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No Lamps Were Lit for Them: Angel Island and the Historiography of Asian American Immigration

ROGER DANIELS

TWO TINY, adjacent islands in New York harbor, Ellis Island and Liberty Island, are home to the twin icons of American immigration. Although the Statue of Liberty, erected on what was then called Bedloe's Island in 1886, was intended by its French donors to be a monument to republican liberty, its imposing presence in the harbor and Emma Lazarus's poem added to its American-designed pedestal, quickly transformed it.[1] The creation, in 1892, of the immigrant reception center on nearby Ellis Island, merely underlined the statue's association with immigrants.[2] The refurbishment of the Statue for its centennial and the creation of a magnificent museum of immigration on Ellis have made the association inescapable, even at a time of increasing nativism.[3] There is, however, another island, which is an immigration icon of a different sort. If the statue—"The Lady" as many call her—and Ellis Island are primarily icons of welcome, of acceptance, that other island, three thousand miles to the west, is an icon of suspicion, of rejection.

Angel Island, whose 740 acres make it the largest island in San Francisco Bay, was associated with immigration for only thirty years, 1910–1940. During those years it was the site of the Angel Island Immigration Station, which was primarily a detention facility for Asian immigrants, mostly Chinese men and Japanese women. Before 1910 it had a long and varied history. Miwok Indian sites on the island have been dated as going back at least 3,000 years. The first written record is from 1775, when Manuel de Ayala, a lieutenant in the Spanish Navy, used the island as a base for his survey of San Francisco Bay. It was he who named the place: Isla de Los Angeles—Angel Island. As the island was the easiest anchorage after the difficult passage of the Golden Gate, all sorts of people used it in the Spanish-Mexican period: Russian sealers stored furs there, whalers of several nationalities stocked up on fresh

This essay is a revised version of the presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the Immigration History Society, held in San Francisco, April 19, 1997.

water and firewood, and smugglers used it to avoid Spanish, Mexican, and later, American customs officials. For a short time there was a cattle ranch on the island, and it has had three different lighthouses.

For a century—1863 to 1962—the island was used by the American military. An Army post, eventually named Fort McDowell, was established there during the Civil War. During World War I and World War II civilian internees were held on it, as were prisoners of war during World War II, and, in its final military use, there was a Nike Missile Base on the island between 1954 and 1962. When the missile base was dismantled the entire island became the state park that exists today.

But it is the Immigration Station that is of concern here. The need for an immigration facility in San Francisco—and for a national immigration bureaucracy—was a direct result of anti-Chinese legislation, the Page Act of 1875 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.[4] These were the first effective pieces of American restrictive immigration legislation; the latter was the hinge on which the legal history of immigration turned. With the passage of the exclusion act, the immigration of Chinese laborers was outlawed for ten years; this was renewed for another ten years in 1892, and the law was made "permanent" early in Theodore Roosevelt's administration. Beginning in the 1870s Chinese immigrants in difficulty with the immigration regulations were held in a ramshackle wooden two-story warehouse leased from the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and located at the end of a wharf on the San Francisco waterfront. It was commonly called "the shed." The building, about 100 feet square, held up to 200 people at a time, with men on the first floor and women on the second. Dorene Askin, a historian for the California Department of Parks and Recreation, described it as "crowded and unsanitary," while a contemporary inspector for the Department of Commerce and Labor reported that it was a "death trap."[5]

Just after the turn of the century, immigration officials in San Francisco were in the process of arranging for new quarters on or near the waterfront when officials in Washington, D.C., opted instead for a purpose-built facility on Angel Island. In 1904 Congress instructed the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Victor H. Metcalf, to investigate and report on a plan for an immigration station there. At the end of the year, Metcalf presented a plan (and cost estimates of $250,000) drawn up by an Oakland architect, Walter J. Mathews.[6] By 1910 the facility was opened. It was located on the island's north shore at China Cove and consisted of a number of wooden buildings—the detention barracks, administration building, hospital, and powerhouse—and a wharf. Soon

after twelve cottages, a laundry, a stable, a carpenter shop, and water tanks were added and the station acquired a ferry boat. The architect supposedly used Ellis Island as a model, so that the analogy between Ellis Island and Angel Island existed even before the immigration station was built. It is not clear what, if anything, the architect learned by visiting Ellis: he chose to build in wood and Ellis Island was largely brick. The location was pleasant and scenic, although quite damp. The ferry trip from San Francisco took forty-five minutes.

In the very year that the station opened local immigration officials began to complain about the inadequacy of the facility. The buildings were, the man in charge of the San Francisco immigration district wrote on 19 December 1910, dangerous firetraps, unsanitary, and vermin infested. In addition, the lack of an adequate janitorial staff kept the place "wretchedly filthy." The hospital "was and is an outrage on civilization."[7] These complaints were buttressed by a report from the Public Health Service Surgeon, who also noted the contaminated water supply and fly and cockroach infested kitchen facilities. He calculated the gross overcrowding: one dormitory room with enough air space for ten persons was equipped with fifty-four bunks, all of which were sometimes used.[8] Five years later Commissioner-General of Immigration Anthony Caminetti made similar complaints and formally recommended "the removal of the station . . . to fireproof, sanitary buildings situated on the mainland upon property already owned by the United States."[9] Despite these and subsequent protests nothing was done about either moving the facility or improving it significantly until a disastrous but happily nonfatal fire destroyed the administration building and many of the records on 12 August 1940. On 5 November 1940 the last Angel Island detainees—125 Chinese men and 19 Chinese women, a few Filipinos and 35 Central European refugees—were ferried to the mainland and the history of the Angel Island Immigration Station was ended. One wonders whether the intolerable conditions would have been allowed to go on for so long if the facility had held mostly Europeans.

It is not possible, at this time, to be precise about the number of people who passed through Angel Island. Some workers connected with the state park have estimated it at 500,000 persons, but this figure is much too high. My own current guess is that perhaps 100,000 persons, mostly Asians, spent some time on the island. I assume that most of the nearly 60,000 Chinese who are recorded as entering the United States between 1910 and 1940 passed through Angel Island, as did most of the nearly 10,000 Chinese who were deported in those years. Although one

sometimes gets the impression from the literature that most Chinese who attempted to enter were denied admission, this was not the case, but the rate of rejection was very high. Some 50,000 came in, while perhaps 9,000 were barred, a rejection rate of about one in six, many times larger than the rate for Ellis Island. To put these numbers into perspective, during the Angel Island years, Chinese who never constituted as much as 1 percent of the nation's foreign born, were more than 4 percent of those deported.

Although the bulk of the literature about the island speaks chiefly if not exclusively about Chinese, many other nationalities, Asian and European, also passed through. The meal arrangements testify to this. There were two mess halls: one was used by Asian men, who ate from bare wooden tables. The other—called the "oil cloth dining room" because its tables were covered—was used, in separate seatings, by Europeans and Asian women. The separate seatings testified not only to the racist notions of the time but also to the different menus provided. The Asian food, served without bread and with less meat and potatoes, was prepared by Chinese American cooks.

Perhaps 6,000 of the Asians were Japanese women, most of them the so-called picture brides, who came to the United States as a result of the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907–1908 until the immigration act of 1924 cut off all Japanese immigration. These were women who had been married by proxy, often to men they had never seen, although some were rejoining husbands. In addition, a significant number of Japanese Americans returning from schooling in Japan were held on the island until their status could be verified. Added to these were some Koreans, people from India, other Asians, a relatively small number of European immigrants, and a few from the Caribbean. The photographic archives of the immigrant station include pictures of Turkish, Serbian, Russian, and Jamaican immigrants. Most of the non-Chinese immigrants spent relatively little time on the island. The Japanese women, the largest single non-Chinese group, were usually cleared in a matter of days: only when a husband failed to appear, or when there were medical problems, were these women kept for any appreciable length of time or sent back.

The Chinese majority were of four categories. Apart from diplomatic personnel—who were never held on the island—the only Chinese who were admissible to the United States in the Angel Island era were merchants and their families, students, legitimate travelers, and persons who could claim American citizenship. Would-be Chinese immigrants to the United States in the exclusion era, like oppressed groups everywhere,

developed a wide array of resistance strategies to combat what one of them called "laws harsh as tigers." From the mid-1870s on, as both Charles McClain and Lucy Salyer have shown us, Chinese immigrants, with the help of their attorneys, demonstrated an ability to adapt successfully to American institutions by utilizing the courts to an extraordinary degree.[10] As McClain and Laurene Wu McClain have written:

> Contrary to the popular image of the Chinese in the United States as passive victims . . . the court cases . . . demonstrate that while the Chinese were indeed victims, they were not passive. Angered by the discriminatory laws enacted to humiliate and exclude them, the Chinese decided to take their grievances to the American courts. While such litigants were probably more interested in getting results than in establishing legal principles, their cases did profoundly affect the course of American jurisprudence, contributing in a significant way to the molding of due-process and equal-protection jurisprudence under the Fourteenth Amendment.
>
> The willingness of Chinese litigants to confront the government in a succession of cases gave rise to sharper delineations of limits on governmental authority and the rights of citizens and noncitizens. In defining these limits and rights, they contributed far more to the ideals of democracy and republicanism upon which their adopted country was based than did their antagonists.[11]

Another form of resistance was invented after the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 18–19 April 1906, destroyed most of the city's vital statistics records. A significant number of Chinese successfully represented themselves as native-born American citizens. The advantage of making such a claim was that a citizen could not only travel to China and return, but any children he might father there were also American citizens and admissible, although their mothers were not. Many of those travelers brought in, not only their own offspring but other male relatives, while some sold the "slots" to the highest bidder. Other immigrants managed to pass themselves off as close relatives of Chinese American merchants. The persons thus admitted, under false names, were known in the Chinese American community as paper sons, although there were also, as Judy Yung has noted, some paper daughters.[12] Immigration officials were convinced that some 90 percent of the Chinese claims of citizenship were fraudulent, and, given the number of Chinese women of child-bearing age in the United States before 1906, they may well have been correct.[13] There is also a great deal of oral testimony about individual paper sons in recent works about the Chinese

American community, especially those written after the so-called "confession program" of the Eisenhower administration[14] enabled some surviving paper sons to regularize their status.[15] When Maxine Hong Kingston, in her marvelous autobiographical novel, *The Woman Warrior* (1976), speaks of "ghost names," one of her many reference points is to the paper son phenomenon.

All Chinese seeking admission through San Francisco were subjected to detailed scrutiny and delay, and almost all of them were detained on Angel Island. Even elite Chinese arriving with student visas, whose right to enter was guaranteed by both statute law and Sino-American treaties, endured long delays.[16] For example, a few years before Angel Island opened, one of the now-famous Soong sisters, Ai-ling, was subjected to two weeks confinement when she came to attend Wesleyan College in Georgia, even though she was traveling with two white American missionaries.[17]

The immigration service developed a number of interrogative techniques to deal with Chinese immigrants. For those claiming derivative American citizenship, both "father" and "son" would be grilled intensively about even minute details of their biographies and of the putative village of their origin.[18] These interrogations and investigations could go on for weeks and months—the longest individual confinement is said to have been two years—and, in some instances investigators working out of the Hong Kong consulate would actually visit a Guangdong village in an attempt to break down a cover story. Many of the paper sons came with crib sheets—in some cases books of more than a hundred pages—which were supposed to be disposed of before landing. The INS tried to isolate the prospective entrant from any support system on the mainland. Oral tradition describes how the isolation was breached: sometimes messages were enclosed in capsules hidden in the food by the Chinese cooks. And, of course, the bribery that has plagued the immigration service from its inception also existed—and was sometimes discovered—at Angel Island. To fail the immigration hearing meant sure exclusion and return to China or wherever the unsuccessful entrant had come from. In those years the detainees had no right of appeal to the courts.

Most of the Chinese women who were held on the island were attempting to enter as wives of merchants or American citizens. From 1906 through 1924 a yearly average of 150 alien Chinese wives were admitted; for six years after the 1924 immigration act—which barred all "aliens ineligible to citizenship"—no alien Chinese wives were admit-

ted.[19] A 1930 statute relaxed the ban by allowing the entrance of such wives as long as the marriage had taken place before 26 May 1924. From then until Pearl Harbor about 60 such women were admitted annually.

In 1970, thirty years after Angel Island had been abandoned by the INS, a California park ranger, Alexander Weiss, noticed a large number of Chinese characters carved into the walls of what had been the detention barracks, and, although he could not read Chinese, he realized that they were of historical significance. Failing to interest his superiors, he got in touch with Professor George Araki of San Francisco State University, who helped generate interest among the local Asian Americans. Community pressure resulted, five years later, in a quarter of a million dollar appropriation from the California legislature for the preservation of the buildings.

The calligraphy on the walls, of course, were the now famous Angel Island poems. Their rediscovery—there had been some Chinese language versions published by former inmates but they had attracted little attention—sparked a flurry of interest and publication. The most important work to emerge was a book called *Island*, first published in 1980 by the doyen of the historians of Chinese America, Him Mark Lai, and two younger scholars, Genny Lim and Judy Yung.[20] In addition to the English and Chinese texts of the 135 extant poems, with English annotations, the volume contains excerpts from a number of oral histories and a wonderful collection of pictures. These poems are all by men. There were apparently some by women, but if so, they were destroyed in the 1940 fire. All of the poems are sad, and some are also angry. An angry poem reads:

> . . . I hastened to cross the American ocean.
> How was I to know that the western barbarians had lost their hearts, and reason?
> With a hundred kinds of oppressive laws, they mistreat us Chinese.
> It is still not enough after being interrogated and investigated several times;
> We also have to have our chests examined while naked.
> Our countrymen suffer this treatment
> All because our country's power cannot yet expand.
> If there comes a day when China will be united,
> I will surely cut out the heart and bowels of the western barbarian.[21]

The foregoing should explode any notion that Angel Island was, as is

often stated, the Ellis Island of the West.[22] It is, however, a useful symbol of the invidious ways in which the American government treated Asian immigrants between 1875 and 1965. Similar invidious treatment can be seen in the ways in which historians have written—and not written—about immigrants from Asia. That historiography has different rhythms than those which govern American history generally. Instead of paradigms about federalists and whigs, progressives and proponents of consensus, the historiography of Asian America may be divided into four phases or periods: a period of scorn, lasting into the 1920s; a period of benign neglect, lasting into the 1950s; and two contemporary and overlapping phases, one of increasing but limited awareness, and one of Asian American history, which have characterized the historiography in recent decades.[23] I will people these periods with some representative historians and comment upon the current state and status of Asian American history.

For the era of scorn the chief exemplar must be Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832–1918) the premier historian of California. In the seventh volume of his *History of California* (1890) he wrote that the Chinese were "alien in every sense":

> The color of their skins, the repulsiveness of their features, their undersize of figure, their incomprehensible language, strange customs and heathen religion . . . conspired to set them apart.[24]

In his memoirs, published in 1912, Bancroft laid out his notion of the proper place of Asians in American life: they should be what post-war Germans called *gastarbeiter*, guest workers.

"We want the Asiatic," he insisted, speaking about both Chinese and Japanese, "for our low-grade work, and when it is finished we want him to go home and stay there until we want him again." As long as they stayed in that role, Bancroft felt that Asian workers were superior to any of the alternatives. They were not "lazy and licentious" like the Negro in whom "the animal overbalances the mental." As for those from "the cesspools of Europe" the Chinese were not "anarchistic dirty and revengeful like the Italian, [nor] thieving and vermiparous like the Slav, or impudent and intermeddling like the Celt and Teuton," and, he was sure, they would not make love to American women or "breed a few million yellow piccaninnies for American citizenship."[25]

Bancroft, of course, was a political reactionary, but the progressives of the early twentieth century were not significantly different when it

came to Chinese and other Asians. Professor Woodrow Wilson, in his popular five-volume *History of the American People*, insisted that "Caucasian laborers could not compete with the Chinese . . . who, with their yellow skin and debasing habits of life, seemed to them hardly fellow men at all, but evil spirits rather."[26] The progressive era socialist, Morris Hillquit, echoing Samuel Gompers, denounced Chinese and Japanese immigrants as "an inflowing horde of alien scabs."[27] In 1922, a more sophisticated scholar, the Wisconsin-school labor economist Selig Perlman, could write that:

> The anti-Chinese agitation in California, culminating as it did in the Exclusion Law passed by Congress in 1882, was doubtless the most important single factor in the history of American labor, for without it the entire country might have been overrun by Mongolian labor and the labor movement might have become a conflict of races instead of one of classes.[28]

To be sure, there were, even in the era of scorn, some "pro-Asian writers," most often those with an axe to grind, be it mercantile or business interests, religious conversion, or sometimes even what seemed to be a good Gilded Age solution to the servant problem. But there were also a few friendly scholars, the most important of whom was Mary Roberts Coolidge, whose *Chinese Immigration* (1909) was the first historical treatment of Chinese in America. Coolidge (1860–1945) was an establishment reform intellectual who espoused a multitude of causes. The daughter of a college professor—her second husband was related to the thirtieth president—she earned two degrees from Cornell and an 1896 Ph.D. from Stanford. She taught history in private schools and at Wellesley, and sociology at Stanford and Mills College. She was a Unitarian, a Republican, and a member of the American Indian Defense Association; her public service included terms on the California State Board of Education and as a trustee of the Pacific Colony for the Feebleminded. In addition to *Chinese Immigration*, she wrote or co-authored nine other books on Indians, the woman question, and social work. Her work was as much an attack on the immigrant leaders of the anti-Chinese movement as it was a defense of the Chinese, whom she saw as hewers of wood and drawers of water essential to middle-class America.

The rise of immigration history as a professional discipline did little to change the picture. For the two founding fathers of professional immigration history, George Stephenson and Marcus Lee Hansen, that history was the story of European immigrants. Edith Abbott, in a book

of documents compiled in 1924, expressed the prevailing professional attitude nicely, asserting that "the study of European immigration should not be complicated for the student by confusing it with the very different problems of Chinese and Japanese immigration."[29] She thus failed to include in her "select documents" any of the fifteen statutes by which Chinese exclusion was effected. (Even today it is a rare textbook which describes, accurately, the 1882 Exclusion Act.)

Carl Wittke, in his 1940 survey, *We Who Built America*, did devote space to Asian immigration, but insisted that it was "but a brief and strange interlude in the general account of the great migrations to America."[30] Similarly, Oscar Handlin, writing in an optimistic, consensual mode in 1957 about "American Minorities Today," recognized that "the Japanese and the Indians . . . had their share of grievances" and that "the postwar period brought no confidence that a remedy was within sight."[31] And, seven years later, his student, Gunther Barth discovered that the Chinese were not immigrants at all, but sojourners who, in essence, brought their troubles on themselves.[32]

To be sure, some historians had already begun to probe the long history of anti-Asian discrimination, but they did so by focusing on the excluders rather than on the excluded. This line of inquiry was pioneered by Elmer C. Sandmeyer's painstaking 1939 monograph on the anti-Chinese movement; later laborers in this vineyard included Roger Daniels, Stuart Creighton Miller, Alexander Saxton, and Peter Irons, to name only a few.[33] In fact, of the Euro-American scholars writing books about Asian Americans through the 1960s, only the sociologist Stanford M. Lyman paid much attention to the Asian Americans themselves.[34]

Only a very few Asian Americans were in the professoriate prior to the 1980s, but there had been a few pioneer authors. Earliest was the immigrant, Yamoto Ichihashi, who had a chair at Stanford because the Japanese government subsidized it. His 1932 work, *Japanese in the United States*, was a work of both scholarship and apologetics, as Ichihashi was at great pains to conceal not only the subsidy which created his position but also the manipulative nature of the Japanese government's intervention in the lives of its subjects living in America.[35] The first major scholarly work created by a native-born Asian American was the sociologist Rose Hum Lee's, *The Chinese in the United States of America* (1960), which, although marred by many factual errors, was an important and insightful advance.[36] In 1967, Betty Lee Sung, who would not earn her doctorate in sociology for another sixteen years, published a popular history, *Mountain of Gold: The Story of the Chinese*

in America, which gave, for the first time, an accurate picture of the breadth of the Chinese American experience.[37]

The development of Asian American studies programs in the 1970s and 1980s has been accompanied by a growing preponderance of Asian Americans among the leading authorities in the still relatively new field. The prominence and authority of such scholars as Sucheng Chan, Gary Okihiro, and Ronald Takaki, all trained in traditional disciplines, provided role-models for younger academics. Symptomatic of the growing acceptance of the field, it is now possible for an American Historical Association member to check off Asian American as a specialization. (Incidently, one can also check African American, Chicano, and Minority, but NOT immigration.) Perhaps of more significance, there are now ongoing Asian American studies series at three university presses—Temple, Illinois, and Stanford—and two other presses, Washington and California, publish Asian American books regularly. The burgeoning Asian American historical literature is being produced, for the most part, by young Asian American scholars, many of them third or fourth generation Americans, although there are also a growing number of scholars who have had their initial training in Asia, primarily the People's Republic of China, and have earned Ph.D.s at American institutions.

And, yet, even a glance at mainstream scholarship demonstrates that the neglect of Asian Americans continues. I will give three examples of what I mean, two from general textbooks, and one from our own journal. In a 1991 textbook covering United States history for the period since 1945, William H. Chafe emphasizes that "gender, class and race constitute fundamental reference points for understanding," but he does not mention even one Asian American individual in some 500 pages of text. A footnote supposedly justifies this by noting that "while the category of race covers a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, this book focuses specifically on Afro-Americans in highlighting the importance of race in American society."[38] He also fails to discuss immigration or changes in immigration law.

Similarly, in the preface to their 1995 text, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*, six historians write: "We have tried not to ghettoize [sic] the concerns and achievements of women, Indians, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other minorities." These are good intentions, but rarely fulfilled. For example, in James M. McPherson's chapter on "Reconstruction, 1863–1877," there is no discussion of a crucial episode in Asian American history, the deliberate exclusion of "Asians" from the eligible classes in the expanded version

of the naturalization statute whose revision the 14th Amendment made necessary.[39] This made Asians the only racial group who were "aliens ineligible to citizenship."

And, for my final example, in a paper first presented at the 17th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Madrid and then published in an Italian journal and in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*, five distinguished scholars of American immigration, writing an otherwise quite perceptive essay under the rubric of "The Invention of Ethnicity," managed not only to ignore Asian Americans in their text, but also did not cite even one work that focused on Asian Americans in their seventy-six footnotes, almost all of which were of a bibliographical nature. Each of these distinguished scholars is, of course, well aware of the presence of Asians in American society.[40] How then can one account for such a glaring and seemingly deliberate omission? The answer is, I think, at least two-fold.

In the first place, the entire historiographical tradition of American immigration—a tradition which is less than eighty years old—has, until very recently, concentrated almost exclusively on Europeans. The first two generations of immigration historians, as we have seen, generally excluded Asians from the immigrant canon. Most contemporary immigration historians explicitly reject both nativism and racism, but tend, almost reflexively, to assume that, for most of the American past, the terms "immigrant" and "European" were interchangeable.

In the second place, until quite recently Asians and their American-born descendants were but a minuscule portion of the total population. As late as 1940 there were only about a quarter million Asian Americans, or less than two-tenths of 1 percent (.0019) of the mainland population,[41] and Asian immigration seemed permanently halted by restrictive immigration laws. Thus, historians and other students of our immigrant past became used to writing off Asian immigration as an aberration. In addition, many, perhaps most, of the historians of immigration wrote about their own ethnic groups, and, even today, all but a handful of historians of immigration are Euro-Americans with a propensity to identify the immigrant past with Europe.

Perhaps the literary scholar Lisa Lowe puts it best when she identifies a persistent motif in American culture, the notion that Asian Americans are "perpetual immigrants" or "foreigners within."[42]

According to the 1990 census, close to two-thirds of the nearly seven million Asian Americans were immigrants and more than half of the immigrants had arrived in the previous decade. Almost none of these

immigrants had come through Angel Island. Yet, for millions of Asian Americans, Angel Island is a symbol of what their predecessors and they have experienced, just as Ellis Island has been a symbol for descendants of German and Irish immigrants who came before Ellis existed, and it continues to be a symbol for immigrants, including Asian Americans, who have arrived since it closed as an immigrant reception center. Angel Island will never replace Ellis Island as the universal symbol of immigration, nor should it. But surely somewhere in the vast iconography of the American experience a place must be found for Angel Island.

NOTES

1. Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Lady and the Huddled Masses: The Statue of Liberty as a Symbol of Immigration," in *The Statue of Liberty Revisited* ed., Wilton S. Dillon and Neil G. Kotler (Washington, D.C., 1994); pp. 34–69. See also other essays in that volume and John Higham, "The Transformation of the Statue of Liberty," in his *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America* rev. ed., (Baltimore, 1984), pp. 71–80.
2. George V. Svejda, *Castle Garden as an Immigrant Depot, 1855-1890* (Washington, D.C., 1968) and Thomas M. Pitkin, *Keepers of the Gate: A History of Ellis Island* (New York, 1975).
3. F. Ross Holland, *Idealists, Scoundrels, and the Lady: An Insider's View of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Project* (Urbana, Ill., 1993).
4. For the Page Law and female Chinese immigration before 1882 see two articles by George A. Peffer, "Forbidden Families: Emigration Experiences of Chinese Women under the Page Law," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 6 (Fall 1986): 28–46 and "From Under the Sojourner's Shadow: A Historiographical Study of Chinese Female Immigration to America, 1852–1882," ibid., 11 (Spring 1992): 41–67.
5. Dorene Askin, "Historical Report: Angel Island Immigration Station," mimeo, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento, 3 June 1977, p. 1. This report and other unattributed copies of archival documents are courtesy of Dr. Dwight Pitcaithley, Chief Historian, National Park Service. Other vital help has come from Marian Smith, Historian, Immigration and Naturalization Service. Telegram, Fred Watts, Jr., to Department of Commerce and Labor, 3 June 1909, RG 85, Box 92, Folder 52270/21, entry 9, National Archives.
6. Much of the construction history is recounted in U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, *Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration and Labor for the Fiscal Year ended 30 June 1910*, (Washington, D.C. 1910), pp. 132 ff. Victor H. Metcalf to Speaker, House of Representatives, 30 December 1904 as cited in Askin, "Historical Report."
7. Luther C. Steward, Acting Commissioner, San Francisco, to Commissioner-General of Immigration, 19 December 1910, 22 pp.
8. M.W. Glavine [?], Passed Assistant Surgeon to Acting Commissioner of Immigration, Angel Island, 21 November 1910, 8 pp.
9. Caminetti, "Memorandum for the Secretary," 15 July 1915, 8 pp.
10. Charles McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Dis-*

crimination in Nineteenth-Century America (Berkeley, Calif., 1994); and Lucy E. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill, N.C. 1995). I have commented on these and other relevant works of legal scholarship in "Ah Sin and His Lawyers," *Reviews in American History*, 23 (1995): 472–7.

11. Charles J. McClain and Laurene Wu McClain, "The Chinese Contribution to the Development of American Law," in *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia, 1991), pp. 21–22.

12. Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 3, 106.

13. Immigration officials constantly complained about the immigrants' agility in evading the law and kept careful counts. The district director in San Francisco wrote that:

> Covering a period of eight years, record information shows that 6,559 Chinese returning from China claimed on reentry to have 17,440 sons and 1,258 daughters of which numbers 13,448 sons and 1,115 daughters were shown to be in China.

Edwin Haff to Commissioner, INS, 27 January 1934, in RG 85, Box 382, National Archives.

14. Act of 11 September 1957.

15. The first of these was Victor and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown* (New York, 1973).

16. Commissioner-General Daniel J. Keefe set out policy for examining Asians at San Francisco in an August 1910 memo:

> I. To be examined on the boat:
> a. officials; b. exempts holding section 6 certificates; c. natives holding return certificates under Rule 39; d. alleged wives and children holding return certificates under Rule 39; e. domiciled merchants (or teachers or students) with return papers; f. alleged wives and children of merchants holding return certificates; g. Japanese holding passports.
> II. To be inspected at Angel Island:
> a. returning domiciled laborers whether holding return certificates or not; b. alleged natives whether "raw" or returning without return certificates; c. alleged wives and children of natives; d. all others.

RG 85, Box 170, Folder 52691/24, National Archives.

17. John W. Foster, "The Chinese Boycott," *Atlantic Monthly*, 97 (1906): 118–27.

18. A committee of "white" San Francisco merchants, including shipping magnates Robert Dollar and William Matson, investigated conditions on Angel island in August, 1910, and reported that the examinations were

> unreasonable, and to answer the questions correctly was an impossibility. . . . the eight- or ten-year-old son of a merchant is asked his grandmother's maiden name on both father's and mother's side, the names of people living a block or two distant. . . . Then the father, who has not been at home for years, is asked to corroborate . . . which is simply impossible.

Committee of San Francisco Merchants, "Report on Angel Island," RG 85, Box 170, Folder 52961/24-B, National Archives.

19. Secretary of Commerce and Labor Oscar S. Straus explained to Secretary of

State Elihu Root "that the theory upon which the Department has proceeded is that a Chinese woman married to an American citizen, although still a Chinese person politically as well as racially, ought to be allowed to join her husband in the United States, out of deference to *his right* to her companionship."
Straus to Root, 24 February 1908, RG 85, Box 164, Folder 52903/42, National Archives.

20. Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim and Judy Yung, *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940* (1980; reprint ed., Seattle, 1991). Other significant publications on the island include: L. Ling-Chi Wang, "The Yee Version of Poems from the Chinese Immigration Station," *Asian American Review* (1976): pp. 117–26; Connie Young Yu, "Rediscovered Voices: Chinese Immigrants and Angel Island," *Amerasia Journal,* 4; 2 (1977): 123–39; Judy Yung, "A Bowlful of Tears. Chinese Women Immigrants on Angel Island," *Frontiers*, 2 (1977): 52–55; Him Mark Lai, "Island of Immortals: Chinese Immigrants and the Angel Island Immigration Station," *California History,* 57 (1978): 88–103; and Charles Wollenberg, "Immigration through the Port of San Francisco," and Hilary Conroy, "A Comment," *Forgotten Doors: The Other Ports of Entry in the United States*, ed. M. Mark Stolarik (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 143–55, 156–60.

21. Lai et al., *Island*, Poem # 46, p. 162.

22. This is not a new observation. Moses Rischin, in his perceptive essay, "Immigration, Migration, and Minorities in California: A Reassessment," *Pacific Historical Review*, 41 (1972): 71–90, makes this point well at pp. 78–89, and in 1988 Charles Wollenberg wrote, in *Forgotten Doors*, at p. 149:

> Angel Island was . . . not the Ellis Island of the West, a receiving point for most west coast immigrants of all nationalities. . . . it was a peculiar product of the Chinese Exclusion Act, whose primary purpose was to control and restrict Chinese immigration.

23. For an earlier historiographical description see Roger Daniels, "American Historians and East Asian Immigrants," in *The Asian American: The Historical Experience* ed. Norris Hundley, Jr. (Santa Barbara, 1976), pp. 1–25. For the most recent such essay see Sucheng Chan, "Asian American Historiography," *Pacific Historical Review*, 65 (1996):363–99.

24. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California, vol. 7, 1860-1890* (San Francisco, 1890), p. 336 (*Works*, vol. 24).

25. Bancroft, *Retrospection, Political and Personal*, (New York, 1912), pp. 345–74. For a fuller view, see John W. Caughey, *Hubert Howe Bancroft, Historian of the West* (Berkeley, Calif., 1946).

26. Woodrow Wilson, *History of the American People* (New York, 1901), p. 185.

27. As cited in Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897–1912* (New York, 1952), p. 279.

28. Selig Perlman, *A History of Trade Unionism in the United States* (New York, 1922), p. 62. Dan La Botz called this quotation to my attention.

29. Edith Abbott, *Immigration: Select Documents* (Chicago, 1924), p. ix.

30. Carl F. Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (New York, 1940), p. 468.

31. Oscar Handlin, *Race and Nationality in American Life* (New York, 1957), p. 138.

32. Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964). Barth's identically titled dissertation was accepted in 1962.

33. Elmer C. Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, 2nd. ed. (Urbana, Ill., 1939, 1973); Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785–1882* (Berkeley, Calif., 1969); and Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley, Calif., 1971).

34. Peter Irons, *Justice at War. The Story of the Japanese Internment Cases* (New York, 1983).

35. Yamoto Ichihashi, *Japanese in the United States: A Critical Study of the Problems of the Japanese Immigrants and Their Children* (Stanford, Calif., 1932). For a recent brief biography and a collection of his writings, see Gordon H. Chang, *Morning Glory, Evening Shadow: Yamato Ichihashi and his Internment Writings, 1942–1945* (Stanford, 1997).

36. Rose Hum Lee, *The Chinese in the United States of America* (Hong Kong, 1960).

37. Betty Lee Sung, *Mountain of Gold: The Story of the Chinese in America* (New York, 1967).

38. William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York, 1991), p. vi. Similarly, in a bibliographical essay of thirteen pages, his paragraph on oppressed groups includes two books on American Indians and five on Mexican Americans, but none on Asian Americans or on other of the newer immigrant groups. It does include, in another place, two works on the incarceration of the Japanese Americans.

39. John M. Murrin, Paul E. Johnson, James M. McPherson, Gary Gerstle, Emily S. Rosenberg, and Norman L. Rosenberg, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People* (New York, 1995).

40. Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the USA," *Altreitalie: International Review of Studies on the Peoples of Italian Origin in the World*, 3 (1990): 37–63. Pozzetta, for example, has published articles on both Chinese and Japanese in Florida, and Morawska's encyclopedic historiographical essay, "The Sociology and Historiography of Immigration," in *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology and Politics* (New York, 1990), pp. 187–238, contains many references to works on Asian Americans. The refusal to notice Asians seems almost perverse. In n. 2, for example, Vecoli's essay, "European Americans: From Immigrants to Ethnics" is cited as covering "historical writings on *immigration*" [my italics] while my companion essay in the same volume, "The Asian American Experience," is ignored. Both are in William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr., *The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture* (Washington, D.C., 1973).

41. Persons living in Hawaii are not included in U.S. population figures until after the grant of statehood in 1959. In 1940 there were nearly 250,000 Asian immigrants and their descendants living in Hawaii where they were about 60 percent of the population.

42. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, N.C. 1996), pp. 1–36.