade grounds." Formerly the site of guards' homes, the GSA razed those buildings along with nine other major structures in 1971, temporarily leaving the area covered in rubble.[45] Since 1994, tourists have experienced landscape architect Lawrence Halprin's Agave Trail, a path that snakes around the island's perimeter, highlighting the natural history of Alcatraz.[46] The expanding access to the island,

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[44] The origins of the fire that destroyed the warden's home and three other buildings remain a mystery. The Native American occupiers denied setting the fire, though they remained the prime suspects for the damage. See "Indians Deny They Set Alcatraz Fire, *San Francisco Chronicle,* June 3, 1970. Many activists believed that the government had set the fire. See Adam Fortunate Eagle, *Alcatraz! Alcatraz! The Indian Occupation of 1969-1971*, pp. 125-27.

[45] "Demolition on Alcatraz," *Oakland Tribune,* July 24, 1971.

[46] The Agave Trail and other natural components were first discussed and developed in Lawrence Halprin et al., *Alcatraz: The Future, Concept Plan and Guidelines for Alcatraz Island* (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Park Association, 1988). For a discussion of the changes to the built and natural environments, see "Planning the Future of Alcatraz," *The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage Newsletter* 19 no. 3, (May/June 1991), Folder: S.F. Islands. Alcatraz. Proposal for Use, SFHC, SFPL. Lawrence Halprin was an influential architect, famous for the landscaping at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair and University of California, Berkeley's Sproul Plaza, among many other projects.

along with changes to the physical and natural environments, helped to solidify visitors' conceptual and spatial vision of Alcatraz as both notorious prison and picturesque tourist spot.[47]

Alcatraz's built and natural environments—its physical space—appear haphazard and un-curated. Yet, with its imposing cement buildings and colorful vegetation, the site also appears permanent, not unlike the ruins one might see on a tour of a fallen civilization. The island's deteriorating buildings give it a sense of wildness, as if they have not been touched since the last prisoner left the island. Similarly, the masses of flowers that creep up the sides of the island's rocky shores appear as wild overgrowth. Alcatraz's environment, however, was the result of intense curation. Since 1971, each run-down building, each piece of graffiti, and each patch of green remains as a result of a government agency, first the GSA and then the NPS, which shaped the island's physical space. From the cell block to the water tower, the graffiti to the gardens, every aspect of Alcatraz's built and natural history contributes to place-making and to visitors' experiences of the island. Not unlike the park brochures and the museum's interpretive exhibits, the physical space of Alcatraz narrates a selective past, giving the impression that the island's history stopped the day the prison doors closed, or when the last Indian occupier departed.

While the island's physical space and museum exhibits have shifted and evolved over the years, the GGNRA's presentation of Alcatraz's history has focused primarily on the penitentiary years and relied upon the embodied experience of visitors. The prison narrative presented by the GGNRA revolved, and continues to revolve, around the extraordinary stories and sensational aspects of the prison experience: from harsh punishments like solitary confinement to instances of violence and escape attempts to "celebrity" inmates such as Al Capone. Between 1973 and

[47] For a detailed description of changes to the island's cultural landscape, see Alcatraz Island National Historic Landmark, *Cultural Landmark Report*, http://www.nps.gov/goga/historyculture/upload/Alcatraz-CLR-Chapter-2-F.pdf (accessed on June 26, 2012)

today, display methods and content have changed: exhibit language has become more complex, incorporating the voices of both guards and inmates. And, since 1987, visitors have wandered the museum with the aid of a self-guided audio tour. In spite of these changes, the central narrative and perspective have stayed the same. GGNRA brochures, exhibits, and audio tours have implored visitors to imagine what life as an inmate on Alcatraz was like and in doing so have helped to shape this place around the prison experience**.**

For example, a 1987 brochure entitled *Young People's Self-Guiding Trail* steered young visitors to all corners of Alcatraz's physical space. It prompted readers to gaze on the club house, where guards and their families once socialized, to identify plants and wildlife, and to imagine the military period on the island. In addition to the educational information gleaned from walking around Alcatraz, the young tourists had a chance to complete activities included in the brochure like crossword puzzles, word jumbles, and connect-the-dots. The highpoint of the self-guided tour however, occurred when visitors arrived at Cell Block D, where the solitary confinement cells were located. Describing different aspects of prison life, the brochure explained how and why inmates might find themselves in these dark and damp cells. "Prisoners," the brochure explained, "who broke the rules on Alcatraz were punished. Sometimes they were put in these cells. They had to stay here 24 hours a day! They were alone and had nothing to do." The brochure directed the visitor to "go inside a cell," and then asked, "Can you imagine what it would be like to live here?"[48] While young tourists might have been able to take in the smells and sensations of the small, cramped space, their understanding of life on Alcatraz was limited to a short visit and these momentary sensory experiences.

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[48] National Park Service, *Alcatraz Island: Young People's Self-Guiding Trail*, 1987, Publications Collection, GGNRA PARC.

Not all tourists experienced the same set of feelings while standing inside the cell, but in its instructive tone, the brochure asked readers to empathize with the inmates who spent nights there, imploring the visitors to imagine the smells, sounds, and feelings that someone might have experienced fifty years earlier. Of course, the tourists who came to Alcatraz were not (and are not) a monolith. They were brought with them their own experiences and interacted with the place in diverse ways, including their own understandings of prison, crime, and punishment. Still, the experiential aspects of the tour helped to shrink the distance between reality and imagination. Imagination alone, however, could not really illustrate the terror of days spent in the hole or of years on the island. It was this very disjuncture—between the lives of young tourists and those of the prisoners in "the hole"—that made the tour exciting and unique, the same tension that has epitomized the Alcatraz experience since the cell block first welcomed visitors.[49]

While visitors explored the punishment of an earlier era in penal control, the tour implicitly reassured them that this type of punishment was a thing of the past. Describing archaic policies as historic relics, the museum narrative gave those touring the cells a sense of progress. Tours for adults, while less focused on imagination, remained fixated on the experience of solitary confinement. Using photos and text, a 1987 exhibit, for example, described the penitentiary's history, guiding visitors through the shower room, isolation cells, and histories of famous inmates. Paying close attention to stories of isolation and punishment,

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[49] While Alcatraz did not use historical reenactors, much like a living history museum, it attempted to capture a place and time by having tourists viscerally experience the museum. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains in her discussion of the living history museum Plimth Plantation, "Visitors do not 'passively' watch a performance on a stage, look at displays in a museum, or take 'rides' through installations in a theme park. They actively engage the site and those in it. The virtual world they are exploring pushes back." Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), p. 195. While tourists on Alcatraz did not necessarily interact with actors, the brochures and exhibits implored visitors to engage the site itself.

the exhibit text stated, "ISOLATION IN D BLOCK was reserved for disruptive or violent inmates from the prison's general population. Inmates received adequate food and health care, but were confined to their cells 24 hours a day. A stay here could be several weeks to several years, depending on the offense." After discussing isolation cells that separated some inmates from the general population, the exhibit went on to describe solitary confinement, which relied upon sensory deprivation: "THEY CALLED IT THE HOLE[.] For more severe disciplinary problems, one of the closed front cells might be used. This treatment, which sometimes included darkness and a restricted diet, would usually last two to five days."[50] As with the *Young People's Self-Guiding Trail*, this exhibit gave visitors a false sense of knowing what prison life was like at Alcatraz. The section of the exhibit ended with the caveat, "Few inmates ever saw the inside of D-Block."[51] Despite the rarity of this harsh punishment, "the hole" was and continues to be a central aspect of the GGNRA exhibits.

The excessive focus on solitary confinement, no doubt, had something to do with the expectations of tourists, young and old, who brought with them their own imagined island histories shaped by television, film, and legend. In a 1977 documentary, *Alcatraz: America's Toughest Prison*, filmmaker Tom Thayer interviewed different people about what they hoped would become of the island when the GGNRA took over. In one scene, at a souvenir kiosk on Fishman's Wharf near the Alcatraz ferry launch, the vendor describes a "common" interaction with a tourist. He explains, "it's very common for someone to be disappointed that they aren't going to see an electric chair. Even though [they know the prison] has been closed, they still

[50] "Alcatraz Audio Tour Version May 5, 1987."

[51] Ibid.

think they are going to see that morbid side of [Alcatraz]."[52] The depictions of the cell block and other aspects of prison life encouraged an uncritical watching, giving tourists tools to imagine the sordid details of prisoners who were punished in the harshest of manners. And these tourists' desires drew crowds to the prison and shaped its exhibits.

In addition to severe rules and strict policies, Alcatraz gained notoriety because of its infamous inmates and rumored escape attempts. This focus in popular culture reinforced the place-making narratives on the island. Popular films like *Machine Gun Kelly* (1958), *The Birdman of Alcatraz* (1962), and *The Untouchables* (1987) famously portrayed the prison's most notable inmates, before and during their time at Alcatraz. In addition to movies about celebrity inmates, other films represented escape attempts. *Six Against the Rock* (1987) depicted an elaborate escape attempt that killed two guards and three inmates, injured thirteen guards, and ultimately, ended in the execution of two more inmates. Most famously, perhaps, *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979) depicted the attempted escape of Frank Morris, Alfred Anglin, and John Anglin, whose bodies have never been found. Fictional depictions of Alcatraz set after the prison years also contribute to its place in the popular imagination. In *The Rock* (1996) a group of rogue soldiers take over Alcatraz, taking tourists hostage and threatening an attack on San Francisco. A former inmate famed as the only Alcatraz escapee navigates the underground tunnels of the prison, saving the city and the tourists. Most recently a television show entitled *Alcatraz* depicted a fictionalized portrait of prison life on the island. The show's conceit is that in 1963, the prison did not close but rather everyone on the island disappeared. In 2012 the former inmates, guards, and staff slowly begin return to the island, and the inmates wreak havoc on the

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[52] *Alcatraz: America's Toughest Prison,* directed by Tom Thayer (Oak Forest, IL: 1977), DVD.

city of San Francisco. These films and television shows have helped shape and popularize Alcatraz's reputation and have brought the prison into the American popular imagination.[53]

The GGNRA exhibits and brochures mirrored the subject matter of these prison movies with a focus on infamous people and events. Inmates highlighted at the Alcatraz prison museum were most often the notorious and well-known, those who have taken on a celebrity-like status in American popular culture. Characters such as Al "Scarface" Capone, George "Machine-gun" Kelley, Alfred "Creepy" Karpis, and Robert Stroud, the "Birdman of Alcatraz," all appeared in various exhibits with the descriptions of their crimes and accompanying mug shots.[54] These men were famous for crimes committed in their days as gangsters and bandits: bootlegging, elaborate bank heists, ransom kidnapping, or killing for hire. During Alcatraz's "gangster years," from 1933, when the prison opened, until right after World War II, the prison mostly housed Depression-era criminals, men incarcerated for crimes that, by the end of the war, had become less prevalent.[55] While the crime of bootlegging is not unlike the crime of selling illegal drugs, the glorification of bootlegging stood in stark contrast to the fear mongering that surrounded the crimes most prosecuted during the 1980s and 1990s.

In a museum focused on crime and criminals of the past, these men seemed almost benign. The exhibits worked to make such prisoners into storybook villains who posed little real danger. In brochures and exhibits, Al Capone, probably the most well-known inmate, featured

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[53] On the seven most popular films that take place at or are about Alcatraz, see Donald MacDonald and Ira Nadel, *Alcatraz: History and Design of a Landmark* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2012), pp. 135-36.

[54] See, for instance, the "Infamous Inmates" in *Alcatraz Interior Exhibits Summary*, 1988. box 5, folder: Alcatraz Wayside, Interior '88, Project Summaries, Alcatraz Documents, GGNRA PARC.

[55] Ward and Kesselbaum, *Alcatraz*, p. 272.

prominently and tourists frequently asked about him.[56] Quoting an ex-inmate and ex-guard, the audio tour juxtaposed Capone's violent reputation to an image of a harmless man inside the prison's cement walls.

> Ordway: I never could understand all of this interest in Al Capone. He was just another inmate. Nothing special about him.
> Bergen: Al Capone, while he was here, was quite a musician… [he played] banjo and he did a pretty good job. [57]

The tour depicted Capone, one of the most notorious and famous gangsters of the Depression era, as a simple banjo player at Alcatraz. Famous on the outside for his criminal network, on the inside he was "just another inmate." If a hardened criminal could transform into a harmless man, then the harsh prison authority at Alcatraz was justified—the exhibit implied that Capone's punishment must have worked. In turn, the tour implied that Alcatraz could discipline even the most notorious gangsters into submission.

While Capone may have been Alcatraz's most famous inmate, during its tenure as a federal penitentiary, Alcatraz housed 1,572 prisoners.[58] Of these men, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) classified 20 as "Native American," 26 as "Mexican," 275 as "Black," and 1,194 as "White," with the remainder falling under other classifications.[59] White inmates did constitute

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[56] See, for instance, "Answers to the Top Ten Questions about Alcatraz Island (Federal Penitentiary Years, 1934-1963)" box 17, folder: Alcatraz Top Ten Review, Questions, 1986, Alcatraz Documents, GGNRA PARC.

[57] "Alcatraz Audio Tour Version May 5, 1987."

[58] There were actually 1,551 inmates on Alcatraz but 24 men returned to the prison twice and one returned three times.

[59] The remaining inmates were classified under a host of other categories including: Chinese, Costa Rican, Filipino, Hispanic Other, Native American, Japanese, Mexican, Native Canadian, and Puerto Rican. The BOP also included mixed classifications: Filipino father and Portuguese mother, Native American father and White mother, Puerto Rican father and Portuguese mother, White father and Native American mother, and White father and native Alaska mother. The BOP collected this data while the prison was in operation, but the compilation of numbers comes from archivist Joe Sanchez at the National Archives at San Bruno. (Email correspondence, July 18, 2012.)

the majority incarcerated at Alcatraz. But the GGNRA's exhibits focused almost exclusively on those inmates, to the near exclusion of inmates of color. On one hand, the GGNRA's portrayal of mostly white inmates provided an important counterpoint to the common late-twentieth-century image of criminals raced as black. During the 1980s and 1990s, the image of a "criminal" became synonymous with young black men; the "gangsters" of the 1930s did not look like "gangstas" of the 1980s and 1990s.[60] On the other hand, an overwhelmingly white portrayal of the 1930s prison population failed to acknowledge the racial dynamics at work on Alcatraz. Most important, perhaps, this uncritical portrayal of "celebrity" inmates, all white, all presented as caricatures of themselves, made it more difficult for visitors to connect this prison of the past to the prison boom of their present moment.

While the main exhibits at Alcatraz have remained sensational, there have been exceptions to this rule. In 1991, on the one-hundred-year anniversary of the federal prison system, an unlikely collaboration began between the National Park Service and the Bureau of Prisons. The two federal agencies teamed up to create an exhibit at Alcatraz outlining the history of the island through the historical lens of the federal prison system.[61] Even though the BOP had closed the prison decades earlier, the museum's popularity demanded that the bureau remain interested in the space and its reputation. As officials explain, "For better or worse, Alcatraz is one of the most prominent advertisements there is for the Bureau."[62] From the BOP's

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[60] Vernetta Young, "Demythologizing the 'Criminalblackman': The Carnival Mirror," in eds. Ruth D. Peterson, Lauren J. Krivo, and John Hagan.

[61] The BOP and NPS understood that this collaboration was unusual, and the exhibit's opening included a dedication, ceremony, and remarks by the heads of the NPS, GGNRA, and BOP. See Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience, Program April 18, 1991, Box 1, Folder "Alcatraz and the American Experience: Summary Publication," GGNRA Administrative Records, GOGA 35174, GGNRA PARC.

[62] Ibid.

perspective, the focus on outdated modes of punishment and imprisonment reflected negatively on the federal agency.

Entitled *Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience,* the exhibit worked to problematize and examine critically the mythology surrounding the island through sections entitled "Alcatraz: The Myth" and "Alcatraz: The Reality." The exhibit also placed Alcatraz in the larger context of the federal prison system, providing a history of penal philosophy and policies, as well as descriptions of some inmates incarcerated on Alcatraz. In the "reality" section, exhibit text described the types of crimes that most often brought people to prison. Adjacent to this explanation, text revealed the correlation between stricter drug laws, longer sentences, and the elimination of parole to prison overcrowding by the year 2000. Exploring Alcatraz mythologies and contextualizing the prison's history, the collaboration presented Alcatraz, and prison in general, as more complex than the sensational descriptions of punishment, scandal, and celebrity in the permanent museum exhibits.[63]

While *Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience* provided a historical context for the penitentiary years, presenting a more complex narrative than the permanent exhibits, the story it provided lauded the federal prison system's evolution just as the prison population was exploding. Under the heading "Prisons in America: Changing Times, Changing Roles," the exhibit included timelines that traced the European origins of prisons, the U.S. federal prison system, and general U.S. history. Pieces of the timeline worked together to elevate the Bureau of Prisons. For instance, one marker in the 1970s section read, "1973: The Bureau of Prisons introduces Inmate Grievance Procedures. It gives inmates a formal process to voice

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[63] Bureau of Prisons and National Park Service, "Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience: Final Exhibit Text," March 11, 1991, Publications Collection, GGNRA PARC.

complaints."[64] The ability to submit formal complaints was a vital step in the humane treatment of incarcerated people and its inclusion here was important. But inmate grievances practices were born out of prison activism in the 1960s and 1970s. They were not an unsolicited gift from the BOP.[65]

Together, the brochures, audio tours, and interpretive exhibits suggested a progressive evolution of prison and incarceration practices. By framing former penal technologies as relics of a time gone by, the permanent displays and audio-tour implied that contemporary prison systems and policies must constitute a vast improvement. This suggestion of progress was made transparent in the historical narrative and timeline of *Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience*. In celebrating the evolution of the American penal system, the BOP articulated the unspoken narrative behind the exhibits at Alcatraz.[66]

The built environment, the experiential exhibits, and the penitentiary's place in popular culture all worked to construct a place-making narrative around the island's prison past. While visitors may have interacted with the site and its histories in varied ways, it would have been difficult to avoid this pervasive narrative and the implicit conclusions that went along with it.

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[64] Ibid.

[65] On prisoner rights activism in the 1960s and 1970s, see, e.g., Donald F. Tibbs, *From Black Power to Prison Power: The Making of Jones V. North Carolina Prisoner Rights Union* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2012); Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 96-132; Regina Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 156-59, 191-224.

[66] Inmate labor helped to build this exhibit. Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience, Briefing Manual, p. 2, Program April 18, 1991, box 1, folder "Alcatraz and the American Experience: Summary Publication," GGNRA Administrative Records, GOGA 35174, GGNRA PARC.

Alternative Exhibits on Alcatraz Island

Although stories of celebrity inmates, damp cells, and escape attempts remained the main attraction at Alcatraz, the NPS, the GGNRA, and Alcatraz Park Rangers also wanted to create a more diverse depiction of Alcatraz history, altering the meaning of the place. Hoping to shift attention away from crime and criminals, they fashioned exhibits that focused on the island's natural components, the domestic histories of prison staff, and the Indians of All Tribes occupation. Aware that "the majority of future visitors… will continue to be attracted by the intrigue of the prison," the park service committed to the dual goals of giving the public what they knew they wanted—a prison museum—while simultaneously presenting stories visitors might not have considered otherwise.[67] These non-prison narratives became permanent and important parts of the museum, but have never been more than sidelines to the central story. Visitors have experienced the natural history of the island through the development of an island perimeter trail and brochures to help identify foliage and birds. Meanwhile, the GGNRA linked the island's civilian and natural history by focusing on the "gardens of Alcatraz." Discussions of civilian life at the museum and park have revolved around themes of home and domesticity, in stark contrast to the danger and criminality highlighted in the prison. The story of the Indians of All Tribes occupation has also comprised an alternative lens into the island history. While the occupation had radical claims of sovereignty at its heart, on Alcatraz the occupation has been narrated as a democratic protest movement, tempering its challenges to the state. It was not until

[67] *General Management Plan and Environmental Analysis,* September 1980, p. 37, Folder Golden Gate, 1980, GGNRA PARC.

1998 that a short documentary and exhibit about the occupation became part of the park's permanent exhibition, though the leftover graffiti from the revolutionary protest movement was present for the very first tourists to see.[68]

Focused on American ideals of freedom and liberty, and set in the site of a former penitentiary, these alternative exhibits are seemingly paradoxical. For instance, one exhibit highlighted the American Indian occupation through the promotion of democracy. Similarly, a focus on nature and the home life of guards and their families worked to underscore ideals of domesticity and promoted a nuclear family life. These stories could not change the image of Alcatraz entirely, but they did provide a corollary to the foreboding image attached to the former penitentiary.[69] While the ideas of freedom and captivity may seem contradictory, as opposites these ideas work to define each other.[70]

One of the most immediate ways that visitors have experienced these alternative histories is through Alcatraz's natural environment. Since Alcatraz joined the GGNRA in 1972, the NPS has focused special attention on the island's scenery. As Robert H. Walker, the head of the NPS, said in 1973, "I would like to suggest that to help lessen the historic connotation of this

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[68] Smith and Bergman, "You Were on Indian Land."

[69] In their article "'Rock Prison of Liberation:' Alcatraz Island and the American Imagination," Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange argue that while Alcatraz has maintained its reputation as the most notorious penitentiary in the United States, it has paradoxically also been linked to American ideals of liberty and freedom. These authors trace Alcatraz Island's long history in the American popular imagination, from its time as a prison, to proposals for the island's reuse in the period after 1963 when the prison closed, to the Native American occupation of the island, to its time as a museum. They explain that these associations with freedom failed to eliminate the prison's foreboding image. While the GGNRA has tried to complicate the history of Alcatraz to include the island's military and natural pasts, as well as the Indians of All Tribes occupation, more popular interpretations continued, and still continue, to dominate the American popular imagination.

[70] Caleb Smith in *The Prison and the American Imagination* explores nineteenth-century writers and intellectuals like Alexis de Tocqueville, Edgar Allen Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and others, examining the relationship between solitude and freedom. Smith, *The Prison and the American Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 81-112.

island as that dreaded citadel known as 'The Rock,' we might all think in terms of Alcatraz's English name 'The Island of the Pelicans,' as far more in keeping with this serene and scenic setting."[71] To this end, park staff worked to incorporate information about the island's natural world. By 1980, visitors could make the beauty of Alcatraz a central part of their trip.[72] The GGNRA highlighted the island's natural setting, as Walker explained, to lessen the public's focus on the sensational prison years.

In addition to birds, foliage, and geology, by 1980, if a visitor chose, the island's domestic history could also become a core part of a trip to "the Rock." The island gardens stood as a central feature in that domestic component. When soldiers first began building gardens on the island, "the Rock" was so barren they looked to Angel Island for soil.[73] First enjoyed by wives of soldiers living on Alcatraz when it was a military base, the gardens fell into disrepair when the Bureau of Prisons took control of the island. But during the federal penitentiary era, guards and their families planted a new set of gardens. Roses flanked the warden's home, and guards and their families enjoyed vegetable gardens and fruit trees in addition to ornamental flowers. Though their homes no longer exist, the remnants of these gardens remain, sustained by the rain and fog.[74] As an early brochure states, "The gardens of Alcatraz provide an unexpected pleasure for visitors, and serve as a constant reminder of the people who once considered

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[71] Fred Garretson, "New Image Besought for Grim Alcatraz," *Oakland Tribune*, October 27, 1973.

[72] As Hal Rothman explains, the NPS understood that the prison would continue to draw visitors to the island, but officials hoped to shift their attention to other histories. Hal Rothman, *The New Urban Park: Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Civic Environmentalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), p. 129. See also Loo and Strange, "Rock Prison of Liberation," pp. 41-42.

[73] Russell A. Beatty, "Long, Enduring Patterns: Gardeners and their Plants," in *Gardens of Alcatraz*, ed. John Hart, Russell A. Beatty, and Michael Boland (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Recreation Area: 1996), p. 30.

[74] For a more detailed history of Alcatraz gardens and the types of foliage that still exists on the island, see Hart, Beatty, and Boland, *Gardens of Alcatraz*..

Alcatraz their home."[75] "Home," of course, meant the homes of soldiers, guards, and their families. The domesticity that the gardens represented defined the concept of home, as articulated by the GGNRA in this pamphlet. The flowers and foliage stood in stark contrast to the island's rocky crags and the criminals once housed in the austere cement prison building. These garden remnants became an important counterpoint for the GGNRA to the memory of violence and sensational crime that so many visitors craved when they visited the island.[76]

The focus on the natural world also became a key aspect of the museum's redesign in the 1980s. In 1988, the Golden Gate National Park Association, a non-profit affiliate of the GGNRA, launched its new plan for the island, directed by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. Halprin's philosophy was "take nothing off, put nothing new on," emphasizing the years before and after the penitentiary as well as the island's "natural and scenic delights"[77] Halprin wanted visitors to have a multifaceted experience of the island. In order to have a true sense of the place, they needed to do more than just see the prison building. They also needed to experience all the island had to offer, including the scenic landscape and the flora and fauna. To develop this plan, Halprin brought together local historians, preservationists, park rangers, and civilians who had once lived on the island, including former guards and their children. They each spent hours on Alcatraz, feeling for the island's character. As Halprin explained,

> As we studied Alcatraz, we became involved in the primary quality of the island itself and the symbolism it evokes. When we first started our work in planning for the future, I

[75] Kathy O'Hara and Sharon Paris, *The Gardens of Alcatraz* brochure, 1981, Publications Collection, GGNRA PARC.

[76] In Amy Kaplan's discussion of domestic discourse in imperial expansion she explains, that "the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery." See Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 23-50 (quote on p. 25).

[77] "Planning the Future of Alcatraz," p. 7.

> suppose like everyone else, we were aware of the island's prison history: Al Capone, the Birdman, the stories of attempted escapes, and the lurid picture of isolation on "the Rock." But the more time we spent on "the Rock," and the more people we involved in our planning work, the more our own impressions shifted to other images, to other symbols more appropriate to a gateway to our country. [78]

Even in attempting to create an alternative history of the island, Halprin and his visitors could not escape the prison narrative.

Halprin's invited visitors wandered the island, taking down their impressions of the natural and built environment. Some produced images, others wrote poems, and still others mused on the aura of the island and their hopes for what it might become. Most visitors observed a disconnect between the brutality of the prison and the island's natural beauty. As one participant observed, "The prison is a powerful experience, but it has nothing to do with the island."[79] Reflections on the gardens, originally planted in the military period, speak especially to this disconnect. One observer stated, "Victorian gardens gone wild. The woman's work has survived the most successfully. The enthusiasm and persistence of the gardens is wonderful!" Another said, "I have great conflict about this area. It's almost, or rather is, sacred. It seems to be a place for nature to be nature, but I also want to share this experience with the world of humans, as fellow creatures."[80] These observers, along with Lawrence Halprin, created a vision for the future of the island, of how it might develop and especially how the areas outside the cell blocks could be a welcome addition to the otherwise violent history portrayed at the site.

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[78] Halprin et al., *Alcatraz*, p. 1.

[79] Ibid., p. 42.

[80] Ibid., p. 58.

In the end, the park would only adopt the Agave Trail, a natural path snaking the perimeter of the island.[81] Halprin upset some in the GGNRA with his unorthodox planning methods. And, in his passion for opening the island up to visitors, he ignored existing regulations and resource management obligations. While the GGNRA appreciated his vision, it was ultimately beholden to the laws and regulations regarding the environment and historic preservation on the island.[82] Halprin's plan would have made the island more akin to a nature preserve than a historic prison, but with the exception of the Agave Trail, the GGNRA chose not to actualize this vision.[83]

In addition to the juxtaposition of the island's natural beauty and the imposing prison buildings, one of the first things visitors arriving on the shores of Alcatraz notice is the fading graffiti leftover from the American Indian occupation: "Indians Welcome," reads one posting, while another announces, "You are on Indian Land." These traces of red paint surround the commanding penitentiary sign, which reads:

UNITED STATES PENITENTIARY
ALCATRAZ ISLAND AREA 12 ACRES
1½ MILES TO TRANSPORT DOCK
ONLY GOVERNMENT BOATS PERMITTED
OTHERS MUST KEEP OFF 200 YARDS
NO ONE ALLOWED ASHORE
WITHOUT PASS

[81] Rothman, *The New Urban Park*, p. 161.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., p. 73.

Ever since the formal tours of the island began, National Park Service rangers have started their tours beneath this sign. In 1980, the NPS went through a detailed inventory of all the graffiti left on the island. Some had been washed away by the wind or rain, some painted over in building renovations, and still other writing had disappeared in earlier island renovations. While the park service decided to catalogue and preserve much of the writing that remained, most of it was and is off the path of the standard tour.[84] Whether intentional or inadvertent, the museum thus has kept much of the graffiti hidden from sight, and thus, the occupation history has remained peripheral to the central prison narrative.

The graffiti left by occupiers is a visible symbol of their time on the island. When the activists first arrived on Alcatraz in 1969, they painted on buildings and over signs as a way to stake a claim to the place. Occupiers covered over the landing dock with signs announcing "United Indian Property." They replaced "Warning Keep Off Government Property" with "Indian Property," visible to anyone approaching Alcatraz from the San Francisco Bay. "Red Power" and red fist symbols appeared throughout the island, signaling the revolutionary intent of the occupation. On the water tower, occupiers wrote "Peace and Freedom Welcome" and "Home of the Free." "Indian Land," one of the most common phrases, appeared on walls throughout the island, both inside and outside buildings, signaling not just the activist presence on the island, but also indigenous people's historical presence on Alcatraz and in California.[85]

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[84] In the filming of the 1979 *Escape from Alcatraz*, filmmakers painted over some of the occupation graffiti in order to recreate accurately the island's scenery for the story, which was set in 1962 (seven years prior to the Indian occupation). When the filming was complete, the filmmakers repainted what they had just removed to return the island to the state it was in when they began the project. If asked about the movie or its setting, the Alcatraz Park Rangers' training manual instructed rangers to explain that film crews painted over the graffiti with a plastic paint that was easily removable. "Alcatraz Training Manuel,"1981 box 13, folder: Alcatraz Training Manuel, Alcatraz Documents, GGNRA PARC.

[85] For a complete list of all of the graffiti left by American Indian occupiers, see John Noxon and Deborah Meyers, "Inventory of Occupation Graffiti, 1969-1971, Alcatraz Island, Golden Gate National Recreation Area California," 1980, carton 4, folder: Alcatraz Island 1969-1971, American Indian Community History Center

In addition to staking a claim to the island through revolutionary slogans, occupiers used the island's prison history in their protest as well. For instance, some of the graffiti played on the island's penal past, mixing absurdity and critique to express the activists' politics.[86] Over the entrance to the main cell block, an eagle framed the doorway; underneath the eagle, activists hung the sign "This is My Land" and attached a picture of Geronimo, the Apache resistance fighter. Above cells in the cell block that had once housed Al Capone, they wrote the names of their political adversaries: "Alioto," "PG&E," "Nixon," "Agnew," and "Reagan." According to the occupiers, Mayor Alioto, Pacific Gas and Electric, President Nixon, Vice President Agnew, and California Governor Reagan had all mistreated American Indians, on the island or elsewhere.[87] With these names written over the cells, occupiers displayed their own vision for who should be imprisoned.[88]

The history of the occupation has taken multiple forms on the island, in tours, videos, guidebooks, and graffiti restoration. As Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo explain in "Holding the Rock: The 'Indianization' of Alcatraz Island, 1969-1999," interpretation of the occupation in the

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Records, BANC MSS 2008/108, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. On occupation graffiti and Indian placemaking, see Rundstrom, "American Indian Placemaking on Alcatraz," pp. 189-95.

[86] The salience of the prison past to the occupation protest also took hold in movement materials and rhetoric. As discussed earlier, the Indians of All Tribes proclamation compares the poverty of reservation life to life on a prison island. Indians of All Tribes, "Manifesto," February 25, 1970, folder: S.F. Islands. Alcatraz. Proposal for Use, SFHC, SFPL. Occupation leaders also utilized this comparison; see Richard Oakes, "Alcatraz is not an Island," *Ramparts*, December 1972; Lynn Ludlow, "Indians Demand U.S. Cash," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 25, 1969.

[87] On federal Indian policy in response to American Indian social protest, see Dean J. Kotlowski, "Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and Beyond: The Nixon and Ford Administrations Respond to Native American Protest," *Pacific Historical Review* 72, no. 2 (May 2003): 201-27.

[88] The occupation graffiti was not the only writing that appeared on island buildings. Guards also marked their presence on the walls of their former workplace, but this graffiti was not featured on tours or made accessible to the public. Some of the guard graffiti simply relayed the common pronouncement that a particular person "was here." Not always so innocuous, other writing reads more like a bathroom stall – drawings of genitalia and other sexually explicit renderings. "Guard Graffiti," nd, box 13, folder: Alcatraz Federal Prison Photographs, Alcatraz Documents, GGNRA PARC.

GGNRA's Alcatraz Island museum and park shifted from barely present in 1973 to favorable by the mid-1990s. The process of bringing the occupation and Native American history to a place of prominence occurred on two levels. Internally, NPS policies encouraged, and at times mandated, diverse interpretations of the island's history. And Alcatraz park rangers took it upon themselves to bring the occupation narrative into the visitor experience at Alcatraz. They did so by taking visitors on a tour entitled "Alcatraz is Indian Land," during which they analyzed the graffiti left by occupiers. Externally, Native American activists, occupation veterans, and academics challenged depictions of Native American history in the museum. As Loo and Strange explain, veterans of the occupation wrote memoirs detailing their experience. In addition, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, native peoples unofficially marked Unthanksgiving Day on Alcatraz. Today, the NPS officially recognizes the holiday with a sunrise ceremony that brings participants from across the Bay Area to the island. Native people also worked to make sure that the occupation history would be told in a positive light inside the museum. To that end, they used the power of documentary film to capture the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation in *We Hold the Rock*. The film remains on permanent display within the museum.[89]

The occupation has certainly become a visible and important part of the museum's narrative. But as Cynthia Duquette Smith and Teresa Bergman point out in "You Were on Indian Land: Alcatraz Island as Recalcitrant Memory Space," while the GGNRA has placed emphasis on the occupation, it remains an alternative to the central focus of the prison tours. For instance, even though the NPS has worked to preserve the majority of the graffiti left from the occupation, the graffiti exists mostly in areas that are off-limits to visitors. While tours of the

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[89] Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, "Holding the Rock: The 'Indianization' of Alcatraz Island, 1969-1999" *Public Historian* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 55-74.

island revolve around the cell block, they do not highlight the cells that activists used for various purposes during the occupation period. The spatial histories of prison and occupation eras overlap, but stories of the occupation have been largely omitted from tours of the prison.[90] The film about the occupation runs only three minutes, and is available for viewing along with other documentaries. Thus focus remains on the prison, avoiding the radical or even revolutionary potential of the Indian occupation. [91]

The American Indian occupation and the military-era gardens are not the only alternative histories that the park service has emphasized. Other exhibits have highlighted the island's military history and its bird migration patterns. Still, of these non-prison histories, the occupation and the gardens have remained the most visible. While the histories that do not encompass the prison past struggle to break through the penitentiary narrative, they have been essential components of the GGNRA's narration of the island's past. These alternative histories may not get the same attention as the popular cell block tours, but their very presence helps to lay bare the overlapping and sometimes conflicting memories that helped to create this physical and discursive place.

Home on "the Rock"

While criminals were, and continue to be, Alcatraz's most well-known residents, the island has had other tenants as well. Prison guards and their families enjoyed spacious

[90] Smith and Bergman, "You Were on Indian Land," pp. 160-88.

[91] Ibid.

apartments and single-family homes with picturesque vistas of San Francisco and the bucolic hills of Marin. In 1963, the year the prison closed, there were seventy-five children living in the shadow of the maximum security prison. Looking back on her days as an adolescent on "the Rock," Jolene Babyak remembered how safe and secure she felt on the island. She remarked, "At the top of our neighborhood was a maximum security penitentiary. Yet I saw prisoners only from a distance and paid little attention to them. Our parents frequently said they felt safer living on Alcatraz than in San Francisco. There was no traffic, no burglaries, few of us in fact worried about security. It was a low-crime neighborhood, after all."[92] Remembering the prison years with affection and nostalgia, Babyak was just one of the former Alcatraz residents who, in the 1980s and 1990s, wrote about their experiences on the island. The voices of these one-time Alcatraz tenants joined those of former penitentiary guards, who similarly recounted their daily lives on the island.

Writing at the same time that the Alcatraz museum grew in popularity, former prison guards and their children worked to recenter the story of Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary on the domestic and personal lives of prison staff and their families. In these domestic interpretations of the island's history, the writers do recall famous prisoners and moments of violence, but danger always sits squarely inside the prison walls, or as Jolene Babyak suggests, in the city of San Francisco. Juxtaposed to this external danger, the memoirists represent nuclear families as protective and safe. Looking at Alcatraz through a domestic lens, rather than through the

[92] Jolene Babyak, *Eyewitness on Alcatraz: Life on the Rock as told by the Guards, Families, and Prisoners* (rev. ed., Berkeley: Ariel Vamp Press, 1996), pp. 3-4.

island's flashpoints of violence and attempted escapes, these narratives provide an alternative vision of Alcatraz's prison history, one originating outside the context of the museum.[93]

For instance, Donald Hurley, son of a guard, begins *Alcatraz Island Memories* with an epigraph, a poem written by Esther Faulk, wife of a guard, entitled, "Our Island Memories." The poem traces the history of the island through the lens of the guards and their families, from the year it opened in 1934 to its closure in 1963, placing the guards and their families as central to that history. Faulk begins by describing the arrival of the guards and, later, their wives and children:

> Soon the families of these stalwart men,
> (There were just a few of us then),
> Came from towns and cities far away,
> To settle on this Island out in the Bay;
> They adjusted themselves without a moan,
> And soon they called this Island their home.
>
> Ere long, more families reached its shore,
> The population grew more and more;
> Finally a Post Office, library, grocery store,
> A church, Sunday School opened their door,
> Various clubs soon began to form,
> Lo and behold: a little town was born.
>
> Our children were active in many sports,
> Their entertainments were of many sorts,
> They rode the Island launch each day,
> To attend city schools across the Bay,
> Joys were many, sorrows few,
> As our children to adults grew.[94]

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[93] Guards and their children were not the only ones who wrote about their time on Alcatraz. In the years following his term as warden of Alcatraz, James Johnston wrote his own memoir about administering the federal penitentiary; see Warden James A. Johnston, *Alcatraz Island Prison: And the Men Who Live There* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949). Additionally, men who had been imprisoned on Alcatraz wrote about their time. See, for instance, Roy Gardner, *Hellcatraz: The Rock of Despair* (San Francisco: Ryan Communication, 1939); Leon "Whitey" Thompson, *Rock Hard: The Autobiography of Former Alcatraz Inmate Leon "Whitey" Thompson* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994); Nathan Glenn Williams, *From Alcatraz to the White House: An Autobiography* (Seattle: Willjoy Publishing, 1991).

[94] Esther Faulk, "Our Island Home," in Donald J. Hurley, *Alcatraz Island Memories* (Petaluma, CA: Fog Bell Enterprises, 1987), np.

Alcatraz, according to Faulk, was like a small town, complete with the necessary post office, grocery store, and church. It was a safe place where a community could nurture its children from the trials of adolescence to the maturity of adulthood. Faulk places "stalwart men" at the heart of her poem and the island's universe. In the island of her imagination, Faulk harkens back to small towns where the family served as the bedrock of the community, and the father as the bedrock of the family.

Although Faulk is drawing on her own memories, her vision of Alcatraz as a small town presided over by "stalwart men" reflects the era in which the poem was published. In the 1980s conservatives blamed the "breakdown" of the American family, including the perceived demise of the male breadwinner and two-parent homes, for what they saw as out- of-control cities.[95] Of course, family life for many American never looked like the one Faulk idealized in her poem, or those to which conservatives harkened back. [96] During a time when economic and social problems were attributed, at least in part, to the breakdown of the nuclear family, Faulk places the family at the very heart of this island community.

Yet, Alcatraz was not *any* small town; it was one with a prison at its center. In his memoir, Donald Hurley does not ignore the realities of growing up on the island. He describes the cordoned-off space and the restrictions of movement that the prison produced. He explains, "I knew that all the children of Alcatraz carried with them the constant knowledge that, although we had a lot of fun playing different games, it could very well be a life and death game at any

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[95] Macek, *Urban Nightmares,* pp. 85-152.

[96] Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Book, 1992).

time up at the prison."[97] But discussions of fear are not what pervade his narrative; rather, the sentiments that come through are like those of Babyak. Hurley explains, "There always seems to be a mystical illusion about one phase of living on the island. It always seemed to me, as I am sure it did to others, that as soon as you stepped onto the island boat and headed for Alcatraz, you felt safe from the outside world."[98] Although the physical reality of the prison loomed large, it was ultimately "the outside world" that drove residents' fear. In a sense, they imagined that the prison, which in fact stood at the center of their lives, was actually quite far away. The fences and cement walls functioned as physical barriers between them and the men housed inside the penitentiary, and their fathers ensured that law and order would be maintained inside and outside the prison. Certainly childhood on Alcatraz was exceptional. But what Hurley highlights is the normality of childhood on the island, relying on the implicit juxtaposition of the innocence of children and the danger of what lurks behind the walls.[99]

In a different type of memoir, *Alcatraz Screw* by a former guard named George Gregory, the author details his daily life on Alcatraz from 1947 to 1963. Gregory's narrative does not dwell on familial life on the island, but it is at times very personal, exploring the duties, glories, and hardships of working as a guard. In every instance, the line between good and bad is easily drawn. In addition, Gregory often depicts himself as protecting inmates by heroically breaking up fights, exhibiting self-restraint, teaching life lessons, or benevolently smoothing out racial tensions. Humanizing the prison guards and elevating the work they performed at Alcatraz, Gregory depicts himself and his coworkers as paternalistic, stern, and fair.

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[97] Hurley, *Alcatraz Island Memories,* p. 76.

[98] Ibid., p. 102.

[99] On white cultural anxiety around city, see Macek, *Urban Nightmares*.

While most of the guard memoirs present officers and staff as benevolent, Gregory's memoir goes a step further and discusses the response of officers to prison taboos such as same-sex intimacy and rape. In one anecdote, Gregory takes an interest in Kevin, "a young black kid" who was often the victim of physical violence and rape. "We tried as best we could to protect Kevin and others from the wolves. We also tried the best we could to ignore the activities of mutually consenting inmates."[100] Kevin's ability to run fast and dodge knives coupled with his ability to play "wolves" (aggressive men seen as sexual predators) against each other protected him in the general prison population.[101] But Gregory ultimately functions as the hero of this story. He rescues Kevin from the dangers of prison life by advocating the young man's parole, encouraging his passion for playing the saxophone and helping him to organize his cell properly.[102]

Although Gregory paints himself as a fatherly hero, this anecdote remains one of the rare mentions of sex or sexual violence at Alcatraz and thus it presents incarceration more complexly than the exhibits and displays at the museum. Unlike narratives that sensationalize the penitentiary, this account brings into relief some of the intimate details of prison life, including intimacies, fear, and safety—even if does so with a paternalistic undertone. Gregory's discussion of rape reflects the perceptions of the time when he worked at Alcatraz (1947 to 1963) as well as the moment when he was writing his memoir. Historian Regina Kunzel explains in *Criminal Intimacy* that a focus on prison rape before the late 1960s was rare, though there was a good deal

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[100] George H. Gregory, *Alcatraz Screw: My Years as Guard in America's Most Notorious Prison* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 196. George Gregory died in 1996 and his wife published this text posthumously.

[101] Part of prison sexual vernacular, "wolf" denoted someone aggressive, often seducing or coercing younger men, in particular, for sex. Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy*, pp. 63-65.

[102] Ibid., pp. 195-96

of attention paid to "sexual manipulation, intimidation, and extortion" by wolves who preyed on innocent heterosexual men. [103] By the 1970s and 1980s though, rape in prison had become culturally ensconced through social science research, fiction, film, and autobiographies.[104]

In addition to detailing his personal relationships with inmates, Gregory's narrative also traces the downfall of the prison from the 1940s, when, as he explains it, inmates flourished under strict control of well-trained and hard-nosed guards, to the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the guards were poorly trained and lax; then he claims, the inmates became the bosses, and "the officer was more likely to be criticized than the inmate."[105] Gregory accounts for these changes by pointing to the shifting priorities and social climate of the 1950s and 1960s. Alcatraz inmates were hardly "bosses" in this period, but Gregory is right to point to a shifting set of priorities in penal philosophy. In the period before and directly after World War II, prisons served primarily to confine those convicted of crimes. In the decades after the war, the focus became two-pronged: to confine *and* to rehabilitate. But this approach was changing as well. In the California state system, for example, the new focus on rehabilitation put many guards on the defensive, feeling as though their law-and-order approach was not respected. Coupled with poor training, moderate wages, and limited professional advancement, these changes left many guards disgruntled. [106] However, by the 1970s, as scholar Joshua Page explains, correctional officers

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[103] Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy,* p. 153.

[104] For discussion on cultural perceptions of sexual violence in prison, see Ibid., pp. 149-89, 195-205.

[105] Gregory, *Alcatraz Screw*, p. 242.

[106] This trend toward rehabilitation occurred nationally, but like many changes in penal philosophy, it was spearheaded in California. Page, *The Toughest Beat*, pp. 17-19.

and their union successfully reintegrated a focus on crime and punishment into the expanding prison system.[107] Gregory's account reflects these very shift.

The guards also discussed inmates' daily lives, including their work detail. Although men incarcerated performed various kinds of labor, the laundry continuously emerges in these narratives. Inmates washed the clothes for other prisoners as well as the families and officers living and working on Alcatraz. Gregory describes the "Clothing Room" as one of the most violent places on Alcatraz, but it was also the place where inmates essentially did feminized work. In another memoir, guard William Sitt describes inmates cleaning the warden's suit.[108] Likewise, the trope of Alcatraz inmates performing laundry or cleaning sits at the center of two hugely popular recent young reader books, *Al Capone Does My Shirts* and *Al Capone Shines My Shoes,* both by Gennifer Choldonko.[109] While not prison memoirs, these stories serve to highlight the prisoners' ostensible toughness on the outside, and their impotence inside the prison walls. This trope recenters the prison narrative around the guards while simultaneously positioning at least a part of the domestic sphere within the prison itself.

While the prison guards represent themselves as hypermasculine but benevolent, their depictions of prisoners were quite different. The stereotype of the prisoner vacillated between the tough brute and the emasculated former kingpin. But more than anything, the prisoners were problems to be managed. The guards, unlike their children, wrote about the dangers of working

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[107] Joshua Page argues that the California Correctional Peace Officers Association fueled shifting penal ideologies. Page*, The Toughest Beat*.

[108] William Sitt, *Alcatraz: Bringing In the Sheep* (Angels Camp, CA: El Rancho Nada, 1984).

[109] Gennifer Choldenko, *Al Capone Does My Shirts* (New York: Puffin, 2004)*; Al Capone Shines My Shoes* (New York: Dial, 2009); Al Capone Does My Homework, (New York: Penguin, 2013). The setting of Alcatraz has inspired other fiction as well. See Tara Ison, *A Child Out of Alcatraz: A Novel* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1998), and Eve Bunting, *Someone Hiding on Alcatraz* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1984).

inside a prison—never of their fears, per se, but of danger nonetheless. From makeshift weapons to worries about getting caught in a fight, the guards expressed their ability to pacify even the most notorious or violent criminals.

The memoirs by guards and their families are unique in both form and content. These writings highlight life outside of the prison cells and focus on guards and their families, painting pictures of benevolent guards and perfect childhoods. In doing, these writers worked to shift the place-making narrative to the domestic, recreating Alcatraz as both a workplace and a neighborhood. Discussions of family life on the island do more than just recount the incongruity of kids playing next to kidnappers; they also helped naturalize the violence of incarceration by venerating the work of prison guards and privileging stories of domestic happiness. While guards and their children have attempted to tell the stories of their lives, the novelty of the prison has reigned supreme. Like the non-prison museum narratives that present alternatives to the island's penitentiary years while affirming its primacy, stories of family life on the island have always focused, however inadvertently, on the prison itself.

Conclusion

Alcatraz opened to tourists in 1973 and grew in popularity during the 1980s and 1990s, becoming one of California's most popular tourist destinations. During this period three distinct place-making narratives emerged—the prisoner experience, defined by harsh punishment and infamous inmates; alternative to the prison experience, including the island's natural world and the 1969 Indians of All Tribes Occupation; finally, the guards and their families, who narrated

Alcatraz as both a work place and neighborhood. Sensational stories of escape attempts and publicity surrounding J. Edgar Hoover's declared "public enemies," like Al Capone, drove crowds to Alcatraz. The GGNRA and NPS satiated visitor curiosity with exhibits and brochures that highlighted the daily life of Alcatraz inmates, focusing on violence, cruelty, and harsh punishment. While the GGNRA also highlighted Alcatraz's natural spaces, civilian histories, and the 1969 Indian of All Tribes occupation, these non-prison narratives remained alternatives to the main story that drew tourists: that of the prison. This same period also saw a profusion of popular histories and memoirs written by former prison guards and their adult children, providing another window into the history of the island. Weaving their years on the island into popular nonfiction, guards and their adult children told the civilian story of the island's penitentiary years. Like the exhibits on the island, these memoirs could not help but focus on famous inmates and harsh punishments. At the same time, the memoirs provided non-prison narratives that relied on the juxtaposition of tropes of home and family with those of crime and criminality.

Both the museum exhibits and the memoirs reflected the moments in which they were produced, a period characterized by law and order politics and a culture of crime and punishment. The museum and memoirs worked to give the visitor or reader, walking through the cell block or turning pages of a book, a false sense of familiarity with prison life. Both sensationalized the crimes of the past while simultaneously caricaturizing the men incarcerated at Alcatraz, distancing tourists and readers from the reality of their present moment, a time that saw growing rates of imprisonment. This disconnect between the prison museum and the reality of the prison boom in the 1980s and 1990s typifies the visitor experience on Alcatraz and this cultural moment in general. However, there were glimpses of a more complex understanding of

the intersection of prison and museum, moments when Alcatraz—both the prison and the museum—were placed in a larger context. Chief among these moments of reflection was the 1991 *Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience* exhibit, in which the federal Bureau of Prisons and the National Park Service teamed up to create an exhibit that told the story of Alcatraz in the context of the federal prison system.

This unlikely partnership between the BOP and NPS examined Alcatraz's tenure as a federal penitentiary in historical perspective. The collaboration between these two federal agencies extended beyond the content of the exhibits. Indeed, they used the labor of contemporary prisoners to construct the *Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience* exhibit and rehabilitate the island's built environment. In the invitation to the exhibit's unveiling, the federal agencies announced the expansion of this collaboration: "This agreement [between BOP and NPS] has expanded to include using Federal inmates to perform renovation work on the island. Since March 1990, Federal inmates have installed handicap ramps, renovated the visitors' reception areas, repaired walkways and common areas, and have begun restoring the cell house."[110] Decades after its transformation from prison to prison museum, a new crop of inmates walked the Alcatraz cell block and yard—convicted laborers from the federal prison in Leavenworth, Kansas, which by 1991, had taken on the mantle as the nation's most notorious maximum security, minimum privilege institution.

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[110] *Alcatraz and the American Prison Experience*, Invitation, Box 1, Folder "Alcatraz and the American Experience: Summary Publication," GGNRA Administrative Records, GOGA 35174, GGNRA PARC.

Chapter Two:
Inclusion Acts: The Politics of Visibility on Angel Island 1940-2010

On January 21, 2010, the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), in conjunction with California State Parks and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), came together to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the U.S. immigration station on Angel Island. The event featured local officials, nationally renowned poets, surviving detainees, and representatives from China, Korea, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, and Canada. The core of the program revolved around remembering the days, months, and sometimes years that new immigrants spent confined in the island's cold and damp barracks. Poets Janice Mirikitani and Nellie Wong spoke about their own families' harrowing immigration experiences and recited poems that detainees had etched into the detention center walls during their confinement. Eric Mar, the supervisor of San Francisco's First District, spoke passionately of his father's journey through Angel Island and his eventual path towards naturalized citizenship. Many other speakers, including the AIISF board president and the director of the California State Parks, remarked on the importance of preserving Angel Island's detention barracks and sharing the island's tangled history with the greater San Francisco Bay Area community.[1]

While remembrances of exclusionary immigration policies sat at the core of this centennial event, discussions of discriminatory immigration laws were paired with a celebration of American democracy. Many speakers remarked on the industrious immigrants who, after suffering detention on Angel Island, entered the United States and, with hard work and

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[1] Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, "100 Years of Angel Island—Welcoming Speech," YouTube video, January 21, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zR-_p1HiaBY.

determination, became business leaders, teachers, and scientists. The USCIS chose the Angel Island centennial event to present their annual "American by Choice Award," recognizing the professional success of one recent Chinese immigrant, Dr. Samuel So.[2] Ironically, the symbolic climax of the afternoon's program was a naturalization ceremony of one hundred new American citizens.[3]

The tension between remembering the United States' exclusionary immigration policies and celebrating the United States as a nation of immigrants, however, was perhaps best exemplified in President Barack Obama's remarks. Although unable to attend the day's event, President Obama sent a proclamation to be read in his absence. Declaring January 21 "Angel Island Day," he recognized the grave injustices immigrants had faced there, asserting that

> unlike immigrants who marveled at the Statue of Liberty upon arrival at Ellis Island those who came to Angel Island were greeted by an intake facility that was sometimes called Guardian of the Western Gate. Racially prejudiced immigration laws of the time subjected many to rigorous exams and interrogations as well as detention in crowded and unsanitary barracks….[4]

These critical remarks about exclusion, however, were juxtaposed with an inclusionary narrative that heralded the United States as a nation of immigrants and a land of opportunity. As President Obama continued,

> If there is any vindication for the Angel Island immigrants who endured so many hardships, it is the success achieved by those who were allowed entry and the many who at long last gained citizenship. They have contributed immeasurably to our nation as leaders of every sector of American life. The children of Angel Island have seized the

[2] Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, "100 Years of Angel Island – Choice to be American," January 21, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqg-U6N6izU.

[3] Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation "100 Years of Angel Island - Citizenship Ceremony," January 21, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLyI6-J. Since opening as a historic park in 1983, Angel Island has been the site of multiple naturalization ceremonies.

[4] Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation "Presidential Proclamation - National Angel Island Day" January 20, 2010, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-proclamation-national-angel-island-day.

> opportunities their ancestors saw from across the ocean. By demonstrating that all things are possible in America, this vibrant community has created a beacon of hope for future generations of immigrants.[5]

In the scene painted by President Obama, discriminatory immigration policies and traumatic detention on Angel Island mitigated the ultimate triumph of American democracy and capitalism realized on the mainland. Reframing the Angel Island immigration narrative, President Obama shifted the focus from exclusion to inclusion, from remembering the hardships of those immigrants detained on Angel Island to celebrating the perennial "American Dream."[6]

This centennial event was just one of many recognizing the hundredth anniversary of the U.S. immigration station on Angel Island. Though varied in size and theme, these commemorative programs were linked by a redemptive narrative, whereby the exclusionary immigration laws enforced on Angel Island were juxtaposed to meritocratic inclusion upon immigrants' arrival to the United States. In this narrative, then, exclusionary policies were just blemishes on a democratic system that otherwise supported the hopes and dreams of all immigrants. As political theorist Bonnie Honig explains, "The myth of an immigrant America depicts the foreigner as a supplement to the nation, an agent of national reenchantment that might rescue the regime from corruption and return it to its first principles, whether capitalist,

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[5] Ibid.

[6] In her study of Mexican immigrant farmworkers, Camille Guérin-Gonzales explains that the American Dream was not a fixed or monolithic concept. Promising individual freedoms and economic opportunities, the American Dream was fraught, applying neither to all immigrants nor all citizens. As she explains, Mexican workers struggled to find a place within this idealized framework, making the dream their own, and using it as a way to fight for their own economic security. Guérin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and Immigrant Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994). In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the American Dream continues to promise individual freedoms and economic opportunities. But, as in earlier periods, the American Dream masks the structural obstacles that immigrants face in the search for economic security.

communal/familial, or consensual."[7] Thus, the immigrant subject represents the nation and its potential, the potential of individuals to succeed in a capitalist economy or to perpetuate traditions of liberal democracy.[8] The exclusionary immigration policies enforced on Angel Island run counter to the mythology of a nation that invites to its shores the tired, the poor, the "huddled masses yearning to be free." And yet, commemorative programs at Angel Island reinforced this very idea. While the speakers criticized past discriminatory policies, they also praised immigrants' ability to succeed against all odds. This construction of the Angel Island immigrant, then, was put to work for the ideological needs of liberal democracy. Ultimately, as President Obama said, these immigrants demonstrated that "all things are possible in America."

This chapter explores the history of Angel Island's transformation from an immigration station to a state park, focusing particularly on the rhetorical tensions between exclusion and inclusion, unbelonging and belonging, invisibility and visibility. These tensions mirrored trends that promoted selective remembrance of the nation's immigration history. *In a Forgetful Nation*, scholar Ali Behdad explains that the United States' relationship to its immigrant past is one of historical amnesia. This amnesia is not a total negation of the facts, but rather a "cultural disavowal that simultaneously denies certain historical facts and produces a pseudo-historical consciousness of the present."[9] The history of immigration and violent detention on Angel Island has been ignored at times and recovered at others, always in service of the historical moment.

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[7] Bonnie Honig, "Immigrant America? How Foreignness 'Solves' Democracy's Problems," *Social Text*, no. 56 (Autumn 1998): 1-27 (quote on p. 1).

[8] Honig also points to other constructs of the immigrant. A communitarian construction understands the immigrant as bringing community back to a nation broken apart by capitalist individualism. Others see the immigrant as a bearer of "tradition," supporting patriarchal family structures. Ibid, pp. 2-3.

[9] Ali Behdad, *A Forgetful Nation: On Immigration and Cultural Identity in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 4.

With each elision and remembrance, city boosters, activists, state park advocates, and area residents made new meanings of this place's immigrant past. In the histories and memories of Angel Island, like those of Alcatraz Island, the San Francisco Presidio, and the Emeryville Shellmound, historical actors struggled over the meaning of the place. Place-making occurred through the imbued meaning of etched poems in detention center walls. This was also a discursive process, one that occurred within the Chinese American community and on a national stage, with naturalization ceremonies, as when President Obama evoked the history of Angel Island. As with all of the sites in this dissertation, the place-making process reaches beyond geographic location. In making and marking places that were sites of institutional violence, notions of belonging and citizenship are defined and redefined on both a regional and national scale.

The contestation around Angel Island's immigration history has served as a proxy for an evolving understanding of citizenship and national identity during the Cold War and beyond. In the 1940s and 1950s, the island's immigration history, one marked by violent detention and the enforcement of racial otherness, remained nearly invisible from the public remembrance of the island. By the 1970s, memory of the island had begun to shift, as activists worked hard to preserve the former detention center while bringing the history of exclusion out of the shadows of American immigration discourse. By the late twentieth century, Angel Island's history had become firmly entrenched in that very immigration narrative. And, while the stories that circulated around Angel Island rarely ignored the violence of immigrant detention and the injustice of exclusion, this discrimination functioned as no more than a blemish on the past—unfortunate aberrations that the nation had moved beyond.

Waiting days, months, and sometimes years to be admitted into the United States, hopeful immigrants etched poetry into the walls of the detention barracks. As one poem states:

> America has power, but not justice.
> In prison, we were victimized as if we were
> guilty.
> Given no opportunity to explain, it was really
> brutal.
> I bow my head in reflection but there is
> nothing I can do.[10]

Through their poetry, detainees expressed a range of emotion: anger, alienation, fear, loneliness, and hope. Anchoring the history of detention to this particular place, these poems serve as more than just reminders of what immigrants experienced traveling through Angel Island. They also challenge the dominant national mythology that celebrates the United States as an inclusive and welcoming nation to all foreigners.[11] While some individuals easily traversed the immigration restrictions and exclusions enforced on Angel Island, most found it difficult, at best, to enter the United States. These exclusionary policies made Angel Island a gatekeeper, "guarding" the entrance to the Golden State.[12]

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[10] Poem 22 in Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung, *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940* (San Francisco: HOC DOI Project, Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1980; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), p. 58.

[11] For a long history of the relationship between acknowledging and forgetting exclusionary immigration laws, see Behdad, *A Forgetful Nation*.

[12] Of course, Angel Island's history did not begin in 1910 with the opening of the immigration station. For a thousand years, the Hookooeko band of the Coastal Miwok lived on Angel Island and used it as a temporary hunting and fishing destination. After Spanish explorers named the island Isla de Los Angeles, Spanish, French, Russian, and British explorers, sealers, whalers, and navy crews used it as a base of operations and as a place to refuel after passing through the Golden Gate. Under Mexican rule, beginning in 1821, the island was home to a large cattle ranch. In 1850, the U.S. fortified the island and established it as a military base. The Army used the island as a depot for soldiers on their way to Hawaii and the Philippines. It was also a quarantine station, and federal inmates and prisoners of war lived there in make-shift island prisons. Angel Island sits on the edge of American nation-

The U.S. Immigration Station on Angel Island opened in 1910, but the immigration laws that governed the island date back to 1875, when Congress passed the Page Law, excluding women presumed to be prostitutes from entering the United States.[13] While the Page Law did not specifically name Chinese women as an excluded group, it indirectly targeted them, as they were commonly assumed to be sexually exploited. A precursor to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the Page Law was the first restrictive federal immigration law and it laid much of the groundwork for this new set of exclusionary policies.[14] Passed in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was the first race-based-immigration law. The 1882 act, as well as subsequent extensions and revisions, denied entrance to all Chinese laborers, and exempted Chinese merchants, students, teachers, travelers, and diplomats. One of the most significant aspects of the laws dictated that even those Chinese able to enter the country legally were still ineligible for American citizenship. The original law was immediately effective, dramatically reducing the number of Chinese immigrants who entered the United States. In 1887, the number of Chinese immigrants entering the U.S. reached an all-time low of just ten.[15]

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building: wrested from Mexico, a staging point for imperial exploits, and a guard against unwanted foreigners. Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 9-10; John Soennichsen, *Miwoks to Missiles: A History of Angel Island* (Tiburon, CA: Angel Island Association, 2001); Dorene Askin, *Historical Report: Angel Island Immigration Station* (Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Interpretive Planning Unit, 1977).

[13] The law also targeted presumed convicts.

[14] On the Page Law, see Sucheng Chan, "The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870-1943," in *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), pp. 105-9; George Anthony Peffer "Forbidden Families: Emigration Experiences of Chinese Women under the Page Law, 1875-1882," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 6, no. 1 (Fall 1986): 28-46; Erika Lee, "Exclusion Acts: Chinese Women during the Chinese Exclusion Era, 1882-1943," in *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology*, ed. Shirley Hune and Gail M. Nomura (New York: New York University Press, 2003),p. 79. On the Page Law as a "blueprint" for future immigration laws, see Ethiene Lubheid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 31-54.

[15] For a discussion of the Chinese Exclusion Acts and immigration during the exclusion era, see Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina

Renewed by Congress in 1892 and made permanent in 1904, the Chinese Exclusion Act heralded more restrictive immigration laws that affected other Asian immigrant groups as well. In 1908, the Gentleman's Agreement prohibited the entrance of Japanese male laborers.[16] In 1905, Japan colonized Korea, making it subject to the Gentleman's Agreement, curbing immigration from Korea. The 1917 Immigration Act further restricted Asian immigration by establishing the "Asiatic Barred Zone," which halted immigration from Afghanistan to the Pacific, including India**.**[17] Finally, with the 1924 Immigration Act, the federal government virtually ended Asian immigration to the United States. The act excluded persons ineligible for citizenship, which applied to people from all nations of East and South Asia.[18] Because the U.S. occupied the Philippines, immigrants from the archipelago were colonial subjects who constituted the sole exemption from exclusion. But, with the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act, the Phillipines obtained independence and the U.S. limited Filipino immigration to just fifty people a year.[19] "Exclusion," as historian Mae Ngai explains, "made Asians into permanent foreigners and guaranteed they would be but a small, marginalized population in America for nearly one

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Press, 2003); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 18, 38, 204-6; Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and Lucy E. Salyer, *Laws as Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[16] Japanese women continued to enter the United States as picture brides. In 1920 the United States and Japan reached an agreement to halt the entrance of picture brides as well. See Lubheid, *Entry Denied*, pp. 55-76.

[17] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, p. 18. The State Department did not want to offend Japan and did not include it the barred zone, though Japanese male laborers constituted an excluded class. The 1924 act included Japan and completed Asiatic exclusion. Ibid., p. 37.

[18] On the 1924 Immigration Act, see Ibid., pp. 21-55. Approximately 17,300 Chinese immigrants entered the U.S. through Canada or Mexico. As Erika Lee argues, it is imperative to understand the transnational consequences of anti-Chinese laws in transforming the northern and southern border. Erika Lee, "Enforcing the Borders: Chinese Exclusion along the U.S. Borders with Canada and Mexico, 1882-1924," *Journal of American History* 89, no.1 (June 2002): 54-86.

[19] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, pp. 118-20.

hundred years."[20] Exclusionary laws and practices worked to make Asians perpetually outsiders, always "alien."

The terms of the Chinese Exclusion Acts and their enforcement changed and shifted from 1882 to 1943, when Congress finally repealed the law.[21] One consistent aspect of the law declared that new immigrants would not be allowed to enter the U.S. until they had been examined and approved for admission by a "Chinese inspector." [22] This was often a day-long process and, with the immigration station located in San Francisco, the city needed a place to house the immigrants. In the years immediately after 1882, those immigrants awaiting admission or deportation or those who could not post bond stayed in a San Francisco jail at Broadway and Dupont streets. Missionaries often picked up Chinese women traveling alone and took them to mission homes in San Francisco designed to convert and "rescue" Chinese prostitutes.[23] For close to twenty years, however, most immigrant detention took place aboard

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[20] Ibid., p. 18.

[21] In *At America's Gates*, Erika Lee argues that Chinese Exclusion shifted over its 61 years in place. For instance, in the law's first two decades its application was still unclear. When Angel Island opened, however, the law's enforcement had become systematic, centralized, and controlled by an immigration bureaucracy. See Lee, *At America's Gates*. From 1875, when Congress passed the Page Law, until 1890, the federal government worked with the states to manage immigration. It was not until 1891 that the federal government took over immigration control from states. Eithene Lubheid argues that the regulation of women's sexuality, policed during the enforcement of the Page Law, became a federal policy. Lubheid, *Entry Denied*, pp. 1-29. See also Ann Pegler-Gordon, *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S Immigration Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

[22] Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, p. 10.

[23] Ibid. Chinese women had traveled to San Francisco since the early years of the Gold Rush. Some Chinese women worked as restaurant operators, laborers, or translators, but many were, in fact, prostitutes whom missionaries hoped to "save." For the foundational text on Chinese women in San Francisco, see Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). On female Chinese immigrants and settlement, see Annette White Parks, "Beyond the Stereotype: Chinese Pioneer Women in the American West," in *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West*, ed. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), pp. 258-273. See also Huping Ling, *Surviving on Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives* (Buffalo: State University of New York Press, 1998). On the relationship between Protestant female missionaries and groups of women they hoped to "rescue," including Chinese women, see Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

steamships floating on the San Francisco Bay, outside the city limits.[24] Then, in 1898, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company converted some of its offices near San Francisco's Pier 40 into a detention facility. Overcrowded and unsanitary, the facility was often called the "detention shed," the "iron cage," or the "Chinese jail" by city residents.[25] The conditions of the facility caused widespread protest in San Francisco's Chinese community, members of which demanded the demolition of the building.[26] Amidst these protests about the inefficient system and decrepit buildings, the federal government established the immigration station on Angel Island.

Over the last one hundred years, Angel Island has often been referred to as "the Ellis Island of the West" and it is indeed tempting to compare these two immigration stations.[27] Their operations overlapped for eleven years (Ellis Island was open from 1892 to 1921 and Angel Island between 1910 and 1940). Both stations were located on islands, near major port cities. Equating the two stations, however, serves to erase the exclusionary history of Angel Island in favor of inclusionary immigration narratives often associated with Ellis Island. This comparison fails to do justice to either immigration hub. Ellis Island was the processing center for mostly European immigrants who arrived on the East Coast of the United States. Angel Island, on the other hand, processed primarily Asian immigrants arriving to the West Coast. Ellis Island's primary responsibility was to enforce immigration restriction, and most immigrants spent less than a day in process before authorities released them to the mainland. Angel Island, on the

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[24] Lee and Yung, Angel Island, p. 10. See also Robert J. Barde, *Immigration at the Golden Gate: Passenger Ships, Exclusion, and Angel Island* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), pp. 54-67.

[25] Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, pp. 10-11.

[26] Ibid., p. 11; Barde, *Immigration at the Golden Gate*, pp. 68-71.

[27] The comparison between these two immigration hubs was made at least as early as 1917. See Mary Bamford, *Angel Island: Ellis Island of the West* (Chicago: The Women's American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1917).

other hand, enforced policies that specifically excluded Asian peoples, with immigrants often staying on the island for long periods of time; many never reached the mainland shore of California.

Like those arriving at Angel Island, immigrants traveling through Ellis Island experienced invasive questioning and medical exams to ensure they were not "likely to be a public charge" (LPC), ill, diseased, or members of any other category that would restrict their entrance to the United States. On average, immigrants to Ellis Island spent just a few hours waiting to enter the U.S. Still, medical inspections could be especially harrowing. Immigration and public health officials often associated "undesirable" characteristics and diseases with people arriving from Eastern and Southern Europe, making entrance more difficult for those immigrant groups. While most immigrants had only short stays on Ellis Island, some were held for longer, and many were ultimately deported. [28] Ellis Island was no open door, but restrictions enforced at Ellis Island were significantly easier to navigate than the exclusions enforced on Angel Island. What ultimately distinguishes these two stations is their respective purpose. Angel Island was not built for admitting immigrants, but rather for the purpose of exclusion.[29]

From 1910 to 1940, the immigration station on Angel Island saw over 600,000 people travel through its doors in hopes of reaching the mainland via San Francisco. The station was established to process immigrants from China specifically, but it also processed those from

[28] For a general history of Ellis Island, see Vincent J. Cannato, *American Passage: The History of Ellis Island* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010). Immigrants on Ellis Island also faced invasive medical procedures and officials often associated certain disease with ethnic groups or nations of origin. Alan Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes and the Immigrant Menace* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 50-77.

[29] For a comparison of Ellis Island and Angel Island, see Roger Daniels, "No Lamps Were Lit for Them: Angel Island and the Historiography of Asian American Immigration," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 17, no.1 (Fall 1997): 3-18; and, Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, p. 8.

Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Between 1915 and 1920, one-third of those who traveled through Angel Island were non-Asian and after 1924, 15 percent of all immigrants to Angel Island were non-Asian. [30] Still, Chinese immigrants experienced the most difficult hurdles to enter San Francisco. During its thirty-year tenure as a U.S. immigration station, approximately 100,000 Chinese were detained at Angel Island.[31]

Tasked with enforcing the nation's exclusionary immigration laws, officials at Angel Island participated in harsh interrogations and medical examinations. While the types of restrictive policies and their implementation shifted during Angel Island's three decades as a federal immigration station, inspections remained extremely consistent. One way that officials attempted to distinguish between true and false claims for admission to the United States was through detailed interrogations. Officials scrutinized every detail of an immigrant's life before arriving on the island, commonly asking arcane questions such as the number of stairs leading up to a house or the number of trees lining a street. Interrogators believed that through this detailed questioning, they might uncover inconsistencies and expose false pretenses under which immigrants had traveled to the United States.[32] Medical examinations on Angel Island were especially invasive. When Chinese men and women arrived to the immigration station, Public

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[30] Lee and Yung, *Angel Island,* p. 18.

[31] About 178,000 Chinese men and women were admitted to enter the United States as new immigrants, returning residents, or U.S. citizens. Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, p. 69. Robert Barde and Gustavo J. Bobins examine passenger data from1913 to 1919, collected from the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. From this data sampling, they argue that Chinese immigrants were detained, on average, for days, though, officials did detain some Chinese immigrants for weeks, months, and sometimes years. They show a wide variety of immigrants, including Europeans, detained by immigration officials. While this empirical data begins to clarify and explain the contours of detention on Angel Island, Barde and Bobins rely on a small sampling to make their argument. See Robert Barde and Gustavo J. Bobins, "Detention at Angel Island: First Empirical Evidence*" Social Science History* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 103–36. Lee Puey You's 20-month detention on Angel Island is the longest recorded and the most well-documented. See Judy Yung, "'A Bowlful of Tears': Lee Puey You's Immigration Experience on Angel Island," in *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women,* pp. 123-37.

[32] Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, pp. 84-7.

Health Service (PHS) officials immediately segregated them by sex. Officials inspected men's teeth, ears, nose, and chest, and took each man behind a screen where he was stripped to examine any potential "abnormalities" below the waist. Women received a considerably less rigorous exam, unless PHS suspected specific diseases. Over time, new procedures were added to this baseline inspection, including inverting immigrants' eyelids to look for signs of trachoma infections, and examining feces for signs of hookworm. In addition to all of this, immigrants' clothing had to go through a complex disinfectant process.[33]

The immigration station at Angel Island managed the flow of people in and out of San Francisco for thirty years. In 1940, however, the station suffered a devastating fire. Likely the result of a short in electrical wires, the fire destroyed the administration building including many of the station's files. At the time, officials were detaining 200 Asian men, 32 women from China, Russia, and Japan, and 23 men awaiting deportation, along with the crew of a ship. After the fire, officials took the deportees to the San Francisco County Jail and immigrants began to be processed.[34] Because the federal government decided to not rebuild the affected buildings, the fire marked the end of the immigration station on Angel Island.

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[33] Nyan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 184-86.

[34] Askin, *Angel Island Immigration Station*, pp. 84-85.

Angel Island Day

On Sunday, September 21, 1952, just twelve years after the fire that closed the immigration station, 20,000 San Francisco Bay Area residents visited Angel Island for what San Francisco Mayor Clifford E. Rishell termed Angel Island Day. The federal government had declared the island surplus property in 1946 and its future was now uncertain. Mayor Rishell, with the aid of area groups, hoped Angel Island Day would help garner support for a November ballot initiative proposing that the city of San Francisco buy the island for the arguably low price of 195,000 dollars. At the time, the city and Marin County were jockeying for control of Angel Island, while others hoped that it would join a public park system.[35] Angel Island Day was only the second time the island had been opened to the public (the first was in 1949) and visitors from the area's surrounding nine counties traveled by ferry in anticipation of the island's picturesque vistas and beautiful picnic spots.[36] Angel Island Day gave area residents a taste of what might become of this tiny isle, and it was an opportunity for the city, and the day's sponsors, to mold the future image of Angel Island as a park paradise.[37]

[35] "Marin Asked to Buy Angel Island," *Daily Independent Journal*, June 3, 1949; "Angel Island Day Planned for Marin, Brucato's Committee Working on Plans For Outing During Autumn," *Daily Independent Journal*, July 8, 1949; "State Side Steps Angel Isle Deal," *Oakland Tribune*, August 31, 1952; and "Angel Island Group Hits Cheap 'Coney Island' Charge," *San Francisco Examiner*, September 1, 1952. The debate also took to the airwaves; see "Private or Public Ownership of Angel Island," *What's your Opinion?,* May 5, 1952, KPIX, Angel Island Foundation Committee Records, 1950-1966, 81/66c V. 2, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley [hereafter Bancroft Library].

[36] "Thousands to View Angel Isle in Big Invasion," *Daily Independent Journal*, April 21, 1949. In 1949, the island opened to the public much like it did in 1952. Replete with curious crowds and maritime events, this 1949 event failed to cause the same stir of the later Angel Island Day.

[37] "Angel Island Heavenly Spot, 20,000 Guests Discover," *Oakland Tribune,* September 22, 1952.

On Angel Island Day, the material and immaterial meanings of the place were still up for grabs. Ignoring most of the isle's long history, including native people's use of the land and the former immigration station, Angel Island Day's sponsors focused on the island's natural surroundings and the U.S. military's legacy. Boy Scouts greeted visitors upon their arrival and the day's events included regular tours along the island's perimeter as well as music, dancing, boat racing, military demonstrations, a bicycle race by returning summer Olympians, and, finally, the coronation of Miss Angel Island.[38]

The sponsors of Angel Island Day presented the isle's history in the service of American nationalism, working in concert with Cold War notions of nation and citizen. With an ever-looming threat of war and the ever-present fear of communism, the early Cold War was a period of increased patriotism among the majority of Americans. Those whose politics or culture threatened this national cohesion, however, often faced deep political and social repression.[39] In the midst of the Cold War, the sponsors of Angel Island Day produced an image of the island that moved away from its exclusionary past as an immigration center and towards a park that was "all-American"—defined by its natural beauty and its military history.

In drumming up support for their park paradise, the day's sponsors published an *Official Souvenir Program,* available for purchase. Among other things, the brochure quoted Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.'s 1947 report on the recreational value of Angel Island and the possibilities of turning it into a park. The son of the famous naturalist and landscape architect of the same name,

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[38] "Eastbay Picnic Day Slated on Angel Island," *Oakland Tribune*, August 26, 1952; "Angel Island Preview, Scouts to Camp Ahead of Public Preview," *San Francisco Examiner*, September 20, 1952; and, "Angel Island Heavenly Spot, 20,000 Guests Discover," *Oakland Tribune*, September 22, 1952.

[39] Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 239-42.

Olmsted Jr. was important in his own right, and his fame was not lost on the organizers of Angel Island Day. Olmsted valued the island's remoteness and recommended against its further development. Rather, he remarked, it was the isle's inherent natural characteristics that "enable people for hours at a time, to feel that they have gotten completely away from conditions characteristic of modern city life and into surroundings as refreshingly different…[and] far distant from any city."[40] The organizers agreed with Olmsted about the island's recreational possibilities, and argued that it could become "a Center for physical and spiritual values for community youth groups. A wholesome place for family and week-end trips…. A rare pleasure ground for the recreational-cultural enjoyment of all."[41] For Olmsted, and the day's sponsors, the natural environs could rejuvenate area residents and provide an escape from the city; it could be an "All-American" park for families to picnic and a place for scouts to sit around the fire.

When Olmsted described the inherent and intrinsic qualities of the island, he also outlined how to preserve its natural beauty. He was against developing the isle commercially and believed that it was "peculiarly suitable" to be a park, specifically because it was an island. [42] In his report, Olmstead wrote, "It must not be stigmatized by the establishment there of a prison, insane asylum, or other incongruous institution."[43] Many such institutions were in fact located

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[40] Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., "Report on the Recreation Possibilities and Values of Angel Island, San Francisco Bay," April 10, 1947, Angel Island Foundation Committee Records, 1950-1954, BANC MSS81/66 Vol. 1, Bancroft Library; "Official Souvenir Program, Angel Island Day," September 21, 1952, p. 10, folder "Angel Island Day," California Ephemera Collection, California Historical Society, San Francisco, CA [hereafter CHS].

[41] "Official Souvenir Program, Angel Island Day," p. 10.

[42] From a yacht harbor to a bridge connector, there were many different proposals for what Angel Island should become. For instance, see Charles Winslow, "The Development of Small Boat Harbors on the West Coast and State Marine Parks in California," December 6, 1946, folder: background info, California Marine Parks and Harbors Association Records, Bancroft Library. and, John Little to James Ricket, February 19, 1953, folder: Correspondence 1953-1955, box 1, San Francisco Bay Area Highway and Bridge Project Collection 1951-1956, Bancroft Library.

[43] Olmsted, "Report on the Recreation Possibilities and Values of Angel Island, San Francisco Bay," p. 7.

on islands geographically isolated from the daily lives of most citizens, with Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary, just to the south of Angel Island, serving as the prime local example.[44] The remnants of a military prison and immigration and detention center already existed on the Angel Island, but Olmsted was against any proposals for their future development. In his view, nature was the antithesis of a prison or a detention center; such an institution would spoil the island's natural beauty with the specter of human weakness and frailty. In this way, Olmsted was reorienting ideas about how these places could be, and, he believed, should be used. Using the *Souvenir Brochure* as a way to shape the legacy of the island, the day's sponsors selectively printed Olmsted's words, omitting anything pointing to a debased past.

The military presence on Angel Island had long piqued the interest of curious onlookers, who were attracted to the island, according to guidebooks, as a "pleasant place of resort" with the military post "beautifully located in a small valley extending from the waters' edge to the heights above."[45] The military had first established itself on Angel Island in 1863 with the founding of Camp Reynolds. In the years after the Civil War, the post served as a recruit depot; it housed soldiers on their way to fight in the so-called Indian Wars; it was an artillery battery; and it quartered troops on their way to and from war in the Philippines. In 1907, the U.S. military's Department of Recruits established a depot on the island and built Fort McDowell. During the

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[44] In addition to places like Angel and Alcatraz islands, on the East Coast, for instance, Riker's Island opened as a state prison in 1932 and remains active. Ellis Island opened in 1892 and closed as a federal immigration station in 1954. McNeil Island, in the Puget Sound, opened as a federal prison in 1875 and did not close until 2011.

[45] William Disturnell, *Strangers' Guide to San Francisco and Vicinity: A Complete and Reliable Book of Reference for Tourists and Other Strangers Visiting the Metropolis of the Pacific, with a Map Showing the Distances to Different Points* (San Francisco: W.C. Disturnell, 1883), p. 43. See also William Doxey, *Doxey's Guide to San Francisco and Vicity: The Big Trees, Yo Semite Valley, the Geysers, China, Japan, and the Sandwich Island* (San Francisco: Doxey &Co., 1881), p. 75; Photos 130, 131, and 132, folder: Mendocino, San Francisco, Belmont 1884-1886, box 1, Photo Collection 87 vol. 1, Francis A. Blackburn Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

first and second World Wars, Fort McDowell's main functions were to send troops west and to protect the Pacific Coast. At the end of World War II, the military operations on the island were no longer needed and the federal government declared it surplus property in 1946. This proved to be a temporary measure, however. By 1954, Army engineers once again adopted the island for artillery placements. The military used the island as a Nike Missile Battery until 1962, when its tenure as an active military site ended.[46] In 1952, during the interim, trams took visitors to see the island's vistas, the diverse foliage, and the famed garrison, Fort McDowell. Images of the military, and a long description of the island's military history, figured prominently in the *Souvenir Brochure*.[47]

Angel Island Day sponsors held a "military demonstration" and tours of Fort McDowell, the area deemed "historical" at Angel Island.[48] Perhaps Olmstead would have criticized the military exhibitions. Perhaps, like insane asylums and prisons, the military was also an institution incongruous with "nature." On the other hand, for many in this era, the military represented freedom and protection from the ever looming communist threat. Celebrating military technology was a way to flex nationalist muscles, showing off the nation's strength in an insecure world.

Angel Island Day reached its peak with the welcoming ceremony and the coronation of Miss Angel Island, awarded to white Oakland resident Gayle Dee Ayers. The *Oakland Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *San Francisco Examiner*, in addition to numerous small local

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[46] Soennichsen, *Miwoks to Missile*.

[47] "Official Souvenir Program, Angel Island Day," pp. 2-15.

[48] Ibid. pp. 9, 16.

papers, reported on the beauty pageant.[49] Of all of the events and happenings on Angel Island in September 1952, the Miss Angel Island competition most captured the public's attention. Crowned in front of the day's 20,000 visitors, Ayers posed in her bathing suit and high heels. In addition to the honor of the crown, Ayers won a round-trip ticket to Hawai'i—which was fitting because Angel Island had once been a discharge station for soldiers returning from Hawai'i and the Philippines.[50] As civic rituals, beauty pageants reflected ideologies of national belonging, defined by proper gender expressions of femininity.[51] "Miss Angel Island," of course, was not "Miss America," but just as Miss America worked to represent and stand in for the nation, so too did Miss Angel Island symbolize Angel Island. Ayers, and all of the young women in the pageant, looked like classic mid-twentieth-century American pin-ups, imprinting their whiteness and femininity onto the island.[52] Miss Angel Island literally became the face of the future of Angel Island. With Ayers representing the isle, the legacy of detention and exclusion moved further into the shadows.

Amidst this celebration there were few, if any, mentions of the island's past use as an immigration and detention center. For the most part, the day's festivities took place in the southern area of the island, where the military installations had been located. Close to Hospital

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[49] "It's Angel Island Day, Come Out and Have a Picnic (Thousands of People Plan to)," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 21, 1952; "Miss Angel Island Will be Chosen," *The Daily Review*, Hayward, CA, August 15, 1952; "Oakland Girls in Queen Race," *Oakland Tribune*, September 21, 1952; "Angel Island Play Host to 20,000 Visitors, S.F. Recreation Plan Back by Please Visitors," *San Francisco Examiner*, September 22, 1952.

[50] Soennichsen, *Miwoks to Missiles*, p. 151.

[51] Sarah Banet-Weiser, *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World: Beauty Pageants and National Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 3–10.

[52] "Miss Gayle Dee Ayers, Oakland," September 21, 1952, BANC PIC 1959.010—NEG, San Francisco News-Call Bulletin Newspaper Photograph Archive, [hereafter SFNCB Archive] Bancroft Library; "Miss Angel Island," September 21, 1952, BANC PIC 1959.010--NEG, SFNCB Archive, Bancroft Library.

Cove, participants picnicked on the beach and watched the afternoon yacht races. Visitors may have used the old immigration station's structures for shade from the sun, and they certainly saw the buildings on their hikes or from their seats on the tram tour around the island. The scheduled tour stopped at Fort McDowell (the East Garrison), the West Garrison, Hospital Cove, and the North Garrison, where the immigration station was located. However, in reports of the day's events and in brochures detailing of the day's activities, the North Garrison was mentioned rarely and then only as a prison for Italian prisoners of war during World War II. Visitors likely saw the immigration buildings, but they were neither a central destination nor a historical focal point of the day's activities. [53]

While the writers of the Angel Island Day program left out the island's immigration history when composing their six-page section entitled "History of Angel Island," they did mention it in their "General Facts about Angel Island." Alongside "facts" about "Angels and Injuns" and the quarantine station, they included a brief explanation of the "Ellis Island of the West." The text described the buildings and their use, but paid no attention to the immigrants who passed through the doors.[54] Given the day's other silences, it is not surprising that the program elided the brutality of detention as well as the people who came through the immigration port.

The events of Angel Island Day were unique, but the silences that enveloped the day's program mirrored early Cold War culture, which tolerated and perpetuated virulent racism against people of color while celebrating the U.S. as a racially and religiously diverse nation,

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[53] "It's Angel Island Day, Come Out and Have a Picnic (Thousands of People Plan to)."

[54] "Official Souvenir Program, Angel Island Day."

uniquely prepared to lead an ever-more connected world. This image of the United States, as a democratic melting pot of the world's cultures and peoples, was challenged by activists within the United States, as well as by Soviet officials who pointed to the inequalities of Jim Crow.[55] How was the U.S. to be a global leader of the world's diverse people when it legislated racism at home? In response to both domestic and international pressure, the federal government instituted reforms both real and symbolic. Aimed at assisting African Americans, federal policies integrated the U.S. military and public schools, forbade discrimination in defense industries, and invalidated restrictive housing covenants.[56] In the same period, a separate set of legal and legislative moves opened immigration to Asians and allowed Asians living within the U.S. to become naturalized citizens. In 1943, Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Acts; in 1946, the federal government passed laws that allowed for the naturalization of Filipinos and Indians. In the 1947 War Brides Act, Congress made it legal for soldiers to bring home foreign-born women as their wives. By 1952, Asians living in the U.S. could become naturalized citizens. These legal and legislative changes during the 1940s and 1950s began to alleviate the structural racism that plagued every level of society, and began to transform the economic, social, and legal structures of the U.S.[57]

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[55] Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 224. See also Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Area* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). On the relationship between the United States' increasing presence in a global arena and African American response to racism at home, see also Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[56] Thomas Borstelmann argues that President Dwight Eisenhower was himself comfortable with segregation but saw the importance of "symbolic improvements in American race relations." In part, he desegregated District of Columbia because he knew it was highly symbolic. Still, Washington remained an egregious symbol of inequity. Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, pp. 90-91.

[57] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism,* pp. 224-25.

Even during this time of increasing racial acceptance, there was little tolerance in American culture for discussions of wrongs that the U.S. had committed against Asian immigrants or citizens. Christina Klein's study of American fascination with Asia and Asians during the early Cold War period uses literature to illustrate this point. For instance, the most popular Asian American literary works of the early Cold War period introduced readers to an ethnic otherness, but at their core they were about Americanization. Written mostly by Chinese Americans, books like *Flower Drum Song* by C.Y. Lee, *Father and Glorious Descendent* by Pardee Lowe, or *Fifth Chinese Daughter* by Jade Snow Wong dealt with themes of generational conflict and discussed difference in cultural, rather than racial, terms. Guiding readers through Chinese familial customs and traditions, these texts had a touristic quality, often introducing non-Chinese readers to San Francisco's Chinatown. On the other hand, books by Japanese and Japanese American authors rarely met critical or popular success, because Americans were far less likely to read work by a group so closely identified with a wartime enemy or with the trauma of internment.[58] Similarly, on Angel Island Day, officials looked past the violence of immigrant detention and towards the parts of the island's history that bolstered American nationalism.

While Angel Island Day brought tens of thousands of people to the island for the first time, it ultimately failed to produce any concrete plans for its future use. Soon after September 21, 1952, the Army Corp of Engineers once again took control of the island and installed Nike anti-aircraft missiles.[59] It would not be until 1962 that Angel Island would join other California

[58] Ibid. pp. 226-7. In 1958, Rodgers and Hammerstein adapted the novel *The Flower Drum Song* into a popular Broadway musical. And, in 1961, it was again adapted, this time into a feature-length film. In both adaptations, ethnicity trumped race, and cultural transformation was vital to assimilation. Robert G. Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), p. 173.

[59] Soennichsen, *Miwoks to Missiles*, p. 104.

natural and historic places as a part of the California State Park System. While the park system worked to keep the island intact for naturalists, its staff failed to see the immigration station as anything more than decrepit buildings. The North Garrison, where the station was located, provided shelter from the wind. Nearby were sandy beaches of which park planners hoped to take advantage. In the state park's master plan, the North Garrison would be almost entirely razed to make room for cabins and fire pits.[60] The impulse to demolish the North Garrison speaks to the planners' strong desire to move past a significant and troubled aspect of the island's history. If carried out, it would have served as a final and enduring silence, after which the history of the place would only be able to speak through memory.

Beyond the Barracks

In May 1970, a California State Park Ranger, Alexander Weiss, walked into Angel Island Immigration and Detention Center's Building 317, located in the North Garrison. One of the former detention center barracks, Building 317 was in a state of disarray, and off-limits to the public. It was without electricity, its floorboards rotted and its windows broken. Weiss entered the building armed with a flashlight and he instantly saw Chinese characters etched deep into the walls.[61] Not isolated to just one room, the writing covered every inch of almost every room.

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[60] *Preliminary Master Plan Angel Island State Park*, 1967, folder: Reference Marin County - Angel Island 1963, 1968, carton 19, Save San Francisco Bay Association Records, 1953-2004, BANC MSS 87/29 c, Bancroft Library.

[61] Weiss was not the first to "discover" this poetry. Two immigrants, Smiley Jan (detained in 1931), and Tet Yee (detained in 1932) transcribed over ninety poems, collecting them in an unpublished manuscript, "Collection of Autumn Grass: Volume Collecting Voices from the Heart of the Weak." Gareth Hoskins, "Memory

Painted over and over again by immigration officials who saw the etchings as nothing more than graffiti, the imprints of the carvings continued to peek through the layers of paint. New coats of paint failed to deter detainees from carving poetry into the walls; a palimpsest, these walls remain physical vestiges of the exclusion laws.[62]

Weiss understood immediately that these poems had cultural and historical significance, and he went to his supervisor to alert him of the discovery. The supervisor, however, did not share Weiss's opinion and reasoned that the staff should not bother with a "bunch of graffiti," especially given that Building 317 and others from the immigration station were earmarked for demolition to make way for a campsite. Soon after Weiss found the poetry, the San Francisco Fire Department used the station's wooden employee cottages, designed by famed local architect Julia Morgan, in a fire drill, burning them all to the ground. At this point Weiss understood that the detention center would soon follow if he did not move quickly and get others involved. [63]

Weiss first approached his former professor at San Francisco State College (SFSC), George Araki. Araki's mother had come through Angel Island as a Japanese picture bride, so Weiss hoped he would understand the significance of the carvings and help rescue the buildings from demolition. After seeing the poems, Araki helped Weiss engage photographer Mak Takahashi, who agreed to capture in image every inch of the detention center walls. In case the demolition plans continued on schedule, there would, at the very least, be some lasting

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and Mobility: Representing Chinese Exclusion at Angel Island Immigration Station," Ph.D. diss. University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2000, p. 3.

[62] Immigration officials periodically filled in the carving with spackle and putty and then painted over the walls. Inadvertently, this has helped archeologists to date the poems according to the paint color. Ibid.

[63] Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, p. 302. For a short overview of Weiss's discovery of the poetry etched into the detention center walls, San Francisco activists' struggle to save the detention center buildings, and the creation of the Angel Island Immigration Station museum, see Ibid., pp. 302-14.

documentation of the poetry. Araki took Takahashi's photos to colleagues and students in the newly established Asian American Studies Department at SFSC. The images spurred college students and community activists to visit the island see the poetry for themselves. Many of these young people's parents had immigrated to the United States through Angel Island, but they knew little of the history, because older family members were often reluctant to speak about their painful immigration experiences. Seeing the poetry, and knowing the destruction of these buildings was imminent, a small group of committed historians, students, and activists from the Chinese American community moved to action.[64]

Forming the Angel Island Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee (AIISHAC), this small group eventually secured 250,000 dollars in state money from grant measure AB3067 for the buildings' protection and stabilization.[65] Saving the physical remnants of the immigration station allowed AIISHAC to provide early tours to former detainees and their families. Between 1970, when Alexander Weiss found poems in the detention barracks, and 1976, when AIISHAC made its formal recommendation to the California State Park System on the future of the immigration station buildings, Chinese American activists worked hard to preserve the memory of Angel Island on multiple fronts. By physically saving the detention barracks, they preserved the material structures that spoke to the injustices many had faced when entering the U.S. And, by recording immigrants' stories and voices, collecting oral histories,

[64] Ibid., pp. 303-04. Initially, groups formed with various names but similar purposes. For instance, the China Cove Historical Advisory Citizen's Committee was comprised of members of different Northern California Chinese communities interested in saving the detention barracks. "Committee Forms to Preserve China Cove," *East/West*, November 20, 1974. Another early group, Save Angel Island Detention Center, also hoped to preserve the detention center and the poetry etched inside. "Asians Want Angel Island Barracks Retained," *East/West*, August 7, 1974.

[65] "Angel Island Bill Passed, 71 to Nil," *East/West*, May 19, 1976. See also Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, p. 307; and, Gareth Hoskins, "Poetic Landscapes of Exclusion: Chinese Immigration at Angel Island, San Francisco," in Richard H. Schein ed., *Landscape and Race in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 97.

translating poems, and organizing trips to the immigration station, they ensured that this history would not be lost. The buildings, and the poems etched into the walls, served as a testament to the violence and humiliation that met immigrants on their arrival. In recording the oral histories of immigrants, they ensured that individual stories would survive in the archive. By bringing elderly Chinese immigrants to Angel Island to return to the barracks and bunks where they had spent days, weeks, and months, the activists worked to connect with the elders of their community and bring unspoken traumas to light.

The decision to try to save the detention center on Angel Island came at the same moment that radical social movements, including the Asian American movement, were gaining traction across the country, and especially in San Francisco. In 1970, when Weiss first saw the poetry etched into the detention center walls and brought it to the attention of his friends and colleagues at San Francisco State College, that school was still reeling from the aftermath of the Third World Student Strike. The five-month strike resulted in the establishment of the first Ethnic Studies Department in the country, alongside departments of Asian American Studies, Native American Studies, African American Studies, and Chicano Studies.[66] In addition to being one of the first and longest student strikes in U.S. history, the Third World Student Strike was also a multiracial movement. Comprised of Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and white students, the activism at SFSC helped galvanize radical movements

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[66] Daryl J. Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 50-61. Maeda's discussion of the student strike primarily revolves around S.I. Hayakawa, the president of San Francisco State College at the time of the strike, and the radical Asian American protesters. Maeda specifically highlights the tension between Hayakawa's self-proclaimed assimilationist ideology and the radical Asian American student strikers, who saw critical links between capitalism and imperialism, and parallel struggles between theirs and those of other people of color, pp. 40-72.

throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Many of the young activists who worked to save the buildings on Angel Island cut their teeth striking at SFSC.[67]

The growing civil rights, antiwar, and Asian American movements politicized second-generation Asian Americans and heightened the young people's awareness of racism and embrace of ethnic pride.[68] This awareness and increasing politicization took various shapes. Some, like those in the group called Red Guard, challenged assimilationist ideology and action, and asserted a radical anti-imperial, anti-capitalist, internationalist agenda. The Red Guard saw their own Chinese community on the frontline of the struggle for racial and economic justice. They hoped that by building community programs to feed children and care for the elderly, organizing Asian American workers, and protesting the Viet Nam War they would improve their own community's conditions.[69] Other groups organized around specific issues like the Viet Nam War, workers' rights, youth concerns or, like those in AIISHAC, preserving and celebrating culture and history. Despite deep divisions in ideology and strategy, these groups were united by a belief that Asian Americans faced racial discrimination and it was necessary to fight this oppression.[70]

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[67] For a broad discussion of the activists who attempted to save the buildings on Angel Island and their involvement in the larger Asian American movement, see Lee and Young, *Angel Island*, pp. 304-05.

[68] Ibid., p. 304.

[69] On the Red Guard's politics, and their relationship with both the Asian American movement, and black nationalism, see Maeda, *Breaking the Chains*, pp. 73-96.

[70] For the first comprehensive history of the Asian American movement, see William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993). For a broad discussion of various strands of the pan-ethnic Asian American movement, see Steve Louie and Glenn K. Omatsu, eds., *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, Asian Studies Center Press, 2001).

Those involved in saving the Angel Island barracks and preserving the stories of immigrants believed that in exposing the exclusions of the past, they might help to expose the racism of their present moment. As one activist, Connie Young Yu, explained,

> the immigration barracks, with the expressions of suffering and struggle on the walls, is a fitting memorial to the courage and determination of our ancestors…It would serve as a reminder of America's past discriminatory policies towards Asians, and strengthen our resolve to continue to oppose any racial exclusion laws and detention centers.[71]

For Yu and others, recognizing and preserving this history was a part of reclaiming dignity and ethnic pride as well. In the pages of *East/West*, a local newspaper in San Francisco's Chinatown, the poems carved into the walls not only represented courage in the face of oppression, but were also evidence of literary Asian America:

> [On Angel Island] you will find the first Asian-American poetry ever written in this country. If you studied them, I think you would find that these poems were written by men and women who possessed an inordinate amount of courage, fortitude, and individuality. They were not unconscious immigrants devoid of sensibility or intelligence, as White America would have you believe.[72]

These poems, then, were a testament to the bravery and resilience of immigrants. Simultaneously, the literary traditions showcased in the barracks represented a challenge to negative stereotypes often associated with Asian immigrants. In preserving the poems, activists

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[71] Connie Young Yu, "Commemoration," *San Francisco Journal*, April 25, 1979, p. 11, quoted in Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, p. 304.

[72] "Behind the jade carvings, there still lies a cage," *East/West*, June 18, 1975. The title of this article comes from the last line of a poem etched into the wall of the barrack.

not only paid tribute to those who survived the exclusions and detentions that occurred on Angel Island, but named the poems as challenges to the racism of their present moment.[73]

In 1976, the Angel Island Immigration State Historical Advisory Committee (AIISHAC), comprised of members of the San Francisco Bay Area Chinese American community, presented the California State Park System with a report and recommendation on what should happen to the immigration station buildings.[74] The report was the culmination of the group's work, which ultimately secured necessary money and support to save the buildings from demolition. AIISHAC was unsatisfied with recommendations that only partially preserved the buildings or did not recognize the importance of these historic structures in their entirety. For instance, the group saw the potential removal of wood panels containing calligraphy, even for the purpose of preservation, as degrading to the integrity of the immigration station as a whole. "Without the poems on the walls," they stated, "the Station would be a body without its heart."[75] Ultimately, AIISHAC recommended that the station be declared a National Historic Landmark and that all of the remaining buildings be properly preserved as a historic museum and interpretative center.[76] In 1971, the immigration station joined the National Register's list of Historic Places, but it would not receive landmark status until 1997.[77]

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[73] Poetry about Angel Island went beyond the words etched into the barrack walls. For instance, Nanyind Stella Wong won an international poetry competition for her poems about the island. "Angel Island," *East West*, October 5, 1977.

[74] Members of this group included journalist Chris Chow, Paul Chow, and Connie Young Yu.

[75] Angel Island Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee [hereafter AIISHAC], *Report and Recommendation on Angel Island Immigration Station* (January 1976), p. 13, Asian American Studies Collection, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA [hereafter AAS ESL].

[76] Ibid. pp. 9-15.

[77] On the protracted fight to declare Angel Island Immigration Station a National Historic Landmark, see Tim Cresswell and Gareth Hoskins, "Place, Persistence, and Practice: Evaluating Historical Significance at Angel Island, San Francisco, and Maxwell Street, Chicago," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98, no. 2

In addition to its advocacy work, AIISHAC provided guided tours to people who had immigrated through Angel Island, bringing this history to the surface and helping these individuals to talk about the arduous experiences they had there. AIISHAC explained that "only recently, within the last two years, have Asian-Americans come to grips with [detention], gone back to the Station for visits, and begun to talk about their experiences there."[78] For many of those who immigrated through Angel Island, the experience was too dark and harrowing to discuss openly.[79] Some immigrants spent years scared that the false papers they used to get into the United States would come back to haunt them. If found out, they feared that they would be branded with an undocumented immigration status, forcing them back to their countries of origin, where they had not lived for decades.[80]

(2008): 392–413. National Historic Landmarks are chosen because they represent an "outstanding aspect of American history and culture." The National Historic Registry includes all places that may be worthy of preservation. "National Historic Landmarks Program," accessed May 15, 2013, http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/tutorial/About/About1.htm, and National Register Criteria for Evaluation, accessed May 15, 2013 http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm.

[78]AIISHAC, *Report and Recommendation on Angel Island Immigration Station*, p. 6.

[79] Ginny Lim and Judy Yung, "Our Parents Never Told Us," *San Francisco Examiner/Sunday Chronicle*, January 23, 1977. The first people the group approached were their own family members who were reluctant to speak about their immigration experience. See also Judy Yung's discussion of her first experience in the detention barracks on Angel Island in 1975 and her feelings of urgency regarding the oral history project, especially given individuals' reluctance to talk. Judy Yung, "'A Bowlful of Tears': Chinese Women Immigrants on Angel Island," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 52-55 (esp. p. 52).

[80] Even after the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws in 1943, immigration authorities continued to hold Chinese immigrants accountable for illegally entering the U.S., despite their long-term residence. In the midst of the Cold War, the federal government's anticommunist sentiment and continuing concern over illegal entrance led it to establish the Confession Program. When the government singled out Chinese for special scrutiny, it sent alarm throughout the Chinese community. The program ostensibly allowed Chinese immigrants to confess their immigrant status in exchange for amnesty. Not only did authorities fail to explain how they would implement the program, but when Chinese people admitted fraudulent status, they once again became aliens and relied on government agencies to grant them legal residence. While some 30,530 chose to confess, many others kept their false names rather than place themselves and their family under scrutiny. Lee, *At America's Gates*, pp. 240-42.

Highlighting the importance of these visits, AIISHAC's *Report* told the story of Howard Tom, a Chinese American man who had immigrated to the United States through Angel Island in 1931. Unlike many of the other individuals who toured the island with AIISHAC, Tom had been back to Angel Island since his own immigration. In 1967, he was a part of a group that was determining whether Angel Island should join the state park system. On a guided tour of the island, he asked if he could go to the immigration station. According to the report, the organizers "told him there was no such thing."[81] Returning to the island in 1975 on an AIISHAC tour, Tom finally made his way back to the detention barracks. The *Report* stated:

> On the walk back to the ferry dock, Tom was pensive and quiet. He confided to one member of this Committee that he was overwhelmed with emotion. Tom is a successful businessman today, with a firm of his own in San Jose. He wants to be recognized for his achievements. But he said he also wants Americans to remember how he got here, recognize where he came from, and see what he had to endure to become who he is.[82]

The narrative of Tom's experience is emblematic of the rhetorical tensions present in AIISHAC's struggle to save the building. AIISHAC recognized the institutional and community silences that plagued Angel Island and members worked tirelessly to break free of them—both silences within their own community and institutional silences that disavowed the island's immigration history. Simultaneously, however, the report's story about Tom goes out of its way to highlight his business achievements. Even as Tom hoped to bring attention to Angel Island, he wanted to be known for his accomplishments as a "successful businessman," thereby reinforcing perceptions of the American Dream.

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[81]AIISHC, *Report and Recommendation on Angel Island Immigration Station*, p. 7.

[82] Ibid., p. 8.

AIISHAC worked diligently to save the physical remnants and reminders of the immigration experience at Angel Island and to bring immigrants to the site of their former detention. Members also worked to collect and save the stories of immigrants who made the arduous journey. Beginning in 1975, Judy Yung, a librarian who later became an eminent historian of Chinese American women; Him Mark Lai, who, while not formally trained as a historian, became one of the preeminent chroniclers of the Chinese American experience; and Genny Lim, a famed poet and playwright, worked together on the Angel Island Oral History Project. They conducted interviews and collected and translated the poems etched into the walls of the detention center barracks. Together, they wrote and published *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*, one of the first texts to look at Chinese immigration through Angel Island using the voices of those who made the journey, in excerpted oral histories and translated poems.[83]

Not unlike other oral history projects in the 1970s, the Angel Island Oral History Project hoped to uncover and recover "an almost totally forgotten chapter in Chinese-American history."[84] The questions interviewers asked their subjects mostly pertained to details of their lives before, during, and after detention on Angel Island. Because each interviewee had to recall his or her experience, remembrance and forgetting sat at the heart of their responses.[85] Recalling

[83] On the development of the project to translate the poems and Him Lai Mark's involvement, see Judy Yung and Him Mark Lai, "Him Mark Lai: Reclaiming Chinese American History," *Public Historian* 25, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 62-63. The Angel Island Oral History project began in 1976. From 1976 to 1978, the group collected 45 interviews. From 1988 to 1990, the project continued when then University of California, Berkeley Ph.D. student Judy Yung conducted 12 additional interviews. And 8 more interviews were conducted between 1986 and 1988 under the auspices of Felicia Lowe Productions for the film *Carved in Silence*. See Background Information, folder 1, box 1 Angel Island Oral History Project, 1976-1990, AAS ARC 2000/62 [hereafter AI OHP], ESL.

[84] Lim and Yung, "Our Parents Never Told Us."

[85] As Alessandro Porteli explains, oral histories reveal the active and creative generation of memory to make sense of past events. Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 26.

the interrogations they went through, the people they knew, the suicides they heard about, and the food they ate, the interviewees remembered their time with anger, sadness, and often humiliation—regardless of the length of their detention. Mr. Ng, detained for three weeks in 1931, expressed a common sentiment among the interviewees: "It [Angel Island] was like a prison…We came here for a better livelihood and were mistreated."[86] Another immigrant, Mrs. Woo, stayed on Angel Island for only three days; she remembered "When we arrived, they locked us up like criminals in compartments like the cages at the zoo."[87] Many decades after their detention, immigrants still held onto the powerful feelings that they had on their arrival.[88] By the time they sat down for these interviews, they had long been U.S. citizens. It was a citizenship, however, mediated by a persistent sense of otherness, starkly exemplified by their mistreatment on Angel Island

When Lai, Lim, and Yung began this project, they were a part of a growing group of historians who sought to make visible the lived experiences of ordinary people and groups whose histories often remained unrepresented and invisible.[89] In part, their project was one of recuperation, to rescue a history that was increasingly at risk of becoming lost. More than

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[86] Mr. Ng Transcript, folder 30, box 1, AI OHP, ESL.

[87] Mrs. Woo Transcript, folder 47, box 1, AI OHP, ESL.

[88] Interviewers understood that former detainees had not only a fraught relationship to the place of Angel Island but also, specifically, to the memories of the place. Interviewers often asked questions like: "What is the most unforgettable thing about Angel Island for you?" "Have you ever been back to Angel Island?" And, "Do you think the next generation should know about Angel Island?" While not all interviewers asked the same specific questions, interviewees who had an opportunity to answer questions like these responded with the same set of emotions and feelings that they had given in the whole of their interview. See for instance, Mr. Lai Transcript, folder 26, box 1, AI OHP, ESL. For a complete list of possible interview questions, see "Interview Questions," Background Information, folder 1, box 1, AI OHP, ESL.

[89] Alistair Thomson, "Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History," *Oral History Review* 34, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2007): 49-70.

simply recovering "lost voices," however, these historians helped to widen the scope of U.S. immigration narratives and the historiography became increasingly inclusive through discussions of Angel Island and Asian immigration. In doing so, they, and, in turn, their interviewees, made their own claims at American citizenship. The memories of Angel Island became a vehicle to help establish national belonging.

In addition to procuring the stories of immigrants and widening immigration narratives, participants also began to bridge what Lim and Yung described as "a chasm" that many second-generation Chinese Americans felt separated them from their parents. What lay across this chasm were "the bleak memories of thousands of Chinese immigrants who have never quite succeeded in repressing all of the humiliation, fear, and defeat they experienced when they first arrived on these shores."[90] In not knowing this part of their elders' stories, many Asian Americans experienced a deep alienation from their own history. Activists and historians like Lim and Yung worked on a number of fronts to unearth this history and in doing so helped to bridge the chasm between the generations. They came to recognize that their immigrant ancestors "worked menial jobs so we could someday have college educations, like the thousands of other immigrants who struggled hard in a strange land in order to seek better economic opportunities for their children. We represent the fulfillment of their dreams."[91] This narrative celebrated the triumph of those who were able to succeed in the face of discriminatory immigration policy and economic hardship. At the same time, while this narrative did not disavow the past, it did obscure those who did not or could not fulfill their dreams. Perhaps inadvertently, their discussion paralleled rhetoric that supported the "model minority" myth,

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[90] Lim and Yung, "Our Parents Never Told Us."

[91] Ibid.

which represented Asian Americans (especially Chinese and Japanese Americans) as a racial minority that had achieved ethnic assimilation through patience, self-improvement, hard work, and political obedience.[92] Lim and Yung, on one hand, disrupted the model minority rhetoric by advocating for themselves and their community; on the other hand, they did so within a progressive immigration narrative that privileged economic success.

Advocates for saving the barracks on Angel Island tended to highlight immigrant success stories, but many immigrants, including those who came through the island, did not fit this mold. In the 1970s, as activists worked to save the stories of Angel Island, the mostly low-income residents of San Francisco's Chinatown struggled and fought for adequate housing, bilingual education, and safe streets.[93] The most famous and prolonged housing struggle began in 1968 at the base of Kearny Street, where San Francisco's Chinatown meets Manilatown. Here, a group of mostly elderly Asian American men, the majority of whom were Filipino, faced eviction from the International Hotel, or "I-Hotel," a workers' rooming house with 184 rooms. The top two floors of the three-story building were residential, serving a poor and working-class population of former farm workers, cannery workers, domestic and service workers, and seamen. A large communal kitchen accommodated the majority of the tenants and each floor had two hallway bathrooms. The I-Hotel also served as a social network and cultural center, with the ground floors and the basement rented to community groups and commercial establishments.[94] In many

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[92] Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, p. 145.

[93] See articles appearing in *East/West*, San Francisco Chinatown's community newspaper. For example, "Community support sought for housing," *East/West*, February 9, 1972; "100 Asians March Against Police Actions," *East/West,* November 11, 1972; "ESAA Program Improves Oral Language Skill," *East/West*, March 12, 1975.

[94] Estella Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), pp. 20-22.

ways the struggle over Angel Island and that of the I-Hotel ran parallel: both groups sought to save buildings imbued with meaning and the groups' participants likely overlapped. But while the memories associated with Angel Island could fit into a progress narrative, the struggle over I-Hotel did not reinforce this same vision of immigrant America.

In October of 1968, residents of the I-Hotel received eviction notices. Milton Meyer and Company, the corporation that owned the building, hoped to raze the hotel and replace it with a parking lot. Limited in their choices, approximately one-third of the elderly residents left the building immediately. In the year that followed, more tenants departed. By May 1969, only sixty-five tenants remained.[95] These remaining residents worked with housing rights advocates to protest the eviction. The struggle to save the I-Hotel was long and grueling, but it was also a multi-generational, pan-ethnic, and multi-racial movement.[96] In the end, the activists could not stop developers from evicting the I-Hotel tenants or razing the building. Despite the destruction, many of the community organizations found new spaces to occupy in nearby locations. In a bittersweet irony, and in spite of developers' hopes, the empty lot that once held the I-Hotel stood vacant until recently. In 2005, after nearly thirty years, a new low-income apartment was built at the site to serve the surrounding community.

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[95] Ibid., pp. 33-34. The largest group living in the I-Hotel were Filipinos, the second largest were Chinese, and the remaining tenants were Latino, Black, and other low-income people of varying ethnicities.

[96] See, for instance, Spanish language flyers such as International Hotel Tenants Association, "Defenden Al International Hotel!" folder: S.F. Bldgs. Hotels. International 848 Kearny St., SF Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco [hereafter SFEC, SFHC, SFPL]. The movement was supported by a diverse coalition. See, for instance, United Labor Committee, May 11, 1977, folder: S.F. Bldgs. Hotels. International 848 Kearny St., SFEC, SFHC, SFPL. See also "Catholic Charities Grant 100,000 Seed Money to I-Hotel Project," *East/West*, November 11, 1975; "Thousands Gathered to Protest Posting of Eviction Notices," *East/West*, June 16, 1977; and, "No Eviction – We Support the International Hotel," *East/West*, June 15, 1977.

For close to ten years, there was constant protest against the eviction of residents living at the I-Hotel. While the building and those who called it home were always at the center of the protests, activists saw this struggle as more than about just one building. As a protest flyer stated, "Our protest to save the I-Hotel is part of the struggle to save our community….The I-Hotel has become a symbol of Third World and working people fighting for our rights."[97] The murals that graced the I-Hotel's exterior reflected this sentiment. From Asian workers to an elderly man raising his cane in defiance of a judge, the building's painted façade mirrored the attitude of the movement.

The fight to save the I-Hotel and the fight to save the buildings and stories of Angel Island were different in many important ways, but they were bound together in time, place, and the hopes of intersecting communities. On Angel Island, activists worked hard to save the barracks that stood as a testament to unjust laws and to preserve the stories of the immigrants who survived and succeeded. Perhaps less obviously, the struggle to stop the evictions at the I-Hotel was also a struggle over memory and belonging. Because the men who lived in the rooming house were mostly Filipino, working-class, and often politically active, their experiences could not so easily fit into a progressive immigration narrative. The buildings and the stories on Angel Island represented the history of discriminatory policies, but not of the structural inequality that affected Asian immigrants' lives when they finally arrived in California. Ultimately, questions of memory and belonging sit at the center of both of these stories and struggles.

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[97] International Hotel Tenants Association, "Defend the International Hotel!," folder: S.F. Bldgs. Hotels. International 848 Kearny St., SFEC, SFHC, SFPL.

Naturalizing Citizenship

In 1983, the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF) opened a historic museum in one of the detention barracks whose walls were covered in poetry. The museum was small, and borrowed its historical artifacts, along with wax figures, from local museums and cultural institutions.[98] It was open to the general public, but the foundation focused mostly on commemorative programs for the local Chinese America community and special tours for former detainees and their families. While the museum received visitors, the island's immigration history and buildings did not gain widespread notice until its 1997 designation as a National Historic Landmark.

This federal designation, which provided financial support and recognition, was the culmination of a decade-long process by which Angel Island's past became increasingly associated with immigrant America. In the years before and after 1997, supporters, promoters, and curators framed the island's immigration history as one of progress, one in which immigrants faced adversity when entering the United States but eventually overcame racial and economic barriers to find success as American citizens. In official national discourse and, particularly, in citizenship ceremonies, Angel Island became a part of an American immigration mythology. Its violent past was always present, but exclusion and its resulting detention were cast as an unfortunate mistakes, serving to illustrate how far the nation had come. Still, there were some in the Asian American community who refused to see stories of racism and detention blend into the background of a celebratory national immigration myth.

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[98] Hoskins, "Memory and Mobility," p. 15.

Geographer Gareth Hoskins has written extensively about the process the AIISF went through to gain National Historic Landmark status for the site. He argues, in part, that the foundation wanted to expand the story of Angel Island beyond just Chinese immigration. Rather than focusing on private trauma for a single community, the foundation believed that it needed to transform the narrative of the island in order to make the history appear more nationally significant.[99] In an interview with Hoskins, Daniel Quan, a past president of the AIISF, explained, "The immigration story through Angel Island isn't just limited to Chinese people…part of the strategic thinking here is to appeal to all people, as opposed to just one specific group and to make it more of a national story so that we can elevate it to the same importance as Ellis Island."[100] The foundation first applied for landmark status in 1996. In the initial application, it framed the historical narrative mainly around the Chinese immigrant experience on the island. This application failed. When the foundation resubmitted it the following year, expanding the narrative to include non-Chinese immigrants and focusing as well on the later use of the barracks to house incarcerated Japanese, German, and Italian prisoners of war during World War II, the application succeeded.[101] While the stories of Chinese and Asian immigrants stayed central to the application, and always at the heart of the museum, when the foundation broadened the story to include other immigrant groups and expanded the narrative to the barracks' wartime uses, the foundation contributed to a pluralistic discourse.

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[99] Hoskins, "Memory and Mobility," p. 51. Cresswell and Hoskins, "Place, Persistence, and Practice," p. 403. Creswell and Hoskins argue that by the late 1990s the buildings on Angel Island helped to define the place as connected to immigration.

[100] Daniel Quan interview with Gareth Hoskins, October 21, 2001. Quoted in Hoskins, "Memory and Mobility," p. 54.

[101] National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, U.S. Immigration Station on Angel Island, January 5, 1998, accessed April 1, 2013. http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/71000164.pdf. See also "Memory and Mobility," Hoskins, p. 55.

This same broad-based vision of Angel Island's history continued after the immigration station was declared a National Historic Landmark. AIISF members established a traveling exhibit about Angel Island called "Gateway to Gold Mountain," which premiered in 1996 at the San Francisco Public Library.[102] The exhibit itself was a critical history that primarily traced the experiences of Chinese immigrants, and included discussions of discriminatory immigration laws. "Gateway to Gold Mountain" circulated extensively in the Bay Area and then, in 2001, it was temporarily housed at the Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. In addition to traveling the country, the exhibit received national attention when elected officials attended a gala for its Smithsonian opening. As California Congressman Mike Honda said, "[Angel Island is] about wisdom, it's about freedom, it's about dreams. And that reflection will shine more brightly than the mountain of gold that the Chinese were seeking."[103] In the nation's capital, those who spoke at the event framed the history of Angel Island as "an American story." On a national stage—at a gala for the Smithsonian opening—Honda echoed that sentiment.

In the decades since the museum opened on Angel Island and the barracks began the process of preservation, there have been a number of citizenship ceremonies both on and off the island that invoked this immigration past. In choosing the improbable location of Angel Island for a naturalization ceremony, the U.S. government (through the INS or the USCIS) recognized the immigration station's symbolic transformation from a site of exclusion to one representing an

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[102] "Gateway to Gold Mountain," July 1-November 30 1996, folder SF Island Angel Island Brochures, SFEC, SFHC, SFPL. Hoskins importantly notes that when Angel Island took the national stage, it also became increasingly a part of a national narrative. Hoskins, "Memory and Mobility," pp. 57-58.

[103] "Gateway Opens at the Smithsonian," *Passages: The Quarterly Newsletter of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation* 4, no.4 (Summer 2001):1-2. See also Hoskins, "Memory and Mobility," pp. 57-58.

inclusive immigrant America. Naturalization ceremonies like these are at their core an affirmation of American tropes: freedom, equality, hope. As scholar Lisa Lowe explains,

> While the nation proposes immigrant "naturalization" as a narrative of "political emancipation" that is meant to resolve… American liberal democracy as a terrain to which all citizens have equal access and in which all are equally represented, it is a narrative that denies the establishment of citizenship out of unequal relationships between dominant white citizens and subordinated racialized noncitizens and women. [104]

Implicit in the act and process of immigrant naturalization is the idea that in becoming American citizens, all immigrants will be afforded equal rights and access, and that all will be equally represented under the law. These are tenets that allow a liberal democracy to flourish. This narrative, however, denies present-day inequality, as well as the United States' long history of differential citizenship. And, when citizenship ceremonies take place on or invoke Angel Island, past exclusions stand in as mistakes, making room for a progressive historical narrative.

At one such ceremony in 1986, at the San Francisco Presidio's Crissy Field, Harry Low, a lawyer and active member of San Francisco's Chinatown, addressed a group of new Americans, describing his parents' difficult journey from China to the U.S, their pride in becoming American citizens, and ultimately, the importance of civic engagement. Looking out across the San Francisco Bay, Low remarked about Angel Island, "As part of its history, immigrants mostly from Asia, were sometimes detained, delayed or had their hopes for a new life in this beautiful country dashed…. Unfortunately, poor treatment of newcomers to these United States is also a part of our earlier 100 years of history. Fortunately we have learned much

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[104] Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 27.

since then."[105] Low posited Angel Island and the policies enacted there as relics from a time long past. And yet, 1986 was a crucial year in immigration reform. Indeed, 1986 is often hailed as a watershed for immigration advocates, because it was the year that Republican President Ronald Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which offered amnesty to those undocumented immigrants who had entered the U.S. before 1982. However, IRCA was not without its own restrictive policies; Reagan needed to balance his apparent leniency with restraint. The act expanded border control efforts and made it illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers (though Congress wrote in a provision making punishment of employers difficult).[106] While Low did not mention IRCA specifically, his insistence that restrictive immigration policies were vestiges of a once-broken system posited the immigration laws of the 1980s as part of a progressive march forward.

On May 15, 1991, the INS celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary by bringing 125 individuals from thirty-seven countries to Angel Island's crumbling detention barracks to take an oath of allegiance to the United States. One new American, Dinesh Patel, told a reporter from the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he was "proud to be an American." Another new immigrant, Herminigildo Santos, told the *Chronicle* that he was happy to expedite the citizenship process, as he had been reassigned by the U.S. Navy to the Philippines. These new immigrants took their oath of citizenship just yards from the barracks where the federal government had once detained immigrants for days, weeks, months, and sometimes years. The event ended with students from

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[105] Harry Low, "Voices…New Citizens, Be Active and Involved," *Asian Week*, July 11, 1986.

[106] On IRCA see Nicholas Laham, *Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Immigration Reform* (Westport, CT: Preager Publishers, 2000), pp. 128-38. As Ali Behdad points out, the 1986 act responded to the public's demand to curb immigration, while also appeasing employers, in effect exposing the economic impetus of immigration reform. Behdad, *A Forgetful Nation*, p. 21.

Stockton's Commodore Elementary School, located in Stockton's Chinatown, leading the crowd in the pledge of allegiance. As then-INS Commissioner Gene McNary remarked, "for [the] thousands who were detained here, Angel Island became an isle of tears rather than an isle of hope." McNary continued, "this nation of immigrants has not come together without struggling."[107] Surrounded by these newly minted Americans, Angel Island seemed finally to have become an "isle of hope" and the nation, a true "nation of immigrants."[108] While McNary paid homage to the violence of detention and recognized that entering the United States as an immigrant was often a daunting, if not terrifying, process, the placement of the citizenship ceremony on Angel Island worked to rescue this history, and in turn, placed it within the march of progress.

In a ceremony on Angel Island over a decade later, in 2004, Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) Eduardo Aguierre, himself an immigrant from Cuba, addressed a group waiting to take the oath of allegiance. Aguierre's speech touched on classic American tropes of freedom and equality, from his ability as an immigrant to rise through the ranks at USCIS to his travel to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Europe, where he naturalized soldiers fighting abroad. Aguierre then addressed the location of the ceremony: "The site reminds us of a time when we greeted immigrants with isolated detention sites, not with open arms."[109] Aguierre invoked the policies enforced on Angel Island as relics of the past, blemishes that the nation had since moved beyond, while ignoring exclusionary policies of the twenty-first century. The same year that Aguierre delivered this speech, Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) detained

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[107] "State, Nation Opens Arms to New Citizens," *Lodi-News Sentinel*, May 15, 1991.

[108] Ibid; "Angel Island Allegiance Oath," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, May 15, 1991.

[109] "New Citizens Sworn in on Angel Island" *Passages: The Newsletter of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation*, 8, no. 1 (Fall 2004).

approximately 275,680 immigrants across the United States.[110] By 2011, that number rose to 429,427.[111] In Aguierre's progressive framework, the detentions of the past were a mistake, while those of his present moment were unworthy of mention.

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, the history of Angel Island was enveloped into the celebratory mythology of immigrant America. But many members of California's Chinese American community refused to let this history be co-opted. In 1986, the same year that Harry Low gave a speech to new U.S. citizens at Crissy Field and President Reagan signed IRCA, March Fong Eu, then California Secretary of State, spoke at a fundraising luncheon for the Chinese Newcomers Service Center. Founded in 1969, the service center supported new immigrants, providing them with basic assistance such as language classes, employment services, and housing aid. Eu told the harrowing story of her grandfather's detention on Angel Island and his eventual settlement in San Francisco, where he "found hard work, racial discrimination, and a heavy dose of culture shock." Eu's grandfather saw "immigrants denied the basic human dignities taken for granted by Anglo-Americans… burned by unruly mobs. He saw them hanged in the streets of this city, just a stone's throw from this very spot."[112] Eu described life after immigration as an extension of the racism immigrants faced on Angel Island, rather than a reprieve. While some, like Eu's own grandfather, did achieve

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[110] Office of Audits, "Detention and Removal of Illegal Aliens," Department of Homeland Security, April 2006, p. 5. http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG_06-33_Apr06.pdf, (accessed November 22, 2013).

[111] John Simanski and Lesley M. Sapp, Office of Immigration Statistics, "Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2011," Department of Homeland Security, September 2012 http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/enforcement_ar_2011.pdf, (accessed November 22, 2013).

[112] March Fong Eu, "Voices…Newcomers Service Center," *Asian Week*, May 26, 1986.

their dreams after landing in San Francisco, it was often not because of the democracy afforded to them in the United States, but rather in spite of the discrimination they faced.

Eu's speech refused a progress narrative in other ways as well. Rather than seeing immigrant detention at Angel Island or the racist San Francisco of her grandfather's day as stains on an otherwise positive immigration record, Eu looked to the Chinese Newcomers Service Center as a challenge, and a solution, to the problems many immigrants faced upon arrival. She explained,

> The services provided by the center are absolutely critical for our new immigrants if they are to achieve their full potential, if they are to realize their dreams in their land of choice…. They are essential to the adjustment of our immigrants to the strange and bizarre ways of America, essential to their becoming early, full-time contributors to our richly-diverse society. We do not ask, we do not want our immigrants to become mere clones of a fictional, ideal American, for there is no such thing as an "ideal" American… But what we want, and what we demand, is that our immigrants be given the basic tools to fully participate in the American Dream. That they understand the system; that they have a basic working command of the English language in addition to their native tongue; that they can read and write in English as well as in their native language; that they have a job and decent housing and good health care and enough food to eat; that they fully understand both the opportunities and the limitations of life in California. Only with those tools, only with that acquired, basic equipment will our immigrants be able to realize the dream of my grandfather. [113]

Invoking language that recalled the myth of immigrant America, Eu's speech ultimately rejected the notion that the nation was guided by an ideology of meritocracy. Rather, she explained that it was only through the services provided by the Chinese Newcomers Service Center that immigrants could receive the tools necessary to participate in and contribute to their new communities.

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[113] Ibid.

The late twentieth century also saw a proliferation of artistic work that viewed Angel Island and the laws enforced there through a critical lens. From the filmmaker Felicia Lowe's documentary *Carved in Silence* to the visual artist Flo Oy Wong's exhibit "made in the u.s.a.: Angel Island Shhh….," these creative works explored the experiences of immigrants who traveled through Angel Island and the resonance of that experience in their everyday lives.[114] Perhaps the most prominent of these works was the play *Paper Angels*, written by the poet and playwright Genny Lim, a co-author of *Island* and an advocate for preserving the detention barracks. In 1980, Lim presented *Paper Angels* at San Francisco's Asian American Theater Company and, in 1982, in New York's Federal Theater. The play received its largest viewing in 1985 when American Playhouse aired *Paper Angels* on public television.

Paper Angels was a fierce and poetic critique of the policies enacted on Angel Island. Lim painted a bleak portrait of the isle, with harsh guards and even more ruthless laws. She explored the fictional lives of eight Chinese immigrants detained in 1915. Looking inside the men and women's barracks, she wrote of migrants who found themselves living on a damp island, unable to realize their hopes for the future. Each person had a different story about what took them from China and brought them to the U.S., what led to their detention, and whether or not they ever made it to California. Perhaps the most poignant characters were those of Chin Gung and Chin Moo. Chin Gung had returned to his native China to reunite with his wife Chin Moo, who he had not seen for forty years. He committed suicide after being denied reentry to his

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[114] *Carved in Silence*, VHS, directed by Felicia Lowe (San Francisco, CA: Felicia Lowe Productions, 1987); Flo Oy Wong, "made in the u.s.a.: Angel Island Shhh…" folder: SF Island, Angel Island Chinese, SFEC, SFHC, SFPL. The Public Broadcasting Network's Jim Lehr News Hour hosted a segment about Angel Island just prior to Wong's exhibit at the museum. The discussion included Wong, Lowe, and Judy Yung. Jim Lehr Newshour, aired September 5, 2000, accessed February 1, 2013, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/july-dec00/Angel_8-5.html#.

adopted country, the United States. In this moving plotline, Lim captured the injustice of immigration while recognizing the attachment that many felt to the United States. Chin Gung's final words illustrate the contradictory feelings that many immigrants had toward their chosen nation: "I came on a ship full of dreams and landed in a cage full of lies… I love this country. Whether or not you will have me, I am home."[115] Lim refused to rescue the history of Angel Island; rather, she painted an unflinchingly critical portrait that did not sacrifice the complex stories and human emotions of those who passed through Angel Island.

By the late twentieth century, then, the history of Angel Island was becoming part of a quintessential American experience. This relationship highlighted the United States as a "melting pot" and a "nation of immigrants," casting the policies of Angel Island as vestiges of a damaged past. All the while, exclusions have remained a persistent aspect of U.S. immigration policy. From its declaration as a National Historic Landmark to its hosting of citizenship ceremonies, Angel Island served to promote the U.S. as a truly democratic terrain. Those who refused this narrative—such as March Fong Eu and Genny Lim—also saw Angel Island as part of the American experience, but they characterized that experience as one full of complexity and hypocrisy.

Conclusion

Paul Q. Chow, the founder of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, said of the site, "This is our Plymouth Rock."[116] Angel Island was the first place in the United States

[115] Genny Lim, *Paper Angels*, *Bitten Cane: Two Plays* (Honolulu, HI: Kalamaku Press, 1991), pp. 41-42.

[116] Chow's quote has been reprinted multiple times. The earliest instance appears to be: "Chinese Poems are Cries of Anguish on 'West Coast's Ellis Island," *The Daily Telegraph*, December 16, 1981.

that many immigrants ever saw or experienced. And early twentieth-century Asian immigrants, like the Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock, left their countries of origin with hopes for a new life. The search for religious freedom has come to characterize narratives of the Pilgrims who landed in Massachusetts. Meanwhile, Angel Island was often the site of brutal detention. For most Chinese immigrants who came through Angel Island, their first experience in the United States was punctuated by interrogations and medical examinations. Still, like Plymouth Rock, Angel Island has come to stand for more than itself.

Through the work of various historical actors, on and off the island, the site has, over the last hundred years, been imbued with multiple and overlapping meanings. On the island, detained immigrants carved their hopes and frustrations into the walls of the detention center barracks and, years later, activists worked to save those same buildings from destruction. Place-making happened off the island as well, as members of the Chinese American community recalled and shared their stories of immigration and detention, or when naturalization ceremonies evoked Angel Island in the service of citizenship. This—like that of Alcatraz, the San Francisco Presidio, and the Emeryville Shellmound—was not, a linear story. In each moment of remembrance, historical actors looked at the places that sat before them, whether it was detention barracks, a cement prison block, an old garrison, or a shellmound, no longer visible on the landscape. Historical actors struggled to make meaning of the past and, of course, its hold on the present moment.

Chapter Three:

From Khaki to Green: Resettling the San Francisco Presidio

The San Francisco Presidio sits at the tip of one of two peninsulas that define the entrance to the San Francisco Bay. Looking from the Presidio out onto the Golden Gate Bridge, one can see the rolling hills of Marin County to the north and the city of San Francisco to the south east. Former home to the Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. militaries, the garrison's history spans over two hundred years of militial power. Under U.S. control, it was an open base, and the army invited the public to visit and enjoy the scenery—both natural and military. In 1898, in the midst of the Spanish-American War, *Sunset* magazine highlighted this coupling of khaki and green in a feature entitled, "San Francisco as a Summer Resort." The author of the article, Eliza D. Keith, wrote that the Presidio was "now more picturesque than ever with its rows of white tents, guard mount and soldiers' drill." She continued, "The beauty of the Presidio is the triumph of man's skill added to Nature's efforts. The groves of trees testify what may be done by man in beautifying a barren hillside."[1] To Keith, the soldiers' white tents were not unlike the groves of trees surrounding them; each made up an equal part of the Presidio's picturesque landscape.

Ninety years after this feature, just before the U.S. Army's 1994 decommission of the Presidio, *Sunset* once again highlighted the soon-to-be former military base as a tourist attraction—now, in danger of becoming extinct. As before, it was the combination of military prowess and picturesque beauty that made the Presidio distinctive. *Sunset* sought to convey the

[1] Eliza D. Keith, "San Francisco as a Summer Resort," *Sunset*, May to October 1898, p. 73.

experience that visitors might have upon entering the historic military garrison on the brink of decommission, calling readers' attention to more than just its natural scenery. "The glimpse you'll get is authentic – and unremarkable, except that it changes so little. Still, it can bring a lump to your throat: crisply exchanged salutes, a bunch of flowers along a row of tombstones, the cannon's roar as the flag is lowered at day's end."[2] More than simply an escape from urban life, according to this *Sunset* author, the Presidio offered a trip back in time. Describing this military garrison, the author presented a romantic vision of the Army, one that existed far away from any real conflict; the Presidio provided a glimpse into an authentic past, offering visitors a peek into Army life as it was and, it seemed, had always been. For both of these *Sunset* authors, separated by close to a century, the Presidio was something to see, a place to visit, and it represented a vision of a romanticized military always a safe distance from the human cost of war.

From the nineteenth century until today, the Presidio's caretakers and visitors have celebrated its military history, picturesque vistas, and natural surroundings. Ever since Mexico ceded California to the United States as spoils of the U.S.-Mexico War, area residents and visitors have enjoyed the Presidio's epic views and military aesthetics. While tourism was an important component of the Presidio's history throughout its U.S. period, the base's 1988 decommission introduced a disjuncture in the story of this place. Once slated to close, the Presidio and its administrators were forced to imagine the garrison as simply a recreational area, its military function soon to be but a memory. The base finally changed hands from the Department of Defense (DoD) to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) as a result of 1972 legislation that created the GGNRA, an arm of the National Park Service. The law

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[2] "The Historic Presidio: Another Great Park for San Francisco," *Sunset*, November 1989, p. 79.

stipulated that once the Army decommissioned the Presidio, it would join the GGNRA. Now it faced another roadblock, this time from the Republican-controlled Congress. Deciding to test the neoliberal idea that a public park could financially sustain itself, Congress stipulated in 1996 a new institutional structure. The financial management of the Presidio would fall under a public-private partnership called the Presidio Trust; the trust's board would be presidentially appointed and would include prominent area business leaders, philanthropists, and environmentalists. The Presidio's military history became more than just a way to attract visitors. It would also serve to further the trust's goals of financial self-sufficiency.[3]

Not all lawmakers or community members believed that the public-private partnership between the GGNRA and the Presidio Trust would benefit the city's residents. Rather than generating capital through renting and leasing former military buildings, some city residents hoped that the park might help alleviate the housing problems caused by the gentrification process that accelerated during the San Francisco Bay Area's "dot-com boom," beginning in the early 1990s. With an influx of wealthy high tech workers moving to San Francisco, housing and rental prices rose, and the city's already bleak housing shortage became even worse.[4] The Trust, however, neither saw this as a part of the Presidio's mission, nor believed that the Presidio had the capacity to fix entrenched housing problems. Instead, members focused on renting and leasing the former military barracks and garrisons to individuals and non-profits, as well as on reintroducing California's native flora and wildlife onto the landscape of the defunct base. In the

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[3] On the San Francisco Presidio's transition from "post to park," see Lisa M. Benton, *The Presidio From Army Post to National Park* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 67-177; Hal Rothman, *The New Urban Park: Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Civic Environmentalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), pp.177-98; Amy Meyer, *New Guardians for the Golden Gate: How America Got a Great National Park*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 252-79; and Richard A. Walker, *The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Seattle: University of Washington Press: 2007), pp. 94-98.

[4] Chester Hartman, *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 400.

midst of all of these fundamental changes to the structure of the Presidio, the GGNRA and Presidio Trust continued the site's legacy of trading in a selective past that celebrated the U.S. military's historic strength and power, while erasing the violence and trauma of military conflicts at home and abroad.

Though the San Francisco Presidio had functioned partly as a public space for its entire history under U.S. control, the now defunct base transitioned fully into this role under the management of the GGNRA and the Presidio Trust. In this chapter, I argue that in transforming the Presidio into a fully public space, the Army, the GGNRA, and the Presidio Trust reimagined the history of this place. A new history emerged, one that generated a positive vision of both the nation and its military, a vision that failed to acknowledge fully the crucial role of the U.S. military in nation-building abroad and in the conquest and colonization of California's early inhabitants. By aesethicizing the military and highlighting an innocuous pastoral past, the San Francisco Presidio became little more than its physical appearance: the straight lines of old Army buildings, the manicured lawns, the cannonball displays, and the dramatic coastline. This focus on an aesthetic military shifted the coastal garrison's significance away from imperial exploits or war work, ultimately obscuring the human cost of war in favor of a celebration of eucalyptus groves, scenic views, and native plants and animals.[5] Examining the transformation of the Presidio unveils the process of creating such a vision of the nation—a vision where the nation and its military protects but does not conquer, defends but does not oppress. Rendering these historical underpinnings legible helps to elucidate the National Park Service and Presidio Trust's

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[5] Geographer Jeffery Sasha Davis explains that many former militarized areas have become praised as "natural" spaces. In this process, he explains, two types of erasures occur. The first is an erasure of the social life that existed in the place before the military occupied the area and the second is an erasure of the history of military use. Jeffrey Sasha Davis, "Introduction Military Natures: Militarism and the Environment," *GeoJournal* 69, no. 3 (2007): 131-134. Of course, the San Francisco Presidio is different because the Presidio Trust and the GGNRA continued to capitalize on the military past. Still, the focus on ecology helps obscure the significance of the military affects on the environment and the human costs of war.

unspoken ideologies and situates San Francisco's place in the larger project of U.S. empire building.

The place-making that occurred at the San Francisco Presidio in the late twentieth century knit together its natural environment with its military past, as the Presidio Trust and the GGNRA promoted these seeming oppositional characteristics.[6] From its eucalyptus groves to its wind-swept beaches, the Presidio's natural beauty served to obscure the violence of its military past. This same dynamic was also at work in the place-making processes that occurred on Alcatraz and Angel islands. At each of these places, various historical actors employed the natural environment as a counterpoint to a violent past. Whether the Agave Trail and gardens on Alcatraz Island, or the campsite that was planned to replace the detention barracks on Angel Island, the natural environment served as an alternative to the violent histories that occurred there. At the Presidio, however, this process was virtually all encompassing, coupling the military and its natural environs in a unified aesthetic.

As various federal agencies and local groups engaged with the Presidio's past and envisioned its future, nostalgia and militarism worked together to make a sense of place at the Presidio. Nostalgia is a way of knowing that romanticizes selected aspects of the past. The object of nostalgia, by definition, must represent a disjuncture from the present moment in order to provide an alternative vision. By valorizing preferred moments and minimizing competing or less favorable ones, nostalgia imagines pasts that simply never were, creating romantic island utopias where time blissfully stops.[7] As Svetlana Boym explains in *The Future of Nostalgia*,

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[6] In *The Presidio*, geographer Lisa M. Benton explores the history of the Presidio's transformation from post to park. Discussing the "biography" of place, she charts the long history of the former garrison and its shifting meanings. This chapter builds on Benton's comprehensive study. Lisa M. Benton, *The Presidio*: *From Army Post to National Park* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

[7] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 13.

"Nostalgia remains unsystematic and unsynthesizeable; it seduces rather than convinces."[8] Nostalgia does not depend on a semblance of reality but instead relies on quixotic notions, inviting one into an invented narrative. In the case of the Presidio, nostalgia was essential in generating a past that pacified a history of violence and colonization. Rather than creating a complex story that recognized the realities and injustices of imperial power, nostalgia instead worked to sand down the rough edges of this violent history.

When the Presidio first opened its gates to visitors at the turn of the twentieth century, nostalgia was already remaking residents' understandings of California's past. The contemporaneous development of Southern California offers a telling example of how this process worked to root ideologies of belonging and create a sense of place. Historian Phoebe S. Kropp, in *California Vieja,* explores how Southern California's nostalgia for the period of Spanish colonialism was deployed to create a Spanish fantasy past. First presented to tourists in the late nineteenth century, the Spanish colonial heritage as imagined by Anglo American promoters helped drive the growth of Southern California by the 1930s. From the development of El Camino Real, or the Mission Highway, to the adoption of Spanish Colonial architecture in Southern California suburbs, the built environment offered a lasting imprint of this regional mythology. A romantic focus on Spanish heritage, however, was paradoxical for many reasons, not least among them that this quaint past was an exclusive one. Marginalizing ethnic Mexicans and American Indians as outsiders, this nostalgia did more than enforce an invented cultural heritage with its origins in Spain; it also enforced prevailing racial ideologies. While Mexicans and Indians may have played a role in this Spanish fantasy, as conduits to the area's history, the mythology relied upon a constant differentiation between Anglo Americans, on the one hand,

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[8] Ibid.

and Mexicans and Indians, on the other. In celebrating a Spanish past, locals and newcomers re-imagined the region, connecting Southern California to an exclusive imperial mythology.[9]

Nostalgia has been written and built into the Presidio's landscape in much the same way. Just as the Mission Highway and red roofs came to illustrate a Spanish fantasy past in Southern California, in Northern California, the Army, the GGNRA, and the Presidio Trust deployed nostalgia to build, or, more accurately, preserve buildings and landscapes in the Presidio that created a truncated vision of the Army's work. As in the Southern California example, preservation of the Presidio's buildings and its natural setting obscure the acts and consequences of colonialism. At the Presidio, one can walk for hours through the eucalyptus groves and enjoy epic views of the Golden Gate Bridge—almost forgetting that the U.S. Army created this landscape. This relative invisibility of the Army, the focus on the aesthetic environment instead of the war work that the military once conducted inside the remaining buildings, reinforces the notion that the Army is a force for peace—a defender of freedom and democracy at home and abroad. Looking beyond the guise of the scenery does more than simply remind us of the former Army presence; it begins to unsettle the project of U.S. exceptionalism.

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[9] Pheobe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). There is an ever-expanding literature about Southern California and its complex relationship to both its Spanish and Mexican pasts. For instance, see William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and The Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California, 2004); William Alexander McClung, *Landscapes of Desire: Anglo Mythologies of Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and David M. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002). On the use of the Spanish past in advertising, see Douglass Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). For a discussion of Southern California's leisure industry, often promoted as "Spanish fantasy," and its influence on American leisure culture, see Lawrence Culver, *Frontiers of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

El Presidio de San Francisco

On March 28, 1776, Spanish explorer Juan Bautista de Anza marked the site that would become El Presidio de San Francisco with a cross, declaring it an official possession of the Spanish Crown. When Spanish settlement began in what became Alta California, it was amidst the complex communities of Native Californians living throughout the Bay Area, including the Ohlone (Coastanoan), Patwin, Wappo, Bay Miwok, Coast Miwok, Eastern Miwok, Pomo, and Yokuts.[10] As Father Pedro Font, one of de Anza's officers, wrote of the vista he encountered from the future Presidio site, "This mesa affords a most delightful view, for from it one sees a large part of the port and its islands…. Indeed, although in my travels I saw very good sites and beautiful country, I saw none which pleased me as much as this."[11] As he looked across the historic Golden Gate and to the green hills that are today Marin County, he may have even been able to see the towering Emeryville Shellmound, recently abandoned by the Huchin Ohlone. Font prefigured the area's future descriptions and uses by the U.S. Army and the GGNRA. Much like the area's later stewards, Font highlighted the site's strategic position and magnificent beauty. As the Presidio changed hands from Native Californians, to the Spanish Crown, to the Mexican government, and finally to the United States, it underwent major transformations, yet with each shift, stewards saw the Presidio as occupying a unique middle place between wild nature and military might.

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[10] Alta California referred to California from San Francisco to San Diego; the area south of San Diego was Baja California.

[11] Herbert Eugene Bolton, ed., *Anza's California Expedition*, vol. 4 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930), pp. 340-343, and quoted in Benton, *The Presidio*, p. 9.

The beauty that Font described belied the realities of Spanish settlement. Occupation of coastal California relied on domination over the indigenous population through a network of four military presidios, twenty-one missions, and three pueblos. As the military arm of Spanish colonization, presidios provided protection for the missions, the most numerous of the colonial outposts. Spain stationed presidio soldiers at the missions to enforce discipline, prevent escape, and suppress rebellion. The mission system planned to transform indigenous populations into a peasant class of Christians and, in the process, native peoples came under the violent and strict control of the mission padres. While focusing on the Christian conversion of Indians, Franciscan missions had a secondary goal of producing a native labor force that would function at the bottom rung of society. To ensure order and religious conversions, Spanish rule relied upon corporal punishment and violent social control, a system from which Indians often recoiled.[12] By the end of the eighteenth century, the conversion process became increasingly militarized. Those who were amenable to mission life had already accepted baptism, while those who had not represented a threat to Spanish control. Colonial soldiers went on punitive campaigns to subdue Indians who had not entered the missions. When soldiers captured Native women and children, they would be sent directly to the mission; men would go to the presidio to serve as forced labor.[13] Though Indians continued to resist Spanish control, colonialism fundamentally

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[12] James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 11. For a detailed look at Spanish control of El Presidio San Francisco, see John Phillip Langellier and Daniel B. Rosen, *El Presidio of San Francisco: A History Under Spain and Mexico 1776-1846* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Corral of Westerners, 1996). On the Spanish colonial period in California, see David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spainards and their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Kent G. Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on California Frontiers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp.49-113; and, Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi, eds., *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998).

[13] Barbara L. Voss, *The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis: Race and Sexuality in Colonial San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 58-61.

disrupted indigenous society and ways of life.[14] Few in Alta California could avoid the effects of the Spanish presence. El Presidio de San Francisco stood as the center of Spanish power in Alta California.

When, in 1821, Mexico gained independence from the Spanish crown, El Presidio de San Francisco went into disrepair. Not a priority for the Mexican government, El Presidio followed the same pattern of neglect that occurred at the other presidios in California**.** In 1833, the Mexican government secularized the missions, ending the day-to-day colonization of Indians, and the presidios of Alta California lost their specific purpose. The secularization decree mandated an end to the systemic conversion of Indians in the Franciscan missions, granted emancipation to Indian converts living there, and obligated local officials to distribute lands and goods to converts as well.[15] In the first years under Mexican control, the military used El Presidio, though minimally. By 1835, with the secularization mandate firmly in place, Mexico all but deserted the Presidio, using it as a bare-bones military garrison.[16] Few, if any, physical reminders of the Spanish or Mexican periods mark the landscape of today's Presidio, but the vestiges of these earlier periods remain nonetheless. From the very appellation "presidio" to Spanish-language street names, from the Mission Revival architecture of the 1910s to its use as a

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[14] Indigenous people's resistance to Spanish authority ultimately undermined the stability of the mission system. See, e.g. Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of San Francis: Indian Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). See also Antonia, I. Castañeda, "Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848," in *Contested Eden*, pp. 235-38, Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries and Merchants,* pp. 88-90.

[15] Liberal Mexican reformers of the 1820s and 1830s, known as federalists, supported and seccularization legislation. These mandates emerged at the same time that anticlerical sentiments were beginning to permeate Mexican government. Influenced by a new emphasis on rights of individuals and a belief in individual property, Mexican officials believed that ending the mission system was a concrete step towards liberal progress. See Robert H. Jackon and Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), pp. 87-90.

[16] See Langellier and Rosen, *El Presidio of San Francisco,* pp. 147-73.

military garrison, what the Spanish began and the Mexicans inherited, the U.S. Army and later the National Park Service embraced.

The Post

Ceded along with the rest of California by Mexico to the United States just months after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, the Presidio's makeup changed enormously with the gold fever of the late 1840s. As the nearby city of San Francisco exploded to close to 50,000 in 1850, many residents wondered why the government kept this deteriorating property for military use rather than turning it over to residents for development or settlement—questions that would continue to plague the Presidio throughout its history. In order to secure the garrison, expel the squatters who had taken up residence at the base, and shake off lurking developers, U.S. President Millard Fillmore attempted to extend the boundaries of the Presidio to encompass 10,000 acres (from present-day Fisherman's Wharf to what is now Cliff House). San Francisco residents pushed back against this huge acquisition and, after much protest, Fillmore reduced the acreage to 2,500 (much closer to the Presidio's present-day 1,500 acres). This pattern continued well into the twentieth century, when the federal government resisted attempts by speculators to develop the Presidio and take advantage of its beautiful and convenient location.[17]

By the start of the U.S. Civil War, the Presidio housed 1,500 soldiers and had secured its place on the Pacific Coast.[18] With more troops and a more defined set of responsibilities, the

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[17] Benton, *The Presidio*, pp. 20-22.

[18] Ibid., pp. 26; Erwin N. Thompson and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Presidio of San Francisco: An Outline of its Evolution as a U.S. Army Post, 1847-1990* (Denver, CO: National Park Service, 1992), p. 22. California was of

Army began to transform the adobe structures of the Spanish and Mexican periods into buildings that denoted U.S. fortification. The Army built wood frame cottages, enlisted men's barracks, and an artillery magazine, beginning to establish the hybrid identity of this place as both military and park-like.[19] The physical remnants of these building would not survive into the late twentieth century to remind visitors of the Presidio's early military history. Instead, new iterations of these buildings and technologies would eventually punctuate the landscape.

As the Presidio grew in military importance, Army personnel understood that it was vital to maintain a good relationship with the surrounding city of San Francisco. Even though the Presidio was under military control, boosters and city planners saw the potential for the picturesque facility to become a park. By designating the garrison as a "headquarters," the Army knew that the Presidio would be more likely to stay out of the hands of urban planners who had their eyes set on the property.[20] While the Presidio expanded physically and grew in military significance during the Civil War, it was not until after the war that the site took on fresh strategic and imperial role. The Military Division of the Pacific Headquarters moved from San Francisco to the Presidio in 1878, cementing the base's place as an outpost for U.S. empire.[21] In

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great strategic importance to both the Union and Confederacy but the Confederate push west was stopped in New Mexico. Still, small and symbolic actions by Presidio soldiers—arresting southern sympathizers, performing Union oaths, and holding parades to celebrate Union victories—helped to secure loyalty to the Union on the nation's westernmost edge.

[19] Benton, *The Presidio*, pp. 26; Thompson and Woodbridge, *Presidio of San Francisco,* pp. 23-28. For early images of the Presidio's fortification, including early wood frame buildings, see "430. The Presidio and Golden Gate, from Russian Hill, San Francisco," c. 1860-1870, album 1, box B001773, The Lawerence & Houseworth Photography Albums, 1860-1870, California Views, California Society of Pioneers, San Francisco, CA; "Looking north from the hill back of the Presidio, showing the old buildings in the distance on the flat built about 1860. Photo taken Jan 1925," 66a, Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks Documenting San Francisco History and Law Enforcement, volume 20, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley [hearafter Bancroft].

[20] Thompson and Woodbridge, *Presidio of San Francisco,* p. 36.

[21] While this new designation may have been an effort to keep the Presidio in the Army's hands and away from planners who saw the potential for a park there, it nonetheless made the Presidio into an important outpost of American empire. Benton, *The Presidio*, p. 30.

addition to evolving into an important administrative hub, the Presidio became an essential conduit for soldiers arriving to fight Native Americans in the western territories and states.[22]

Simultaneous with these imperial exploits, San Francisco residents continued to take advantage of the garrison's natural beauty, strolling along its beaches, picnicking in its green spaces, and walking along its cliffs. Even as residents enjoyed the picturesque landscape, the martial purposes of the garrison were always front and center. On July 3, 1876, for instance, 100,000 people came to the Presidio's parade grounds to watch a day-long military display in honor of the centennial of the American Revolution.[23] While the natural beauty may have initially attracted visitors to the garrison, the martial displays emphasized the intersection of leisure and militarism. The 1876 pageantry was an elaborate but not entirely different spectacle from what tourists would see on a normal day at the Presidio: soldiers, mounted cannons, and the changing of the guard at the parade grounds.[24]

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[22] These so-called "Indian Wars" included the brutal Modoc War (in Southern Oregon and Northern California), the American pursuit of the Lakota Sioux (in the Montana, Dakota, and Wyoming territories), the campaign against the Nez Perce (in Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana), and the campaigns against the Apaches (in Arizona Territory). Presidio soldiers were instrumental in each of these campaigns. Thompson and Woodbridge, *Presidio of San Francisco,* pp. 49-51.

[23] Ibid., p. 36. In addition to commemorating the war, the event was an opportunity for the Presidio's troops to demonstrate their skills. In this instance, they reenacted a battle showing how they might defend the installation, and thus, California, from enemy attack. Celebrations of this sort were not unique. For instance, the entire garrison paraded in San Francisco in honor of the centennial of George Washington's inauguration. Ibid., p. 51. In "The Bicentennial Landscape: A Mirror Held Up to the Past," David Lowenthal argues that in 1976, unlike 1876, Bicentennial celebrations were spread out among all fifty states and thousands of local cities. Bicentennial celebrations were obsessed with the past and emphasized the nation's greatness. On the other hand, Lowenthal argues, Centennial celebrations were concerned with emphasizing that this still new nation, just fifteen years after the Civil War, *had* a past. For those 100,000 onlookers at the Presidio in 1876, the military display represented the future of the nation, and the event's pomp emphasized the nation's military strength. Still, the incongruity of the celebration is notable. Thousands of miles from the East Coast cradle of U.S. nationhood, this Centennial connected the California onlookers to a distant American past. David Lowenthal, "The Bicentennial Landscape: A Mirror Held Up to the Past," *Geographical Review* 67, no. 3 (July 1977): 253-67.

[24] See the description of the military aesthetics at the Presidio in Helen Throop Purdy, *San Francisco: As it was, as it is, and how to see it* (San Francisco: Paul Elder and Company Publishers, 1912), pp. 91-96.

In addition to such celebrations and displays, the military also concerned itself with the Presidio's appearance. The Army began a base beautification program in 1883 with Major William Albert Jones's massive tree-planting endeavor, promoting the Presidio as the Army's first major landscaping project. Jones said of the tree planting, "In order to make the contrast from the city seem as great as possible, and indirectly accentuate the ideas of the power of the Government, I have surrounded all the entrances with dense masses of woods."[25] The major's initial landscaping was just the beginning. In 1886, school children celebrated Arbor Day at the Presidio by planting 3,000 trees. In 1893 alone, the Presidio gained 60,000 more trees, and between 1888 and 1897, close to 100,000 trees were planted at the Presidio.[26]

The Presidio's tree planting craze came at the same time as the California "Eucalyptus Rush," a period when Californians planted these fast growing trees en masse.[27] The eucalyptus is not native to the state; an Australian variety, it first became popular among Gold Rush era settlers. Californians originally planted the tree to beautify the landscape and later for its believed healthful properties.[28] Northern California's cool climate and fog was especially hospitable to the blue-gum variety and while the tree was not always popular with area residents—in the 1970s some residents feared correctly that it might be a fire hazard—it remains

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[25] W.A. Jones, "Plan for the Cultivation of Trees upon the Presidio Reservation," (San Francisco: Engineer Office, Headquarters Department of California, 1883), quoted in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District, *Presidio of San Francisco Forest Management Plan*, 1990-2010 (Sacramento: Jones and Stokes Associates, Inc., 1990), p. E-4.

[26] Thompson and Woodbridge, *Presidio of San Francisco*, pp. 53-58. Initially, the Presidio landscaping project followed a systematic plan, but by 1902 this order had just about dissolved and the Presidio forest had begun to develop haphazardly. Pete Holloran, "Seeing the Trees Through the Forest: Oaks and History in the Presidio," in *Reclaiming San Francisco: History Politics and Culture,* eds. James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters (San Francisco: City Lights, 1998), pp. 343-45.

[27] Harold Gilliam, *The Natural World of San Francisco* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 84-85.

[28] Jared Farmer, *Trees in Paradise: A California History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), pp. 103-06, 109-112.

a ubiquitous aspect of the Northern California landscape.[29] As Jared Farmer explains in his history of trees of California, the eucalyptus has become deeply rooted in Californians' sense of place.[30] Tended and manufactured by the Army, the Presidio's landscape was full of eucalyptus trees, marking it as quintessentially Northern Californian.

This forestation served no specific military purpose, but it did help the Presidio appear more formidable than it might have otherwise, helping to solidify the Army's ownership of the coastal garrison. These groves also emphasized the Presidio's important place in civilian life because they were planted by San Francisco residents, including local Boy Scouts. And, while the woods worked to set the Presidio apart from the city, they also served to remind San Franciscans that the federal government—with the seat of power physically removed from California—was closer than it seemed. While the newly planted forests affirmed the Army's property ownership and political power, they simultaneously affirmed, on the Army's terms, the Presidio's place as an open base, to be enjoyed by the public as well.[31]

As an open base, the Presidio welcomed visitors to enjoy the leisure space that the garrison had to offer. In this way, it was not unlike other nineteenth-century urban parks that embraced civic improvements with aesthetics in mind. The Presidio's beautification projects of the 1880s and 1890s created a park-like landscape, similar to that of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco or Central Park in New York.[32] During the same period, proponents of the City

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[29] The tree had gone up and down in favor since the first planting craze, but in the early 1970s, fear of fire drove a major downward shift in their popularity. Ibid., pp. 139-53.

[30] Ibid., pp. 172-74.

[31] Holloran, "Seeing the Trees Through the Forest," p. 343.

[32] While not the urban park that Golden Gate was slated to become, the Presidio still served area residents and attracted them with its military character. Benton, *The Presidio*, pp. 34-35. On the making of Golden Gate Park and many of San Francisco's other parks, see Terence Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Beautiful Movement reimagined San Francisco just as they did cities like Chicago, Denver, Washington DC, and San Diego.[33] One of the most influential architects of the movement, Daniel Hudson Burnham, envisioned parks as a central aspect of San Francisco's redesign, and he saw the Presidio as one of the most important. Burnham hoped to connect the Army base to the city using new thoroughfares like the Presidio Parkway. As Burnham put it, he wanted to "arrange the drives and concourses that the public may enjoy the best possible views of the landscape, and to allow the public to participate in military maneuvers." His vision of the Presidio was two-fold; visitors could enjoy both the scenery and the martial pageantry as equal parts of the Presidio experience.[34] Burnham's vision of a Presidio fully integrated into San Francisco was not realized. It remained an important military installation, delineated by thick groves of trees that marked a separation from the city.[35]

As architects and planners thought about how to integrate the city and the base, Presidio soldiers helped orchestrate the nation's military and imperial exploits. Presidio troops fought in the western Indian Wars, and at the end of the nineteenth century, they moved beyond the reaches of the continental U.S. to fight in the Spanish-American War, including the Philippine invasion.[36] As the administrative hub in the war's Pacific theater, the Presidio commanded the

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[33] William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 26-29.

[34] Daniel Hudson Burnham and Edward Herbert Bennett, *Association of Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco* (San Francisco: Sunset Press, 1905), p. 155. On Burnham's general plan for the Presidio, see pp. 146-56. In line with the City Beautiful Movement, Burnham's design for San Francisco invoked an imperial Rome; see Grey Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 151-54. The 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire caused Burnham's plans for the city to go unrealized; Thomas S. Hines, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 174-96.

[35] Benton, *The Presidio*, pp. 37-39.

[36] These imperial exploits abroad also brought civilians to the base for fundraisers. In one such instance, the Army and Navy Christian Commission hosted a fundraiser for troops in Manilla entitled "Grand Military Drills

area's bases and supply depots. By World War I, the base had garnered increased military prominence, and Crissy Field, an area of the Presidio that abuts the Pacific, was converted into an airfield.[37]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Army named the Presidio the Western Defense Command headquarters and the base functioned as a Pacific staging center throughout World War II.[38] This was the only time in the Presidio's history that it was closed to the public. With fears that the coast was vulnerable to attack, the Army forbade the civilian population from coming onto the base. Soldiers guarded the Presidio's gates; barbed wire topped the fences; and machine gun emplacements shielded anti-aircraft guns. The Presidio looked more like a war zone and less like a military park paradise.[39] World War II marked the height of the Presidio's martial import. In the years after 1945, the base continued sending soldiers abroad but the Presidio transitioned, in the postwar period, to an increasingly administrative post. The Sixth Army, garrisoned at the Presidio, became a prized placement for senior military personnel and for those on the brink of retirement.

The Presidio continued its military duties in the mid–twentieth century, but by the early Cold War, it was becoming a less important base and many San Francisco residents once again saw the garrison as simply attractive real estate. Developers and others campaigned for the

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and Maneuvers." See "Military Display," 1898. S.F. Districts. Presidio. SF Ephemera Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco [hereafter SFEC, SFHC, SFPL].

[37] Benton, *The Presidio*, pp. 45-46.

[38] During World War II the San Francisco Presidio was just one part of a heavily fortified Bay Area, including bases, arsenals, navy yards, and laboratories. Richard Lotchin, *The Bad City in the Good War: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

[39] Benton, *The Presidio*, pp. 50-51. For a more detailed explanation of the Presidio's role in World War II, see Thompson and Woodbridge, *Presidio of San Francisco,* pp. 117-22.

Army to abandon the post and open up the area to development.[40] Despite the determination of those who wanted to dispose of the Presidio and free up the land, the Army insisted that the base was essential to national defense, both as an administrative hub and western defense post. Army officials were committed to keeping the post, and a local group of community members, the Presidio Society, supported their efforts to save the garrison. Founded in 1957, the group was the first to introduce the Presidio formally into what would become the heritage industry.[41] The Presidio Society wanted to support the Presidio's historic role and aid in its preservation, improvement, and beautification. In a 1962 effort to stave off developers, the group, alongside the Department of the Interior, lobbied for the Presidio to become a National Historic Landmark, a goal they achieved in 1963.[42] Even in their efforts to maintain the military function and character of the Presidio, the group's members further enmeshed the military function of the base with its aesthetic one.

During the Vietnam War, the base's military role was minimal, but it served as both a real and symbolic site of conflict. Garnering national attention, in 1968 the military imprisoned 27 GIs who attempted a sit-in demonstration to protest harsh conditions and the killing of an inmate. Of the demonstrators, the military court-martialed and tried 24 for mutiny. As a result, among anti-war GIs and protesters, the Presidio represented a place of grave injustice. The demonstration and the subsequent case against the soldiers also gained attention in major

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[40] Benton, *The Presidio*, p. 52.

[41] The term "heritage industry" refers to the post-1945 emergence and proliferation of leisure spaces that were built upon commercializing the past. While the movement to preserve historic buildings has changed and shifted, the "industry" refers specifically to the marketing of specific pasts that seem removed from the present moment. See Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World* (New York: Routledge Press, 1992), p. 4.

[42] Benton, *The Presidio*, p. 52.

newspapers, putting the Presidio in the national spotlight. While officially a military matter, the treatment of the "Presidio 27" became a cause watched around the country.[43] With the Presidio's utility waning, the publicity surrounding the "Presidio 27" may have been the most military-related attention that the base had received since World War II. Even in the shadow of this controversy, visitors continued to enjoy the leisure space that the Presidio provided.

Further blurring the lines between civilian and military, in 1972 the Presidio joined the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), an arm of the National Park Service (NPS). This new recreation area worked within the NPS's mission to bring parks to the people. However, the Presidio did not join the newly created park system immediately. Rather, the GGNRA legislation stipulated that the base would join the park service only when the Department of Defense (DoD) declared the Presidio land excess. Park supporters would have to wait until 1988 for the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) to close the coastal garrison.[44]

Between 1972 and 1988, the Presidio functioned much as it had for the previous two hundred or so years, as both military and public space. Even with the specter of base closure on the horizon, the Presidio remained integral to U.S. military operations overseas and became a symbolic site of protest against U.S. intervention abroad. At the Presidio, San Franciscans protested U.S. intervention into South and Central America, recognizing the base as a

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[43] For a detailed account of the "Presidio 27," see Fred Garner, *The Unlawful Concert: An Account of the Presidio Mutiny Case* (New York: Viking Press, 1970). The national and international publicity helped the "Presidio 27" became an important turning point in the GI movement protesting the war. Richard R. Moser, *The New Winter's Soldier: GI and Veteran Dissent during the Vietnam War Era* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 74.

[44] Meyer, *New Guardians for the Golden Gate,* pp. 252-79.

representation of U.S. military power in their own backyard.[45] Though the Presidio's significance to the American military had declined, it continued to hold both material and symbolic importance and visitors continued to Presidio to enjoy its particular blend of militarism and scenery. [46]

Located at the seam of region, nation, and empire, the San Francisco Presidio has served a military base for three nations' armies. Under the control of the U.S. military, the Presidio functioned as both a martial and leisure site, laying the groundwork for the future place-making that would carry through to the late twentieth century. On the eve of decommission, when the Presidio was scheduled to join the GGNRA, various stakeholders—the U.S. Army, the GGNRA, advocates for the Presidio, and residents of the Bay Area—would have to reckon with the memory of the place's colonial and military pasts**.**

Landscaping the Army Green or From Post to Park

On the morning of September 21, 1987, a fire tore through Presidio building 556. First constructed in 1903, the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At the time of the fire, a program dedicated to helping the greater San Francisco population, the Army Community Service (ACS), used the space. Two years and a day after the fire, Presidio soldiers

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[45] See, for instance, Liz Greely, "2,500 Protester March to Presidio Gate," *Star Presidian*, April 1, 1988, box vol. 31 (no.13) Golden Gate National Recreation Area Park Archives and Records Center, San Francisco, CA [herafter GGNRA PARC]; Joel P. Smith, 110 Protester Arrested Near Post Gates, *Star Presidian*, October 20, 1988, box vol. 31 (no. 42), GGNRA PARC; and, "3,000 in S.F. Hold Peaceful Protest Near Presidio Base," *San Jose Mercury News*, March 27, 1988.

[46] Karen Libatore*, The Complete Guide to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area* (San Francisco: Chronicle Book, 1982), pp. 42-43. Publications Collections, GGNRA PARC.

turned to the task of flattening the now vacant building, hoping to construct a parking lot in its place. In an article about the demolition in the base newspaper, the *Star Presidian*, Captain Michael L. Herman, Operations Officer at the Directorate of Engineering and Housing, mourned the loss of a historic building and saw the fire as a failure of the soldiers' mission. He said, "It's a shame to lose any historic structure. Part of our job here at the Presidio is to preserve historic buildings, not just for the Army's use, but for the benefit of the American public."[47] Many Presidio soldiers shared Herman's sentiment—not just his concerns for the historic legacy of the Presidio, but also his view that it was the duty of the Sixth Army to care for the Presidio's buildings. Tasked with more than the U.S. Army's mission to protect the nation, soldiers stationed at the Presidio fulfilled their jobs in part by tending to the place they lived.

Towards the end of the same article, Starine Cheek, director of ACS, expressed her own disbelief about the now demolished building, "You think you're going to return to it, and it's a tremendous shock when you realize you can't."[48] Cheek was lamenting the loss of her former work space, but she could just as well have been remarking on the much bigger change looming over the base: the eventual closure of the Presidio. The front page story in that week's *Star Presidian* covered then Defense Secretary Richard B. Cheney's visit to the base. Cheney came to the Presidio on a tour of western military installations in order to strengthen support for a national plan to close 86 bases, including the Presidio.[49] In September of 1989, as soldiers demolished the charred remains of building 556 to make way for a new parking lot, many pondered the future of the historic garrison.

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[47] Joel P. Smith, "Soldiers Level Gutted Historic Building," *Star Presidian,* September 28, 1989, pp. 4, 5, box vol. 32 (no. 39), GGNRA PARC.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Steve Morey, "Cheney Backs Closure Plan," *Star Presidian*, September 28, 1989, pp. 1,3, box vol. 32 (no. 39), GGNRA PARC.

The 1988 Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) marked the end of the San Francisco Presidio's tenure as a military base. Antiquated in form and function, the Presidio at the end of the Cold War represented a military past from which the Department of Defense (DoD) was moving away. No longer organized around an intricate and essential base system, the DoD was also downsizing after President Ronald Reagan's huge peacetime buildup. The Presidio's military functions—from conquest to imperial expansion—were now complete, but the base still had cultural work to do. Discussions over base closure revolved around more than just where to move soldiers or what the economic consequences for the base's surrounding community would be, though those issues were paramount. The discussions also included questions of representation and preparation: how to balance the historic, scenic, and cultural components of the base with the environmental legacy that the military would leave behind. Embedded in the discussions of closure and preservation of Army structures, both natural and built, were beliefs about how to represent the nation and the military. As the DoD adopted new modern technologies of war, the Presidio epitomized an old way of soldiering, a snapshot of the Army's past.

At the end of the Cold War, the containment of communism no longer stood as one of the U.S. military's main concerns. This changing set of priorities, brought on by the fall of the Soviet bloc, promised to bring about a restructuring of the military that would free up billions in defense spending.[50] Chief among the changes was the DoD's plan to close military bases

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[50] According to some, scaling back the Cold War military created the prospect of a so-called "peace dividend," whereby the reduction of military spending would create a surplus in government funds. "Peace dividend," however, was a misleading term, as the late 1980s and early 1990s were not so much a time of "peace" as much as one of changing warfare and a retooling of the military. No base had closed since 1977, though there had been one failed attempt to close a large number of bases in 1984. Daniel Wirls, *Buildup: The Politics of Defense in the Reagan Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 212-13.

through the provisions of BRAC, which designated sites to be closed by 1995. The government placed the San Francisco Presidio on the top of the list. The DoD added more bases to that initial 1988 grouping in 1991 and 1993. By 1995, 330 military installations were set to close and 173 were to be realigned. More recently, in 2005, BRAC dictated another set of base closures.[51]

While base closure was motivated by financial concerns, these changes also spoke to larger shifts in U.S. foreign policy and military strategy.[52] Nationally, the military reorganized itself in relation to American business interests, downsizing the forces, outsourcing its work, and privatizing its methods. This new peacetime also depended upon international reorganizing, training other countries' armies and, increasingly, providing nation-building assistance from afar.[53] In a world of changing military tactics and new defense strategies, the Presidio was a relic; this picturesque seaside garrison was an artifact plagued costly upkeep, old structures, and limited capabilities.

Many in Congress supported the decrease of defense spending, but the issue of base closure was fraught with difficulties. Military bases brought money and jobs to communities; in many places, whole towns revolved around a single military installation. Closure would affect not only the structure of the military and lives of soldiers, but also civilian jobs on base and off.[54]

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[51] In 2005, the DoD recommended 190 bases to close or realign. Department of Defense, *Base Closure and Realignment Commission: Executive Summary,* September 8, 2005; http://www.brac.gov/docs/final/ExecutiveSummary.pdf (accessed February 1, 2012).

[52] By 1976, defense spending was as low as it had been in 1954 and 1960, but still twice as high as during the late 1940s. Spending reached its peak in the late 1980s under President Ronald Reagan. Catherine A. Lutz, *Homefront: A Military City and the American Twentieth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), p. 178.

[53] Ibid., pp. 214–19.

[54] In order to avoid individual Congressional representatives' attempts to protect their own districts, the initial base list had to be approved twice in its entirety, first, by then Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, who initially spearheaded BRAC, and then by Congress. Still, the composition of the list was subject to intense lobbying. Wirls, *Buildup*, pp. 212-13.

Accordingly, California's U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi and Senator Barbara Boxer initially both insisted that the Presidio should remain open. They argued that closing the 213-year-old base would cost more than keeping it operational.[55] Ultimately, however, the Presidio was slated to close, and by the end of the BRAC process, only a few San Francisco Bay Area bases remained open.[56]

Certainly it would be expensive to transform the base into a park, but the Defense Department estimated that closing the Presidio would save the department $50.2 million each year, and that its initial closure would produce a one-time savings of more than $313 million.[57] These millions on the DoD balance sheet represented significant economic activity for both the city and region, which was especially important because the Presidio closed on the heels of the 1980s recession that had hit California hard. For civilian employees, closure meant that they were likely to lose their jobs or be forced to look for work elsewhere. In San Francisco, soldiers would no longer spend their paychecks at nearby businesses, a change with potential widespread ramifications for California's economy.[58] Thus, many people in the Bay Area, including business owners, were shocked and angered at the decision to close the Presidio.[59]

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[55] Steve Morey, "Local Politicians Visit Post," *Star Presidian,* January 12, 1989, box vol. 32 (no. 2), GGNRA PARC; Steve Morey, "Congresswomen gear up for Presidio Battle," *Star Presidian,* August 3, 1989, box vol. 32 (no. 31) , GGNRA PARC; Steve Morey, "Will the Army Stay on Post?" *Star Presidian,* December 7, 1989, box vol. 32 (no. 49), GGNRA PARC. Once Congress determined that the Presidio would transfer to the GGNRA, Boxer and especially Pelosi became advocates of the garrison-turned-public-park.

[56] Port Chicago remains open as both a naval base and a part of the National Park Service. The Northern California bases closed throughout the five rounds of BRAC (1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, and 2005).

[57] Benton, *The Presidio*, pp. 86-87.

[58] Eric Brazil and Jane Kay, "S.F.'s Battle Cry: Save the Presidio," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 30, 1988, A-1. For BRAC's affects on California, see Michael Freedman and Tim Randsdell, *California Institute Special Report: California's Past Base Closure Experiences and the 2005 BRAC Round*, April 2005, http://www.calinst.org/defense/base1a.pdf (accessed March 29, 2012). See also Rothman, *The New Urban Park,* pp. 172-75.

[59] Bill Boldenweck, "Neighbors Would Suffer," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 30, 1988.

Still, concerns over base closure went beyond the financial. City officials saw the loss of the historic base as a cultural concern as well. The Presidio, as an active military base, was an important part of San Francisco's locale and perception of itself. As San Francisco Planning Director Dean Marcis said, "The Presidio has always been an army post, and the idea of it being something else, no matter how well cared for, still severs this bond."[60] Macris struggled with how the city might integrate the soon-to-be defunct garrison. He remarked, "This is a city that cherishes its history. The loss of this as an army post from the beginnings of The City has a psychological impact on The City."[61] In addition to its economic affects, base closure would leave a cultural scar as well.

Even though the Presidio was set to become a park, questions remained about what kind of park it would become. Hosting frequent public meetings and workshops, the Presidio planning team wanted to ensure public support and relieve fears that any one constituency would be left out of the process.[62] To guarantee public engagement, the planning team published the *Revielle* and the Golden Gate National Park Association (GGNPA) published the *The Presidio Update,* two newsletters that solicited feedback about the process and held dialogue about the Presidio's future as their central focus.

Embedded in questions about future use were assumptions about how the park would preserve and represent the Presidio's military history. For instance, the Park Service Planning Committee took the title of the publication *Revielle* from "military parlance." The newsletter explained that "'reveille' is a signal to [soldiers to] start the duties of the day." Like a soldier's

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[60] Brazil and Kay, "S.F.'s Battle Cry: Save the Presidio."

[61] Ibid.

[62] Rothman, *The New Urban Park*, pp. 180-82.

revielle, the newsletter announced the conversion of "this proud military post to a national park."[63] While *The Presidio Update* spent considerably less time discussing the military, it nonetheless opened with the question: "What future is worthy of the most beautiful military post in America?"[64] For both publications, the historic military presence was what made this future park unique; the proud martial Presidio sat at the center of these narratives, splashed across the front page in a question, as the title of the publication, or through historic military images. While uncertainty remained about how and by whom the buildings would be used, the place of the historic military was decided. These publications naturalized the military presence, framing it as part of the scenic backdrop.

Meanwhile, the military continued to occupy the base, keeping a utilitarian outlook on the base closure. While many military personnel expressed sadness to leave the site and recognized the historical significance of the change, they still followed their orders.[65] When the Sixth U.S. Army first learned that the Presidio was slated for closure, there was widespread disbelief on the base. Many military personnel saw the Presidio closure as an administrative hassle or a strategic mistake. In the years between the 1988 BRAC announcement and the GGNRA's 1994 takeover, the Sixth U.S. Army reduced the number of people living and working on site. Those who expressed the most disappointment about the impending closure were

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[63] *Revielle: The Newsletter of the National Park Service Planning Process*, May 1990, Presidio Trust National Park Service, San Francisco District, SFEC, SFHC, SFPL.

[64] Golden Gate National Park Association, *The Presidio Update*, Presidio Trust National Park Service, San Francisco District, SFEC, SFHC, SFPL.

[65] George Raine, "The City's Guardian is as Old as the U.S.," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 30, 1988.

civilian employees at risk of losing their jobs.[66] Area Army retirees who had access to the Presidio, and those who hoped the Presidio would be their last military station, feared that they would lose the perks that came with retiring at the base: health care, a golf course, and the officers' commissary.[67] Many soldiers and their families shared in the sadness about closure, but for these Presidio residents, leaving the beautiful ocean view and relatively relaxed base atmosphere prompted their initial responses, as opposed to the practicality that motivated civilians or retirees.[68] Still, all of those employed by the U.S. Army as civilian workers, enlisted soldiers, or retired personnel faced closure and its inevitable challenges.

Meanwhile, the Army's concerns were mostly utilitarian; the Sixth Army had long understood and promoted itself as caretaker of the Presidio's natural landscape. From Major William Albert Jones's massive tree-planting project in the nineteenth century to pride in base beautification in the twentieth, the Army delighted in its care of the scenic location.[69] Despite this self-perception, the Army could not escape criticism of the environmental conditions they

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[66] Liz Greeley, "Hey Ma; We'll all Survive Base Closure," *Star Presidian,* June 15, 1989, pp. 1,2, box vol. 32 (no. 24), GGNRA PARC; Pleasant Lindsey III, "Civilians Urged to Use Transition Aid," *Star Presidian,* December 4, 1992, pp. 1,5, box vol. 35 (no.43), GGNRA PARC.

[67] "Ask Presidians: What is your opinion of the Sixth U.S. Army headquarters remaining at the Presidio of San Franciso?" *Star Presidian*, July 9, 1993, p. 2, box vol. 38 (no. 25), GGNRA PARC.

[68] "On this Army Post the Living is Easy," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 30, 1988.

[69] Adrienne Smith, "Ongoing Projects Beautify Post," *Star Presidian*, July 16, 1992, pp. 1,4, box vol. 35 (no. 25), GGNRA PARC. *The Presidio Soldier and the Environment* (Chicago: Department of the Army, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory Corps of Engineers, Environmental Division, 1982), Publications Collections, GGNRA PARC. While not sponsored by the military itself, newspapers and guidebooks also heralded the Army's care of the natural landscape and the military displays as invitations for tourists. See, for instance, John S. Hittel, *Guide Book to San Francisco* (San Francisco: Bancroft Co., 1888), pp. 40-41; Frank Morton Todd, *The Chamber of Commerce Handbook for San Francisco. A Guide for Visitors* (San Francisco: San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Under the Direction of the Publicity Committee, 1914), pp. 95, 106; Jack Shelton, *How to Enjoy 1 to 10 Perfect Days in San Francisco* (Sausalito, CA: Shelton Publications, 1977), p. 24; Jean Catino, "Presidio's Primrose Path," *Times Weekend,* March 8, 1980.

were to leave behind at the Presidio.[70] During the base closure process, negative articles appeared in newspapers like the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, with reporters accusing the military of environmental negligence, at best.[71] As outlined in the 1990 *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, the problems created by the U.S. military's 144-year presence at the Presidio were real and would be expensive to address.[72] Since the Presidio Trust took over management of the base in 1996, it has removed underground fuel tanks, cleaned soil full of lead-based paint, and cleared landfills, all remnants of the military period.

While the Army went on to fund clean-up efforts, at the time of BRAC, military personnel rejected the claim that they were responsible for the area's environmental damage. Lieutenant General William H. Harrison, in an open letter to Presidio soldiers, offered ways for enlisted men and women to understand these accusations. He explained that the military presence at the base had transformed the area from barren to forested and that whatever environmental problems existed were not the fault of those living there in 1990. Rather, they had

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[70] The San Francisco Presidio is not the only military site to combat negative publicity regarding environmental degradation nor is it the only former garrison that claimed its presence actually protected the area. See articles in the special issue of *GeoJournal* entitled "Military Natures: Militarism and the Environment." For instance, Davis, "Introduction Military Natures"; and David Havlick, "Logics for Change for military-to-wildlife conversion in the United States," *GeoJournal* 69, no.3 (2007): 151-64; and Jeffrey Sasha Davis, Jessica S. Hayes-Conroy, and Victoria M. Jones, "Military Pollution and Natural Purity: Seeing Nature and Knowing Contamination in Vieques, Puerto Rico," *GeoJournal* 69 no. 3 (2007): 165-79.

[71] See, for instance Saul Bloom, "Toxic Park Syndrome," *San Francisco Bay Guardian,* July 31, 1991, pp. 23-24; Gerald D. Adams, "Presidio Report Assailed," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 10, 1990, pp. 1, 10. Environmental advocacy groups like the Sierra Club also criticized the Army's care of the area. For the Army response to one such Sierra Club complaint, see Colonel William D. Swift to Deborah S. Reames, August 30, 1989, folder (Department of the Army (1989-1990) Correspondence GOGA) box 9, People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area Papers, GOGA 35304, GGNRA PARC.

[72] *Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Base Closure of the Presidio of San Francisco* (Sacramento, CA: The Corps, 1990). On concerns about potential environmental degradation and clean-up costs, see Transfer of the Presidio to the National Park Service: Oversight Hearing Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred Second Congress, First Session ... Hearing Held in Washington, DC, July 8, 1992 (Washington, DC: U.S. G.P.O., 1992), pp. 1-13.

consciously cleaned up the mess left behind by earlier generations. More than simply a steward, the Army, according to Harrison, had guarded the area, as well:

> As Presidians, you and I have a great deal of which to be proud because of what the United States Army and all of us have done to preserve and to make the Presidio of San Francisco "A Very Special Place." Were it not for the Army's creation and care of this beautiful site – soon to become one of America's most beautiful scenic parks – this parcel of land would likely, long-ago, have been dissected, zoned, and developed commercially and residentially. Again, thanks to the Army, that never happened.[73]

As the Army prepared to surrender the land to the National Park Service, Harrison maintained the narrative that the Army had saved and protected the Presidio, despite claims otherwise. The letter provided a way both to defend the Army and to remind soldiers, angered or offended by the negative attention, that they need not be upset. Harrison concluded with an appeal to soldiers' patriotism: "remember too, that one of the roles of the United States Army is to protect and defend everyone's right to express his or her opinion, whatever that opinion happens to be."[74] It was the responsibility of the Army to ensure that all opinions could be expressed, even those with which they so virulently disagreed.

The official transition from post to park was not an easy one for the Army; it was more than just a bureaucratic change of hands from the DoD to the NPS. Over the course of the Army's tenure at the Presidio, military personnel had come to understand themselves as stewards of the base's historic, cultural, and environmental components—elements that ultimately came to matter immensely for the base's future use. Throughout its history, the Presidio had been esteemed for both its martial and scenic contributions to the San Francisco Bay Area, but in this

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[73] Lieutenant General William H. Harrison, "Open Letter to the Citizens of the Presidio of San Francisco," *Star Presidian*, May 24, 1990, pp. 3, box vol. 33 (no. 21), GGNRA PARC. See also Lieutenant Colonel David McClure, "Closure Marks New Era for Presidio," *Star Presidian*, p. 2, April 22, 1994, box vol. 37 (no. 16), GGNRA PARC.

[74] Lieutenant General William H. Harrison, "Open Letter to the Citizens of the Presidio of San Francisco," *Star Presidian*, May 24, 1990, p. 3, box vol. 33 (no. 21), GGNRA PARC.

transition, contemporary activity no longer mattered. The coastal garrison would now be appreciated primarily for its martial history, coupled with its environmental value. The Presidio represented an old style of soldiering, and this inefficiency was part of why it closed—but it was also part of why and how it came to be preserved.

The Public-Private Park

On October 1, 1994, the Presidio officially transferred hands from the Army to the National Park Service. Emblazoned on the cover of the day's commemorative brochure was an illustration of a soldier and a park ranger working together to raise a pole with an American flag blowing in the wind. The brochure's two figures are silhouetted; the shape of their hats and the outline of their uniforms suggest their park service and military affiliations. The only bit of color on the brochure cover is that of the American flag. The image depicts more than just a transfer of the 1,500 acres of land from one government agency to another; it signifies the two agencies moving together from "post to park"—from swords to ploughshares. Although discussions about closure and realignment had been, and would continue to be, fraught with bureaucratic and political disputes, the image projected an overwhelming sense of unity, shared values, cooperation, and above all, patriotism.[75]

Since 1972, when the GGNRA joined the National Park Service, activists and advocates of the park system had waited for the Presidio to decommission as a military base and join the

[75] *Commemorative Program: The Presidio Post to Park*, October 1, 1994, S.F. Districts, Presidio, Presidio Trust National Park Service, SFEC, SFHC, SFPL.

GGNRA. When the time finally came, nearly twenty-two years later, in 1994, the agency rejoiced. While supporters were ready to implement the strategic plans they had been working on since the base closure decision, a Republican-controlled Congress saw things differently. Some in Congress argued that, with a rising deficit, it would be unwise and irresponsible to fund a new national park, especially one rife with environmental problems and in need of repair. To appease criticism that the park would be too expensive to run, Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Boxer, and others backed a bill that would create a public-private agency to control the Presidio and make it financially self-sufficient by 2013. In 1997, the Presidio Trust took over management of the park, but this new public-private entity, comprised of area real estate developers, business people, and advocates of the park system, generated new concerns among San Francisco residents, who worried that the open space would become simply a playground for development interests.

Debates over keeping the space accessible to the public demonstrates the Presidio's crucial cultural meanings. While an essential goal of the public-private partnership between the NPS and the Trust was to keep the site true to the GGNRA mission of bringing parks to people, the secondary goal was to make money. In the service of generating revenue, the Trust revived the importance of the historic garrison. Largely through a focus on aesthetics, members ultimately recuperated dominant notions of the nation and triumphant visions of the military. While the Presidio Trust and the NPS worked towards making the park accessible, unspoken ideologies nonetheless limited the stories that the newly preserved Presidio told.

As the Presidio Trust looked to market the past to leasers and developers, the city of San Francisco was in the midst of one of the most important economic transformations since the Gold Rush or World War II. The growth of the internet economy, the so-called "dot-com

boom," brought new people and new money to the Bay Area. The changing economic landscape resulted in rising rents (in a city that was already home to some of the highest rents in the country), rapid gentrification, evictions, and the amplification of an existing housing crisis.[76] Professionals preferred to live in San Francisco and commute to Silicon Valley, rather than live in the South Bay, which had plenty of housing but a suburban ambiance. The result of young, affluent, computer programmers moving to San Francisco was not only soaring rents, but perhaps more important, an overall housing shortage—the city's vacancy rates hovered around zero. While wealthy people moved into what were once modest neighborhoods and construction boomed with the development of lofts and condos, affordable and low-income housing became less and less available. The gentrification process touched the entire city, causing widespread evictions. In neighborhoods like the Mission District, residents who had been living there for years were priced out of rentals and forced to move, despite considerable anti-gentrification organizing. While there was plenty of construction and development in the mid and late 1990s, very little of it went to building apartments or houses that most people could afford.[77]

The public-private partnership between the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust materialized against the backdrop of San Francisco's rising cost of living. Even with its new management, there were still questions about what might happen to the Presidio's lands and empty buildings; many area residents feared that the Presidio would cater to San Francisco's wealthiest residents. The park plans largely revolved around preservation, conservation, and the

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[76] For instance, the median price for a two bedroom apartment grew by leaps and bounds between 1995, at the start of the "dot-come boom," and 1999. In 1999, the median cost of a two-bedroom apartment was $2,500; in 1997, it was $1,600; in 1996, it was $1,350; and in 1995, it was $1,100. Chester Hartman, *City for Sale*, p. 325.

[77] Ibid., p. 328. For a history of urban renewal and gentrification in San Francisco, see Rebecca Solnit and Susan Schawartzenberg, *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism* (New York: Verso, 2000). On San Francisco's post-war growth and the effects of economic development on the city's neighborhoods and most vulnerable residents, see Hartman, *City for Sale*.

environment, but in order for the Presidio to be self-sustaining, it needed to make money off park resources. The Trust created a committee on real estate and housing, led by Donald Fisher, one of San Francisco's leading businessmen and the CEO of the Gap. The group decided that the Presidio would lease empty buildings and large areas of land to nonprofits, high tech companies, and cultural institutions. Additionally, the Trust would lease single-family homes and apartments to individuals and families, including NPS employees, employees of businesses and non-profits located in the Presidio, students, and others. As Fisher remarked, "to make the Presidio operation self-financing we must create a compelling vision of the Presidio that builds on its national park character, its historic flavor and scenic beauty."[78] By highlighting the Presidio's military legacy and epic location, Fisher and the Trust hoped to attract new occupants to the base's vacant buildings.

Not everyone shared the Presidio Trust's vision for the park generally and these newly abandoned buildings specifically. The Presidio Trust saw the Army's empty buildings as a ticket to financial independence, while others saw the former barracks as an answer to a housing shortage and a rising homeless population. At the first official meeting of the Presidio Trust, in July of 1997, San Francisco community members voiced their concerns to the newly sworn-in trustees. While most of this forum was taken up by the Trust's hearty self-congratulation for its role in ensuring the Presidio's place in the Park Service, the other main topic of discussion was the Wherry Building, a 466-unit structure slated for demolition.[79] Since the Trust already intended to refurbish and preserve historic buildings for residency, economic and housing rights

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[78]"Meeting of the Board of Directors," July 9, 1997 http://www.presidiotrust.gov/archive/documents/minutes_07-09-97.htm (accessed October 15, 2011).

[79] Ibid.

activists hoped that the units in the Wherry Building could be used for homeless individuals and families, along with other low-income San Francisco residents.

San Francisco's homeless advocates were not the first to think of reusing empty military structures for low-income housing. Just before to the Presidio Trust's takeover of the former garrison, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published a *Guidebook on Military Base Reuse and Homeless Assistance*. The guidebook outlined how a Local Redevelopment Authority could apply for HUD funding to transform and redevelop a former military base to accommodate homeless people. HUD imagined low-income housing along with community programs, bike lanes, and parkland. Minus the affordable housing, HUD's vision would ultimately resemble the Presidio's twenty-first century reality.[80]

An interfaith community group, the Religious Witness with Homeless People, directed the charge to save the Wherry Building. In the years before the official establishment of the Presidio Trust, the group spoke out against development and led actions of civil disobedience to protest the park's transformation, including illegally occupying buildings slated for demolition. At the open meeting in 1997, Religious Witness activist Ken Butigan took the Presidio Trust to task. Unlike the earlier speakers who lauded the history of the Presidio and the nascent Presidio Trust, Butigan came to the meeting with a different perspective. He relayed the violent history of the Presidio, from Spanish conquest to the Sixth Army's Regiment role in overthrowing governments in Central and South America. Butigan called the Presidio "a place of death," but, he implored, "It can be a place of life. We had 154 human beings, women and men and children, die on the streets of this city in the last year because they were on the streets, because they didn't

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[80] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development *Guidebook on Military Base Reuse and Homeless Assistance* (New York: Diane Publishing, 1996).

have housing."[81] For Butigan and the other Religious Witness activists, turning away the homeless was in line with the Presidio's history of colonization and militarism. This was, thus, an opportunity for the former base to change its path, to recognize this violent history and do the right thing. Butigan's sentiment spoke directly to the Presidio Trust's development plans, but also its representation of history; these critics were not going to be romanced by a version of the Army as environmental steward of the land.

Supported by 10 environmentalist groups, 230 community organizations, and more than 1,700 individuals, Religious Witness for Homeless People did not work alone. For example, Carl Anthony, executive director of Urban Habitat and the President of Earth Island Institute, endorsed the mission to transform the Wherry Building into housing for the homeless. As a prominent environmental activist, Anthony aimed his concerns specifically at the environmentalist community, which was, in general, supportive of the Presidio Trust and the move to "green" the former garrison. Pointing to what he viewed as a blind spot in environmentalist logic, he explained that it did not make sense

> [to demolish] $80 million of viable housing stock to make way for open space and recreation when homeless people are sleeping in city parks. We also question the ethical basis of demolishing viable housing stock, built with raw materials which should be recycled when we are appropriately and publicly making the case that we should stop cutting down forests. Just as endangered species are indicators of the health of our urban forests, poor and homeless people are indicators of the health of our ecosystem.[82]

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[81] "Meeting of Board of Directors."

[82] Carl Anthony quoted in "Campaign to Preserve Wherry Housing for Homeless People," folder Anthony, Wherry Housing in the Presidio-Religious Witness with Homeless People, 1997, April 10 carton 2:14, Urban Habitat Program Records, BANC MSS 2002/65 [hereafter Urban Habitat Records], Bancroft.

Anthony saw the decision to flatten homes in order to make way for native plants and wildlife as incongruous with other ideologies of the environmental movement. A city that well before 1990 touted its “green” credentials, according to Anthony, had the opportunity not just to improve the health of the San Francisco community but that of the larger world as well.[83]

The National Park Service, the Presidio Trust, and their supporters, including U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi, responded to these concerns with compassion. But they ultimately did not see low-income housing as a primary interest of the Trust or the Park Service. While the Presidio Trust touted its commitment to social responsibility—having nonprofits and tech companies lease space inside the Presidio—members did not feel they had the resources to accommodate the city’s neediest populations. In the midst of the debate, Pelosi and others insisted that the Wherry Building was full of asbestos and thus uninhabitable, thereby supporting the movement for its demolition. An independent study, however, determined that the Wherry Building, along with a number of other structures scheduled for demolition, were free of asbestos and were structurally sound. The study claimed that the houses would need only minimal renovation before being safe for residency.[84]

Of course, the Presidio Trust was very much interested in housing—if residency could generate revenue. Nonprofits and high-tech companies began reoccupying the Presidio’s barracks and other military buildings in 1998. Filmmaker George Lucas brought Lucasfilm, Industrial Light & Magic, and LucasArts to the Presidio in 2000, locating them in the abandoned

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[83] For a history of the movement to “green” the San Francisco Bay Area, see Walker, *The Country and the City*.

[84] Michael P. Noon, *Summary of Wherry Housing Report*, folder Anthony, Wherry Housing in the Presidio-Religious Witness with Homeless People, 1997, April 10, carton 2:14, Urban Habitat Program Records, Bancroft.

Letterman Army Medical Center. Individuals and families soon followed the arts organizations and nonprofit lead, moving into homes where soldiers and their families had once lived. Initially, these new residents were National Park Service and other federal employees. At first, some of the rents were lower than other places in the city, but after a few years, the rents began to rise. In a drastic case in 2000, the Trust raised the rent on nearly two dozen properties by 400 percent. Many of the occupants of those units were federal park service employees; they could not afford these inflated rents and had to leave.[85] The Presidio remained an attractive housing option for those who could afford its Golden Gate Bridge views and the benefits of having a national park out their front door. By 2010, the Trust reported that close to 3,000 people lived in buildings that were once home to U.S. Army personnel and their families.[86]

Meanwhile, Religious Witness with Homeless People continued to fight the Presidio Trust's plans to demolish the Wherry Building, in part by adding Proposition L to the 1998 San Francisco city ballot. The non-binding initiative stated that the city would encourage the National Park Service to make all vacant housing units available for rent at affordable prices. If the Trust did not comply, the city would refuse to provide the Presidio with basic services, including trash collection.[87] San Francisco residents passed the proposition, but the activists who supported it were ultimately unsuccessful. Because the Presidio was federal property, the area

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[85] Glen Martin, "Presidio Rents Soaring For Some: About Two Dozen Residents Will Get 400% Increases," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 1, 2000.

[86] "Frequently Asked Questions," http://www.presidio.gov/about/Pages/frequently-asked-questions.aspx, (accessed April 31, 2012).

[87] "City and County of San Francisco, Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot," June 2, 1998, pp. 163–73, San Francisco Voter Pamphlets and Propositions, Government Information Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA, http://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=200012610 (accessed October 12, 2011).

was not under the city's jurisdiction and thus the city could not legislate the uses of the Presidio's buildings.[88]

The Presidio Trust had other critics as well. The *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, a free weekly paper, paid close attention to the Presidio in its transfer from the DoD to the GGNRA and its subsequent transfer to the Presidio Trust. *Bay Guardian* journalists criticized many aspects of the transition process, but they saved their ultimate vitriol for what they saw as the slow process of privatization, even predating the introduction of the Presidio Trust.[89] While the paper had a progressive slant and a smaller readership than other area papers, such as the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Oakland Tribune*, its coverage of the Presidio gained attention from the general public and elicited responses from the Presidio Trust and its advocates.[90] As the GGNRA took control of the Presidio, *Bay Guardian* reporter Martin Espinoza wrote extensively about the Presidio and its business dealings. Under the headline "Presidio in Peril," the paper published two feature articles on the changes. Espinoza criticized the National Park Service's decision to give the private utility company Pacific Gas & Electric the electricity contract for the Presidio (instead of the less expensive public electricity that could come from the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, built and owned by San Francisco but underutilized by the city and the surrounding

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[88] Jason B. Johnson, "Presidio Trust Comes Under Fire/Advocates for Homeless Want City to Take Action," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 21, 1998; Dan Levy, "Bid to Move Homeless Into the Presidio," *San Francisco Chronicle,* May 24, 1998.

[89] For instance, an article that appeared in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* in 1989, when the ultimate fate of the Presidio was still unknown, expressed interest and concern for the base conversion process. See "The Fate of the Presidio," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, July 26, 1989, pp. 15-17. See also Saul Bloom, "Toxic Park Syndrome," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, July 31 1991, pp. 23-24.

[90] For instance, the Presidio's supporters responded to the *Bay Guardian* with letters to the editor. See, e.g. Amy Meyer et al., "Presidio Insiders," letter to the editor, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, April 20, 1994, p. 8.

area).[91] More generally, Espinoza challenged the future of the Presidio. He reported on the early incarnation of the public-private entity that would come to control and develop the defunct base. For Espinoza, and others suspicious of this partnership, the public-private union was coming at the expense of the very environmental goals the GGNRA and the Presidio Trust set out to achieve. According to Espinoza, it was "a case study in the privatization of national parks."[92]

Ultimately, the public-private partnership between the Presidio Trust and the National Park Service persisted in the face of local objection. And, despite the impassioned protest of Religious Witness for the Homeless, the Presidio Trust determined that the Wherry Building, along with other structures at the Presidio, would join a three-part phased demolition process beginning in 2010. In their place, the Trust planned to create a wildlife corridor including over 794 acres of open land where the Park Service would plant native grasses and flowers.[93] The fight to use the Presidio for low income housing was eventually trumped by environmental interests. In the end, the Presidio Trust selected certain historic buildings, like defunct barracks and homes of soldiers, to refurbish and lease to those civilians and non-profits who could afford to pay premium rents for beautiful views. These buildings functioned as the backbone of the Trust's campaign for financial self-sufficiency. The new residents of the Presidio moved into a manicured version of the historic military base. With intensive landscaping efforts and the preservation of selective buildings, the Presidio became much like an Army museum in which people lived and worked.

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[91] Martin Espinoza, "The Presidio Power Grab," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, January 12, 1994, pp. 16-18.

[92] Martin Espinoza, "Presidio Inc.," *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, January 12, 1994, p. 17.

[93] The Presidio Trust, *Presidio Trust Management Plan: Land Use Policies for Area B of the San Francisco Presidio, Executive Summary,* May 2002 (accessed September 4, 2012) http://www.presidio.gov/about/Administrative%20Documents/EXD-600-PTMP01-ExecSum.pdf.

Aesthetic Military

While homeless advocates saw their vision for the Presidio slip away, the Presidio Trust began to develop the park in earnest. Like the groves of trees, the trails, and the lawns, the military past had to be maintained. In line with preservation practices and the post's 1962 designation as a National Historic Landmark, single family homes and apartment buildings had to retain their historic character, inside and out. The Department of Defense and the National Park Service celebrated the groves of trees as their largest landscaping project and in turn, obscured the DoD's primary war objective. As the Presidio Trust took over management of the defunct base, the Presidio was itself beginning to embody the trappings of late twentieth-century neoliberalism, as a public-private park that catered to the city's young professionals. With its attendant non-profits and open spaces, it contributed to both the local and national perception that the San Francisco Bay Area was among the most progressive in the nation.[94]

Beginning in 1998, the Presidio Trust began leasing former soldiers' homes and barracks to families, non-profits, and select for-profit companies. The Presidio's historic buildings had two important functions. First, they housed the people working and living within them. Second, the former garrison's buildings, coupled with austere landscaping, provided the park with its historic military flavor. The Presidio Trust had emphasized this military history in its promotion of the park and residences. History, then, added economic and cultural value to the properties

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[94] On the environmental restoration and community partnerships at the San Francisco Presidio, see Peter Holloran, "The Greening of the Golden Gate: Community Base Restoration at the Presidio of San Francisco," *Restoration and Management Notes* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1996): 12-23.

and to the experiences of those living and working within them. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains in *Destination Culture,*

> Heritage and tourism are collaborative industries, heritage converting locations into destinations and tourism making them economically viable as exhibits themselves. Locations become museums of themselves within a tourism economy. Once sites, buildings, objects, technologies, or ways of life can no longer sustain themselves as they formerly did, they "survive" – they are made economically viable – as representations of themselves.[95]

In this way, the Presidio was, and remains, a type of museum: a place frozen in time, a location turned into an exhibit. And, if the former base is a museum, then its residents are both museum goers and part of the display; by inhabiting the historic structures, they are enacting a mode of tourism. They are not the traditional tourist who visits another country to soak up a local culture or who attends a historical reenactment in Williamsburg to learn about life in colonial Virginia. Rather, they visit a version of the past every time they walk outside their front doors. Those living and working amongst the pristine lawns, brick buildings, and cannonball displays, then, are not dissimilar to those who hike in the Presidio's eucalyptus groves, visit the Walt Disney Family Museum, or picnic on nearby Baker Beach.

Groups and individuals living and working at the Presidio have also contributed, in one way or another, to the production of this snapshot of history. Rules regarding residency at the Presidio read much like any other leasing or rental agreement, but "due to the significant historic and cultural quality of buildings and landscapes found in the Presidio" they also had (and continue to have) extra provisions.[96] The Presidio Trust, for instance, has prohibited tenants

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[95] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 151.

[96] "The Presidio Residential Rules," September 2000. http://www.presidio.gov/lease/Documents/ResidentialLeasePresidioResidentialRules900.pdf (accessed October 12, 2011).

from making any modifications to their homes, including repairs and outdoor planting. Tenants have been told not to leave any items in public view, including "play equipment, lawn furniture, ornaments, tool[s], outdoor equipment or any similar items."[97] In addition to individuals and families, the Presidio Trust has leased buildings to non-profits and technology companies. In order to be eligible to take up residence in the Presidio, groups have had only to comply with the 1994 Presidio General Management Plan, which stated that they must be working towards the betterment of San Francisco or local communities. Today, groups housed in the Presidio range from the Walt Disney Family Museum and It's Yoga Kids to George Lucas's Letterman Digital Art Center. Like the residents of single-family homes or apartment buildings, these groups must comply with relevant rules and regulations regarding historic structures.[98]

Even the insides of houses have been subjected to regulations. Describing the aesthetic the Presidio Trust hoped to replicate, the Presidio Tenant Handbook in 2007 stated that "objects at the Presidio tended to be utilitarian rather than decorative and their number was kept to a minimum." To that end, residents needed to ensure the "consistency of site furnishings between design areas, so that furniture fits within its context and does not compete with or distract from the integrity of its setting."[99] Just as the homes have needed maintenance to satisfy the production of this past, so too have the other aspects of the park. Streets, neighborhoods, and restaurants have mimicked the Army's presence. The place names in the Presidio reference the

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[97] Ibid.

[98] For an example of leasing requirements and rules, see Presidio Trust, "Request for Qualifications To Lease Building 99 At Historic Main Point," Presidio of San Francisco, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, April 2, 1998, PLA 310 RFQ Bldg. 99, Presidio Trust Library, San Francisco, CA.

[99] "Presidio Tenant Handbook", December 2007, http://www.presidio.gov/trust/documents/.(accessed October 12, 2011).

military past with an almost campy remembrance. The Presidio's current 2,700 residents live in neighborhoods named Pilot's Row and Infantry Terrace or they boast addresses on Artillery Lane, reflecting the military personnel who once lived in the houses.

One of the larger buildings where residents live is the recently renovated Public Health Service Building, a huge complex that once served soldiers, veterans, and civilians throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Until 2008, this building had been in veritable ruin. Sitting vacant for years, the windows of the old hospital were all broken. It was a favorite spot for graffiti artists, and it was rumored to be occupied by squatters. In the summer of 2010, the building reopened as the Presidio Landmark, a luxury apartment complex. There were many reasons that potential residents might be attracted to the building. As the Presidio Landmark promotional website stated, it is "a peaceful, private haven with a National Park right out your front door… there are lots of amenities that make it easy to stay fit, get together with friends, and unwind." In addition to its luxury and the natural beauty of its location, the Presidio Landmark used its historic Army past to attract potential residents, inviting visitors to "sit out on the historic portico where generations of sailors and merchant marines came before you."[100] The luxury amenities of the apartment building were not enough; the past occupants became part of the appeal, part of the scenery, as well. [101]

Asking tenants to put toys away and garbage cans out of sight was, and remains, neither a difficult task nor a loud disavowal of the past. But, in effect, such requests have helped to

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[100] "The Presidio Landmark", n.d., http://www.thepresidiolandmark.com/landmark_apartments.html. (accessed October 12, 2011).

[101] The Presidio Landmark used militarized imagery, though the characters described were not necessarily part of the military. For instance, merchant marines are not the same as military marines and sailors can be either civilian or military.

maintain a landscape that seemingly lacks a civilian presence. This past remains, of course, a manufactured and mediated one. By keeping the facade of the buildings pristine, the Presidio's tenants have blended into the Army base landscape—a museum where people work and live. Capitalizing on the Army's presence at the Presidio, the Presidio Trust has evoked nostalgia for the military and in doing so contributed to the quiet abstraction of that past.

Conclusion

At the Presidio, military buildings and paraphernalia continue to dot the landscape. The Presidio remains unmistakingly a former military garrison in the precise lines of its architecture, its pyramids of cannon balls, and its neatly trimmed grass. The Presidio Trust literally built this nostalgic longing into the landscape through the preservation of old army buildings and the imposition of strict aesthetic codes. This is a bold nostalgia. The visual landscape of the Presidio trumpets a yearning for a grand and simple army past, untroubled by war or conflict. Yet, it is a quiet place, too. One can walk the trails of the Presidio, lost in groves of eucalyptus, and forget that the Army planted them. Looking out across the water to the Marin Headlands, it is easy to forget that the Presidio was once the headquarters for the Sixth Army, or a base that housed imprisoned Vietnam War "draft dodgers." The Presidio's military aesthetic—both in residential and public areas, from the buildings to the cannonball displays to the vast natural spaces—ultimately has worked to obscure the social and cultural implications of the military that created such a landscape. By highlighting the trappings and aesthetics of military life, while simultaneously circumventing the violence of the military and the human cost of war, the

landscape of the Presidio makes the U.S. military just another neighbor, albeit one with an extremely well-kept lawn.

In effect, the Presidio's backdrop has normalized the presence and work of the U.S. military, contributing to the long and deep process of the militarization of American daily life. As scholar Cynthia Enloe explains, militarization is

> the step-by-step process by which a person or thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military *or* comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas. The more militarization transforms an individual or a society, the more that individual or society comes to imagine military needs and militaristic presumptions to be not only valuable but also normal.[102]

To be sure, late twentieth- and early twenty-first century militarization has worked in a multitude of ways. It has occurred through the escalation of labor and resources funneled to fuel conflict and war build-up. It has been a process by which societal values have shifted to legitimate the use of force, a large standing army, and taxes to fund both. Militarization creeps into people's daily lives through financial incentives that encourage young people to enlist in the Army in order to pay for college, through nationalisms that privilege dominant racial and gender constructions, and through national stories that help glorify military actions and demonize "the other." The process, however, is even more insidious than this. Much of the symbolic work of militarization emerges in cultural forms, from the popularization of camouflage and fatigue prints, which normalizes military aesthetics, to the prevalence of war movies, video games, toys, and books. This cultural work often glorifies war or propagates the notion that the U.S. military builds men of character and spreads universal freedoms abroad.[103]

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[102] Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 3. Historian Michael Geyer defines militarization "the contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organized itself for the production of violence." Geyer "The Militarization of Europe, 1941-1945," in *The Militarization of the Western World*, ed. John Gillis (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 79.

[103] Anthropologist Catherine Lutz pieces together the twentieth-century history of militarization in the United States, connecting the global and national trends of warfare with the people on the ground. In doing so, she

The nostalgic longing at work in the Presidio is part of the same process that helps to create triumphant narratives that surround the military. In the process of turning this military garrison into a world-class national park, the Presidio's military history was subsumed by happy stories of environmentalism and public use; the history of the military, then, became a quiet story, one that created the landscape but masks the human cost of war.

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reveals the discursive work of militarization. Lutz, "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 723-35. On the prevalence of war and the military in American culture, from toys to movies, from camps to the academy, see Roberto González, *Militarizing Culture: Essays on the Warfare State* (Walnut Creek, CA: West Coast Press, 2010). Militarization of everyday life is an insidious process, whereby the technologies of control and surveillance become normalized. For instance, see Mike Davis, "Fortress L.A.," in *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso Press, 1990), pp. 223-63. Since the end of the mandatory draft, scholars have called the military's recruitment strategies a "poverty draft," enlisting men of color at much high rates than white men. See Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All Volunteer Force* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Chapter Four:

Exhuming Histories: Redeveloping the Native Past in Emeryville, California

In 2002, on the day after Thanksgiving, a group of about twenty people held signs and passed out leaflets to the shoppers at the recently opened Bay Street, a mall in Emeryville, California. Protesters opposed the construction of this mixed-use shopping center and residential space, located atop what was once the region's largest indigenous shellmound. "It's still a burial site, it's still sacred ground," one activist said, reaffirming the connection many have to this place while simultaneously locating the mall and its development within the long history of native land dispossession.[1] Protests like this one were common immediately after the mall was built. Since then, rallies have become less frequent but no less persistent, occurring annually on black Friday—the day after Thanksgiving and the busiest shopping day of the year. At a 2008 protest, activists stood on the outskirts of the mall, holding signs that read "This Sacred Site is Older Than Pyramids," "You Are Shopping on Burial Ground," and "I Just Found Oakland, Can I Keep It?"[2] While many shoppers stopped to talk and some decided to leave the mall for other destinations, the majority continued undeterred, searching for holiday deals. Reflecting on the day's action, one protester remarked, "Everything takes time. But it's gonna change because people are gonna start listening to Indigenous people. We tell them, 'What if it was your cemetery?'"[3]

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[1] Laura Casey, "Protest at Bay Street Shopping Center," *Oakland Tribune*, November 30, 2002.

[2] Shadi Rahimi, "Black Friday Brings Shellmound Protest," *Indian Country Today*, December 17, 2008.

[3] Ibid.

The Emeryville Shellmound has for 150 years been a contested place, a sacred space, a site of gathering, and a point of meaning-making. For over two millennia the shellmound grew as a band of Huchin Ohlone disposed of shells from shellfish and other materials of everyday life, and laid to rest members of their community in that same soil. A refuse pile and burial ground, the mound became a dominant physical feature on the edge of the bay. Between 1876 and 1924, the mound and its surrounding area constituted Shell Mound Park, an amusement park that consisted of a shooting range, a dance pavilion, and a picnic spot. During its tenure as Shell Mound Park, the site also periodically functioned as an archeological dig for anthropologists at the University of California, Berkeley (UC-Berkeley). When, in 1924, steam shovels destroyed the mound and made way for new industry to emerge in its stead, anthropologists took away the artifacts and bones that they found at the mound. They stored and studied those materials at the nearby campus, in the nascent Anthropology Department and at its museum, across the bay in San Francisco. Formerly standing three stories high, the once imposing mound was leveled, paved, and, by the mid-twentieth century, replaced by industrial buildings and, later, a Sherwin Williams paint factory. In 2002, it became a shopping center called "Bay Street," home to J. Crew, Old Navy, California Pizza Kitchen, and other retail establishments.

Although the physical remnants of the mound are now buried beneath the pavement or displayed on the shelves of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, the shellmound has not been erased from the historical imagination. This chapter charts the history of the Emeryville Shellmound from its active use as a burial ground, to its time as part of Shell Mound Park and as an archeological dig, and finally, to its current iteration as the Bay Street mall. I argue that in each of these periods, even as the physical mound depleted, it accreted meaning. In the early twentieth century, as Shell Mound Park and as an anthropological dig, the park owner,

picnickers, and anthropologists recognized the place's indigenous past but only in ways that promoted the idea that California's native people were all but extinct. In the late twentieth century, activists fought the mall's development because of its location. To pay homage to the place's past, developers built a small commemorative park at the entrance to the shopping center. While the park did recall the shellmound and its Ohlone builders, it simultaneously followed the trends of the earlier period, conveniently confirming the mythology of the "vanishing Indian." In line with the politics of multiculturalism, the memorial paid tribute to the Ohlone past but only in ways that simplified a long and complex history.

Each of these historical actors—from Ohlone builders to nineteenth century revelers and early anthropologists, from mall developers to indigenous activists and their allies—made meaning from the shellmound, creating a sense of place. The mound's nineteenth and twentieth century users were memory-makers, selectively remembering Ohlone life ways. Even when the geographic marker of the shellmound was no longer visible, the stories and histories of the shellmound recalled an indigenous past, continuing to label this place as such. The history of this place was marked by an active tension between visibility and invisibility, the outline of the mound three stories tall and the artifacts buried within. While the Ohlone past was at times seen and at other times unseen, the descendants of the mound's builders were almost always regarded as relics of the past. In spite of this, Ohlone descendants and their allies struggled for belonging, fighting against the designation of "extinct" and, in the late twentieth century, against the development of the Bay Street mall.

Over the past 150 years, the shellmound's historical narrative has been contested, reevaluated, and rearticulated, its native history codified and commodified by Shell Mound Park's owners and park-goers, anthropologists, and, ultimately, developers and shoppers. The

Emeryville Shellmound has been embroiled in a modern removal and meaning-making process, continuing a long history of native land dispossession that began with the arrival of the Spanish. This has been a material dispossession, transforming the landscape, exhuming dead bodies, and moving artifacts for display. At the same time, the dispossession has relied on a rhetorical process, acknowledging the sacredness of the site, while relegating an Indigenous people and culture to the past. Over time the mound's physical legibility has decreased while the historical significance of the mound, and the objects found within it, have undergone a more subtle transformation. This process of meaning making was particularly active during moments of transformation and rupture. But even in the period of relative stasis, from 1924 to 1998, information and stories about the mound continued to circulate, mostly in the academic halls of anthropology departments. With each successive iteration of the shellmound site, the mound was flattened, alongside its history.

Native California

For almost a century and a half, the small town of Emeryville has been the home to the East Bay's industry, hosting paint, steel, and iron factories, as well as stockyards. And, while some turn-of-the-century residents of nearby Oakland and Berkeley may have traveled to Emeryville to work, many others were pleasure seekers attracted to its card rooms, saloons, amusement park, race track, and shooting range. By the mid-1970s, the city of Emeryville had begun to imagine redevelopment projects that would help this small industrial town transition into the twenty-first century, including building more housing and courting bio-tech companies

to set up shop. By the late twentieth century, the city's developers began to follow the growing national trend to create mixed-use space, containing both commercial and residential properties.[4]

Although Emeryville's recent history has been primarily industrial, 4,500 to 5,000 years ago the Ohlone people who populated today's East Bay experienced it as an abundant natural landscape, surrounded by water.[5] To the south of the Emeryville Shellmound site, Temescal Creek flowed from the east, draining into the San Francisco Bay. Below the creek lay a willow thicket, with a freshwater marsh farther south. Farther still were miles of oak groves that stretched eastward to the rolling hills of the East Bay.[6] In the willow thicket and among the oaks, animals like foxes, bear, deer, and antelope thrived. The bay and nearby creeks were full of smelt, shellfish, waterfowl, and the like.[7] For the thousands of years that the Ohlone lived in

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[4] On Emeryville's history and future development, see Mary Katherine Herder, "Permanence and Change in an American Industrial Town: Emeryville, California" (M.A. thesis: University of California-Berkeley, 1983).

[5] Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1978), pp. 8, 59.

[6] W. Egbert Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 23, no.3 (1926): 147-282 (esp. p. 156); Seth Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Gold Rush: Natural Landscapes, Ohlone Settlement, and Spanish Conquest," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 18, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 3-26 (esp. pp. 8-9).

[7] On the environment in which the Ohlone lived, see Margolin, *The Ohlone Way*, pp. 7-12. On Ohlone practices of hunting and fishing, see pp. 23-35, 36-40. See also Robert Heizer and Albert B. Elasser, *The Natural World of the California Indians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). For a discussion of historical changes in the environment early by Bay Area native people experienced, see Brian Faber, *Before California: An Archeologist Looks at our Earliest Inhabitants* (New York: Rowman Altamira, 2004), pp. 244-49. On environmental change that came with colonization, see, William Preston, "Serpent in the Garden: Environmental Change in Colonial California," in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush,* ed. Rámon Gutíerrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 260-98. In the mound itself, the archeologist Max Uhle found traces of animals like deer, elk, sea otter, beaver, squirrel, rabbit, gopher, raccoon, wild cat, wolf, bear, seal, dog, sea lion, whale, porpoise, canvasback duck, goose, cormorant, turtle, skate, thornback, and other fish. The mound was composed primarily of shells that Uhle determined were overwhelmingly oysters, mussels, and clams. Max Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound," *University of California Publications American Archaeology and Ethnology* 7, no. 1 (1907): 1-107 (esp. pp. 16-18). See also Edward Winslow Gifford, "Composition of California Shellmounds," *University of California Publication in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 12, no.1 (1916): 1-29 (esp. pp. 4-7); and N.C. Nelson, "Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Area," *University of California Publication in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 7, no. 4 (1909): 310-46 (esp. pp. 337-39). See also Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Gold Rush," pp. 8-9.

today's Bay Area, they molded their environment through hunting, fishing, harvesting, and planned field burnings. The Emeryville Shellmound, as well as other nearby mounds, speak to this legacy of shaping their environment.[8]

In the years before Spanish colonization, over ten thousand people lived in the coastal area of Central California between Point Sur and the San Francisco Bay.[9] Belonging to forty different bands of small, politically autonomous communities that controlled specific areas of land, the Ohlone over the centuries settled and became identified with this territory.[10] While Ohlone lived in relatively permanent settlements, they also still participated in large scale trade and married outside their own village territory.[11] The small size of communities and their relative autonomy, however, likely contributed to California's linguistic diversity, as the Ohlone spoke as many as a dozen languages. Often the dialect, language, or culture of people living

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[8] The long-held myth that native people lived in simple harmony with the land has been overturned by scholars. For an overview of this mythology, see Stephen Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999). For an overview of the native history of Emeryville, including the shellmound, see Sandra Sher, "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 1," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 5, no.2 (1994): 4-14; and Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Gold Rush."

[9] As Malcolm Margolin explains, the word "Ohlone" is a fabrication. The Spanish originally referred to coastal Indians as Costenos, "people of the coast." This term Costenos morphed into Coastanoan, connecting the Indians of Monterey with those of the San Francisco Bay into a single tribe. Today the term refers to the linguistic group to which the Ohlone belong. Coastanoan was not a name that Indians used for themselves; descendants of these Bay Area Indians preferred Ohlone. The word has a disputed origins as well. It may have referred to a prominent village or it may have been a Miwok word meaning "western people." Margolin, *The Ohlone Way*, pp. 2-3.

[10] Many anthropologists and historians of California Indians refer to these communities as "tribelets," as opposed to the commonly used "tribe" or "band." Native scholars and others, however, have pointed out that the suffix "-let" is diminutive. Thus using "tribelet" has the effect of diminishing the significance of these communities. Moreover, in minimizing the importance of these groups, it also diminishes the historical claims of California Indian people. Alan Leventhal, Les Field, Hank Alvarez, and Rosemary Cambra, "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," in *The Ohlone Past and Present: Native Americans of the San Francisco Bay*, ed. Lowell John Bean (Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1994), pp. 299-300. See also Lowell John Bean "Social Organization" in *Handbook on North American Indians: Vol. 8, California*, ed. Robert F. Heizer (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), pp. 673-82. See, also anthropologist Kent J. Lightfoot's discussion of critiques of Kroeber's analysis of Indigenous Californians way of life. Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), pp. 44-47.

[11] Leventhal, et. al "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," in Bean, ed., p. 304.

only miles apart were incomprehensible to one another.[12] Perhaps one of the most lasting reminders of the Ohlone settlement in and around Emeryville were the 425 shellmounds that once punctuated the bay's coastal area. By the mid-twentieth century, however, only a fraction of these mounds remained. While development and construction destroyed many, including the Emeryville Shellmound, other known mounds have been protected. Still others reside quietly in locals' backyards, as seemingly permanent aspects of the landscape.[13]

One of the largest of the Ohlone shellmounds was located in Emeryville, numbered 309 by archeologist N.C. Nelson in his comprehensive study of the San Francisco Bay Area mounds.[14] Known as the Emeryville Shellmound, the vestiges of this site now dwell beneath Bay Street's buildings. Archeologists estimate that the shellmound was once between 30 and 40 feet tall and 270 feet in diameter, and that it occupied 39,000 cubic meters.[15] The Emeryville Shellmound was one of the area's biggest and it was flanked by another, smaller mound. A

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[12] According to anthropologists Robert Heizer and Albert E. Elasser, California was home to nearly one hundred native languages, of which 70 percent were mutually unintelligible. Heizer and Elsasser, *The Natural World of California Indians*, p. 14-17. See also William F. Shipley, "Native Languages of California" in *Handbook on North American Indians: Vol. 8, California*, ed. Robert F. Heizer (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), pp. 80-90. Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Gold Rush," p. 11; Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1769-1810* (Menlo Park, CA: Bellena Press, 1995), pp. 24-26; and Margolin, *The Ohlone Way*, pp. 62-63. Alfred Kroeber was the first anthropologist to map California Indian's linguistic groups and his research and mapping is still used by scholars today. See, e.g., Robert Dixon and Alfred L. Kroeber, "Native Languages of California," *American Anthropologist* 5, no. 1 (1903): 1-26. For a discussion of linguistic patterns of the Ohlone living in Central California's Coast Range valleys, see Randall Milliken, "The Costanoan-Yokuts Language Boundary in the Contact Period," in *The Ohlone Past and Present*, pp. 165-81. See also Alfred Kroeber, "The Chumash and Coastanoan Languages," *University of California Publications American Archaeology and Ethnology* 9, no. 2 (1909): 237-71.

[13] On the distribution and early destruction of the Bay Area's shellmounds, see Nelson, "Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Area," pp. 310, 322-27. Many of those shellmounds that remain are known by some members of the Bay Area's American Indian community. However, because shellmounds have been disturbed over the years through development and archeology, many in the community prefer that mounds remain largely unknown to the general public or the scientific community, protected through anonymity.

[14] Nelson, "Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Area."

[15] Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," pp. 161-62; Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound," p. 10.

number of even smaller mounds resided to the east along the banks of the Temescal Creek.[16] The Emeryville mound had a symmetrical cone shape and seemed to emerge almost naturally from the level ground; its base, however, was located much deeper in the earth, rising up from a low-lying layer of mound material.[17]

Sitting beside Temescal Creek, the shellmound likely began as a refuse pile that over time grew in size and significance. Shells and dirt constituted much of the mound's make up, but it also held charcoal and animal remains, as well as Ohlone artifacts like mortars and pestles, stone tools, and pipes. In addition to the components of and refuse from everyday life, the mounds also consisted of graves and burial grounds. Bodies, often painted with a red ocher, were laid to rest there, clothed with personal ornaments.[18] The Emeryville Shellmound, like nearly all of the shellmounds across the Bay Area, most likely served a variety of day-to-day and ceremonial purposes. It is likely that Ohlone people used and resided alongside the same mounds where they had buried their family or community members, creating a connection between the living and earlier generations.[19] For over 2,500 years, the shellmound served the Huchin band of Ohlone who lived along the banks of the Temescal Creek. [20] While archeologists

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[16] Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," p. 155; Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound," p. 3.

[17] Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound," pp. 11-12; Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Goldrush," p. 10.

[18] Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Goldrush," p. 10; Sher, "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 1," pp. 5-6; Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," pp. 173-98, 212-68; Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound," pp. 16-18, 42-84. Schenck disagrees with Uhle's assessment that there was evidence of an abundance of cremations in the mound. Schenck, "The Emeryville Shelmound," pp. 184, 206.

[19] Fagan, *Before California*, p. 262.

[20] While the Ohlone occupied the San Francisco East Bay and surrounding area for anywhere from 4,500 to 5,000 years, it is unlikely that they used the Emeryville Shellmound for that entire period. How long the Ohlone used the mound is a matter of debate among early archeologists. Max Uhle believed that it was a testament to many thousands of years of settlement, while Egbert Schenck estimated that the mound was probably in use for about 1000 years. Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound," pp. 33-35; and Schenck,"The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," p. 211, 278. Current estimates place the mound at approximately 2,500 years old. See Jack M. Broughton,

have not yet come to a consensus regarding when or why Ohlone people stopped using the shellmound, they do agree that by the time of the first Spanish expeditions to California, the mound likely had already been abandoned, or was used only occasionally.[21]

Spanish colonization, in the late eighteenth century, largely destroyed Ohlones' way of life. One of four presidios controlling coastal California, the San Francisco Presidio presided over the Bay Area, including present-day Emeryville. Providing protection for the missions, the military arm of Spanish colonization enforced discipline, prevented escape, and suppressed rebellion at the twenty-one California missions, including the San Francisco Mission, which from 1786 to 1793, Ohlone people joined.[22] The brutality of colonialism, along with disease and environmental deterioration, radically reduced the population and transformed the life ways of Ohlone people.[23] Ohlone did survive Spanish colonization by resisting, marrying Spanish colonizers, or providing labor for nearby ranchos and pueblos or Spanish villages. Still, in addition to general population decline, colonialism shifted subsistence and trade patterns, tribal ways of life, and belief systems.[24]

Resource Depression and Intensification During the Late Holocene San Francisco Bay: Evidence from the Emeryville Shellmound Vertebrate Fauna (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 25-27.

[21] Uhle estimated that the mound had been abandoned just before Spanish arrival. Schenck argued that when the Spanish arrived, Ohlone were still using the mound, but only seasonally as they had for many years. Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," pp. 208-12; Uhle "The Emeryville Shellmound," p. 36. See also Fagan, *Before California*, pp. 266-67; and Sandra Sher, "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 2, The Destruction of the Emeryville Shellmound," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 5, no.3 (Summer 1994): 4-10 (esp. p. 7).

[22] Milliken, *Time of Little Choice,* p. 249.

[23] Milliken, *Time of Little Choice*; Margolin, pp. 157-67; Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Goldrush," pp. 15-16; Sher, "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 2," pp. 7-9.

[24] See, for example, Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of San Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). See also Antonia, I. Castañeda, "Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848," in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush eds.* Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi, eds., (Berkeley: University of California, 1998),

In 1821, Mexico won independence from Spain, and gained control of California, bringing continued change for the native population and others now residing there. In 1833, Mexico ordered secularization that forced missions across California to close, transferring land and property to those local politicians and elite rancheros who implemented the changes. While missionized Ohlone peoples may have become free of oppressive Spanish control, those who had given up their old ways of life now depended upon the mission system and found themselves with little food or support.[25] During this period, some Ohlone stayed close to the mission, while others took work at nearby ranches, and still others joined together to farm.[26]

With the U.S. conquest of California in the U.S.-Mexico War, the Gold Rush, and Anglo American westward migration, Ohlone people continued to face an onslaught of violence and change. In 1850, the new California state government legislated the status of American Indians, determining that the state's indigenous peoples were to have no political rights, including voting, or appearing in court.[27] Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, northern Californian whites exploited indigenous labor on farms and in the gold mines.[28] While whites angled for more land, support

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pp. 235-38; and, on the Northern California interior, Alberto L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival On the California Frontier* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).

[25] Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants*, pp. 211-22; Robert Jackson, "The Development of San Jose Mission, 1797-1840," in *The Ohlone Past and Present*, p. 243; Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Gold Rush," pp. 16-21; Sher, "Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 2," pp. 9-10.

[26] Margolin, *The Ohlone Way*, pp. 165-66.

[27] James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), pp. 81-86; Leventhal, et. al., "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," in Bean, ed., p. 308. For a comprehensive discussion of California Indian life after the U.S.-Mexico War, see Rawls, *Indians of California*, pp. 81-201.

[28] Rawls, *Indians of California*, pp. 109-33. See also Stacey Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

grew for Indian removal and relocation to reservations.[29] By 1870, the population of Californian Indians had dropped to less than 30,000.[30]

Even in the face of terrible violence, poverty, hunger, and disease, the Ohlone community survived Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. control of California. While some California Indians endured by living in the hinterlands and laboring on ranches, one group of Ohlone in the East Bay was able to acquire land and formed a ranch named Alisal. Together with other northern California native peoples, they lived and worked on the ranch, intermarrying across tribal lines and with Spanish Mexicans. Until the beginning of the twentieth century the Alisal community joined in cultural revitalization efforts, but when the economic base supporting the ranch dwindled, and Anglo populations began to move to the area in larger numbers, they were unable to keep it running and eventually lost their claim to this land in a bureaucratic paper shuffle. Members of the Alisal ranch moved throughout the Bay Area, and while the community grew increasingly fragmented, the persistence of intermarriage and ritual godparenthood kept members intertwined.[31]

While Ohlone people experienced the effects of brutal colonization, struggled against it, and found modes of survival, the shellmounds continued to dot the landscape and endured as a reminder of older Ohlone ways of life. The Emeryville Shellmound remained relatively undisturbed until the late nineteenth century, its contents suggesting what life was like for Ohlone people before contact with European settlers.[32] While the shellmound was never frozen

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[29] Rawls, *Indians of California*, pp.137-70.

[30] Ibid., p. 171.

[31] Leventhal, et. al., "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," in Bean, ed., pp. 308-10.

[32] For an overview of early studies of shell mounds in North America, see Bruce G. Trigger ed., *Native Shell Mounds of North America: Early Studies* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986).

in time, altered by its Ohlone builders and falling victim to the elements of rain and wind, it would not be until the mound and its Indian past became a commodified in the late nineteenth century that it would slowly begin to deplete in size. Even while the mound shrank, ideas regarding the Indian-ness of the place permeated the historical, cultural, and national imagination.

Shell Mound Park

By the late nineteenth century, the Emeryville Shellmound had become the central component of an East Bay amusement park, Shell Mound Park, a place for groups and individuals to congregate, dance, and enjoy leisure activities. On August 9, 1909, the park hosted a typical event, celebrating the German heritage of local residents. The San Francisco Call reported that the park hosted close to 15,000 revelers that day. The celebrations began in San Francisco, where approximately 50,000 participants and onlookers enjoyed a parade, including fourteen floats and musical accompaniments. Participants dressed as Roman and German warriors, mingled with their American corollaries, cowboys and Indians. After the parade, people made their way across the San Francisco Bay to Shell Mound Park, where they listened to speeches by community leaders, watched athletic performances, and enjoyed the on-site bowling alley. The excitement was perhaps nowhere greater than at the dance hall pavilion.[33] Ninety feet in diameter and forty feet from the floor to the roof, the pavilion was impressive—from the top of it, one would have been able to see the outline of San Francisco,

[33] "Fifty Thousand Sons Revere Memory of Warrior with Imposing Pageant," San Francisco Call, August 9, 1909.

along with Alcatraz and Angel islands and, farther in the distance, the San Francisco Presidio.[34] But more important than its size was its placement atop the visually striking shellmound.

Open to visitors from 1876 to 1924, Shell Mound Park was one of three turn-of-the-century East Bay recreation areas. The other two, Idora Park in Oakland and Neptune Beach in Alameda, were both amusement parks, replete with roller coasters and, in the case of Neptune, "the greatest swimming baths in the world."[35] While Idora and Neptune competed with one another for patrons, Shell Mound Park enticed visitors with its beautiful grounds and attractions like dining rooms, shooting galleries, bowling alleys, athletic fields, swings, and a race course. Shell Mound Park was also different from Idora or Neptune in that it frequently hosted area clubs and fraternal organizations. From the French on Bastille Day to the labor unions on May Day, it offered a place for people to celebrate membership in various collectivities and for various collectivities to celebrate their distinctiveness.[36]

Shell Mound Park was typical of new types of public amusements emerging at the turn of the century. Between 1890 and 1920, a newly expanding industrial economy brought with it a

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[34] Sandra Sher, "Shellmound Park (1876-1924): The Bay Area's Premier Amusement Resort," *Journal of the Emeryville Historical Society* 7, no.3 (Fall 1996): 4-11 (esp. p. 5).

[35] "Alameda to Have a Million Dollar Amusement Park," *Sunset Magazine*, April 1912, p. 854. On Neptune Beach and Idora Park, see Dwitt Jones, *Oakland Parks and Playground* (Sacramento: State Emergency Relief Administration, 1936), pp. 257-59, pp. 292-95. Shell Mound Park has appeared in literary classics. Jack London begins his *Valley of the Moon* in a fictionalized Shell Mound Park, named Wiesel Park, replete with dancing, picnicking, and area organizations socializing. See London, *Valley of the Moon* (1913; repr., Los Angeles: David Rejl Publishers, 1988), pp. 3-17. In Frank Norris's *McTeague,* characters picnic at Shell Mound Park and enjoy the shooting range but end their jaunt with a brawl. Norris, *McTeauge: A Story of San Francisco* (1899; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 160-70.

[36] E.g., "Frenchmen Gather at Big Picnic in the Park," San Francisco Call, August 17, 1908; "Labor Parade Largest Ever Held in City," San Francisco Call, September 6, 1910. A cartoon in the *San Francisco Call* also speaks to the ethnic affiliations of the park attendees; see "Humorous Views of the Men Behind the Guns At Shell Mound Park, as Sketched by Call Cartoonist," *San Francisco Call*, June 3, 1901. See also description in Jones, *Oakland Parks and Playgrounds*, pp. 242-43. For a brief overview of park history, see Sher, "Shellmound Park."

new class of workers, many of whom were immigrant women. With money in their pockets, individuals consumed new mass-produced commodities like fashion and dime novels, participating in leisure activities such as going to movie theaters, amusement parks, or saloons. Among working women, going out to dance halls was an especially popular outing, and the pavilion at Shell Mound Park was an enticing attraction to all who visited.[37] Like other parks of the era, Shell Mound Park was a popular destination among immigrants and members of ethnic communities, who used the park to celebrate their identity through traditional festivals or cultural events.[38]

All turn-of-the-century parks had distinctive features that helped to bring the crowds and Shell Mound Park was no different. Providing food, drinks, a shooting range, and more, perhaps its most alluring feature was its "slick pavilion floor atop a huge shell mound, [which left visitors] unaware they were dancing on the graves of Indians."[39] In 1877, the park's owner, Edward Wiard, leveled the top of the thirty-foot shellmound to construct the pavilion. Shell Mound Park was both physically and metaphorically built around the Emeryville Shellmound.

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[37] Nan Enstad explains, while working women had long been consumers, during this period they began to buy mass produced items made for them. Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 17. On the popularity of dance halls, see Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure at the Turn-of-the-Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), pp. 88-114. For a general discussion on the emergence of public amusements at the turn of the century, see David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusement* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

[38] Five Thousand British celebrated the coronation of the Queen of England. "Miniature King and Queen are Gaily Crowned," *San Francisco Call*, June 11, 1911. Following the convention of the German American League, the group gathered at Shell Mound Park; "German League Will Celebrate," *San Francisco Call*, September 20, 1908. Celebrating the Italian constitution, Italians gathered at the park; "Italian Societies Hold Annual Picnic" *San Francisco Call*, June 3, 1901. See also Jones, *Oakland Parks and Playgrounds*, p. 242, for a short description of the diverse ethnic and racial groups that visited the park. On immigrant public culture, including public amusements, see Sabine Haenni *The Immigrant Scene: Amusements in New York, 1880-1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[39] "The Knave," *Oakland Tribune*, July 2, 1967.

Most simply, its name, Shell Mound Park, recalled Emeryville's native past and placed the mound—and the Indigenous peoples who once used it—as central to the experience of park-goers. Physically, the mound sat at the end, though not the edge, of the park. Just next to the shores of the San Francisco Bay, surrounded to its south by food stands and picnic areas and to the east by the Southern Pacific Railroad Station, the mound remained the visual center of the park. With its height, location next to the water, and the grand pavilion, it anchored the space.[40]

While the shellmound may have physically structured visitors' experiences at the park, the native past remained otherwise invisible, except during those important archeological moments that revealed the interior of the shellmound. For instance, during Max Uhle's 1906 excavation of the mound, the entrance to the shaft he dug remained open and visible for a month, including during the highly popular "picnic days" celebration. The University of California, Berkeley's Anthropology Department, the sponsor of the dig, placed guards on watch to ensure that no one fell into the hole and that the area would not be disturbed.[41] While there had been smaller excavations at the shellmound site, they intended this particular dig to be more comprehensive, and it made headlines with local newspapers reporting the anthropologists' subsequent findings. In doing so, newspapers connected the park both to the digs and to what one newspaper reporter called an "aboriginal crematory."[42]

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[40] See Sher, "Shell Mound Park," pp. 8-9.

[41] Letter Samuel A. Barret to John C. Merriam, June 19, 1906, folder Samuel A. Barret, box C-B970, John C. Merriam Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California (collection in process).

[42] "Emeryville Shellmound Aboriginal Crematory in Stone Age," *Oakland Tribune*, July 28, 1907. See also "Secure Relics of Stone Age," *San Francisco Call*, July 23, 1902; "Relics of the Stone Age Discovered," *The Evening News*, July 13, 1907; and "Secrets of Shell Mound Laid Bare by Scientists," *Oakland Tribune*, July 7, 1907. During park construction in 1896, skeletons were discovered in a smaller mound adjacent to the central Emeryville Shellmound. This was reported in "Seven Skeletons," *Oakland Tribune,* August 24, 1896.

Newspaper and magazine articles on the excavations reported on the mound's artifacts, including bones and burial matter, as well as other anthropological findings. A *Sunset Magazine* article, entitled "Indian Relics Near San Francisco," outlined Uhle's excavation, but falsely, at first, claimed the mound was not used as a burial ground. Then, the article continued by stating that there were indeed some burials "made in the vicinity." [43] The author rationalized, however, that these graves were unimportant because "tribes of low grade civilization follow the custom of burying their dead underneath their feet…in order to protect the graves against disturbance."[44] Presumably, the author was comparing the Ohlone to more "civilized" native peoples such as the Aztecs. This *Sunset* article used the shellmound relics as a way to attract and intrigue visitors, while divorcing the site from death. During the park's tenure, only the archeological digs prompted reflection on the links between the park, the mound, and the burials. The next major excavation would not occur until steam shovels leveled the mound in 1924.

Newspaper reporting about the mound, archeological digs, and even the place of the mound as a stagnant and central feature of the park, maintained Indian identity as a relic of the past. The late nineteenth century saw the birth of antimodernism, contending that modernity's rapid industrialization was divorcing urban people, with their consumer culture and attendant frivolity, from their authentic selves. Looking to American Indians to find expressions of authenticity, indigineity represented closeness to a nature, static culture, and the past. This belief relied upon the declentionist narrative of the "vanishing Indian," which assumed that American

[43] "Indian Relics Near San Francisco," *Sunset Magazine*, November 1907-April 1908, p. 204.

[44] The article continues by discussing the content presented in Uhle study, including the burials and bones found within. Ibid, p. 205.

Indians would be unable to withstand the onslaught of "advanced" societies, "vanishing" either in death or through assimilation. [45]

Part and parcel of antimodernists' search for an authentic past was white America's cultural obsession with Native Americans. Often on display in traveling Wild West shows, Indigenous people were central players in these theatrical episodes. In such of pageantry, Indians often represented the past or a dying way of life, succumbing to the onslaught of industry and westward expansion.[46] Or, as illustrated in the Woodcraft Indians, young white boys "played Indian" to get in touch with their own innate "native" ruggedness, which, like antimodernists, they believed was too often suppressed in an increasingly industrial world.[47] Shell Mound Park guests never animated the American Indian past—with stories, costumes, or reenactments—as was typical in this period. But, given frequent newspaper articles and the occasional visible presence of an archeological dig, visitors presumably had some awareness that they were dancing on hallowed ground.

At Shell Mound Park the commodification of the indigenous past, then, was not one of pageantry. There were no generic tipis or ostentatious headdresses at this picnic spot. Instead,

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[45] Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episode of Encounter from the Late Nineteenth Century Pacific Northwest* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 5-8. The idea of the "vanishing Indian" had a much longer history, taking hold in the 1820s. By proclaiming that American Indians were vanishing, popular American imagery could narrate Indigenous history without engaging with "real Indian people." Phillip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 65-66.

[46] L.G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), p. 149. See also Louis Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Random House, 2007).

[47] There is an ever growing literature on the relationship between popular cultures, American Indians, "Indian-ness," and American identity. See for example, Phillip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004); Shari Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); and Deloria, *Playing Indian.*

the tension lay between the place's history and its use, between the seen and the unseen. While visitors did not "play Indian" or watch reenacted battles, they still capitalized on the "Indian-ness" of the place; the mound loomed large even as observers learned or knew little about the people who built it. The mound, then, stood as a visual testament to the area's Ohlone inhabitants, providing a link to an authentic Indian past. The shellmound and the surrounding area was commodified—locals visited the park to dance at the pavilion that sat atop the mound, and the name "Shell Mound Park" alerted visitors to its past.

Shell Mound Park shut its doors in 1924, an event reported mournfully in local newspapers. One paper lamented, "Shell Mound Park, within a few days, will be only a memory."[48] Bemoaning modernity's long arm of industry, it would seem that Shellmound Park would have the same fate at the hands of industry that antimodernists saw as befalling indigenous people. Another paper wrote nostalgically, "Where yesterday the glad cries of children were heard as they romped under the towering eucalyptus trees, the hum of machinery will be heard tomorrow."[49] The shellmound and its native past provided a quiet background to park visitors' experience. Meanwhile, the anthropologists' engagement with the mound and its history were both physically and metaphorically in the foreground.

[48] "Shell Mound Park Will be Factory Sites, Famous Picnic Grounds to Become Industrial District," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 28, 1924.

[49] "Shellmound Park Now Thing of Past, Historic Picnic Grounds Give Way to March of Industrial Progress," *Oakland Post*, October 11, 1924.

Digging in the Dirt

Area residents may have been sad to see the park go, but anthropologists and archeologists at nearby University of California, Berkeley, saw the demolition as a boon for their growing collection of California Indian artifacts. On October 17, 1924, anthropologist Egbert Schenck prepared for the demolition and subsequent excavation of the Emeryville Shellmound. The owner of the property, John Mee, had sold the land to developers, who hoped to build on Emeryville's growing industrial reputation. Mee knew of the shellmound's historical and scientific significance, and while it did not stop him from selling the land, he did offer its contents to the Anthropology Department at UC-Berkeley.[50] The shells, tools, and bones that Schenck unearthed were eventually housed on the shelves of the Anthropology Department, less than five miles away from where they had resided for over 2,500 years.[51] In that five-mile journey from Emeryville to Berkeley, however, the meaning of the animal bones, tools, and human remains changed fundamentally.

By the time a steam shovel razed the mound, the former park's dance pavilion had already altered its size. Still, it remained a significant 22 feet tall and about 150 to 250 feet in diameter. It took approximately six weeks to flatten the mound and another two and half months to sift through the dirt and complete the archeological dig, collecting the artifacts that survived in

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[50] John Hubert Mee to Department of Anthropology, September 16, 1924, folder Mee, John Hubert, box 101, University Archives Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley [hereafter UA, Bancroft].

[51] For a discussion of the mound's destruction and its study, see Sher, "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 2," pp. 4-10, and "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 1," pp. 10-14.

the depths of the pile.[52] Schenck's excavation would be the last and most extensive at the Emeryville Shellmound until 1999, when workers would discover bones during construction of the South Bayfront Project, the site of the future Bay Street mall. In earlier excavations, the presence of Shell Mound Park prevented researchers from accessing more than a slice of the mound. Alfred L. Kroeber, head of the Anthropology Department and the famed twentieth-century scholar of California Indians, thought that the earlier digs had produced "an insufficient quantity of material … to give wholly satisfactory scientific results."[53] With Mee's offer to allow anthropologists to examine the shellmound's contents during and after its destruction, Kroeber figured that Schenck should give it another look. In the end, the 1924 dig was the most fruitful one yet.[54]

While the Emeryville Shellmound held scholarly significance, it was just one of the many ways in which the Anthropology Department at UC-Berkeley worked to survey the history, culture, and people of native California, and, in turn, make meaning about the region's earliest inhabitants. Early twentieth-century anthropologists, like Kroeber and those who worked on the shellmound, hoped to preserve and index what they saw as a disappearing culture and people.[55]

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[52] Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," p. 165.

[53] Alfred L. Kroeber to John Hubert Mee, September 23, 1924, folder Mee, John Hubert, box 101, UA, Bancroft.

[54] Alfred L. Kroeber to John Hubert Mee, November 25, 1924, folder Mee, John Hubert, box 101, UA, Bancroft.

[55] Phoebe A. Hearst officially sponsored the survey work, in varying degrees, from 1901 to 1920. The department and museum funding often depended on Hearst's ability and willingness to support the work. Alfred Kroeber's first contribution to this work occurred in 1899. Frederick Alexander Long, "'The Kingdom Must Come Soon': The Role of A.L. Kroeber and the Hearst Survey in Shaping California Anthropology, 1901-1920" (M.A. thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1998), pp. 18, 36. On Hearst's donation and specifically her southwest collection, see Ira Jackson, "Patrons, Potters, and Painters: Phoebe Hearst's Collections from the American Southwest" *Collecting Native America 1870-1960,* eds. Stephen Krech III and Barbara Hail, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), pp. 139-171.

Like the antimodernists searching for authenticity, these anthropologists hoped to find a past uncontaminated by white influence.[56] Through their digs, their writings, and their museum displays, anthropologists and the institutions that supported them produced knowledge about California's Indian peoples and, in the case of the Emeryville Shellmound, the Ohlone people specifically. With these acts, anthropologists contributed to place-making, marking this site as Indigenous. In doing so, the scholars and their institutions were a part of a larger memory-making machine that preserved Ohlone culture while contributing to the idea of the "vanishing Indian," reaffirming the culture of the Ohlone people as bounded, static, and dead.

Schenck's impulse, and that of his predecessors at the Emeryville Shellmound, to collect and categorize bones and other artifacts was indicative of the broader disciplinary method that would later be referred to as "salvage ethnography," the approach that defined early twentieth-century American anthropology. Proponents of salvage ethnography posited that native cultures were rapidly becoming extinct as "primitive" society collided with Western "civilization." Salvage ethnography worked to rescue native cultures from disappearing, providing a justification for the collecting and categorizing of indigenous artifacts.[57] In this conceit, then, rapid change inevitably caused "traditional" cultures to disappear, with no possibility of transformation or any meaningful future existence—giving scientific weight to the idea of the "vanishing Indian." Collecting, then, became a benevolent pursuit for anthropologists, who saw

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[56] Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, p. 5.

[57] Pauline Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), pp. 90-91.

themselves as saving disappearing cultures, witnessing authentic traditions, and serving as custodians of the past.[58]

UC-Berkeley's Anthropology Department, which conducted the excavations of the Emeryville Shellmound, was committed to the salvage approach. Phoebe A. Hearst, a passionate collector of objects from all over the world, and the wife of California congressman and mining magnate George Hearst, helped to fund the department and museum. With her help, the university established a museum-oriented department in 1901, modeling it on the influential anthropologist Franz Boaz's American Museum of Natural History in New York.[59] Boaz provided more than a model for an anthropology museum; he was also Kroeber's mentor and one of the major proponents of the salvage approach.[60] Motivated by fears about the disappearing languages and cultures of California native people, Kroeber shaped the UC-Berkeley department and its focus accordingly. He honed the department's specialization to California, and inaugurated an anthropological survey of its indigenous people. Based on extensive fieldwork that included ethnography and mapping, Kroeber published the formative *Handbook of the Indians of California*, in which he chronicled the details of everyday life before European contact and mapped California's linguistic groups.[61] Reports on the artifacts excavated from the

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[58] James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography,* ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcuse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 113.

[59] Long, "'The Kingdom Must Come Soon,"' p. 24. On Kroeber and Hearst, see Theodora Kroeber, *Alfred Kroeber: A Personal Configuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 60-62.

[60] On the relationship between Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber, see Kroeber, *Alfred Kroeber*, pp. 45-52. For a brief overview of Franz Boas and the salvage approach, see Paul A. Erikson and Liam Donat Murphy, *A History of Anthropological Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 63-68. On the history of the relationship between anthropologists and native people, see Thomas Biolsi and Larry J. Zimmerman eds., *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Critique of Anthropology*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997).

[61] Alfred L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1925). For an in-depth discussion of Kroeber's theories and methods, as well as the bureaucracy that accompanied the making of the *Handbook of Native California,* see Long, '"The Kingdom Must Come Soon.'"

shellmounds also contributed to Kroeber's study, but had an even greater impact as the material backbone of the growing anthropology department and its affiliated museum.

In their early years, the excavations of Northern California shellmounds provided an important stockpile of material culture for both the department and the museum. The Emeryville Shellmound was one of the largest and best preserved of California's mounds; ironically, the dance pavilion had protected the site and its contents from both looters and more comprehensive digs.[62] Under Kroeber's directorship, archaeologists provided four major reports on the make-up of the Emeryville Shellmound, two that dealt with this mound exclusively (Uhle in 1907 and Schenck in 1926) and two others that surveyed area mounds more generally (Nelson in 1909 and Gifford in 1916).[63] The reports focused on excavation techniques, environmental obstacles, and the mounds' make-up, including the placement and types of animal bones and shells, tools, ash, and human remains.

In each of their reports, the authors concurred that the indigenous people who had used and built the mounds ranked, as Egbert Schenck, author of the 1926 report, stated, "very low in the cultural scale."[64] Max Uhle, author of the 1907 study, reasoned:

> The manner of procuring the essential of life by collecting shells in itself indicates a low form of human existence. In all parts of the world, even today, people may be seen on the shore at low water gathering for food the shells uncovered by the retreating tide; and although under the changed conditions of life they raise no shellmounds, these people always belong to the lower classes of society, and lead in this manner a primitive, as well as a simple life. Peoples depending for food upon collecting shells are usually not

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[62] Sher, "The Native Legacy of Emeryville: Part 1," p. 5.

[63] Egbert Schenck and Max Uhle's reports focused solely on the Emeryville mound. See Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," and Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound." Nels C. Nelson and Edward Winslow Gifford examined the Emeryville Shellmound in the context of other Bay Area mounds. See Nelson, "The Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Region," and Gifford, "Composition of California Shellmounds."

[64] Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," p. 151.

> agriculturalists, but fisherman, and perhaps hunters as a secondary occupation. Their implements are of the rudest kind, made of bone, stone, wood, and the like.[65]

Because the size of the shellmound increased over time, archeologists used the strata or levels of the mound to determine its age.[66] The anthropologists who studied the mound reasoned that because they saw little substantial change between the levels of the shellmound (indicating for them a lack of cultural change over time), the Ohlone and central California Indians more generally were primitive, or neolithic at best. Schenck's returned to Uhle's work and agreed with Uhle's earlier assessment, stating "we are dealing with a very simple people."[67] While Kroeber did not excavate the mound himself, his study of California Indians lead him to a similar conclusion: "the practical arts of life, the social institutions, and the ceremonies of California Indians are unusually simple and undeveloped."[68]

Typical of the period, anthropologists labeled tribal and non-literate societies as "primitive," understanding culture within a hierarchy. The designation "primitive," of course, depended on its corollary, "civilized," to gain meaning. As Gail Bederman explains, "civilization" was a raced and gendered concept in the United States at the turn of the century. "Civilization" signified more than just industrially advanced or Western; rather it "denoted a precise stage in human racial evolution….But only white races had, as yet, evolved to the

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[65] Uhle, "The Emeryville Shellmound," p. 31.

[66]Ibid., pp. 14-16.

[67] Schenck, "The Emeryville Shellmound Final Report," p. 277.

[68] Alfred Louis Kroeber, "Types of Indian Culture in California," *American Archeology and Ethnography* 2, no. 3 (June 1904): 81-103 (esp. 81). See also Nelson, "The Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Region," pp. 340-43. While Kroeber saw important differences among indigenous cultural groups, including language, he also observed indigenous culture in central California as relatively uniform. Northwestern of California (and along the Oregon coast) as well as the southern region of the state stood out to him as a significantly different. See Kroeber, "Types of Indian Culture of California," p. 82

civilized stage." According to this line of thought, primitive or savage (non-white) races had failed to evolve properly.[69] The idea of the "primitive" went hand-in-hand with the salvage approach to anthropology. Salvage anthropologists studied those they saw as vanishing people, recording customs that they assumed had failed to withstand the onslaught of industry or "progress." And thus, anthropologist James Clifford explains, "the other is lost, in disintegrating time and space, but saved in text."[70] Kroeber and those who studied the shellmound wrote about California native people, who they saw as unable to adapt or transform, as part of a stagnant and timeless culture. As they worked to preserve California Indian culture, anthropologists simultaneously memorialized California Indians in the pages of their professional journals.

In addition to the written word, the University of California's anthropology museum held indigenous cultural artifacts as well. First opened in San Francisco in 1911, it would not be until 1931 that the department brought the holdings back across the bay to its current home in Berkeley. The museum built its collection initially on items donated by Phoebe A. Hearst, and added artifacts that researchers brought to California from all over the world. Not least among these collections were California Indian materials, including selected artifacts from the Emeryville Shellmound.[71] While the museum displayed bones, beads, and awls in a scientific

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[69] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 25.

[70] James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 112-15. On Kroeber and salvage anthropology, see Thomas Buckley, "'The Little History of Pitiful Events': The Epistemological Moral Context of Kroeber's California Ethnology," in *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition* ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996). See also Long, "The Kingdom Must Come Soon," pp. 111-14.

[71] "To Open California Shellmound Exhibit," *Oakland Tribune*, January 17, 1915.

manner, the dispassionate presentation was belied by the sensationalism of the museum's main attraction: Ishi.

In 1911, Ishi, a Yahi Indian, was living outside of Oroville, California. When a young white man from town saw the "wild Indian," he called the local police, who picked Ishi up, and changed his life forever.[72] Alfred Kroeber got word of "the wild man of Oroville," and, intrigued by this man's inability to understand English or other native languages, Kroeber believed that he might be an "authentic" Indian, untouched by modernity.[73] Kroeber had built his career learning the cultural history of native California by working with native informants. He thought, however, that Ishi was different, that he was the last "uncontaminated man." Kroeber therefore had high hopes that he would learn an unprecedented amount from Ishi about his culture, his people, and his language.[74]

Accordingly, an associate of Kroeber's picked up Ishi in Oroville and took him to San Francisco. Kroeber, in turn, took him to the anthropology museum in the city, where Ishi would live and work as a janitor. Ishi was more than just a resident or paid staff member, however. He was a living exhibit.[75] Starting with the invitation-only museum opening, Ishi became a main attraction and he remained on display weekly, on Sundays from 2:00 to 4:30. Despite the

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[72] Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Wild Men: Ishi and Kroeber in the Wilderness of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.103-09. See also Orin Starn*, Ishi's Brain: In Search of the Last Wild Indian* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004); Karl Kroeber and Clifton Kroeber, eds., *Ishi in Three Centuries* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); and Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America* (1961; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). For a documentary history of Ishi, see Robert Heizer and Theodora Kroeber, eds. *Ishi, the Last Yahi: A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

[73] Sackman, *Wild Men*, pp. 107-08.

[74] Ibid., p. 142.

[75] Ibid., p. 158-68.

obvious exploitation, Kroeber did not want to capitalize on Ishi simply as a spectacle, though this type of display was popular at the time. Instead, Kroeber tried to show Ishi at work, carving an arrowhead or drilling a fire.[76] Regardless, Ishi was a human exhibit. And, it was in this context that anthropologists displayed the shellmound artifacts, and in which visitors saw them.

The implicit message behind the exhibit was that the Indians of California were either extinct or on the verge of extinction. Kroeber put this sentiment on paper in the *Handbook the Indians of California.* Towards the end of the section on Coastanoans (the linguistic group to which the Ohlone belong), Kroeber remarked that "the Coastanoan people are extinct as far as practical purposes are concerned."[77] Kroeber likely had no idea of the role his statement would play in native peoples' land claims, tribal recognition, and sovereignty. Saying that a people was extinct had real-world implications; it was not just an academic exercise. For those people who claimed membership as Ohlones, it was difficult to escape Kroeber's early assessment, first published in 1925, which influenced the government's decision to withhold recognition of the Ohlone people as a federally recognized tribe in 1927.[78]

In 1955, however, Kroeber served as a witness on behalf of California Indians, in a California Claims hearing, held by the federal government.[79] He provided testimony regarding

[76] Ibid., p. 166.

[77] Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, p. 464. Krober completed the text in 1917 but was unable to publish it until 1925.

[78] Leventhal, et. al., "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," ed. Bean, pp. 297-98.

[79] On the land claims of the Mission Indians in Southern California, see Florence C. Shipek, "Mission Indians and Indians of California Land Claims," *American Indian Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (Autumn 1989): 409-420. Shipek explains some of the material ways Kroeber affected the land claims cases. Mission Indians, for instance, contested the boundaries he drew in his map, limiting land claims the group felt that they deserved.

all of the state's tribes that sought economic retribution. Intending to help the Ohlone redress extensive land loss, Kroeber retracted his earlier statement about "extinction," explaining,

> It is their aboriginal culture which has essentially died; and the native languages are also dying out, though somewhat more slowly. The "blood" or race is maintaining itself under the admixture that is taking place. As a result of this misunderstanding, there is a widespread belief that many Indian groups, especially the smaller ones, have by now become extinct. This misapprehension is supported by the fact that the younger generation of Indians, schooled and accustomed to associating habitually with whites, often speak little if any of their ancestral language, and may have heard only conversational snatches about the culture of their great grandparents – in fact may not know even the tribe or birthplace of their grandparents. [80]

As Alan Leventhal, Les Field, Hank Alvarez, and Rosemary Cambra point out in "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," while Kroeber's 1955 statement can be viewed as a retraction, it is a problematic one at best. They explain that Kroeber "reinforced the widely held notion that cultural transformations among native people erase their indigenous identity."[81] As this statement makes clear, notions of authenticity are also rooted in the politics of remembrance. Kroeber froze indigenous identity in a certain time and place, allowing very little room for change. Thus, even in Kroeber's retraction, he continued to supply the authoritative tools with which to understand who was a "real" Indian, and, in doing so, he put up a fence around the indigenous past and present.

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[80] Alfred. L. Kroeber and Robert F. Heizer, "Continuity of Indian Population in California from 1770/1848 to 1955*," Contributions of the University of California Archaeological Research Facility* 9 (1970): 1-22 (esp. p. 2). Kroeber and Heizer wrote this paper in connection with the federal court case Indians of California vs. United States, submitted as Plaintiff's Exhibit No. RFH-27. In Kroeber's biography, his wife, Theodora Kroeber, explains that he took his role in the claims case as an important duty, retracting outmoded statements. As the principal witness for the Indians of California, "He spoke also with a contained passion: he was testifying for a people and land which he knew intimately and loved deeply." Kroeber, *Alfred Kroeber*, pp. 221-223 (quote on p. 222).

[81] Leventhal et. al., "The Ohlone Back from Extinction," ed. Bean, p. 312.

Writing about the Muwekma Ohlone (a San Francisco-based tribe of Ohlone, but not descendants of those who built or sustained the Emeryville Shellmound), anthropologist Renya Ramirez discusses the complicated feelings that many Ohlone people have towards Kroeber. On one hand, she notes that "Ohlones discuss their frustration and anger at Kroeber because of Kroeber's statement. These Ohlones argue that public, city, and federal agencies, as well as other Native Americans, are still influenced by his 'extinct' proclamation."[82] On the other hand, Ramirez explains, some Ohlone feel that "Kroeber did important work, because he documented their culture, and saved songs and other valuable information for their descendants."[83] The legacy of Kroeber and his anthropology colleagues is a complex one. While they did manage to record and document important aspects of Indian life ways, which were indeed rapidly changing, the vision that they created was not value-neutral. In shaping the past world of native people, they deeply affected native people in the present and for the future.

The anthropologists who excavated the Emeryville Shellmound worked to piece together an Ohlone past, one aspect of a larger project on California Indian people and culture. In doing so, they helped to produce a sense of place at this particular site, one that resonated throughout the region and the state. While developers paved over the mound soon after John Mee razed it to the ground, the connection to the indigenous past remained. It survived on the shelves of the Phoebe A. Hearst Anthropology Museum, beneath the soil in the materials of bones and artifacts, in the memory of Bay Area residents, and in the imagination of the Bay Area American Indian community.

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[82] Renya K. Ramirez, *Native Hubs: Culture, Community, and Belonging in Silicon Valley and Beyond* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 31-32.

[83] Ibid.

Paving the Past

Seventy-five years after the last major excavation of the Emeryville Shellmound, builders broke ground on the South Bay Front Project. When developers and city officials first conceived of a mall along the waterfront in Emeryville, they knew that they were building on the site of the former Emeryville Shellmound. They also knew that their digging might unearth artifacts. But they assumed that any bodies laid to rest in the depths of its soil had been excavated long before by archeologists. They did not expect to find human remains when their shovels hit the dirt.[84] The developers' more immediate concern was the threat of toxic run-off leaking into the adjacent San Francisco Bay. Since the mid-twentieth century, a Sherman Williams paint factory had manufactured pesticides and lead-based paint there, continuing Emeryville's industrial legacy.[85] To curb the potential problem of run-off, construction workers dug a holding pond on the property. Much to their surprise, their digging exposed the human remains and artifacts of the lowermost levels of the Emeryville Shellmound.[86] This 1999 discovery triggered a set of state and federal laws enacted to protect native people, native burial grounds, and native cultural resources, while simultaneously shielding developers from future legal battles. Even with the legal machinery set in motion, deeply entrenched interests fought over the meaning of the place and the significance of the items. The struggle over how the city would build the mall and

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[84] Public Affairs Management, "South Bayfront Environmental Impact Report," (Emeryville: City of Emeryville, 1999), p. 380.

[85] Ibid., pp. 325-26.

[86] Chip Johnson, "Flap Over Emeryville Indian Bones/Archeologists Complain About City Policy," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 20, 1999.

memorialize the shellmound ultimately came down to questions of remembrance—how to remember the dead, how to remember the past, and how to move toward the future.

Upon finding human remains and artifacts at the South Bayfront Project site, the Emeryville City Redevelopment Agency called the Alameda County Coroner's Office. According to California's Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the city needed to hire an archeologist immediately to survey the site and find the "most likely descendant" of the Huichin Ohlone to serve as a cultural monitor. First created in 1976 (and extended in 1982), NAHC is a state commission designed to protect American Indian sacred sites, human remains, and artifacts. While the NAHC functions on a state level, the Native American Graves Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), signed into law in 1990, works on a national level. This federal legislation was also designed to protect American Indian sacred sites, human remains, and artifacts, but NAGPRA, as opposed to NAHC, can legally halt development and mandate the repatriation of artifacts. NACH can only make recommendations. NAGPRA and NAHC were born out of the controversial histories of archeology and anthropology, whose practioners sought ownership of human remains and artifacts, divorcing them from the communities to which they belonged.[87]

At the behest of NAHC, Allen Pastron, an urban archeologist of California, initially surveyed the site, including the human remains and artifacts, and concluded that "the remnants…must be deemed of the greatest possible archaeological significance." Pastron recommended that the city at least temporarily cease development and commence a full-scale

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[87] On the history of repatriation acts, see Kathleen S. Fine-Dare, *Grave Injustice: The American Indian Repatriation Movement and NAGPRA* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). See also essays in Devon A. Mihesuah, ed., *The Repatriation Reader: Who Owns American Indian Remains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

archeological excavation, potentially costing the city three million dollars and halting construction for at least three months. Emeryville ultimately ignored Pastron's recommendation and fired him from the project. In his place, the city hired a firm that recommended a less invasive and less time-consuming dig.[88]

Simultaneous with Pastron's initial survey and research, NAHC looked for the Most Likely Descendent of the Huichin Ohlone to "inspect the site…and … recommend to the owner or the person responsible for the excavation work means for treating or disposing, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and any associated grave goods."[89] Stockton resident Katherine Perez was named the Most Likely Descendent. Like Pastron, Perez was overwhelmed by her survey of the place. For Perez, however, it was a deeply personal matter: "I knew that the ground was toxic and that anything you touched there could contaminate you, I couldn't help but bend over and pick up some bone [fragments]…I kinda dug a little hole and covered it up and I said, 'forgive me.'"[90] Pastron and Perez both opposed development on the site, but while Perez did not want to see the burial ground disturbed by developers, by archeologists, or by anyone else, Pastron advocated further archeological excavation.

Perez may have preferred to leave the site undeveloped, but her desire to rebury the exhumed bodies and not further disturb any others ironically coincided with city and development interests.[91] As José Flores, Emeryville's City Manager, explained, "We have a

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[88] "Flap Over Emeryville Indian Bones."

[89]The National American Heritage Commission, California Public Resources Code 5097.98, accessed September 1, 2013, http://www.nahc.ca.gov/cpr.html.

[90] Katherine Perez, quoted in *Shellmound*, directed by Andres Cediel (New York: New Day Films, 2005), DVD**.**

[91] "Flap Over Emeryville Indian Bones/Archeologists Complain About City Policy."

moral obligation to respect the Native American community's wishes… She [Perez] wants us to leave the graves alone. I was surprised at first, but then, when I thought about it, it made sense. I wouldn't want someone digging up my ancestors' bones to study them, either."[92] The city was not legally required to act on Perez's recommendations.[93] Still, Flores's endorsement of Perez was convenient; he took a position that would allow construction to continue.

After the discovery of human remains, the city of Emeryville hosted a public forum regarding the future of the South Bayfront Project. Area residents, Ohlone descendants, preservationists, anthropologists, and others saw multiple possibilities of what to do with the development site. Many Ohlone descendants wanted the area to be left alone as much as possible; they wanted remains to stay at the shellmound, where they would no longer be disturbed. Pastron and other archeologists saw the Emeryville site as a historical gold mine. They believed that it was imperative to stop development entirely, and to excavate the site immediately. Still others hoped development could be designed around the shellmound, ridding the area of toxic waste, creating an open space, and preserving the possibility of future digs.[94] Preservationists also hoped to clean the site of pollution, but they wanted to halt development, turning the site into a memorial.[95] The city of Emeryville and the property's development firm, Madison Marquette, reasoned that the site was too contaminated for either a comprehensive dig

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[92] Gordy Slack, "Emeryville Shell Game," *California Wild*, Summer 1999, http://researcharchive.calacademy.org/calwild/1999summer/stories/habitats.html.

[93] The National American Heritage Commission, California Public Resources Code 5097.98, accessed September 1, 2013 http://www.nahc.ca.gov/publicresource.html.

[94] Kent Lightfoot, "Shellmounds: An Archeologist's View," *Native California*, Spring 2004, p. 17.

[95] Nancy and Leonard Becker, 'The Emeryville Shellmound: Preservation, Development, Study or Memorialization," *SiteSaver: The Newsletter of Sacred Sites International Foundation* 10, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 1-8 (esp. pp. 6-7)

or an open space. And, more important, city and business representatives argued that time marches on. As Emeryville's mayor said, "we wanted to honor and respect the past while still honoring and respecting our present and our future."[96] In their own ways, each of the stakeholders needed to wrestle with the demands of the past as they looked towards the future.

Ultimately, Emeryville transformed the South Bayfront Project into a mall, not all that different from the one originally planned. While construction continued unabated, developers' discovery of the shellmound did shape the construction of the shopping center; it was built in a manner that disturbed as few graves as possible.[97] The archeologists who hoped to excavate the site, those who wanted to make a green space, and the activists who opposed construction altogether were all angry about the shopping center. As one voice of dissent put it in a local paper, "Bay Street could have been a unique development that also respected the cultural heritage of our area. That would have been really smart growth."[98] Knowing there was little they could do, American Indian activists and their allies continued to protest throughout the mall's construction.[99] Not everyone, however, felt that the activists' vitriol was appropriately placed. Eric Hohmann, an employee of Madison Marquette, remarked that he felt "pretty proud of how we as a company dealt with this," explaining that not "every firm out there would have acted in such a responsible manner."[100] In accordance with the law, archeologists and Native American

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[96] Sara Zaske, "Emeryville Officials Will Honor Ohlone Site Before Destroying It," *East Bay Express,* May 18, 2001.

[97] *Shellmound*, dir. Cediel.

[98] Sandra Sher, "Not grateful for the new mall in Emeryville," *Oakland Tribune*, December 1, 2002.

[99] "Work on Indian Stirs Public; Residents Rally Against Bay Street Project at Meeting," *Tri-Valley Herald*, May 27, 2002.

[100] Eric Hohmann, quoted in *Shellmound*, dir. Cediel.

monitors, in addition to the Most Likely Descendent, observed the initial archeological dig and the subsequent construction.

Responding to the recommendation of the Ohlone descendent Katherine Perez, the city and developers set aside a small portion of the site for a memorial space, to be dedicated to the history of the place. Recommendations for how the site could be memorialized ranged from a mural, to an educational kiosk, to a public art installment.[101] The park that Madison Marquette ultimately built is a small green space designed to pay homage to the Emeryville Shellmound and its Ohlone builders. The memorial, however, failed to appease all interested parties. Perez said, "I don't ever want to set foot on [the mall] again, not because my people are there but because of what transpired."[102] Even after Madison Marquette, the city of Emeryville, and members of the community worked towards the creation of a memorial, the question of how to honor the memory of the dead remained salient.

The small park sits at the corner of Shellmound Street and Ohlone Way, next to the clothing retailer Old Navy, across the street from the cosmetics giant Sephora, and surrounded by other stores. The park includes California wild grasses, an exposed Temescal Creek, artistic and geological renderings of the mound's layers, and a small replica of the shellmound itself. According to Madison Marquette, the natural world of the mound builders was reconstructed to "form the lifeblood of character for this contemplative historical park. A series of interactive physical elements reconstruct the memory of this special place."[103] From a small metal basket,

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[101] Becker, "The Emeryville Shellmound," p. 7.

[102] Catherine Perez quoted in *Shellmound*, dir. Cediel.

[103] The Street Today, http://www.baystreetemeryville.com/info/mallinfo2 (accessed September 1, 2013).

representing food containers used by Ohlone, to depictions of the wetlands that once lined the banks of the creek, to the "artifacts" sunk into the concrete walls, the park's built environment attempts to bring attention to what once stood in this place.

Next to the park, developers erected a stone portal that leads visitors into an area meant to tell a story about Ohlone history and life.[104] The stone portal's granite pieces chart the area's history from 10,000 B.C., when the "first inhabitants arrive to the area now called California," to the year 2000, when "estimated Native California Indian lands total 500,000 acres."[105] For the intervening 12,000 years, additional stones mark the history and culture of the Ohlone and the creation of the state of California, with mentions of tule boats, woven baskets, native food ways, the Spanish arrival, the mission system, and Indian population decline. The stone portal and the small park mobilize memory-making as a tool for place-making at the shopping mall. As geographer Seth Lunine explains, "It is part of the real estate industry's strategy of 'place-making,' in which developers commemorate romantic or colorful elements of local history and then market this 'authenticity.' This historical setting – the park and even the street names – helps to attract shoppers and mask the banality of the mall's chain stores."[106] At the park, the developer Madison Marquette looks back to the natural environment of native California, selectively remembering the Ohlone past and bringing visitors on the march of history that inevitably ends with the Bay Street Mall. With no remaining threats of native burials thwarting

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[104]http://www.baystreetemeryville.com/info/mallinfo2 August 19, 2013

[105] I base these remarks on site visits to the Bay Street Historic District, 5616 Bay Street, Emeryville, CA 94608.

[106] Lunine, "Emeryville Before the Gold Rush," pp. 5-6.

development, the memorial easily functions as a positive, even nostalgic, remembrance to help create a sense of place.

The stones do pay homage to Ohlone life ways before contact with Europeans and the violence Ohlone experienced in the face of colonization. Still, the history is cursory and sanitized. Perhaps the most glaring omission is the inadequate description of the contents or purpose of the shellmound. One stone states, "Leftover shells were thrown in a pile near the village. These big piles, called shellmounds, built up over time. Bay Street Emeryville was a shellmound site."[107] More conspicuous still is the absence of any mention—visual or textual—of human burials in the shellmound. Reminding shoppers and passers-by that the Bay Street Mall once looked quite different, the park's historical presentation only passively engages with the mound itself or its former usage. Even as the last stone makes clear the calamitous loss of indigenous land, it leaves the mall itself and the surrounding area unexamined. While the park and stones mark the place's past, the textual narrative provided still works to flatten it.

Conclusion

Even with the Bay Street Mall complete and the contents of the Emeryville Shellmound sealed off below the pavement, the mound has remained a resonant symbol. Since the mall opened in 2002, it has been the site of annual protests. Every year, on the day after Thanksgiving, Native American activists and their allies gather at the memorial park to protest and educate Black Friday shoppers about the history of the place. In 2005 local groups went a

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[107] The stone is in the Bay Street Historic District, 5616 Bay Street, Emeryville, CA 94608.

step further, sponsoring a two-week long trek that took participants on foot around the Bay Area to various sacred sites. Ending in Emeryville, the Sacred Sites/Shellmound Peace Walk sought to bring attention to the vast network of shellmounds throughout the region, widening the scope of the conversation beyond Emeryville to the wider Bay Area.[108] The walk covered hundreds of miles and participants visited dozens of shellmounds and other sacred places. Trekking across an area once predominantly populated by the Ohlone, the group remapped the boundaries of the Bay Area according to the sacred sites. In bringing attention to these places, protesters moved the shellmounds out of the shadows of the past, illustrating their ongoing relevance and importance to indigenous communities. As marchers regarded the sites as sacred and thus, as continually relevant, they worked to endow the place and the region with another layer of meaning.

Over the past 150 years, the Emeryville Shellmound—located on the edge of the bay, at the very edge of the continent—has continuously decreased in size. Once standing close to three stories high, the remnants of the mound now reside beneath the pavement of the Bay Street Mall. The struggle over the meaning of the shellmound helps to lay bare both a material and discursive dispossession, one with implications far beyond the mound or the Bay Street Mall. While the use of the place has changed and shifted over the last century and a half, each new occupant has attached an imagined Indian past to its location. Each of these iterations, in its own way, worked to flatten the mound materially, and discursively changed the meaning of the place by using or ignoring the native past, in order to justify a new meaning or use of the place.

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[108] "American Indians Visit Historic Shellmounds," *Oakland Tribune*, November 22, 2005; "Glen Cove Start of 18 Day Walk Honoring Indian Burial Sites," *Vallejo Times-Herald*, November 8, 2005.

At each of the sites at the heart of this dissertation, the place-making process occurred over the course of centuries as various historical actors—explorers and tourists, developers and activists, government officials and area residents—made meanings of the places and their pasts. The places and memories produced in this process were, and remain, varied and at times conflicted. As at the Emeryville Shellmound, this process is far from over. Memory and place-making proceed in tiny steps, accreting new meaning with every visitor to Shell Mound Park, the Bay Street Mall, Alcatraz Island, Angel Island, or the San Francisco Presidio.

Conclusion

On a clear day, standing at the tip of the East Shore State Park in Emeryville, California, you can see the four sites at the heart of this dissertation. Peering across the bay, you can glimpse the Presidio's outline, framed by the Golden Gate Bridge, the same color as the red-roofed army buildings that mark its landscape. To your west, you can see the silhouettes of Alcatraz Island's imposing cement prison and water tower. Adjacent to the former prison isle sits Angel Island, the largest in the bay. From the park, you can see the east side of that island, with the immigration buildings just out of view. And finally, across the highway, less than a mile to your east, you can spot the boxy buildings that comprise the Bay Street Mall. The East Shore State Park is close enough to the shopping center that you might spy the names of various retail stores; you will surely notice the large blue and yellow sign of the furniture giant IKEA. While the Bay is what defines this region, these sites and their attendant memories and histories help to make this region culturally recognizable. These places are constructed by bricks and mortar and landscaping, but also by narratives that take a wide range of forms, from museum exhibits to novels, memoirs to academic histories, memorials to nature preserves. Taken together, these narratives work to make this region the one that we call the San Francisco Bay Area.

The epigraph for this dissertation comes from Rebecca Solnit's *Infinite City*. In her preface she explains, "Place is a leaky container." Places, she continues,

> always refer beyond themselves, whether island or mainland, and can be imagined in various scales, from the drama of a back alley to transcontinental geopolitical forces and global climate. What we call places are stable locations with unstable

> converging forces that cannot be delineated either by fences on the ground or by boundaries of the imagination.[1]

Places amount to more than geographical coordinates. It is the stories individuals and communities tell that make places legible. Solnit, with the help of artists, historians, performers, and activists, reimagined a traditional atlas and created one that mapped San Francisco and its surrounding area through histories of environmentalism, militarism, food ways, urban development, racial migration, labor patterns, and popular culture. The atlas's maps knit together tangled, multiple, and overlapping Bay Area histories, taking in both the small- and large-scale historical and cultural arcs of the region. Solnit and her contributors demonstrate the vast possibility of place and memory. This limitlessness is exemplified by the diverse interpretations of those individuals and groups that continue to mold, contest, and shape the memories of the places at the heart of my dissertation.

The meanings of those places—the Emeryville Shellmound, Alcatraz Island, Angel Island, and the San Francisco Presidio—reach beyond their geography. Residents' and visitors' memories of these places are inextricably linked to official narratives told through museum exhibits and memorials, to the cultural products that contain and produce place memories, and to the personal memories, expressed through oral histories or memoirs, of those who experienced the policies enacted at each site. Geography surely connects and unites these four places, but it is only part of what links them to one another. It is the place stories that make these four sites legible in the regional and national imagination. Stories create a sense of place that encompasses both the material and the imagined.

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[1] Rebecca Solnit, ed. *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), p. vii.

In exploring how these sites of memory became known, respectively, as Alcatraz Island Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Presidio Trust, Angel Island National Historic Site, and the Bay Street shopping center, I use a method and theoretical approach that understands remembrance as an active process, whereby memory is put to the service of the moment in which it is created. These sites share connected histories of violence, militarism, imprisonment, detention, and dispossession as well as overlapping histories of transformation into memorials, museums, nature preserves, and commercial districts. In these transformations, each of these places has become a site of meaning-making, a site where ideas and ideologies of citizenship and belonging have come to be played out. These memories were codified in the late twentieth century, a moment when the politics of violence and exclusion were masked by rhetorics of equality and multiculturalism. Today, when people think about the San Francisco Bay Area, the histories of Alcatraz Island, Angel Island, the Presidio, and the Emeryville Shellmound remain largely obscured by prevailing narratives of the region's progressive politics, environmental consciousness, and technological innovation.

Each of these places is a local site of violence linked to federal policies and national trends, and to older imperial histories as well. The violence that occurred at the Emeryville Shellmound did not happen in just one moment, but instead reprised a long history of Indigenous land dispossession. Alcatraz Island notoriously served a federal penitentiary from 1934 to 1963, famous for harsh punishments and hailed as escape-proof. Immigration officials on Angel Island carried out the Chinese Exclusion Acts, detaining close to 100,000 Chinese immigrants for days, weeks, and sometimes months.[2] The Presidio was home to the Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. militaries. Soldiers who fought in all of the major wars of the twentieth century passed through

[2] Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 69.

the base before it shut its doors. These histories of violence were not isolated; rather they were a part of larger systems and policies of dispossession, detention, and the state-sanctioned violence that is war. While these places reflect the aims of the nation-state (and the goals of earlier global empires), they are located in the San Francisco Bay Area, and as such have helped to constitute the region as a region, doing so both materially and discursively.

The memories of violence associated with each of these sites have been effaced, in varying degrees, in the process of place-making. In their current incarnations, Alcatraz and Angel islands, the Presidio, and the Emeryville Shellmound are each intimately linked to the late twentieth-century period in which they became newly legible. Alcatraz Island welcomed visitors when it joined the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1973. In the late 1980s, when both the state and nation's prison populations were booming, it became one of the most popular tourist sites in the country. In 1983, ten years after Alcatraz joined the GGNRA, the immigration station on Angel Island first opened to the public. Over the course of the next decade, Angel Island became part of a national mythology of American immigration. By 1996, at the start of dot-com boom, the San Francisco Presidio began inviting individuals and families, non-profits and tech companies to rent and lease former Army buildings in hopes of becoming the first financially self-sufficient national park. When the Bay Street Mall opened to shoppers in 2000, codifying and preserving Indianness in the street names and a small adjacent park, it continued a process of obliteration begun in the nineteenth century with park-goers, anthropologists, and archeologists. The memories of these places have changed over time, put to the service of the historical moments in which they were made.

The process of memory-making is a long and non-linear one. At the Emeryville Shellmound, Alcatraz Island, Angel Island, and the San Francisco Presidio, memory-making

sometimes reached back into the far depths of the past, just as it continues to do so into our present moment. While histories of exclusion, incarceration, detention, and dispossession have been rescued in the service of multiculturalism, this has been and it remains an uneven process. Today, protestors continue to picket at the Bay Street Mall, urging shoppers to boycott the stores built atop the shellmound. Annually, thousands of tourists visit the museum on Alcatraz. They still wander the cell blocks, just as the prison maintains its hold on our national imagination through tourist kitsch and popular histories. At Angel Island, citizenship ceremonies continue to connect the island's former use as an immigration processing center with a mythology of immigrant America, one that promises upward mobility. And, at the San Francisco Presidio, the Presidio Trust and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area continue to navigate the demands of financial self-sufficiency while preserving an aestheticized military past. Each of these present-day actors persist in making new meanings, at times contesting and at times reinforcing those memories that are currently at work.

All of these sites serve, in different ways, as beachheads. They are strategic footholds where various historical actors have exercised power, producing a set of memories that have helped to define the region's identity. Our present-day understandings of the San Francisco Bay Area work through such beachheads. These footholds are places we come to know through stories that, with time and repetition, root in our collective memory and work to shape the region. They are places of violence not simply because of the racialized exclusions that took place there but also because of the rhetorical violence employed in making such histories more palatable. At these theaters of memory, historical actors continually create a usable past, enacting histories on the stage of the imagination. Visitors, tourists, and residents enter and alter the drama each time

they set foot or fix eyes on these places, remembering and forgetting, avowing and disavowing the violence that created this storied region.

The San Francisco Bay Area is known today for its progressive politics and picturesque vistas, but it is a region marked by exclusionary and violent pasts. Meaning-making and the play of power infuse the ways we remember and memorialize specific places through monuments, museums, memorials, memoirs, and managed lands. Through remembrance and elision, intentional and inadvertent, we tell the stories that comprise our understandings of place and past, stories that are essential to our notions of nation and constructions of citizenship.

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