

Case Statement: Historic Sing Sing Museum, Ossining, N.Y.
NCPH Working Group: “Imagined Places, Actual Spaces: Physical Manifestations of Romanticized Pasts.”

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With roots reaching back to an early nineteenth-century 800 cell prison near a rural New York river town of less than 2,000 residents, Westchester County politicians and developers hope to close the Sing Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining in order to create a mixed-use development of housing, retail, office space, and the “Historic Sing Sing Museum.” The original marble cellblock, constructed by convicts from stone quarried on site between 1825 and 1828, closed in the 1940s and was later gutted by fire [Fig 1]. If their current plan comes to fruition, portions of the ruins of the cellblock and the former power plant will house exhibits highlighting the history of prison reform.

Prison tourism traces its roots to the origin of the modern prison. Sing Sing attracted interest from tourists as early as the 1820s, when people came to view convicts constructing their own cells. By the early 1840s, reformer Dorothea Dix estimated that Sing Sing received over 1,000 visitors per year.¹ This was a low figure when compared to the Auburn (NY) State Prison (over 7,000 visitors per year) and the state prison in Columbus, Ohio (over 2,000 visitors per year), but in line with most other prisons. Historian Janet Miron estimates that tens of thousands of people visited prisons and asylums in the US and Canada during the nineteenth century. “Ferries were taken to see the institutions on Blackwell’s Island near New York City, steamboats were taken along the Hudson River from New York City to see [Sing Sing] and Auburn Penitentiary, and carriages or sleighs were used to visit the Utica Asylum. The improvement of transportation systems, especially the introduction of steamboats and the railway-building frenzy of the mid-nineteenth century, also helped facilitate tours by visitors who did not live in the immediate vicinity of the institution.”² Throughout the mid and late nineteenth century, Sing Sing and other prisons appeared in guidebooks, popular engravings, stereoscopes, and postcards. [Fig. 2]. In addition to providing significant revenue to offset the cost of incarceration, prison

¹ Dorothea Dix. Remarks on Prisons and Prison Discipline in the United States Second Edition. (Philadelphia, Joseph Kite, & Co., 1845), 43.

² Janet Miron, Prisons, Asylums, and the Public: Institutional Visiting in the Nineteenth Century. (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2011), 10.

tourism served as an important way for prison administrators to communicate what they saw as the proper social role of incarceration and to counter mounting criticism from newspapers, magazines, and reformers.

Contemporary interest in the experience of incarceration exists in a cultural context saturated with images of prisons. The successful HBO program Oz (1997-2003), set off a decade of prison themed television shows that included Prison Break, (2005-2009) and MSNBC's long running documentary franchise Lockup, Lockup Raw, and Lockup Extended Stay. These shows hold in common an emphasis on violent offenders and incidents. Like their television counterparts, contemporary prison museums typically emphasize collections of handmade weapons, sinister electric chairs, claustrophobic cells, and the imposing stone and steel cellblocks themselves. However, there is a significant range in approaches. Prison museums currently operate in countries that include Australia, Canada, Cuba, Great Britain, India, Japan, Poland, Russia, South Africa, and the US. Alcatraz is the most widely known prison museum. It became a National Park in 1972 and is visited by over one million tourists per year. From Robben Island's emphasis on its role in the apartheid's repression to the Halloween "Terror Behind the Walls" tour at Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary, the future designers of the Historic Sing Sing Museum have a broad range of options.

One starting point for designing the new museum will be the current small exhibition currently installed in downtown Ossining. In the late 1980s, the state named Ossining an Urban Cultural Park. The state allocated funds for the construction of an unstaffed exhibit at the village's community center called "Up the River: Sing Sing Prison." Visitors are instructed to let themselves in and turn on the lights in a neglected wing of the community center. The exhibit tells the story of Sing Sing through posters featuring 19th century magazine images of life in the prison [Fig 3]. The exhibit also includes an iron door from the old cellblock, a full-sized, convict-constructed facsimile of an electric chair [Fig 4], and reproductions of two cells from the currently used 1930s-era cellblock.

The revenue goals of museum planners may constrain any departure from this limited and neglected exhibit. Planners envision the museum as a magnet for revenue modeled on recent successful efforts in the region. The Westchester developers and politicians who see the prison as the potential site of a multi-use development suggest that Ossining should look to the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMOCA) in what had been a depressed mill

and manufacturing town in the nearby Berkshire Mountains. They are also looking just thirty miles to the north of Sing Sing, where the DIA Foundation for the Arts converted a shuttered 240,000 square foot Nabisco factory into a popular museum for its contemporary art collection. DIA: Beacon is now the anchor of the vital redevelopment of what had been a Hudson River town on the skids. With one eye on these acclaimed efforts at using cultural tourism as a catalyst for post-industrial conversion, elected officials representing Ossining and surrounding Westchester County asked Governor Andrew Cuomo to close the 190 year old correctional facility in order to spur regional economic development: “Construction of new homes or mixed-use development and the planned Historic Sing Sing Museum would provide employment to hundreds of workers and a destination for tourists, bringing further economic benefit to Ossining, Westchester County, and the entire lower Hudson Valley.”

The “imagined space” of the facility currently conflicts with the “actual space” – the 800 employees and over 2,000 inmates in the maximum and medium security prisons. It is far from certain that the state will cooperate with plans to create the Historic Sing Sing Museum will be created. There are several factors that planners should find encouraging. New York’s crime rate dropped by an estimated 25% over the previous decade. In addition, the previous governor, David Patterson, successfully overturned the draconian “Rockefeller” drug laws that were primarily responsible for the dramatic ballooning of the state prison population. The resulting twenty percent decline (from over 70,000 in 1999 to 56,000 today) in the state’s prison population created excess capacity in the state’s medium and minimum security facilities. Lastly, the state has begun looking to its prisons as a potential source of savings during difficult budgetary times. Prior to 2008, 20% of state revenue came from the financial sector. With the decline in salaries and bonuses on Wall Street, the state experienced a sharp decline in its tax base – over 200 million dollars in 2011 alone. As one of his first acts as governor, Andrew Cuomo created a 16-member Prison Closure Advisory Task Force. In its first year, the Cuomo administration closed seven facilities. Even with these closures, the state prison system continues to operate with excess capacity.

In contrast, in addition to the redevelopment goals of Ossining, the state could also see significant economic and political benefits if it closed Sing Sing. Politicians from the farther north and west—especially those representing areas with few other job opportunities—hope to keep prisons open to maintain some jobs. The union representing correctional officers holds

significant political clout in the rural areas surrounding most of New York's prisons. Lastly, inmates are currently counted as part of the census in the counties of the prison (as opposed to their county of last residence), providing additional legislative representation to rural upstate New York. For these financial and political reasons, upstate politicians typically resist the closure of upstate prisons. In addition, once a state prison is closed, a state agency looks for a buyer for the vacant facility. So far, the small rural facilities currently on the market have not found buyers. In contrast, the potential closure of Sing Sing generated significant interest from developers. Its location in Westchester County—one of the most expensive real estate markets in the country—means that a sale of Sing Sing would generate revenue for the state while avoiding the political fallout of closing facilities further upstate.

Conversely, there are excellent reasons to keep Sing Sing open in favor of closing facilities in more remote parts of the state. 60% of New York's prison population hails from the New York City metropolitan area. With the recent closure of Arthur Kill Correctional Facility in New York City, Sing Sing is now the closest state prison to the city. People hoping to visit an inmate in Sing Sing take a thirty-minute train ride from Manhattan to the Ossining train station. The prison is a simple two-block walk from the station. To the families and communities impacted by incarceration, having a family member or friend incarcerated in Sing Sing is a good outcome in an otherwise awful situation. There are also significant racial and cultural differences between metropolitan New York City and upstate New York. Over 50% of the state prison population is African American and 25% is Hispanic. While upstate New York has significant minorities of African Americans and Latinos, the demographics do not support a correctional staff that is remotely representative of the inmate population whereas Sing Sing's long term staff is more representative of the demographics in the New York City metropolitan area.

The questions I hope to answer as my project moves forward include:

- How can a museum confront difficult and often polarizing issues related to incarceration, including the crimes committed by former and current inmates, the forms of punishment they endured, and the problems of social, economic, racial and gender inequality inherent in the history of criminal justice?
- How might these interpretive difficulties be further complicated by a museum integrated into an upscale mixed-use housing and commercial development?
- How does the history of prison tourism and the cultural representation of prisons in general offer object lessons in the problems and possibilities in the public history of inequality?



Fig. 1. Original Cellblock's current condition.

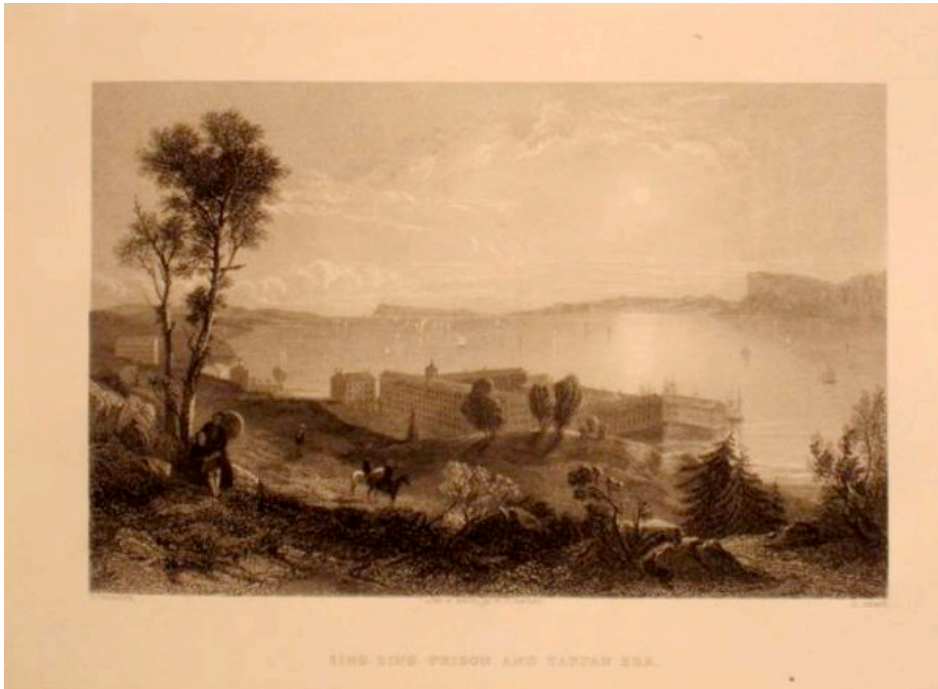


Fig. 2. William Henry Bartlett's "Sing Sing and Tappan Sea" (1839).

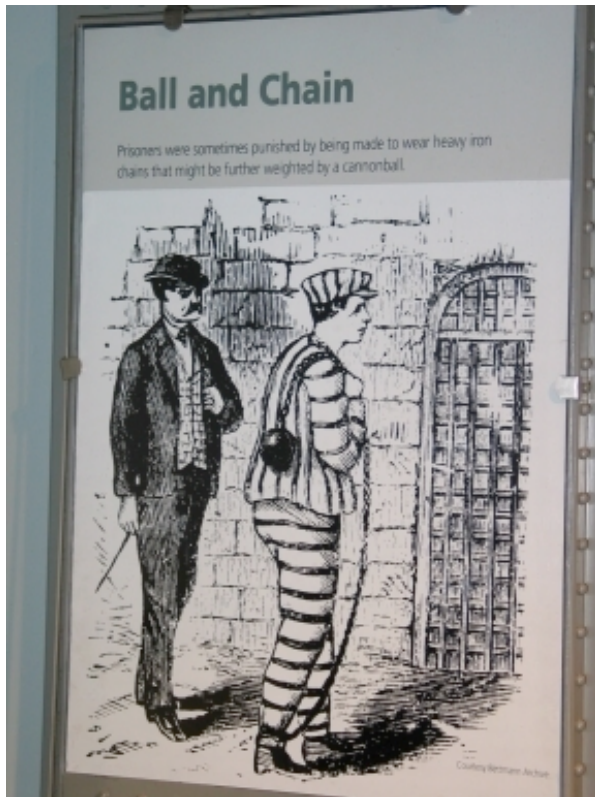


Fig. 3. Panel from Ossining Visitors Center Exhibit, "Up the River."



Fig. 4. Electric Chair from Ossining Visitors Center Exhibit, "Up the River."

Case Statement: Clayton County, Georgia, The Home of *Gone with the Wind*
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According to author Tony Horwitz, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* has "done more to keep the Civil War alive, and to mold its memory, than any history book or event since Appomattox."¹ Nowhere is that legacy more apparent than in Jonesboro, Georgia, the county seat of Clayton County. In *Gone with the Wind*, Mitchell's fictional plantation, Tara, was located in Clayton County, and since the 1960s, this once-rural area on the south side of Atlanta has used its connection to Mitchell's work to lure tourists and conventioners to the area. Although the marketing of Clayton County and Jonesboro through the lens of *Gone with the Wind* is not without its detractors, county leaders continue to rely on this twentieth-century fictional work as its primary brand image well into the twenty-first century.

Atlanta became inextricably linked with *Gone with the Wind* following the publication of the book in 1936 and the release of the film in 1939, but it was south of Atlanta in rural Clayton County that the first sustained efforts to create a memorial tribute to Mitchell's work began in the 1960s. Although she always claimed that the specific buildings and locations mentioned in the book were creations of her imagination, Mitchell offered enough references to Clayton County and Jonesboro to put the town on the map for *Gone with the Wind* pilgrims who traveled to Georgia in search of Scarlett and Tara.

In 1966 Margaret Mitchell's brother, Stephens Mitchell, granted a license to Clayton County to use the phrase "The Home of *Gone With the Wind*" to promote tourism in the area. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Clayton County Savings and Loan in April of 1969, Mitchell

¹ Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), p. 296.

declared, “I want Clayton County to have the name of ‘Home of *Gone with the Wind*.’ I have wished for this promotion for a long time, because it [Clayton County] is the home of *Gone with the Wind*. This would have been pleasing to my late sister, Margaret.”²

For the next 30 years, while the local preservation organization, Historical Jonesboro, operated an antebellum house museum, Stately Oaks, county leaders continued their efforts to develop a *Gone with the Wind* attraction. After an effort to raise money through a sales tax increase failed and an attempt to construct a Tara replica as part of the volleyball venue for the 1996 Olympics was thwarted by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, Clayton County finally secured a bona fide *Gone with the Wind* attraction when it acquired the contents of the Road to Tara Museum from its previous owner, Patsy Wiggins, who had lost her lease at the museum’s location in Stone Mountain. The Road to Tara Museum, which had occupied 6,000 square feet in its original location, was squeezed into 1,600 square feet in the Jonesboro depot, which had been transformed into a welcome center for the town.

The Road to Tara Museum became the focal point of tourism in Clayton County. It also became a place where fact and fiction commingled to the point where casual visitors were hard pressed to distinguish one from the other. Upon entering the museum, visitors were introduced to the Atlanta Campaign of the Civil War as follows:

Born of a railroad, Atlanta grew as her railroads grew, and by 1862 (the year that Scarlett came to visit Aunt Pittypat) the young city sprawled about Union Station.³

The depot also became the home base for Peter Bonner’s *Gone with the Wind* driving tour. Visitors were invited to drive along in their own cars, following either Bonner or his alternate tour guide, “Catfish” Schrader, to a series of locations around downtown Jonesboro

² Exhibit at the Road to Tara Museum, Jonesboro, Georgia, visited by author, 18 July 2006.

³ Exhibit panel at the Road to Tara Museum in the railroad depot, Jonesboro, Georgia, visited by author on 15 June 2004.

where everyone would alight and be regaled by tales that, according to Bonner and Schrader, formed the basis for Mitchell's book. According to Bonner, just about everything in Mitchell's book was true and it all happened in Jonesboro. From the birth of Melanie Wilkes's baby, which allegedly happened at the site of a present-day bank, to the assault on Scarlett O'Hara Kennedy in Shantytown, which Schrader claimed took place near the modern-day Jonesboro Housing Authority, Bonner and Schrader maintained that the events about which Mitchell wrote all took place within walking distance of downtown Jonesboro. "In the book, the story is thirty miles long over thirty years," explained Schrader, while "in real life, it was one block and one week long."⁴

Scarlett and Tara have remained central to plans for tourism promotion in Clayton County for more than half a century. The county's Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), which uses www.visitscarlett.com as its website address, continues to market the county as the Home of *Gone with the Wind*. Downtown Jonesboro has been designated as the *Gone with the Wind* Historic District, and Peter Bonner continues to offer "historic tours" of downtown Jonesboro that emphasize the alleged "true stories" on which Mitchell's work purportedly is based. Missing from almost all of the interpretive efforts is any meaningful discussion of the events that transpired in Clayton County during the Civil War or of the racial issues that formed the foundation of both the real and imaginary Old South. For all the press in the Atlanta area given to discussions of *Gone with the Wind* and Clayton County's heritage, frank discussions of race and slavery are few and far between. Although the issues of the county's history and identity permeate the press, the discussions almost always center on the fictional world created by Margaret Mitchell rather than the real world of yeoman farmers, small planters, and slaves who inhabited Clayton County in the mid-nineteenth century. And although there always seems

⁴ "Catfish" Schrader, tour taken by author, Jonesboro, Georgia, 26 June 2004.

to be a few determined citizens who continued the crusade to create a likeness of Tara in the imaginary land of *Gone with the Wind*, most of the county's residents seemed more concerned with the future than the past.

While it seems probable that the county will continue to use *Gone with the Wind* as a marketing device to lure tourists, involving scholars in the interpretative effort would be a simple, corrective measure the county could take to enrich the tourists' experience. The Confederate cemetery, which is within walking distance of the depot welcome center, seems a natural place to tell the story of the Battle of Jonesboro. And while the impact of Mitchell's work on the history and memory of the area should not be ignored, *Gone with the Wind* should be contextualized within the framework of the historical events upon which it was based rather than vice versa.

Case Statement: No Man's Land: The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), South Korea
NCPH 2012 Working Group: "Imagined Places, Actual Spaces: Physical Manifestations of Romanticized Pasts"

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The Korean War (1950-1953) began at the border called the 38th parallel between North and South Korea, and "ended" by creating another border. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is the 4km wide border-zone between South and North Korea. At the very center, is the DML (Military Demarcation Line), a 240km line that cuts through the Korean peninsula. On each side of the DML is a 2km buffer zone. The border and the DMZ were established in the Korean War Armistice Agreement, signed on July 27, 1953, at Panmunjom.

Within the 2km on the southern side of the border are several well-defined areas with the following distinctions: (1) Most of the land is wilderness, untouched by humans since the War. This area is open to neither South Korean civilians nor foreigners; (2) Closest to the North Korean territory is the Joint Security Area (JSA) at Panmunjom where North and South Korean guards literally stand face to face; (3) Military outposts; (4) A controlled village known as Daseong, or "Freedom Village," areas that are only accessible to foreign nationals; and (5) On the outer edge of the DMZ area is the Imjingak tourist zone, that is open to the public including both foreign travelers as well as Korean civilians.¹ (Fig 1.)

Created as a consequence of the violent war, it seems unlikely that this space would be romanticized for its past. Indeed, it is still an ideologically and politically contested borderland where the construction of South Korean national identity has occurred through interactions with the Allies and "othering" North Korea. Ironically, however, it is also the most romanticized tourist site for foreign visitors to Korea, and where the South Korean government has begun to promote so-called "security-tourism." Even more paradoxically, South Korean civilians cannot cross the DMZ nor even reach the inner core area. In other words, the actual space (the border zone) is inaccessible and a somewhat unknowable imagined space for South Koreans.

¹ The DMZ Area is again divided into two, what I would call "double standard tourism." The tour that I was able to join was a bus tour. The tour starts at the Imjingak Ticket Office for DMZ-sightseeing. Course A stops by the 3rd tunnel, Dora Observatory, Dorasan Station, and Tongilchon (unification village) Souvenir Shop. The first stop, the 3rd tunnel was discovered in 1978 by the South Korean army. The tunnel that is 1,635m in length, 2m in width and 2m in height is a enough space for 30,000 fully armed North Korean soldiers to reach the South in an hour. Tourists enter this tunnel with helmets on and take the electronic monorail to go down. The next stop, Dora Observatory is located within the DMZ and tourists can see the North side including a propaganda village, and a city in the North, Gaeseong. The next stop is Dorasan Station, located 700m from the Southern boundary line of the DMZ. However, as a South Korean passport holder, I cannot go there. Still, we can consider the romanticization and its relation with the past (present, future), by looking at the ways in which this space has been represented in the media. Thus, to depict the areas to which I do not have access, I consult visitors and reporters' reflections on their trips deep inside the DMZ as well as widely circulated photos of the inner core including the JSA-Panmunjeom area.

This case study on the DMZ discusses the romanticization of the past, present, and future of this space, particularly looking at the notion of physical inaccessibility. While such physical inaccessibility is certainly a limitation, both local and global imaginations of this space have no limitation. In fact, the desire to know and experience this Cold War space has tended to increase due to its inaccessibility. Looking at the DMZ, there is no single way to romanticize the past in this space. However, this paper presents three ways of romanticizing its past, present, and future. The romanticization of this space has been always with some combination of inaccessibility/unknowability and the past (as a Cold War frontier), the present (as a tourist site), and the future (not yet conceived) of this space.

The first and most enduring romanticization is to trigger and to conjure up the Cold War past at this existing Cold War frontier. The DMZ is a site where American Cold War manhood has been manifested. Particularly, the image of the Cold War frontier has been reinforced with the presence of the Cold War warriors in this space. This representation has been based on the presidential trips during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1983, at the height of the Cold War, President Ronald Regan visited U.S. troops at Camp Liberty Bell at the DMZ to provide them encouragement. Even after the Cold War had officially ended, President Bill Clinton visited the DMZ during his East Asia trip in 1993. These presidential visits so close to North Korea were continuing manifestations of Cold War manhood at the “frontier.” They are still widely used in news media, and can evoke the romantic notion of DMZ as “frontier” outside of the U.S. (Fig 2. Reagan & Clinton)

Such a notion that the DMZ is the last Cold War frontier is the fundamental premise for recent “security tourism.” It is the space where the Cold War past seamlessly flows into the post-Cold War present. It is from this vantage point that security tourists access the past. Around 1994, the South Korean government opened up new sections of the Demilitarized Zone to foreign tourists who desire to have “a glimpse of the Cold War” at “its last and biggest outposts.”² According to 1994 reports, this site drew about 22,000 tourists, mostly from Japan. About 15 years later, however, tourists increased: “over 100,000 visitors passed through the JSA, the United Nations Joint Security Area” at Panmunjom in 2009.³

At the inner core of the DMZ, where only foreign passport holders may venture, stands the iconic blue U.N. buildings of the United Nations Joint Security Area (JSA). Here, North and South Korean guards are lined up face-to-face. (Fig 4.) Tourists to the JSA receive directions and

² David E. Sanger, “Travel Advisory: Correspondent’s Report; Korea’s DMZ Opens New Areas to Tourists,” *New York Time*, May 8, 1994.

³ J.R. Breen, “DMZ: Cold War Front or Tourist Attraction?,” *Korea Times*, Feb. 23,2010. <http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/include/print.asp?newsIdx=61302> (accessed Feb. 2, 2012).

disclaimers, saying “Visitors are entering a hostile area and their safety cannot be guaranteed,” and “The visit to the Joint Security Area at Panmunj[e]om will entail entry to a hostile area and the possibility of injury or death as a direct result of enemy action.”⁴ In contrast, the reports on this space also capture the ironic nature of this tourism. One author points out “U.S. servicemen are becoming more like tour guides than soldiers” at the “world’s last Cold War frontier.”⁵ Others point out that, “The 960 square-yard U.N. Joint Security Area plaza at Panmunjom, however, seems more Disneyland than DMZ.”⁶ If it is not a “Disneyland,” it may evoke a feeling similar for tourists of going into a haunted house. One pertinent image of this is that of a North Korean soldier looking inside through the window of an iconic blue building, while Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and Defense Secretary, Roberts Gates, held a discussion. “Neither acknowledged the soldier,”⁷ as if he were a ghost. (Fig 5.)

A different area of the DMZ – the untouched wilderness– is the focus of the imagination of the future of this space. As one author describes the DMZ, it is an “unparallel[ed] living museum and repository for much of the region’s flora and fauna.” This space “has become an important stop in what is known as the East Asia migratory flyway, a resting point for rare Manchurian cranes, Siberian herons, ducks, and geese.”⁸ From the discussion on ecology, “The region is so important that environmentalists from around the world are trying to preserve it.”⁹ Thus, ecologists want to maintain this no man’s land.

The hold of the global imagination on the future of this inaccessible space is illustrated by proposed plans to create a Peace Park, to register it with UNESCO World Heritage, and to develop another type of tourism, called “eco tourism.” The emerging discourse on peace and giving attention to the ecology of this space shows the ways in which the memory of the War and ecology tie together under the imagination and language of peace. The Peace Park was first launched in the borderland between South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe in 1990 to create the Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA or peace parks). It aimed to promote to encourage cooperation amongst these states for the economic benefits, as well as to establish political

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Chester Dawson, “Popping Up to the DMZ: It’s just a bus tour from Seoul,” *Business Week*, Oct. 27, 2003.

⁷ Mark Landler and Elisabeth Bumiller, “U.S. to Add to Sanctions on N. Korea,” *New York Times*, July 21, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/22/world/asia/22military.html?hp> (accessed Feb. 2, 2012)

⁸ Arthur H. Westing, “Toward Environmental Sustainability and Reduced Tensions on the Korean Peninsula,” *Environment Magazine*, January-February 2010. <http://www.environmentmagazine.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/January-February%202010/toward-environmental-full.html> (accessed Feb. 2, 2012) ; “Maintaining No Man’s Land,” in *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 39:10, (December 1997), p. 24.

⁹ Michael Schuman, “Bitter No-Man’s Land, Korea’s DMZ Conceals A Haven for Animals,” *Wall Street Journal, Eastern ed.*, August 24, 2000, A1.

stability.¹⁰ An imagined goal for the Peace Park in South Korea is to transform this highly militarized space into a potential “transfrontier conservation area.” This new attention and blueprint of this space has been particularly driven by international figures, including Bill Clinton, Ted Turner, and Nelson Mandela. The complex and paradoxical characteristics of the DMZ retain the old ideological tensions, neoliberal economic impulses, and ideal visions for the reunification of Korea.

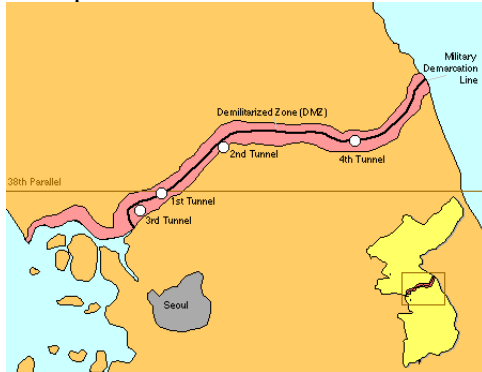
I became interested in the DMZ in the process of researching my dissertation project, which examines the construction of South Korean identity and its relation to Korean War memories. I first considered this barbed wired border and the space it created as only a material trace of the Korean War. This premise – the border as the trace (scar) of the War – still stays the same. However, when I approached this site, it brought up a whole set of new issues: (1) the degree of accessibility to this physical site, as well as how it holds memories of the past; and (2) that multiple temporality (past, present, and future) that co-exist without a cohesive dialogue. These perspectives are often conflicting and competing with each other. The body of scholarship on the DMZ is largely divided into three issues, which correspond to its transformation: (1) inter/national politics over the North-South Korean relationship (peace settlement), (2) tourism, and (3) ecology and environmental issues. However, little research has considered the ways in which these issues overlap and compete with each other. In addition, historians’ and public history practitioners’ engagement with this space is lacking.

The DMZ is certainly a “living museum” of the history of the two Koreas. I would like to invite peers to converse about several issues relating to methodology: 1) how can public historians gather and measure the general public’s thoughts about a particular site, particularly when it is inaccessible; 2) how can public historians measure audiences’ and tourists’ perceptions of the site; and 3) how can we better create and use visitors’ survey in order to understand the public’s consumption of the romanticized space, and to re-create and re-imagine alternative interpretations together, especially for a local space in the global imaginations. This case – the DMZ – adds a discussion of local and transnational spaces and interconnectedness. As such, the influence of the DMZ on South Korean national identity remains somewhat of a mystery.

¹⁰ Official Website of the Peace Park Foundation, <http://www.peaceparks.org/story.php?pid=1&mid=2> (accessed Feb. 2, 2012).

Supplementary Images [Please do not circulate this page, without the author's permission]

1. A map of the DMZ



2. Warriors on the Frontline



C18388-10, President Reagan looks across the DMZ at Guard Post Collier, South Korea. Nov. 13, 1983. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/photographs/trips.html>

3. Warriors on the Frontline



C18394-9, President Reagan addresses U.S. troops Camp Liberty Bell, the DMZ, South Korea. Nov. 13, 1983.



Bill Clinton, at the DMZ, Nov. 1993 <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/diplomacy/431434.html>

4. Joint Security Area (JSA) - Outside



5. Hillary Clinton at the JAS, at Panmunjom



<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/22/world/asia/22military.html?hp>

Sarah McCormick Seekatz, PhD Candidate- University of California, Riverside
Arabian Fantasies in the Deserts of Southern California
**Case Statement for NCPH 2012 Working Group: "Imagined Places, Actual Spaces:
Physical Manifestations of Romanticized Pasts."**

In 1949 several high-school-aged girls from Southern California's Coachella Valley met at a fair to see which one of them would make the transition from pageant princess to queen. Instead of swimsuits and evening gowns these young, white women were dressed as visions of harem girls, with bare-midriiffs and billowing pants. The stage behind them featured Middle Eastern architecture, a fantasy setting called the "Old Bagdad Stage." Before the winner was announced, an Islamic call to prayer played on the loudspeakers. With an Arabian theme, the National Date Festival, serves as a startling example of American perceptions of the Middle East.

The Coachella Valley remains one of the few places where dates can be commercially grown outside of the Middle East. Ever since the date industry was established there around the turn of the 20th century, local boosters have tapped into the date's Arabian heritage to market their crop and the agricultural communities they established. My dissertation follows the establishment of the date industry and its celebrations to explore changing American perceptions of the Middle East, the power of Southern California's booster work beyond Los Angeles in the 1880s-1920s, and how interethnic and gendered relationships of the area were filtered through celebration, play, and costume.

This study analyzes the creation of an Arabian fantasy in the deserts of Southern California. Established through architecture, costume, boosterism, parade, marketing, and pageantry, this fantasy was centered in Indio's National Date Festival. Though the link between the two places, the Coachella Valley and the Middle East, was solidified only through the cultivation of the date and the desert landscape, an Arabian fantasy became integral to the Valley and especially to the city of Indio as it grew and developed between 1900 and 1950. Streets were named Arabia and Oasis, a nearby city literally became Mecca (it is an official city name), a

local school chose the “Arabs” as its mascot, Arabian inspired architecture sprang up, and many residents and visitors donned costumes during the festival. This fantasy was heavily based on popular culture of the 19th and 20th century- including the widely read *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, Lawrence of Arabia lectures and ephemera, biblical archeology, early films like *The Shiek*, and travelogues. Much of this popular culture failed to take into consideration the changing and developing Middle East and instead focused on Arabia as an ancient and mysterious place. The creation of this Arabian fantasy, in a location that did not ever have a large Middle Eastern population, is startling and raises several questions. Who contributed to these notions of “Arabia?” How were they molded by popular conceptions and popular culture of the time locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally? How did these (mis)conceptions affect by those of Middle Eastern descent and how were they perceived? I think these questions are pertinent to all who study romanticized places. *How is the fantasy created and manipulated to romanticize a space? What is the relationship between fact and fiction in the space’s history? How does it affect those who lived the actual history?*

Scholars of California history have long noted that the state's boosters often used, and continue to use, pageantry, parade, costume, and performance to create a romanticized celebration of the state's Spanish Colonial past while establishing political, economic, and social hierarchies. In a project they have called the "Spanish Fantasy Past," scholars like Carey McWilliams, William Deverell, and Phoebe Kropp have demonstrated that the romance of Spanish colonialism re-figures what was a brutal colonial system through performances that depict pious priests, sexy señoritas, child-like Indians, and lazy Mexicans. But Southern California did not sell itself exclusively through the romance of Spanish Colonialism. My dissertation will demonstrate that Coachella Valley boosters tried to link their crop, their climate,

and themselves to an even older history- that of the Middle East, through similar celebrations of ethnic “others.”

The relatively recent newcomers of the Coachella Valley utilized a romantic version of history to establish their inheritance of a land they had recently migrated to. They did so not with a romantic version of the region’s local history (as the rest of Spanish Fantasy crazed Southern California did) but instead with an older history of the Middle East, complete with Sultans, harems, and caravans. The date industry provided a very thin historic line, as the trees that bore the crop were imported directly from Arabia, where date palms and the fruit itself maintain cultural importance. The sandy desert landscape drew the second parallel, one more centered in the landscape. However romancing the Southern California deserts via old Arabian histories and myths, based heavily on 19th and 20th century American (mis)perceptions of the Arabia, leaves a complicated regional identity. Tapping into Christian claims on the holy land, recent Anglo-protestant migrants to the Coachella Valley claimed this similar desert as their own. Their religious stake in the holy land (reincarnated in the Southern California deserts) provided them with a history that outdated the Native American population of the region and justified their elevated economic, political, and social status in the local community. As a similar justification was made through the Spanish Fantasy Past (claiming priests as European civilizers who left California as the inheritance of Anglo-protestants) I think this is a key point in romanticized spaces. *What cultural work is the fantasy or romance performing? Who’s status- social, political, or economic, is the fantasy elevating and at what cost?*

This is particularly important to the area’s multiethnic population. The area’s large population of Mexicans and Mexican Americans have seen their local histories obstructed by an exclusive focus on the date industry and its “Arabian” heritage. As the date industry grew, so too did its need for labor. In addition to temporary labor needed for picking and packing the fruit, a

small group of highly skilled laborers needed to tend the palms year round. These “palmeros,” often Mexican and Mexican American, are crucial to date production, but are not often celebrated or discussed in the region’s history. The date festival itself has a complicated relationship to the Mexican American community. While both Anglos and Mexican Americans “played Arab” at the fair, on at least one occasion a separate beauty pageant was held for Mexican/ Mexican American girls and the winner had to be officially invited to the fair and parade by the Anglo Queen Scheherazade. The multiethnic and racial makeup of the Coachella Valley is further muddled by the act of “playing Arab.” Like so many other romanticized spaces, the fantasy and celebration obscures any real discussion of racial friction and local tensions, including labor strife. I’m interested in other ways this obscuration plays out. *How does the fantasy impact local race relations?* In these “Arabian” celebrations, women’s bodies took center stage- with the harem playing an important role in marketing the date festival and “Arabian” costumes sexualizing perceptions of Middle Eastern women. Since a similar process played out in cites of the Spanish Fantasy Past, with sexy *senorita*’s taking center stage, I’m interested in finding out *how gender impacted the creation of various romanticized spaces through costume and in other ways.*

Tracking the way the Coachella Valley saw the Middle East also for an insight into the changing way Americans envisioned the Middle East over the 20th century. In the eyes of many Americans the region changed from an exotic, luxurious, romantic faraway land to an increasingly foreboding, troubled area central to American debates about homelands, terrorism, and oil. This fact raises questions crucial to romanced places- *what happens when the relationship to the romance changes? Has this happened in other spaces and how has the community that depends on the romance as a booster tool reacted? Will some aspect of the romance always live on in a space that clung to it?*



Photo courtesy of the Pomona Public Library, 1949



Photo courtesy of the Pomona Public Library, 1949

Emily McEwen: Enduring Romance at Riverside's Mission Inn Hotel
Case Statement: 2012 NCPH "Imagined Places, Actual Spaces" Working Group

The National Historic Landmark Mission Inn Hotel in Riverside, California is an architecturally dazzling centerpiece for the sanitized imagined history of Southern California crafted by boosters in the early twentieth century to attract tourists, snowbirds, and waves of new long-term residents. The Miller family, migrants to the new Riverside colony from Wisconsin, began the Inn in 1876 as a simple 12-room adobe boarding house. Under the direction of son Frank, by 1932, the Mission Inn was a palatial four-wing grand hotel encompassing an entire city block. The first two wings, the Mission and Cloister Wings, designed by preeminent Los Angeles architect Arthur Benton in 1903 and 1911, were conceived as a means to preserve the most architecturally distinct elements of California's crumbling missions with an array of arches, buttresses, towers, and domes. The Inn was conceived as not just a luxury hotel for travelers seeking rest and warmth in the citrus belt, it was also a feat of historic preservation. This original penchant for architectural accuracy, however, was short-lived as Miller expressed his flare for the dramatic in increasingly ornate Spanish, Moorish, and Japanese styles throughout the hotel, the inspiration for these new additions coming from his months traveling around the world.

It was not just the eccentric architectural elements that left visitors gasping and wondering what other exotic marvels might befall them in Southern California, but every inch of the Inn was stocked with art, artifacts, and oddities from around the world. From Native American baskets, antique crucifixes, cast iron bells, and full size wax replicas of Pope Pius X and his court (to keep with the mission theme, of course), to masterpieces of Russian painting, Asian decorative arts, hundreds of international dolls, and collections of aviation ephemera, the

Inn was packed to capacity. Miller scoured the world market for rare artifacts to gain publicity for the Inn, making deals to import antiques from Mexico and Western Europe in the wake of violent revolution and war. Specialty display rooms, such as the Cloister Walk, El Camino Real, Kiva, Fuji Kan, Court of the Orient, Spanish Art Gallery, St. Francis Chapel, Music Room, and Galleria transported guests to past times and places. Not only were these rooms striking displays, but most items at the Inn were also for sale at the right price, making the Mission Inn a strange hybrid of highbrow art gallery, weird and wonderful dime museum, World's Fair, department store, and theater company. Miller often costumed himself as mission Padre Junipero Serra and annually staged an elaborate Nativity Pageant that imagined Christmas at California's missions, complete with benevolent padres and innocently naïve neophytes.

Through this intricate web of architectural design, object collections, theatrical performance, consumerism, and publicity, the Mission Inn was ground zero for the re-imagining of Southern California's identity. Perhaps this is best exemplified in a 1927 Bullock's department store advertisement written by Miller in the *Los Angeles Times*:

The old Franciscans of the Missions set the example. Their handclasp, their smile and their words of greeting were genuine. They gave the best they had, simple though it was. Let us all who deal with the traveler copy them – our teachers of the past...Let our hospitality be true and sincere, like that of the Missions.¹

The Mission Inn's romanticization of California's history is an enduring vision that persists unchallenged to this day. Currently, the Inn continues as a privately-owned, four diamond luxury hotel. It is the focal point of Riverside's tourism industry, downtown renewal, and civic identity. Guests still wander the winding hallways remarking how they've never seen such a beautiful mission, not realizing that the Inn has always been a hotel. What makes the Mission Inn such a unique situation, however, and what has allowed little to no reinterpretation

¹ Frank Miller, "The Hospitality of Old California," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 March 1927, A12.

or problematizing of this site's history are the public/private partnerships that keep its doors open. Although the Inn is privately owned and operated, there is also an on-site non-profit organization, the Mission Inn Foundation & Museum, which is charged with stewarding the historic collections and providing public access to the Inn through exhibitions, programs, and daily docent-led hotel tours. Binding these two partners together is the City of Riverside, which originally created the Mission Inn Foundation & Museum to ensure protection of the public interest in the Inn and continues to provide a large sum of the Foundation's annual budget.

While these partnerships have allowed the Inn to remain intact for over a century, gaining city, state, and national landmark recognition in the 1960s and 1970s, little has been done to revise the outdated, and sometimes harmful, interpretation of California history largely due to its place as Riverside's number one attraction. The hotel's management naturally trot out the Inn's "old world charm," "rich history," and "romance and enchantment" in advertising campaigns, while Frank Miller is practically beatified in Riverside for his civic boosterism.² One can certainly not blame the Mission Inn ownership for capitalizing on the hotel's romantic heritage (a perfect way to advertise a one-of-a-kind luxury hotel), but it becomes problematic when historical interpretations that deviate from the starry-eyed party line are not allowed – especially when there is an independent non-profit organization whose mission is to critically interpret the site's history. Issues of race and class and how they were driving factors in the development of the Mission Inn are ignored or lightly glossed over. The Mission Inn Foundation operates an impressive docent program with over 125 docents who must take a nine-month training course. This training course, however, largely focuses on the hotel's historical chronology, with classes detailing construction dates, the names and purchase dates of the Inn's most valuable artifacts, and the triumphant biography of Frank Miller. Mission Inn Foundation docents are chided by

² "A Grand State for Life's Most Dramatic Moments," Mission Inn website, www.missioninn.com.

management if they are overheard telling guests anything deemed “negative” about the hotel’s history. The “tough stuff” of the Inn’s history never enters the picture.

I worked for 3.5 years as the Curator of History at the Mission Inn Foundation & Museum before leaving in September 2011 to concentrate on finishing my Ph.D. I definitely gained an interesting education in navigating the intricacies of the Inn’s public/private relationships and came away with more questions than answers, which I will pose here for further discussion. Firstly, as the public history field becomes increasingly entangled with and dependent on consumer enterprises, how can we begin to reinterpret romantic histories? In the case of the Mission Inn, the City of Riverside’s identity and economic stability is largely based on these romantic histories, so how can public historians work within this system to ensure more inclusive and challenging historical analyses are presented? Or, perhaps a more uncomfortable question is whether or not public/private partnerships like those at the Mission Inn can produce anything but romantic visions of history? These partnerships certainly saved the Mission Inn’s physical building, but largely at the cost of complex historical interpretation. The Inn was expressly built as a physical manifestation of a romanticized past, but this imagined romantic vision has now become its single history and identity. The Mission Inn’s stunning architecture brings thousands of visitors to Riverside every year. In this peculiar place, with its oddball art and artifact collections, there is so much potential to creatively interpret Riverside and Southern California history. How can some sort of common ground be found in order for the various stakeholders to see that there is more to the Mission Inn than just romance?

Ashley Shimer
10 January 2012

Case Statement: The Betsy Ross House
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I first visited the Betsy Ross House as a little girl with my grandmother. A little budding colonial enthusiast, I even wore a home-made mob cap, and was enthralled with the idea of standing where the first flag maker had lived. Years later, my undergraduate research concerning women and weapons in eighteenth-century America took me back to the house, equally curious but far more skeptical-- and concerned. As a Park Ranger at Valley Forge National Historical Park, about 20 miles west of Philadelphia, part of my job entailed dispelling the myths that have developed around the story of that miserable Continental winter encampment of 1777-1778. Between my job and my research, I was curious to see how much myth was dispelled at the Betsy Ross House.

That myth holds a special place in the American public memory. Unsubstantiated by hard evidence, congressional records, or personal accounts, the story is as trite for academic historians as the tale of Washington and the cherry tree, yet among the public, Ross is the undisputed origin of the first American flag.¹ Betsy Ross, enshrined in the public memory with the likes of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, has a temple in the form of her residence on Arch Street, just blocks from Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center in historic Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

¹ In 1870, William Canby presented a story, backed by affidavits from family members, to a conference of historians in preparation for the Revolutionary Centennial celebrations. He claimed that his grandmother, Elizabeth Griscom Ross Ashburn Claypool, was visited at her home by Commander in Chief George Washington and three members of Congress, to commission the first American flag. The newly widowed Mrs. Ross suggested an alteration to the design-- replacing the six-point stars with five-pointed ones-- and set to work. Unsubstantiated by hard evidence, congressional records, or personal accounts, the story was quickly dismissed by academic historians, yet the myth took root among the public, championed by ??? For more information on the life of Betsy Ross, see Marla R. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2010)

The house is managed by the private nonprofit organization, Historic Philadelphia, Inc. Visitors must buy a ticket in order to tour the museum. The exhibits are tastefully executed, text panels on the walls of a beautifully restored interior, decorated to reflect an approximation of what the rooms must have looked like, based on inventory records and material culture research of the period. The tour covers the various facets of Betsy Ross's life, from her Quaker upbringing to life in colonial Philadelphia, the American Revolution, and after. I was shocked yet pleased to see a new addition to the exhibit-- the downstairs room has a small section that depicts the manufacture of musket cartridges. Military records indicate that Betsy Ross, like many urban women who supported the American cause, manufactured musket cartridges for the American Army during the British occupation of Philadelphia in the winter of 1777-1778. It is not widely known that while the Americans endured privations at Valley Forge, Betsy Ross and hundreds of other women risked their lives to make munitions, for use by the Americans in the spring. Throughout the exhibits, I was happy to see an insightful, educational presentation of the known facts of Betsy Ross's life. However, all of this was negated by the last room. A costumed actress, who I recognized as the some-time Martha Washington for the occasional private demonstrations at Valley Forge, was currently portraying Betsy Ross, and gave a spirited performance to the small cluster of visitors standing behind the guard rail. Wielding a needle and a 5-pointed star, she told the story of how she was visited by General Washington, and sewed the first flag. That vivid, stirring performance was the very last part of the tour, and consequently outshone the rest of the exhibit, which had tentatively suggested doubt at the veracity of William Canby's claim. The takeaway message: Betsy Ross sewed the first flag, even if it can't be conclusively proven with evidence.

The museum in its entirety raises several issues. Betsy Ross currently stands as the best-known woman of the Revolution, aside from Martha Washington and the mythic Molly Pitcher. Ross's story is infused with nineteenth-century conventions of gender roles, a result of the story's development during that era. Yet the feminine ideals of the nineteenth century do not reflect the reality of eighteenth century gender roles, and the judging of early American history by these standards limits the average eighteenth-century woman like Betsy Ross to a passive observant role, ignoring her contribution to the founding of a nation. Ross is the face of female participation in the Revolution; emphasis on her feminine sewing contribution of the first flag, which cannot be substantiated, instead of her documented work in munitions manufacture, does a disservice to the contributions of the many American women who participated in the cause in manifold ways.

Secondly, the museum enables the perpetuity of the myth and bolsters the message taught in schools. The story of Betsy Ross is generally learned in primary school, and supported by the performance at the Betsy Ross House. Between the two, the story becomes enshrined in public memory, and integral to the story of the nation's founding. Once there, suggesting that Betsy Ross may not have sewn the first flag becomes an almost anti-American act, a slur aimed at the American identity.

Finally, the financial situation of the museum is of particular concern, as it impacts the interpretation of the Betsy Ross story. A privatized non-profit, the museum depends upon visitation revenue to stay open, and the myth of Betsy Ross attracts a large number of visitors each year. There may be concern that if the museum chooses to not capitalize on the myth, visitation may drop off. This is in direct contrast to the circumstances of Valley Forge Park,

which as a federal park unit, has a steady budget and actively works to dispel myths created in schools and popular culture, such as the claim of men freezing to death in six feet of snow while on guard outside their log huts.

Resolving the divide between academic history and the public is always a challenge. Yet there are some strategies that may allow the Betsy Ross House to enjoy its high levels of visitation while working towards a more historically accurate portrayal. The work must start at the earliest and lowest levels-- in the primary schools. While currently a convenient vignette for female participation in the American Revolution, a more appropriate rendition should introduce doubt, that she “may” have sewn the first flag, but that she definitely made musket cartridges and sewed naval flags, as did many women in the Revolution. By emphasizing her other contributions, she can still be representative of the countless, and nameless, other women who contributed to the Revolutionary War effort.

Secondly, eliminating the actress at the Betsy Ross House would go a long way in changing the takeaway message of the exhibition. Living history demonstrations performed in the third person by docents would provide the vivid, visual effect as well as an opportunity to discuss women’s activities during that period. Furthermore, a docent not bound by a limiting character role will have the flexibility to clarify the distinction between what is known about Betsy Ross and what is myth and answer questions with the knowledge gained over the past two hundred years, rather than pretending to possess only the knowledge available in the eighteenth century.

Finally, expand the munitions manufacture exhibit space, and include a section that depicts Ross's work as a naval flag-maker. This space suggests the variety of ways in which urban colonial women participated in the war effort.

**Chelsea Vaughn: Staging Colonialism: Recreations of History in the Western United States
Case Statement: “Imagined Places, Actual Spaces” Working Group**

Audience members of *Americanus*—which ran from July 23-28, 1923 at the University of Washington Stadium in Seattle—were treated to an evening of U.S. history in pageant form. Written by Professor of History Edmond S. Meany, *Americanus* depicted this history through a series of tableaux that opened with General Washington at Valley Forge and concluded after the armistice of World War I with a scene meant to portray “the great American melting pot and the progress of life in this country to the present time.” The formation of this melting pot through progress appears explicitly in Episode II “Era of Good Feeling,” where in Scene 2 “a procession of fifteen beautiful maidens, each representing a Spanish-American republic [...] form a pyramid, the apex of which is Miss Columbia led to her position by President Monroe.” A group of Spanish dancers soon joins this initial spectacle as a representation of “the joy of the Latin-American countries over the pronouncement of the Monroe Doctrine.” This celebration of President Monroe’s pronouncement against European intervention in the Western Hemisphere held many of the hallmarks of historical pageantry and of its permeations upon the West Coast in particular: the equation of U.S. imperialism with national progress, the feminization of these colonial encounters, and the reliance upon visual spectacle in order to communicate these ideas.

For work toward a PhD in Public History from the University of California, Riverside, I examine historical pageants, and similar performative types, as they appeared in the Western United States in the early twentieth century through the onset of World War II, at which point many of these productions went on hiatus. In particular, I am interested in what these shows sought to communicate through both storyline and visual cues, with the argument that such shows intended to sway public sentiment in favor of U.S. imperialism through the commemoration of past colonial ventures, and that they did so through a feminization of the

imperial process. While few were as overt in their depiction of U.S. imperialism as to have the female figure of Columbia physically climb onto the backs Latin American nations (aided by President James Monroe no less), many of these productions took imperialism as a theme. The Mount Tamalpais Theatre (Marin County, California) productions of *Drake* (1925) and *Thunder in Paradise* (1937) celebrated early British exploration to what would become the Western United States. Similarly, *The Mission Play* (San Gabriel, California, 1912-1930s), the *Ramona Pageant/Outdoor Play* (Hemet, California, 1923-current), and the *Mission Pageant of San Juan Capistrano* (San Juan Capistrano, California, 1924, 1925) display first the Spanish, and later the U.S. conquest of Alta California. Finally, the *Happy Canyon Indian Pageant and Wild West Show* (Pendleton, Oregon, 1913-current) and *How the West Was Won: An Historical Pageant* (Walla Walla, Washington, 1923), in their portrayal of U.S. westward migration, both contain scenes of the displacement of Native Americans to reservations.

The “Era of Good Feelings,” as portrayed in *Americanus*, also contained the two tropes utilized by many of these productions to portray imperialism as a feminine process; the idea of white women as conveyors of Western civilization, here in the character of Columbia, and the equation of conquered lands with the bodies of women of color—the scene’s “fifteen beautiful maidens.” Exemplifying this first group are characters based upon historical figures such as missionary Narcissa Whitman—generally considered to be the first white woman in what would become the western United States—in *How the West Was Won* and Queen Elizabeth I—the epitome of European civilization and virtuous white womanhood—in *Drake*. In contrast, storylines engaging the archetype of a woman of color that embodied a colonized territory relied upon fictional creations rather than pulling from the area’s past, such as those plays depicting conflict in the Southland and the Mount Tamalpais play *Tamalpa* (1921, 1923, 1938, 1946, 1953,

1957, 1963, 1970). In *The Mission Play* this role was portrayed through the “half-breed Indian girl” Anita, in the *Mission Pageant of San Juan Capistrano* it manifested through Señorita Margarita, and in both the *Ramona Pageant/Outdoor Play* and *Tamalpa* the title characters served this purpose. Notably, white actresses were initially cast to portray each of these four characters. A third portrayal of women appears within pageantry in the western United States involving those that are ambiguous in either their role or their racial make-up. Characters such as Sacajawea—a Native American woman credited with guiding the United States into the wild of the Oregon Territory and a favorite among those staging the history of the Pacific Northwest—complicate easy readings of race and gender within historical pageantry.

Rather than providing quaint renderings of area history, these productions both participated in and perpetuated gendered and racialized understandings of the conquest of the western United States and subsequent community formation. A close examination of their content, and of the privileging of certain stories over others, further offers a lens to how people in the western United States understood themselves in a larger national narrative as well as within their local communities. For audiences of *Americanus*, the celebration of the Monroe Doctrine tied the burgeoning metropolis of Seattle to international politics. In contrast, *How the West Was Won* presented a narrative that emphasized Walla Walla’s historical significance within Washington State. These competing concepts of place and belonging reflected demographic shifts occurring in both cities at the time—while Seattle’s population of 315,000 continued to grow, Walla Walla’s meager 15,000 was contracting—allowing Seattle to shed its recent frontier past in favor of a forward-moving metropolitan identity while Walla Walla looked backward to scenes of its prior importance.

I came to this topic as an Oregonian transplanted to Southern California for graduate school and encountering a pervasive regional identity based upon the state's Spanish Colonial past. My work on this subject led to an article published in the journal *Southern California Quarterly* and another in the *Journal of San Diego History*. The first of these, "Locating Absence: The Forgotten Presence of Monjeríos in the Alta California Missions," addressed the lack of interpretation of Native American women's experiences in the reconstructed California missions. The second article, "The Meeting of Señora Josefa Yorba and Lucretia del Valle through Historical Pageantry and the Spanish Fantasy Past," examined del Valle's participation in *The Mission Play*. Reflecting upon my own sense of regional identity as a native of the Northwest, I expanded my examination of historical pageantry beyond Southern California and the so-called "Spanish Fantasy Past" to a larger consideration of its role in forming regional identity throughout the American West.