SPACES OF IMMIGRATION: AMERICAN RAILROAD COMPANIES, THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Spaces of Immigration: American Railroad Companies, the Built Environment, and the Immigrant Experience

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From the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth centuries, American railroad companies played a crucial role in shaping the physical and cultural landscape of the nation. These companies altered the land by constructing tracks, building stations, and platting towns. Railroad companies also redefined the cultural landscape of the nation by heavily promoting immigration, targeting specific ethnic groups that railroad officials considered desirable, such as northern Europeans, attracting them with employment opportunities, sale of cheap lands, and reduced transportation rates. Although dependent on immigrant traffic and land sales, railroad companies largely catered to the expectations of middle-class American citizens by designing their built environment in accordance with contemporary attitudes toward immigration, not only revealing class and ethnic hierarchies but also reinforcing them.

On the East Coast, railroad companies operated at ports of entry in facilities like Baltimore’s Immigrant Station (1868-1914), New York’s Castle Garden (1855-1890) and the purpose-built Ellis Island Immigration Station (1892-1954), in order to move European immigrants as swiftly as possible through the station buildings and onto waiting trains headed for the country’s interior. On the West Coast, however, restrictive
legislation for Asian immigrants, who had largely constructed the Transcontinental Railroad, resulted in a prison-like design for the Angel Island Immigration Station (1910-1940), which featured barbed wire fencing, barred windows, and racially segregated barracks. Further along the immigrants’ journey into the United States, segregated train cars and waiting rooms quelled fears of foreign-born illness and reinforced ethnic and economic divisions between immigrants and citizen-travelers. Yet these immigrants were a source of profit for the railroads, and company officials organized ethnic enclaves in order to settle their Midwestern lands, targeting groups known for their agricultural skills, such as the German Mennonites. These spaces of immigration—ports of arrival, railway stations and train cars, and railway-established towns—may be read as physical manifestations of the country’s changing immigration policies, of constructed popular ideas of otherness, and of ethnic and social hierarchies in the United States. This dissertation situates those spaces within the larger networks of American politics, capitalism, and culture.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract of the Dissertation..............................................................................................ii

Acknowledgments..............................................................................................................iv

Table of Contents.............................................................................................................v

List of Illustrations..........................................................................................................vii

Introduction......................................................................................................................1

Chapter I. Ports of Arrival: Baltimore .................................................................12

Chapter II. Ports of Arrival: New York...............................................................53

Chapter III. Ports of Arrival: San Francisco.....................................................107

Chapter IV. Along the Rails: Immigrant Train Cars and Waiting Rooms..........147

Chapter V. Settlement: Ethnic Enclaves in the Midwest...............................184

Conclusion ....................................................................................................................233

Illustrations...................................................................................................................243

Bibliography..................................................................................................................333
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1.1: Map of the National Road in 1840
Fig. 1.2: Francis Blackwell Mayer, *The Founders of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*, 1891
Fig. 1.3: Map of Baltimore, A.P. Folie, 1792
Fig. 1.4: Map of Baltimore Harbor
Fig. 1.5: Map of Whetstone Point, ca. 1850
Fig. 1.6: Transfer of cargo on Baltimore shoreline
Fig. 1.7: Distances between cities, 1916
Fig. 1.8: Distances between Camden Station and Locust Point
Fig. 1.9: Camden Station, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company
Fig. 1.10: Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Station, President Street
Fig. 1.11: Map of Canton
Fig. 1.12: Herbert Stitt, *Locust Point-Marine Terminus in the Early Eighties*, 1926-27
Fig. 1.13: Immigrants boarding a train, Locust Point, 1880s
Fig. 1.14: Map of Locust Point, 1980s
Fig. 1.15: Immigrants aboard ship, Locust Point, ca. 1904
Fig. 1.16: Group after unloading, immigrants at Locust Point, ca. 1904
Fig. 1.17: Immigration Station, Pier 9, ca. 1910
Fig. 1.18: Doctor examines immigrant woman for trachoma, ca. 1904
Fig. 1.19: Immigrants separated into pens
Fig. 1.20: Immigrants in main waiting room, Baltimore & Ohio Immigrant Station
Fig. 1.21: Aerial view of Locust Point, 1920s
Fig. 1.22: Federal Immigration Station, Locust Point, 1916

Fig. 2.1: “The Pitfalls Awaiting the New Arrivals in New York City”
Fig. 2.2: Plan of West Battery
Fig. 2.3: Interior of Castle Garden as music hall
Fig. 2.4: “Jenny Lind at Castle Garden,” 1850
Fig. 2.5: Exterior of Castle Garden
Fig. 2.6: Aerial view of Castle Garden, ca. 1900
Fig. 2.7: Interior layout, Castle Garden Emigration Depot, ca. 1855
Fig. 2.8: Interior, Castle Garden Emigration Depot, 1865
Fig. 2.9: Aerial view of Castle Garden with surrounding outbuildings
Fig. 2.10: Castle Garden Baggage Room
Fig. 2.11: Immigrants in Castle Garden interior, 1878
Fig. 2.12: Map of Ellis Island, 1854
Fig. 2.13: Ellis Island, 1892
Fig. 2.14: Barge Office, 1882
Fig. 2.15: Immigrants in Barge Office, 1900
Fig. 2.16: Aerial view of Ellis Island, ca. 1920
Fig. 2.17: Main building, Ellis Island, 1905
Fig. 2.18: Elevation of Ellis Island Main Building, 1897-98
Fig. 2.19: Immigrants entering Ellis Island
Fig. 2.20: Registry Hall, ca. 2010
Fig. 2.21: Immigrants’ path through Ellis Island, 1904
Fig. 2.22: Eye inspection
Fig. 2.23: Registry Hall, 1903
Fig. 2.24: Registry Hall, ca. 1912
Fig. 2.25: Registration and inspection, 1912
Fig. 2.26: Money Exchange Office
Fig. 2.27: Stairs of Separation
Fig. 2.28: Railroad Ticket Office
Fig. 2.29: Immigrants in railroad waiting room
Fig. 2.30: Ground plan of main building, 1907
Fig. 2.31: Railroad official tagging immigrants, Lewis Hine photograph, 1926

Fig. 3.1: Chinese immigrant laborers
Fig. 3.2: “Let the Chinese Embrace Civilization, and They May Stay”
Fig. 3.3: “Pacific Chivalry: Encouragement to Chinese Civilization”
Fig. 3.4: “The Great Fear of the Period”
Fig. 3.5: Democratic County Central Committee Handbill
Fig. 3.6: Pacific Mail Steamship Company Detention Shed, 1899
Fig. 3.7: Bertillon System
Fig. 3.8: Aerial view of Angel Island
Fig. 3.9: Aerial view of Fort McDowell, 1926
Fig. 3.10: Quarantine Station, Angel Island, 1892
Fig. 3.11: Layout of Ellis Island
Fig. 3.12: Sketch of Angel Island Immigration Station, Walter J. Mathews, ca. 1907
Fig. 3.13: Staff cottages at Angel Island
Fig. 3.14: Angel Island location and layout
Fig. 3.15: Medical inspection aboard Angel Island ferry
Fig. 3.16: Passengers disembarking from the Angel Island ferry
Fig. 3.17: Administration building, Angel Island
Fig. 3.18: Interior, Administration Building
Fig. 3.19: Caged waiting area for female detainees
Fig. 3.20: Detention Barracks, Angel Island
Fig. 3.21: Floor plan of the Detention Barracks
Fig. 3.22: Exterior, Detention Barracks, 2009
Fig. 3.23: Wire bunk beds
Fig. 3.24: Interior of dormitory
Fig. 3.25: Museum exhibit of dormitory interior
Fig. 3.26: Exterior, Hospital Building
Fig. 3.27: Interior, Hospital Ward
Fig. 3.28: Medical inspections at Angel Island
Fig. 3.29: Alcatraz Military Prison
Fig. 3.30: Female detainees walking around the grounds
Fig. 3.31: Recreation yards for European and for Chinese detainees
Fig. 3.32: Interior, washroom and lavatory
Fig. 3.33: Interrogation of Chinese detainee
Fig. 3.34: Poem carved into the dormitory wall
Fig. 3.35: Administration building after the 1940 fire
Fig. 4.1a: Norfolk & Western Railway boxcar
Fig. 4.1b: Norfolk & Western Railway boxcar converted for immigrant passengers
Fig. 4.2: Interior, Pullman Palace Sleeping Car, 1877
Fig. 4.3: Interior, Immigrant Sleeper Car
Fig. 4.4: Interior, Pullman Palace Car
Fig. 4.5: Interior, Immigrant Sleeper Car
Fig. 4.6: Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company advertisement
Fig. 4.7: Crowded interior of immigrant sleeper car
Fig. 4.8: Train platform in Laguna, New Mexico
Fig. 4.9: “Negro Expulsion from Railway Car, Philadelphia”
Fig. 4.10: Map of railroad terminals in the Port of New York, ca. 1900
Fig. 4.11: Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal
Fig. 4.12: Interior, Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal
Fig. 4.13: Vintage postcard, Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal and Ferry House
Fig. 4.14: Plan, Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal
Fig. 4.15: Exterior, New York, Lake Erie, & Western Railway Station
Fig. 4.16: Pier 5, Erie Railroad Station, Jersey City
Fig. 4.17: Interior, Immigrant Waiting Room in Pier 5 building, Erie Railroad Station
Fig. 4.18: Exterior, Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Terminal
Fig. 4.19: Immigrant waiting room, Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Terminal
Fig. 4.20: Main waiting room, Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Terminal
Fig. 4.21: Laundry facilities, Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Terminal
Fig. 4.22: Washrooms, Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Terminal
Fig. 4.23: Plan of Union Station, Kansas City, Missouri
Fig. 4.24: Opening day at Kansas City Union Station, October 30, 1914
Fig. 4.25: Interior, Kansas City Union Station
Fig. 4.26: Immigrant waiting room, Kansas City Union Station
Fig. 4.27: Basket Lunch Room, Kansas City Union Station
Fig. 4.28: Map of greater Spokane area
Fig. 4.29: Oregon-Washington Station, 1914
Fig. 4.30: Plan, Oregon-Washington Station
Fig. 4.31: Main waiting room, Oregon-Washington Station
Fig. 4.32: Vintage postcard, Oregon-Washington Station

Fig. 5.1: Bird’s eye view of Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1882
Fig. 5.2: Checkerboard pattern of land distribution
Fig. 5.3a: Extreme limits of railroad land grants
Fig. 5.3b: Land claimed by railroads
Fig. 5.4: Bilaterally symmetrical grid plan of railway town
Fig. 5.5: Bird’s eye view of Cheyenne, Wyoming showing actual town development
Fig. 5.6: Town plan with railroad diagonally bisecting the town’s main street
Fig. 5.7: T-Plan of railway town
Fig. 5.8: East Main Street, Danville, Illinois
Fig. 5.9: “In Line at the Land Office, Perry, Sept. 23, 1893.”
Fig. 5.10: American Emigrant Company Circular, 1863
Fig. 5.11: Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway advertisement
Fig. 5.12: Map and description, Santa Fe Railroad German Colony “Germania,” ca. 1873
Fig. 5.13: Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Station, 1871
Fig. 5.14: Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Company Circular, 1872
Fig. 5.15: Northern Pacific Railway Colonists’ Reception House
Fig. 5.16: Illinois Central land advertisement
Fig. 5.17: Hardy Gillard, *Over the Continent from New York to San Francisco*, ca. 1880
Fig. 5.18: Advertisement, C.S. Dawson’s *The Great Overland Route to California*, 1871
Fig. 5.19: Illinois Central circular
Fig. 5.20: Settler outside his sod home
Fig. 5.21: Map of Mennonite settlements in southeastern Russia
Fig. 5.22: Arrival of Mennonite Immigrants in New York City
Fig. 5.23: Public Well at the Temporary Home of the Russian Mennonites
Fig. 5.24: Temporary lodging house, Alexanderwohl, 1873
Fig. 5.25: Interior, temporary lodging house
Fig. 5.26: View of Gnadenau, 1873
Fig. 5.27: View of Gnadenau—looking east, 1873
Fig. 5.28: Plan and bird’s eye view of the village of Hochfeld, Kansas
Fig. 5.29: Typical sod house
Fig. 5.30: Drawing of a saraj
Fig. 5.31: Abraham Bloemaert, *Tobias and the Angel* (detail), 1620
Fig. 5.32: Section, elevation, and floor plan of Dutch farmhouse
Fig. 5.33: Types of faces and costumes of the Russian Mennonites
Fig. 5.34: Mennonite oven, 1911
Fig. 5.35: Danish immigrant Hans Jacobson and family
Fig. 5.36: Permanent and temporary Nebraska homes

Fig. C.1: Basement floor plan, St. Paul Union Depot, 1917
Fig. C.2: Border fence, Mexican side
INTRODUCTION

Between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the rise of the American railway system catalyzed the nation’s industrial and economic growth and played a major role in immigration, attracting foreigners through employment and sale of cheap land, and providing transportation for immigrants to their new homes throughout the country. Through the lens of architectural history, this dissertation examines how the intersection of the railways and immigration played a defining role in the shaping of the American nation. Railroad companies sought to control circulation of passengers within their stations and throughout the states. The built environment of the railways functioned as an architectural expression of American attitudes toward immigration; race and ethnicity determined an immigrant’s spatial experiences. I argue that the built environment of the railways, including ports, railroad stations, train cars, and railroad-established towns, both constructed and reinforced racial and social hierarchies between American citizens and the immigrant population.

This dissertation employs methods from the study of cultural landscapes; therefore, landscape refers not only to open space, but also to the spatial and cultural relationships between groups of people and their surroundings. This approach is informed by a range of fields, including human geography and social history, in addition to architectural history. In placing the railways within a cultural context, I build on the work of John Mackenzie and Jeffrey Richards, who study the social history of railway stations throughout the world and in different media, such as literature and art.¹ This dissertation, however, focuses on the spaces through which immigrants moved on their

path from country of origin to their new American home. I apply my research methods to a range of buildings, from award-winning monumental works such as the Ellis Island Immigration Station, to temporary lodging houses built by railroad and immigrant laborers in the Midwestern United States. Although the structures in this study are distinct from one another in terms of function, scale, material, and style, they are nevertheless linked as spaces occupied by immigrants within the built environment of the railways. These structures offer an understanding of the spatial experiences of immigrants and the ways in which the railways both directed and influenced those experiences.

My research covers not only buildings, but also town planning and land-use policies, particularly in the western United States, where federal and state land grants allowed railroad companies to plat towns and sell lands along their lines, altering the natural landscape at an alarming rate. As geographer Deryck Holdsworth suggests, we would do well to examine the broader spatial frame surrounding a particular building. In examining the land under and around a structure, architectural historians can form a more thorough understanding of the building, its owners, and its occupants. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company, for example, dominated the area of Locust Point in Baltimore, transforming it for industrial purposes by constructing an extensive marine terminal. The presence of their privately-owned immigrant station within this industrial context illustrates how the railroad treated its immigrant passengers as a commodity to be shipped along its rail lines. In study of the railroads, examining the larger transportation

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network—not just one particular building—sheds light on the cultural undercurrents informing the architecture.

Studies of the railway system saturate the fields of economics, technology, and history. Within architectural history, however, railway studies have largely been limited to the style and design of railroad stations, with Carroll Meeks’ 1956 study, *The Railroad Station: An Architectural History*, serving as the most well-known example. However, railroad stations and indeed, the entire built environment of the railways, may be viewed as physical manifestations of broader cultural occurrences. Cultural studies of the railroads are more common than architectural ones. Wolfgang Schivelbusch’s *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Space and Time in the Nineteenth Century* and Dolf Sternberger’s *Panorama of the Nineteenth Century* are both seminal texts. A more recent work, Amy Richter’s *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity*, offers a study of gender within the space of the railways. This dissertation presents a cultural study of the American railways from the perspective of architectural history.

An important area addressed in this dissertation is the inextricable link between American railways and immigration, a discussion that is bound up in issues of race and class. The question of race and the railways has largely been limited to segregation of black passengers, particularly in the American South. African Americans were not

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offered the same accommodations as white passengers in railroad stations or train cars, and like immigrant passengers, were kept segregated within the space of the railways. The segregation of black and immigrant passengers was not the same; the difference between the two was significant. While segregation of immigrants was indeed a matter of race, if immigrants had enough money to purchase passage in the first-class compartments (the majority, however, did not), railroad officials allowed them to ride with citizen-travelers. Segregation of immigrant passengers on the railways, then, was largely tied up in issues of race and class; these issues informed the railroad companies’ decisions on the design of their built environment. Immigrant train cars, for example, were little more than converted freight cars, with the addition of wooden seating being the extent of the amenities available to passengers. Little scholarship has been done about the magnitude of this segregation, the design of these spaces, or the spatial experiences of immigrants traveling along the railways.6

In the built environment of the railways, an immigrant’s race or ethnicity affected the level of control imposed upon him or her. As a presence at ports of arrival and as the means of transporting immigrants throughout the country, railroad companies were in the unique position of supervising contact between American citizens and newly-arrived foreigners. For American citizens that had already been in the country for a generation or more, foreigners were perceived as a threat to their personal health as well as to the moral

Historian Mia Bay also has a work in progress entitled Traveling Black: A Social History of Segregated Transportation.6 Immigrant train cars are perhaps the most studied aspect of immigrant segregation on the American railways, although there have been no studies of the larger segregation throughout the entire system of the railways. See Mackenzie and Richards, The Railway Station, 147-148 and Nicole Ingrid Kvale, Emigrant Trains: Migratory Transportation Networks Through Germany and the United States, 1847-1914 (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009).
health of the country. Segregated immigrant trains and waiting rooms kept these
supposed threats away from the American populace.

Railroad officials imposed segregation among foreigners as well. On immigrant
trains, Chinese passengers rode in a car separate from Europeans. Furthermore, while the
East Coast immigration stations were designed to accommodate a continuous flow of
human traffic through the buildings and onto waiting trains, on the West Coast, the Angel
Island Immigration Station (where Chinese immigrants largely entered the country) was
designed by government officials to prohibit circulation. The treatment of Chinese
immigrants was especially harsh; they were the ethnic group most discriminated against.
The extent of this discrimination—namely, the exclusionary legislation passed to prohibit
entry of Chinese into the country—was made physically manifest in Chinese train cars
and the prison-like Angel Island Immigration Station.

In the eyes of railroad and government officials, immigration was entirely
necessary to build the country’s infrastructure as well as to spur the nation’s industrial
and agricultural development. As a result, both the railways and the government wished
to control who repopulated the American West. The far-reaching hand of American
capitalism displaced (or, in many cases, annihilated) American Indian tribes, and opened
up their native lands to white settlers. Railroad companies advertised and sold their lands
to targeted ethnic groups (largely Northern Europeans)—settlers whom railroad officials
believed to be industrious and skilled, with the goal that the agriculture and goods
produced by them would be shipped along the rail lines to domestic and foreign markets,
thus perpetuating business for the railroads even after they sold their lands. Along the
railways, these flows of capital and commerce moved continuously from region to region,
connecting markets in ways that had not been previously possible. William Cronon’s concept of Second Nature, in which city and country are linked by the railways and flows of capital, illustrates the profound ecological and economic changes that occurred in nineteenth-century America. Immigration played a major role in those changes, whereby foreigners settled on the lands that railroad companies had utterly transformed by plating towns onto the once open prairie, opening up lands for agriculture, and conquering the land by laying tracks, excavating tunnels, and building bridges.

The abundance of ethnic enclaves in the American West was formed under railway initiatives. The American frontier was declared by Frederick Jackson Turner to be “the line of most rapid and effective Americanization.” Railroad companies used rhetorical strategies to invoke the transformative powers of settlers and farming techniques that could convert the West into a civilized land. Civilization, for nineteenth-century Americans, was defined in terms of opposition to savagery, that is, in opposition to Native Americans. Expansion of this so-called civilized society was thus contingent upon the removal of the indigenous population. In order to settle these lands, railroad companies fervently promoted immigration, displacing the native inhabitants and repopulating the land with foreigners. Railroad promotional campaigns targeted specific ethnic groups in efforts to populate the lands with the settlers they believed had the potential to become model American citizens. Yet before these immigrants permanently settled in the country, they remained foreign and thus separate from the American citizenry in the space of the railways.

Cultural historian Schivelbusch famously wrote of the railways that they annihilated traditional notions of space and time, replacing those concepts with new constructions by establishing standardized time and increasing travel speeds. Increased speeds resulted in a reduced perception of geography, where the distance between spaces was felt by travelers to be lessened, even though the distances remained the same. Schivelbusch terms this travel space the “space in-between.” It is within this “space in-between” that passengers encountered one another, where societal divisions were confronted and where the railroad companies attempted to limit those confrontations. This space in-between was therefore far from neutral; it was in fact fraught with social meaning.

The railroads were representative of the changes occurring in Victorian America. Within the space of the railroad, notes Alan Trachtenberg in the foreword to Schivelbusch’s *The Railway Journey*, “nineteenth-century people encountered the new conditions of their lives; they encountered themselves as moderns, as dwellers within new structures of regulation and need.” Part of these new structures included racial hierarchies, where one group could identify themselves by being placed in opposition to another. In the American South, this opposition revealed itself in relations between black and white passengers, in the emergence of Jim Crow. The effort to create and impose racial identities extended to foreigners entering the country as well. As historian Amy Richter asserts, as Americans came to terms with the new experiences of public life “the

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9 Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*.
12 Alan Trachtenberg, foreword to *The Railway Journey*, xv.
renegotiation and imposition of racial identities comprised […] one effort to stabilize social and cultural change on the trains.”

The railways served as a location where American citizens could define themselves as moral, healthy, and educated in opposition to foreigners, whom many Americans viewed as corrupt, diseased, and inexperienced.

The metaphor of the United States as a melting pot or salad bowl hails the country as a nation of immigrants. The country is indeed comprised of immigrants; however, the realities of segregation and xenophobic legislation expose a complicated relationship between citizens and foreigners. From the railroad officials’ point-of-view, there was a fine balance between addressing the native-born public’s concerns and catering to their immigrant customers. Both groups were sources of profit. Within the railway built environment, Schivelbusch’s “space in-between” may thus also serve as a metaphor for the transient nature of these migrants—not only in terms of their geographic location but also in terms of their citizenship.

The structure of this dissertation follows the route of the immigrants themselves, from ports of arrival, on trains and in railroad stations, and ultimately, to settlements. The first three chapters address the processing facilities at ports of entry to the United States. Chapter One focuses on the Port of Baltimore, where the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company owned and operated the city’s immigration station. This port served as a significant connection between the American hinterland and the markets of Europe, a location where immigrants were shuttled into the country at the same speed and efficiency with which the railways moved freight along its lines. The Port of New York, where railroad companies pooled together to form an extensive transportation network,

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14 Richter, Home on the Rails, 5.

forms the subject of Chapter Two. This railroad pool operated first from Castle Garden, a repurposed fort renovated to become a state-owned immigration facility, and then at the purpose-built Ellis Island Immigration Station, a facility owned and operated under the federal government. Chapter Three examines the location and design of San Francisco’s Angel Island Immigration Station, a federal facility largely built to enforce Chinese exclusionary legislation. The extent to which the Chinese were discriminated against pervades every aspect of the station’s design, from its island location to its bed furnishings.

Chapter Four focuses on the transitory spaces along the rails—immigrant waiting rooms and train cars. Architectural plans reveal that immigrant waiting rooms were often far removed from the main waiting areas and shops or even removed from the head house altogether. Railroad officials upheld the cleanliness of white-tiled, sparsely-furnished immigrant waiting rooms to quell fears of foreign-borne illness. Such sterile rooms contrasted the opulent amenities provided for citizen-travelers. Similarly, segregated train cars were sparsely furnished and offered little to no amenities to passengers. Many of these trains also ran on a freight schedule, that is, a slower schedule than the first-class passenger trains, reinforcing the idea of the immigrant as commodity in the eyes of the railroad companies.

Immigrant settlements in the American Midwest form the subject of Chapter Five. In their land advertisements, railway companies targeted the specific ethnic groups they considered desirable, such as Northern Europeans, to purchase and settle their land. Using the settlement of Russian-German Mennonites in Kansas as a case study, this chapter explores how the railroads platted towns and organized ethnic enclaves. To
facilitate the settlement of the Mennonites, and indeed other immigrants, railroad companies offered reduced freight and transportation rates, affordable land, and established temporary lodging houses. Yet the immigrants brought with them their own architectural styles and village organization, complicating the railroads’ homogenous town plats. Railroad colonization efforts directed flows of migration throughout the country and shaped the cultural geography of the Midwest.

Throughout this dissertation, I seek to explore the ways in which the railways acted as a social agent in the circulation and regulation of immigrants. As Amy Richter has pointed out, the railroad served the multifarious role of being a commercial space subject to market demands, an intimate space in which passengers come in close contact, and a “socially diverse and fluid space capable of blurring lines of class and caste.”16 It is this unique position that allows the study of the railways to become a lens through which to view aspects of American culture. While there is an abundance of literature on American railway history, within that field there has been a lack of scholarship on the ways in which issues of race and class informed the built environment of the railways. This dissertation seeks to use spaces of immigration as a means to amplify the discussion of race and class in architectural history and railway literature.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In the nineteenth century the term “emigration” (and the corresponding “emigrant”) was used by government and railroad officials to denote our contemporary

16 Richter, Home on the Rails, 5.
notion of immigration. In architectural plans and company literature, railroad companies labeled the spaces designated for immigrants as “emigrant trains” and “emigrant waiting rooms” until the turn of the twentieth century. To prevent confusion, I have chosen to consistently use the terms “immigrant” and “immigration” and only retain the historical term when it appears in a name or title, for example, the Board of Commissioners of Emigration or the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad’s Emigrant Home. In all other instances, emigration refers to the act of leaving one’s country of origin and immigration refers to the act of entering the United States.

Another example of nineteenth-century terminology was the railroad companies’ use of the terms colony and colonization. The railroads used the term “colony” when describing what we would refer to today as ethnic enclaves. The term “colonization,” while it may sound jarring to modern ears, refers to railroad company efforts to settle groups of people from the same country or of the same ethnic origin in a concentrated area. Railroad companies used the term “colony” in their advertisements, promotional literature, and company correspondence. For historical accuracy, I retain the use of the term throughout the text.

Finally, I employ the term “citizen-traveler” to refer to non-immigrant train passengers. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define immigrant passengers as foreigners that recently entered the United States and were traveling to their intended destinations in the country. “Citizen-traveler” thus refers both to American citizens traveling on trains as well as any other passengers able to afford first-class passage.
CHAPTER I. PORTS OF ARRIVAL: BALTIMORE

The story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company is one that is inherently linked to a desire on the part of the city’s merchant class to elevate Baltimore to the status of a world-class port city. It serves as an example of how industrialization in the United States, particularly the rise of the railroad system, changed the landscape of the nation, effectively transforming labor and economic markets and establishing a distinction between the regions of city and country. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad’s transportation network produced a three-part trade between Europe, the city of Baltimore, and the American hinterland, connecting domestic and foreign markets, within which immigration played a crucial role. In this exchange, Baltimore was the link between the ships traveling back and forth from Europe and the trains traveling back and forth from the American Midwest.

Following its charter in 1827, the Baltimore & Ohio established trading links with Bremen, Germany through the North German Lloyd Steamship Company, exporting raw goods such as the tobacco, cotton and grain that had been produced in the American Midwest and South and exported through Baltimore, and in turn, welcoming millions of European immigrants to American shores. This chapter examines the role of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad as a transportation network that not only linked the Eastern seaboard with the nation’s interior and the American market with the European markets,

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1 The most famous triangular trading system is, of course, the transatlantic slave trade, in which slaves, cash crops, and manufactured goods were carried between Europe, West Africa, and the Americas between the late fifteenth to early nineteenth centuries. An important distinction must be made between the transatlantic slave trade, in which African slaves were traded as chattel, and the triangular trade discussed in this chapter, in which immigrants departed Europe for the United States willingly and, with the exception of indentured servitude, worked for a wage. For a study of slavery in America within the context of the Atlantic slave trade, see Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (New York: Verso, 2011).
but also established a system to draw immigrants to Baltimore. Some remained as laborers to build the city and its infrastructure, and many others traveled west, eventually contributing to the commercial trade enabled by the railways. The built environment of the Baltimore & Ohio’s Locust Point marine terminal serves as a physical manifestation of these developments.

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad dominated the Baltimore ports, building extensive wharves and piers, including an immigrant pier that allowed foreigners to move directly from steamships to the waiting immigrant trains that would carry them west. Within the port’s railroad-owned built environment, immigrants were thus moved in the same way as freight—with efficiency and economy. The Baltimore & Ohio held the monopoly on immigrant traffic arriving in Baltimore from its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century until the 1910s. In the 1910s it was the only remaining railroad-owned port of arrival in the United States, well after the federal government had taken control of immigration from individual states in 1891. While historians have examined the strategic importance of Baltimore as a port city, the built environment of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad has been largely unstudied.² It is through an examination of this built environment that the railroad’s ties to immigration and its effects on national development may be understood.

When the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad began service in 1830, it was the first common carrier railroad in the United States—that is, the first railroad to offer both

² Dean R. Esslinger’s chapter, “Immigration through the Port of Baltimore,” in M. Mark Stolarik’s Forgotten Doors: The Other Ports of Entry to the United States (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1988) remains one of the only studies of Baltimore as a port of entry. Histories of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad generally focus on the railroad’s early development, technological feats, and competition with other railroad companies.
freight and passenger service. Its construction was part of a strategic plan on the part of city government officials, merchants, and businessmen to increase Baltimore’s national and international importance. They wanted to connect the city with what, at that time, was considered the American West—the Ohio River (hence the name Baltimore & Ohio Railroad). In particular, Baltimore was competing with New York City. New York became the principal American port for foreign trade and the best route to the West after the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, which formed a direct transportation link from the eastern seaboard to the western interior of the country. As historian Edward Hungerford noted in 1928, on the occasion of the Baltimore & Ohio’s centennial, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad “was born as much out of fear as out of high ambition.” The founders of the railroad, mainly merchants and prominent Baltimore citizens, had a vested interest in the establishment of a transportation network connecting the western and eastern markets, national and international, in a strategic plan to draw more capital to the city and compete with other American ports. The more freight that passed through the Port of Baltimore, the more revenue to be gained for the city and its merchants.

Baltimore merchants and the City Council saw how transportation played a crucial role in bringing a city to the forefront of commercial success. Since the late eighteenth century, Baltimore had engaged in foreign trade, sending flour from Maryland and Virginia to the West Indies, along with other food products and iron in exchange for sugar, cocoa and rice. In the early nineteenth century, Baltimore’s foreign trade

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5 Stover, History of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 11.
expanded to Brazil, exchanging flour for coffee, and to Peru and later other Central and South American countries, importing guano (seabird excrement) for use as fertilizer. In 1815, the signing of the Treaty of Ghent ended the War of 1812 and the attention of principal seaport cities—New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore—turned to expanding domestic trade. In Baltimore, these efforts were supported by the National Road (also called the Cumberland Road) which originated in Cumberland, Maryland. Approved in 1808, its extension to Wheeling, West Virginia was completed a decade later. It connected the East Coast with the emerging frontier by means of a direct overland route, becoming the first federally funded and planned American national highway for travel by horse and horse-drawn carriages. This connection to Wheeling stretched from the Potomac River to the Ohio River. By 1850, the road reached its western terminus in the Illinois capital of Vandalia (Figure 1.1).

Before the railroad, the National Road established Baltimore as the eastern gateway for settlers and goods traveling west from the Eastern seaboard. This road, however, was just the first step in geographically and economically linking the country’s growing number of states. The railroad would become the most efficient means of

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6 See Frank Roy Rutter, *South American Trade of Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1897) for a contemporary history of Baltimore’s nineteenth century trade market with South America.
8 One example of the significant contribution of the National Road to American trade is contained in an 1808 report to Congress in which Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin explained that the current way to ship goods from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia was by water, from the Monogahela River to the Ohio, then down the Mississippi to New Orleans, around the tip of Florida and up the Atlantic Coast. By this route, the two cities were more than 3,000 miles apart. By land, however, the distance was only 280 miles. A National Road would thus provide a much more efficient and economical route. See Karl Raitz, *A National Road* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
9 Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*, 1, 5-14
10 Although West Virginia (the first terminus of the National Road) did not become a state until 1863, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, all of which the road traversed by 1850 had become states in 1803, 1816, and 1818, respectively.
transportation, allowing the industrialization and expansion of the United States to continue. Two men, Philip E. Thomas and George Brown, both of whom who had brothers in England and received information from them about the developing railroad line between Liverpool and Manchester, were convinced that the future commercial prosperity of Baltimore was dependent upon the establishment of a railroad. At a private meeting of Baltimore’s most prominent citizens, held at Brown’s house on February 12, 1827, twenty-five of the most influential merchants in the city resolved to charter a railroad line that would place Baltimore at the forefront of western trade (Figure 1.2).

Thomas, who was at the time Maryland’s Commissioner of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company, resigned from his post in the canal business and focused his attentions on establishing a railroad in Baltimore that would connect to the Ohio River. Thomas and others abandoned their once fervent interest in the canal system in anticipation of railroad development. Construction of the proposed railway would cost significantly less than the estimated $22 million it would take to build the 340-mile Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. Furthermore, these men felt that the city of Washington, as the origin of the canal, would have benefitted more than Baltimore. The railroad, on the other hand, would ultimately provide significant benefits to Baltimore itself and to the merchants operating within the city. Thomas understood the railroad to be the future of

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11 Citizen of Baltimore, A History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1853) 10.
12 Plans for the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal were begun in part as a response to the success of New York’s Erie Canal. The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal ran parallel to the Potomac River from Washington to Cumberland and eventually to Pittsburgh. Hungerford, The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, I, 15-16.
13 The lowest estimate of the canal was $12 million and the highest was $22 million. In contrast, the lowest estimate for the railroad was $3 million and the highest $5 million. Stover, History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 15, 18.
transportation and argued that “these [rail]roads will, for heavy transportation, supersede canals as effectually as canals have superseded turn-pike roads.” Maryland legislators incorporated the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad charter on February 28, 1827. The initial capital stock totaled $3 million and was comprised of 30,000 shares: 15,000 for individuals or corporations; 10,000 for subscription by the state of Maryland; and 5,000 for the city of Baltimore. Thus from its beginning, both the city of Baltimore and the state of Maryland held a stake in the potential success of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

At the groundbreaking ceremony on July 4, 1828, ninety-year-old Charles Carroll, the sole living signer of the Declaration of Independence and stockholder of the railroad, laid the first stone and declared it to be “among the most important acts of my life, second only to my signing of the Declaration of Independence, if even it be second to that.” This remark, while perhaps apocryphal, nevertheless serves as a reminder that by the early nineteenth century the country was still in its formative stages. The presence of Charles Carroll at the railroad’s groundbreaking, a man who was once a co-owner of an ironworks that relied exclusively on slave labor and owned a massive estate with more than two hundred slaves, represented, as historian T. Stephen Whitman has noted, the changing shift in Baltimore’s economy and labor use and its ambiguous identity as border between the northern and southern states. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad rejected the use of slave labor, indicating the changing nature of the industrial market which, up to

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this point, had used a large percentage of slave labor. Businessmen used manumission to ensure that laborers would produce steady and constant work until they earned their freedom.\textsuperscript{18}

According to Whitman, in promising freedom, slaveholders were not acting in the interest of the slaves or in response to any moral reservations. Rather, they used gradual manumission as a business strategy. Industrialists received free labor for a period of time, but once the slave had been freed, they purchased another slave to continue the work.\textsuperscript{19} The industrial and urban nature of slavery had changed by mid-century, as large industrial companies began employing more freedmen, many of whom were looking for work and received lower wages than white workers. Mid-nineteenth century Maryland was unusual among the southern states, in that it had a high percentage of free blacks in its population; although slavery was not officially abolished until the end of the Civil War, nearly half of the state’s black population was free by the early 1860s. With his presence at the groundbreaking ceremony and in his role as railroad stockholder, Carroll served as a representative figure, not only for the transition from slave labor and hired labor (at least in Baltimore) but also of the larger national shift to an industrial capitalist economy.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] In 1829 and 1830, the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal considered using slave labor after a group of indentured servants that had been working for them escaped. Company officials ultimately rejected that idea. \textit{Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Annual Report, 1830}, 5, 29; Dilts, \textit{The Great Road}, 133-134. Not surprisingly, the terms of this gradual manumission were entirely in the hands of the slaveholders, who had the power to change these terms at will, extending the slaves’ required period of service and thus, offering little incentive for the slaves to stay.
\end{footnotes}
The first rail service from Baltimore to Ellicott Mills (later Ellicott City), a distance of thirteen miles, took place on May 24, 1830. The board of directors of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad pressed on in their endeavor to connect the city of Baltimore to the Ohio River, a distance of 379 miles. Mainline construction continued throughout the following decades, with tracks reaching Harper’s Ferry by 1835 and Cumberland by 1842. In 1849, President Thomas Swann of the Baltimore & Ohio delivered an address to the board of directors in response to the stockholders’ apprehension, affirming that their railroad would be able to compete with both the Erie Railroad in New York and the Pennsylvania Railroad in the establishment of a “fixed and permanent” avenue of trade. He encouraged the continuation of railroad construction, stating that “there is a point where the revenue of the road cannot be interfered with, where its destiny will be forever established, and where the only question that is likely to arise will be as to the ability of the company to supply the power to accommodate trade and travel. That point, gentlemen, is the Ohio River.” Construction on the line continued and finally, in 1853, the railroad reached its intended destination on the Ohio River in Wheeling, West Virginia.

The internal improvement projects initiated in Maryland in the early nineteenth century, including the National Road, the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, required an extensive labor force to construct them. The construction of the city—its wharves, canals, streets and railroads as well as its buildings—along with the burgeoning manufacturing and service industries in Baltimore provided hundreds of

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22 Ibid., 8.
thousands of jobs not only to black migrants from the South but also to European immigrants. In response to advertisements for employment for laborers published in British, German, and Dutch newspapers, these immigrants arrived in Baltimore seeking employment throughout the nineteenth century. According to an 1899 history of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, for example, the canal company offered foreign laborers three meals a day, with meat, bread and vegetables, a small allowance of liquor, and eight to twelve dollars a month in wages. The promise of employment brought hundreds of thousands of foreigners to Baltimore’s shores.

In the 1840s in particular, Irish immigrants fleeing the potato famine arrived on American shores seeking employment. Two-thirds of the million Irish that came to America during that time were laborers working on these major transportation projects. One English visitor traveling to America observed the living conditions of a group of Irish laborers working for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad:

I was happy to observe, on looking into their temporary wooden cabins, which are erected at different stations on the road, that, although there appeared a good deal of wild disorder in the domestic arrangements, and the total absence of what the English cottager would term comfort, there was no lack of the means to live; which was the more important as philoprogenitiveness seemed the order of the day. Every hovel had its swarm of children, its barrel of superfine flour, flitch of bacon, and stone bottle of the ‘creature,’ and the interstices were filled up with pigs and poultry.

The Irish living in this shantytown had named it Dublin, the new capital of their American lives. The observer described a primal atmosphere, where its occupants were

23 See Seth Rockman Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery and Survival in Early Baltimore (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) for further description of the types of jobs available for so-called unskilled laborers employed (or seeking employment) in Baltimore in the early nineteenth century.
25 Dilts, The Great Road, 132-133.
as active in their free time as they were during their long, hard laboring hours. These shantytowns were comprised of ramshackle wooden cabins constructed of scrap wood and other found materials. These towns had no running water and certainly no plumbing; they were most often temporary locations for the workers for the period of time they were hired by the railroads. The spirited atmosphere of the laborers’ shantytowns, although the focus of this particular observer, did not indicate the difficult, and often horrific, working conditions laborers experienced, not to mention the economic insecurity of the working class.

There was much unrest among laborers—against the railroad for the low wages and difficult working conditions they encountered, but also between ethnic groups. In 1834, conflict between Irish and German laborers escalated to a point where the Baltimore & Ohio president considered concentrating German laborers in one location in order to protect them from the Irish. Most of the shanty towns that sprung up during the construction of the railroad consisted of shacks and cabins belonging to members of the same ethnicity, who spoke the same language and preferred the company of their own countrymen during their limited non-working hours.

The construction of the railroad brought a confluence of various races and ethnicities to the Baltimore area, indicating one of the changes occurring in the region as a result of the introduction of the railways to America. The President of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Philip E. Thomas (1827-1836), declared: “should our present

27 For more on railroad shantytowns, see John Stilgoe, Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 212-215.
28 See Rockman, Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery and Survival in Early Baltimore for a full discussion of working conditions in Baltimore.
29 Various nationalities not only fought against one another, but also within their own group. In the spring of 1835, groups of German laborers attacked another group of German laborers with muskets, following disputes over the demand for higher wages. A half-dozen Germans content with the current wages were wounded by those seeking higher rates. Dilts, The Great Road, 177-182.
anticipations of the efficiency of Railways be realized, a total change would be produced in commercial and social intercourse in every country where these roads might be introduced."\textsuperscript{30} Indeed, Thomas’ comment was prescient of the transformation the railways would ultimately bring to the economic, commercial, and cultural spheres of the United States, not to mention the reshaping of the country’s physical landscape. As historian William Cronon points out in \textit{Nature’s Metropolis}, the railroad altered how the land was used, and it transformed commodity and capital flows, allowing a symbiotic relationship to emerge between city and country, at once defining the two entities yet inextricably linking them.\textsuperscript{31} This symbiotic relationship was certainly evident in Baltimore, where the railroad and steamship companies were dependent upon industrial and commercial enterprises in the United States. Similarly, immigrants and transportation companies were dependent upon one another. This circulation of capital, commodity, and people inherently linked urban and rural development, enabling each to develop its defining characteristics while still relying on the other for economic prosperity.

As the population of Baltimore became increasingly diverse, the landscape of Baltimore changed drastically. In the 1840s, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad purchased extensive tracts of land at Locust Point and built a spur to the new location from its main line. The Baltimore & Ohio directors planned a deep-water terminal at Locust Point; steamships were becoming progressively larger and the Baltimore & Ohio was eager to accommodate these ships in order to increase international trade. Originally called Whetstone Point by eighteenth-century European settlers, at the time of the Baltimore &

\textsuperscript{30} Quoted in Citizen of Baltimore, \textit{A History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad}, 27.  
\textsuperscript{31} Cronon, \textit{Nature’s Metropolis}. 
Ohio’s construction the name Locust Point referred only to the sole protrusion of land located on the northern shore of the peninsula—not the entire peninsula itself, as it is known today (Figure 1.3). The first Baltimore & Ohio facilities were built on the original Locust Point and construction extended eastward on the peninsula. By July 1849, the American Railroad Journal reported that the Baltimore & Ohio’s harbor facility at Locust Point extended 2,600 feet along the waterfront and could accommodate several ships of 750-ton capacity in its twenty-two foot deep waters. As the Baltimore & Ohio harbor terminal continued to expand, the entire peninsula came to be known to Baltimoreans as Locust Point.33

The Locust Point peninsula is best known for being the location of Fort McHenry, which had been built during the War of 1812 at the easternmost tip of the peninsula, to protect Baltimore from attack by British naval forces (Figure 1.4). The construction of Fort McHenry on Locust Point demonstrates the peninsula’s strategic location in the port of Baltimore. Where the British naval forces had once sailed into the harbor to bombard Baltimore, now foreign ships would be welcomed at the Baltimore & Ohio harbor facilities, exchanging wares and raw materials in a mutually beneficial relationship. According to the Baltimore & Ohio’s annual reports, the company received the bulk of its

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32 Stover, History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 76.
34 On the morning of September 13, 1814, the British began an attack on Fort McHenry that lasted throughout the night. They were ultimately unsuccessful because Americans had sunk a chain of ships offshore, thus preventing the British cannons from getting close enough to shore to do extensive damage. It was after this attack that Francis Scott Key, who had been detained on a British ship, penned what would later become the American national anthem, the “Star-Spangled Banner,” after seeing the flag still flying after the lengthy attack. Although the “Star-Spangled Banner” was distributed widely and became immediately popular in America (its verses were sung to the tune of the English drinking song “Anacreon in Heaven”), it was not adopted by Congress as the national anthem until March 4, 1931. See Lonn Taylor, et al, The Star-Spangled Banner: The Making of an American Icon (New York: Harper Collins, 2008).
profits from freight service—not passenger traffic. As such, the Locust Point facility became the point at which the heart of the railroad’s daily operations took place. In the 1840s, the Baltimore & Ohio began building what would become over the next three decades an extensive network of piers, wharves, warehouses, freight yards and grain elevators.

The specific requirements for piers, bulkheads, rail sidings, and other supporting infrastructure, notes historian Tom Liebel, had a lasting impact on the built environment of the harbor and shoreline, as well as the industrial and commercial development of the city. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, the president of the Baltimore & Ohio, John W. Garrett (1858-1884), constructed wharves for coal export at the east ends of both Nicholson and Marriott streets (Figure 1.5). Coal was the primary export at this period in Baltimore & Ohio history, and the wharves were continuously occupied with ocean ships arriving in Baltimore to replenish their fuel supply. Warehouses for handling the import of sugar and coffee were some of the buildings rising on the shoreline. Garrett authorized the construction of two fireproof storage grain elevators, completed in 1873, that were of the most advanced technology of the time, featuring 331 storage bins, twenty-one receiving and eleven shipping elevators, and together were able to contain over two million bushels of grain. Upon its completion, the storage elevators handled over seven million bushels of grain—an astronomical increase from the company’s grain exportation in the years prior to the construction of the elevators. These dockside grain

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35 The Baltimore & Ohio Annual Reports are held in the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company Collection at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, Maryland.
37 The majority of coal transported by the Baltimore & Ohio was from mines in western Virginia (later West Virginia). Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad*, 90.
38 Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, *Annual Reports for the Years 1870, 1871, 1875*, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.
elevators and warehouses, in tandem with the rail lines that extended directly to the shore, allowed the handling of significant amounts of grain, coal, and other agricultural, industrial, and commercial products.\textsuperscript{40} Train tracks extended to the shoreline, allowing dock workers to unload freight cars immediately onto the waiting steamships for export or unload imports into the waiting freight cars for distribution in the United States (Figure 1.6).

The development of its marine terminal was a direct attempt on the part of the company’s directors to compete with the other major American port cities and establish themselves, and by extension the city of Baltimore, as a major capitalist enterprise. By 1868, according to Garrett, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad owned fifty miles of the Locust Point peninsula, “embracing more than a half-mile of the first class wharf fronts.” He went on to declare that “the immense facilities thus secured for the economy and despatch [\textit{sic}] at the marine terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio road will not be surpassed, if equaled, by those of any railroad company in America.”\textsuperscript{41} The Baltimore & Ohio did indeed build an expansive transportation network throughout the eastern United States and with its westward expansion, it reached St. Louis in 1854 and Chicago in 1874, successfully linking the western markets with Baltimore.

The freight traffic moved by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad secured profits for its shareholders and formed the core of the company’s business. With political and economic conditions deteriorating in Europe beginning in the 1840s, immigrants began arriving on American shores in unprecedented numbers. They sought labor on the railways, employment in the merchant classes, and agricultural opportunities beyond the

\textsuperscript{40} Kirk Reynolds and Dave Oroszi, \textit{Baltimore and Ohio Railroad} (Minneapolis: Voyageur Press, 2008) 43.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Address of John W. Garrett, President, February 12, 1868}, Minute Book I, Meeting Minutes, 428-430, Hays T. Watkins Research Library, Baltimore & Ohio Museum, Baltimore.
Baltimore area. Guidebooks for intending European emigrants were published from the early nineteenth century on, and encouraged travelers to sail to the port of Baltimore, specifically because of its access to the western United States.\textsuperscript{42} One book advised the European emigrant to “seek, on his arrival at Liverpool, or at any other seaport, a vessel bound for Baltimore, in preference to any other port in the United States, because from here he will be able to bend his course either for the Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Illinois, or the Missouri, &c.”\textsuperscript{43} Like its freight traffic, the Baltimore & Ohio established a nexus of transportation that would move these passengers through the city and beyond in such a way to maximize the company’s own profits.

By 1850, Baltimore had become the third largest city in the United States, with a population of 169,000—nearly as large as Boston and Charleston combined.\textsuperscript{44} The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad competed with the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and with other railroads for the business of transporting immigrants to destinations throughout the United States. The company advertised its port as the shortest route to key cities (Figure 1.7). For example, the distance from Baltimore to Chicago was just over six hundred miles whereas from New York it was seven hundred miles. To St. Louis, the distance was 742 miles from Baltimore, whereas from New York it equaled 885 miles. The Baltimore & Ohio board members capitalized on the geographic advantage offered by the city and also presented the railroad as a more efficient means of transportation than the

\textsuperscript{42} Guidebooks were published both in the United States and abroad. The Shamrock Society of New York advised intending Irish immigrants: “If a European has previously resolved to go to the western country, near the Allegheny or Ohio rivers, he will have saved much expense and travel by landing at Baltimore.” Shamrock Society of New York, \textit{Hints to Emigrants from Europe Intending to Make a Permanent Residence in the United States} (New York: Van Winkle & Wiley, 1816) 8, 10.

\textsuperscript{43} Patrick O’Kelly, \textit{Advice and Guide to Emigrants going to the United States of America} (Dublin: William Folds, 1834).

\textsuperscript{44} Stover, \textit{History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad}, 4.
turnpikes and canals. After it began service in the 1830s, the railways took passenger
traffic away from the canal companies almost immediately.45

The westward extension of the Baltimore & Ohio line resulted in, as its directors had hoped, increased freight and passenger service. The growing ridership spurred the Baltimore & Ohio officials to construct a passenger station on a four-block area southwest of the center of the city at the intersection of Howard and Camden streets, several blocks north of the branch line to Locust Point (Figure 1.8). When Camden Station opened in 1857, it became the terminus of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad for non-immigrant passenger traffic. Designed by the architectural firm of Niernsee & Neilson (who completed several other projects for the Baltimore & Ohio), the Italianate three-story brick building featured a central pavilion topped by a 185-foot clock tower (Figure 1.9). Two-story wings extended from this central pavilion and two three-story towers marked the corner of the building at either end of the façade. The building served as the Baltimore and Ohio’s main passenger facility until the turn of the century and also housed the company headquarters until 1882.46

Prior to its construction, the Baltimore & Ohio had been using a small wooden building on Pratt Street near the railroad’s Mount Clare repair shops that could no longer contain the growing ridership. With the rise in passenger traffic, railroad officials desired a station that would convey not only the prominence of the railway but also of the city. The triple-arch entryway, central clock tower, and solid brick construction lent an air of grandeur and permanence to the station, much more so than the small wooden station at

45 After the canal companies lost passenger traffic, the Canal Commissioners reported that canal boats were thereafter constructed for freight alone. Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company, Annual Report of the Canal Commissioners, Ass. Doc. 15 (1852), 144.
46 After 1882 the company headquarters moved to a seven-story office building located in downtown Baltimore. Reynolds and Oroszi, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 43.
Pratt Street. This new station was used by local riders traveling between points in Maryland or riders making connections to travel further west. Immigrant passengers arriving by steamship, however, would depart from the Locust Point piers instead, using the Baltimore & Ohio’s Locust Point branch line to travel to their destinations.

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was not the only railroad operating within the city. For connections to Philadelphia and New York, the Baltimore & Ohio used the tracks of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad (PW&B). Riders on the Baltimore & Ohio alighted at Camden Station and made the connection via ferry to the PW&B’s President Street Station across the harbor (Figure 1.10). The PW&B tracks were used by both the Baltimore & Ohio and the Pennsylvania Railroad for connections north. In the 1880s, the two companies fought for control until the PW&B was ultimately purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad, meaning that the Baltimore & Ohio now had to pay for use of the company’s tracks for connections north until the construction of its own branch to Philadelphia.

The rivalry between the Pennsylvania and the Baltimore & Ohio extended to its immigration dealings. The Pennsylvania Railroad operated its own immigrant station at Canton, across the harbor from Locust Point (Figure 1.11). The Pennsylvania’s main line to points west first traveled north, making the journey longer than that on the Baltimore & Ohio; furthermore, it was more prudent for immigrant passengers traveling to northern states to sail to New York or even to Philadelphia instead of Baltimore since it minimized

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47 By 1886, the Baltimore & Ohio was using ferries to transport whole trains from Locust Point to Canton in order to make the connection to Philadelphia. The process was tedious and costly. The completion of the Howard Street tunnel in 1895 obliterated the need for the ferries and made the connection much more convenient. Keith, *Baltimore Harbor*, 184-185.

48 This branch was named the Baltimore & Philadelphia Railroad.
overland travel. The economic holdings of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad enabled the company not only to shape the land, with its transformation of Locust Point, but also to direct the flow of immigration into and through the city. Although the Baltimore & Ohio was not the only railroad company in Baltimore transporting immigrants, it was the railroad that processed the majority of foreigners. A major contribution to that success was the relationship that formed between the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company and the North German Lloyd Steamship Company.

The link between the railways and steamships played a crucial role in the development of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. President John W. Garrett recognized that Baltimore had the potential to become a significant ocean port and felt that, to do so, transatlantic steamship lines had to be established. To the Board of Directors of the Baltimore & Ohio, Garrett explained:

[...]

Garrett purchased three steamships from the federal government that had been used during the Civil War, with the goal of creating a transatlantic freight service to work in tandem with the railway system. These ships were unfortunately too small for Garrett’s intended purpose of overseas freight carriers and thus could not compete with foreign

49 The Pennsylvania Railroad operated its own immigrant station in Philadelphia at Pier 53 near the intersection of Washington Street and Columbus Boulevard. The station processed approximately one million immigrants—half that of Baltimore’s arrivals. The Port of Philadelphia was not ideal for immigrants arriving by ship; the sea voyage was two hundred miles longer than that to New York and the ice that formed during the winter on the Delaware River made it difficult for ships to pass through.

Following this failure, yet still recognizing the important link between sea and rail, Garrett entered into a contract with the North German Lloyd Steamship Company, based in Bremen, Germany on January 21, 1867. The relationship between the two companies was forged by Albert Schumacher, a German immigrant and son of a Bremen city counselor who had established himself as a successful Baltimore businessman and was on the board of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. It was this contract that ultimately allowed the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to gain control over the immigrant traffic that entered the port of Baltimore.

To secure the patronage of the North German Lloyd at its port, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad agreed to several stipulations in the 1867 contract. The railroad company would build a suitable pier, with covered sheds and the necessary offices and gates, within Baltimore harbor to accommodate the North German Lloyd’s steamships. The Baltimore & Ohio also agreed to construct an adjoining canal yard and warehouse for goods and provide wharves that would be available at all times to the North German Lloyd. Furthermore, the railroad company agreed to “get the vessels exempted from the city-harbor and county taxes” and attempt to obtain for the North German Lloyd a contract for English mail transport. In this way, the Baltimore & Ohio hoped to secure more business for the North German Lloyd and provide reason for the steamship company to conduct business with the Baltimore port. In exchange, the railroad stipulated that “it [be] understood that goods and passengers of and for the ships of the North German Lloyd are to be transported over the roads of the Baltimore and Ohio

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51 The ships transported mail along the Atlantic coast for three years before the Baltimore & Ohio ceased using them. Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad*, II, 78-79.
52 Esslinger, “Immigration through Baltimore,” 64-5.
Railroad Company […].”53 The steamship company’s obligations were to provide a Baltimore & Ohio agent at its port in Bremerhaven and to provide two vessels that each made trips every four weeks for at least a period of five years.

The terms of the contract placed the North German Lloyd and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in a mutually beneficial relationship; the North German Lloyd had permanent American facilities provided for them by the railroad and the Baltimore & Ohio received guaranteed traffic (both passenger and freight) on their lines. The Baltimore & Ohio’s attempts to secure English mails for the North German Lloyd, while seemingly in the interest of the steamship company, actually benefitted the railroad as well, for once the mail was unloaded at the Port of Baltimore it would be distributed over the rail lines. The construction of new facilities was a considerable commitment for the Baltimore & Ohio and indicated the increased business they expected to incur as a result of their relationship with the North German Lloyd. The geographic advantage of the Port of Baltimore, which the Baltimore & Ohio advertised as the “shortest and cheapest path to the sea,” in addition to its relationship with the North German Lloyd, would allow Baltimore, in the words of the railroad’s President Garrett, “to accomplish the great commercial destiny that awaits her.”54 The aspirations of the railroad’s original founders had the potential to finally be realized—Baltimore would, in fact, become one of the busiest and successful ports on the eastern seaboard.

Although the Baltimore & Ohio received the bulk of its profits from its freight service and working relationships with various coal, grain, tobacco and other industries, it also handled passenger traffic. In fact, following the contract with the North German

54 “Baltimore and Ohio Railroad,” American Railroad Journal 24, no. 7 (February 15, 1868) 177.
Lloyd steamship company, immigration became a source of revenue for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, so much so that the company became one of the first in the United States to provide immigrant trains—that is, trains with minimal amenities that allowed the railroad to charge lower fares for immigrant passengers.\textsuperscript{55} In the 1880s, the railroad constructed a permanent immigrant facility to handle the waves of foreign arrivals and streamline the connections between steam and rail, allowing the immigrants not remaining in the city to swiftly move from the shores of Baltimore to their intended destinations throughout the United States. Immigrant traffic was a profitable commodity for the Baltimore & Ohio and became an integral part of the trade patterns between the railroad and the North German Lloyd Steamship Company.

The contract between the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the North German Lloyd Steamship Company enabled a three-part trade between the American hinterland, the city of Baltimore, and Europe. The trade patterns between these regions were marked by flows of capital along transportation routes, demonstrating the larger economic forces at play in a network that architectural historian Paula Lupkin terms “macro-circulation.”\textsuperscript{56} In this network, the financial, industrial, and commercial realms between regions—Baltimore and the Midwest, Baltimore and the South, and Baltimore and Europe—were linked by a transportation system that enabled goods and people, and thus capital, to move along its lines. Lupkin’s concept of macro-circulation is informed by William Cronon’s notion of Second Nature, in which city and country are connected together by

\textsuperscript{55} See Chapter Four for more on immigrant trains.

\textsuperscript{56} Paula Lupkin, “Mapping Macro-Circulation: Building, Banking, and Railroad Networks in the Great Southwest” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians, Buffalo, New York, April 10-14, 2013). See also Lupkin, “Rethinking Region along the Railroads: Architecture and Cultural Economy in the Industrial Southwest, 1890-1930,” \textit{Buildings and Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum} 16, no.2 (2009): 16-47. This article, while it does not employ the term macro-circulation, provides an excellent example of the concept using the example of the Industrial Southwest.
means of a “coordinated system of raw materials, processing, manufacturing, and distributing.”⁵⁷ Cronon’s study illuminates the relationship between Chicago and the Great West (a massive region extending from Chicago to West Coast) while Lupkin’s work situates St. Louis as the capital of the Industrial Southwest, a region stretching across Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. Likewise, the city of Baltimore formed the center of the exchange between the interior United States and the European markets. The capitalist framework that supported a transportation system between these regions also enabled the mass-circulation of goods and people across the sea and throughout the country.

The raw materials and merchandise produced in the western and southern United States were shipped along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad for distribution in the eastern United States and abroad. Dock employees at Locust Point loaded the North German Lloyd’s steamships (which had brought over immigrant passengers and were now emptied) with the freight arriving in Baltimore and intended for international markets. Tobacco was one of the largest export industries but cotton and timber also formed a significant portion of the exports to Germany throughout the nineteenth century. The ships sailed back to Germany and distributed their holdings throughout greater Europe. The North German Lloyd then brought immigrant passengers from Bremerhaven to Baltimore. After arriving at the port, the immigrants traveling further into the country boarded Baltimore & Ohio trains from the Locust Point terminal. Many of these immigrants, once settled in their new cities and towns, contributed to the production of freight shipped along the Baltimore & Ohio’s lines through their own agricultural, industrial, and commercial labor.

⁵⁷ Lupkin, “Rethinking Region,” 17.
Local manufacturing and regional agricultural stimulated Baltimore’s urban growth, and with that growth came increasingly more foreigners to its shores. In the 1830s and 1840s, immigration to Baltimore consisted largely of Germans and the Irish. Between the 1860s and the 1880s, more Eastern Europeans, such as Czechs and the Polish began to arrive in Baltimore. In the 1880s and 1890s, Italians and Prussians were the dominant groups. By the end of the century until the beginning of World War I, Russians and Russian Jews immigrated to the city. As a result of the trade patterns between the Baltimore & Ohio and the North German Lloyd, immigrants departing from Bremen were bound for Baltimore. Following the contract, nearly ten thousand immigrants arrived in the port of Baltimore compared to the nearly four thousand that had arrived the year prior. The arrival of immigrants at the port of Baltimore was not entirely based on the foreigner’s choice, as historian Dean R. Esslinger has pointed out. Rather, many immigrants arrived in Baltimore as a result of the city’s trade patterns with northern Europe; immigrants departing from a specific European city (typically the city closest to their homeland) may have been limited to the routes taken by steamship lines departing from that port. It is for this reason that the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad received a significant number of German immigrants who had departed from Bremerhaven and traveled on the North German Lloyd steamships. Furthermore, the connections between steam and rail companies allowed for relatively easier travel accommodations; passengers traveling on the North German Lloyd purchased a single ticket for their entire voyage, transferring to rail once they arrived at the port in Baltimore. American railroad

58 Keith, *Baltimore Harbor*, 94. See also Esslinger, “Immigration through Baltimore,” 63-64.
59 Esslinger, “Immigration through Baltimore,” 70.
60 Ibid., 63-64.
61 For German immigration to Baltimore, see ibid., 66-70.
companies also formed contracts with immigrant agencies in the United States that had
agents in Europe to offer special rates for passengers in exchange for the agents’
agreement not to sell tickets to immigrants over competing rail lines.\textsuperscript{62}

The immigration station built by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company at its
Locust Point marine terminal was designed to enable ease of transfer from the steamships
to train cars. Following the contract with North German Lloyd Steamship Company, the
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad constructed three piers, begun in 1868 and completed the
following year, to serve the ocean-going passenger and general cargo business. On the
first pier, which measured 650 feet long and 90 feet wide, the company constructed a
single-story brick building to serve as the immigrant facility.\textsuperscript{63} This pier could not
contain the high numbers of immigrants arriving in Baltimore and in 1872, Piers 8 and 9,
each of which handled immigrant traffic, were both extended 106 feet in length and 100
feet in width to accommodate the increased business. They were extended again in 1880
and 1881.\textsuperscript{64} Baltimore & Ohio officials claimed their facilities were superior to New
York’s immigration station, Castle Garden, since immigrants disembarked the steamships
and were able to connect to their trains at the pier, instead of having to travel to a train
station elsewhere in the city (as was the procedure in New York). During the second half
of the nineteenth century, New York was infamous for the con-men who preyed upon the
foreigners arriving at Castle Garden. The Baltimore & Ohio immigrant station was
contained, however, within the company’s marine terminal, existing as one of the many

\textsuperscript{62} Harry H. Pierce, \textit{Railroads of New York: A Study of Government Aid, 1826-1875} (Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Press, 1953) 64-65.

\textsuperscript{63} The building itself measured 600 x 75 feet. The other piers measured 475 x 40 feet and 668 x 100 feet,
respectively. Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company, \textit{Annual Report for the Year 1867} (Baltimore: Sun
Book and Job Printing Office, 1867) 39.

\textsuperscript{64} Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company, \textit{Annual Report for the Year 1872}, 44; \textit{Annual Report for the Year
1880}, 54; and \textit{Annual Report for the Year 1881}, 50.
structures that enabled foreign trade, and thus, it was isolated from the rest of the city and provided little opportunity for swindlers to practice their occupation.

The new Baltimore & Ohio immigrant station at Pier 9 formally opened on February 22, 1888 (Figure 1.12). A party of city officials, officers of the Baltimore & Ohio and the steamship company, customs officials, and the press welcomed the German steamship *Hermann*, although the ship had in fact arrived much earlier than the party’s arrival at the pier and the 850 immigrants onboard had already disembarked. The facility consisted of two buildings: one was a long, wooden pier building with a pitched roof intended to store cargo and which allowed a train track to run through its center; the other was the immigrant processing station directly in front of this pier building alongside the railroad track (Figure 1.13). The steamer docked alongside these two buildings, allowing the passengers to walk from the deck of the ship via gangplanks directly onto the second floor balcony of the immigrant station and into the main waiting area.

The station was a long, two-story brick building, measuring 180 x 60 feet, with a pitched roof. The second floor, which contained the main waiting area and was also the site of inspections, measured thirty-three feet high, while the first floor, where the baggage was inspected and held, measured fourteen feet high. Within the building, signs written in several languages, including English, German, and Polish, indicated where the foreigners could purchase their railroad tickets, exchange money, or find instructions on how to

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65 The station, however, had been completed three months prior and had been in use since December. “Comfort of the Immigrant,” *Baltimore Sun*, 23 February 1888.
66 As steamships increased in size over the years, the landing platform was actually moved to the roof of the building and immigrants walked down steps from the roof to reach the main waiting area.
continue their journey. The Baltimore & Ohio hired multi-lingual agents to work in the immigration station and direct the new arrivals.67

At the Baltimore immigration station, limited inspections took place. The immigrants had been thoroughly inspected at the German port prior to departing Europe because the steamship company would incur the cost of transporting deported immigrants back to Europe if they failed to pass inspection at American ports. Thus, medical examinations at the Baltimore pier were cursory; they were conducted aboard the ship by medical officers that had boarded the steamer as it slowly sailed into the harbor to berth. In the immigration station, customs officials registered the new arrivals using the ship’s manifest. Once landed, they purchased or picked up their railroad tickets and waited in the large open waiting room. When ready to board their train, the immigrants went down the stairs to the first floor to collect their baggage and stepped out onto the train platform.

One journalist who covered the opening of the immigration station remarked that, because the train platform was adjacent to the building, “the new arrivals are under no necessity of touching the soil of America—or Locust Point either—from the time they leave their native land until they are put down in their future homes.”68 In this sense, the immigrants were like the freight that moved daily from ship to train and vice versa at the Baltimore & Ohio’s Locust Point marine terminal. They were commodities to be moved along this transportation network, contributing to the railroad’s profits. The journalist further noted that “the Baltimore receiving-house [could] handle 1,000 passengers in four hours, or at the rate of about 3,000 for a working day.”69 The Baltimore & Ohio’s contract with the North German Lloyd had allowed the railroad company to integrate

67 “Comfort of the Immigrant,” Baltimore Sun, 23 February 1888.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
immigration into its transportation network in a way that moved immigrants along quickly, from sea to rail, all the while keeping them contained, shuttling them deeper into the country to their intended destinations.

Even though the train tracks were indeed adjacent to the immigration station, many immigrants had to wait for several hours or overnight for their train west. For this reason, several steamship companies, including the North German Lloyd, contracted a German immigrant, Augusta Koether, to run a boarding house on the Baltimore & Ohio’s Pier 9 for immigrants that had to wait for their trains, since the steamship companies were responsible for the immigrants until they departed from the landing pier. The companies paid Koether seventy-five cents a day for each immigrant she fed and housed. She received her first boarders on March 23, 1869, when the SS *Baltimore* landed at Locust Point with 350 steerage passengers, all of whom she provided with a meal. Koether ran the boarding house for over fifty years, serving the hundreds, and occasionally thousands, of immigrants arriving on a single ship. The immigrants that stayed overnight in the sleeping quarters were either waiting for the next day’s train departure or had been detained for some reason. In some cases, however, Koether also boarded immigrants that had been denied entry to the United States. These passengers had to wait for a Europe-bound ship, which could take up to several days since the ship on which they had arrived had to be loaded with cargo and refueled. Given the number of immigrants that passed through Koether’s doors over the period of fifty years that she was employed by the transportation companies, surprisingly little information is available about the details of this boarding house, not even its exact location or design.

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70 Henry C. Raynor, “Immigrant Tide here is slowly rising again,” *Baltimore Sun*, 8 March 1925.
When the Baltimore & Ohio’s immigration station opened, railroad officials emphasized that passengers could pass from sea to rail. Indeed, the agreement with the North German Lloyd steamship company was that passengers would be issued one ticket allowing them to travel via steamship to Baltimore and board the train west directly from the pier. The Baltimore & Ohio marine terminal was the embodiment of continuous transportation, moving goods—and people—between modes of transportation, allowing maximum benefits from the railroad’s capitalist enterprise. The truth of the matter, however, was that the timing between ship arrival and train departure did not always work out to the passengers’ benefit. For example, a train departing for Chicago may leave the station at noon, allowing passengers headed for that destination enough time to board if their ship had docked at eight A.M. Passengers held up during the medical or baggage inspections could miss that train and would then have to wait for the following day’s train to continue their journey.

The boarding house was necessary if railroad officials wanted to validate their claim that Baltimore was a much safer port of arrival for immigrants than New York’s Castle Garden, which was ultimately shut down in 1890 once investigations by Congress revealed its inadequacies. The Baltimore Sun credited the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad’s immigration station with the protection the arriving foreigners: “In the history of the immigrant business of this port […] was established it is said that no sharper [conman] has ever approached the piers of landing.”71 Whereas Castle Garden opened out onto the streets of New York City and the rail lines did not extend directly to the immigration station, the adjacent railroad tracks and Koether’s boarding house allowed immigrants to remain within the confines of the Baltimore & Ohio marine terminal, effectively

71 “Comfort of the Immigrant,” Baltimore Sun, 23 February 1888.
shielding them from the rest of the city. In fact, by the 1880s, Baltimore had become the second largest port of arrival for immigrants in the country and both the city government and railroad officials believed it to surpass Castle Garden “in the advantages offered and protection afforded those who come to America.” 72

Another significant difference between the two ports was the fact that the Baltimore & Ohio held the monopoly on immigrant traffic arriving in Baltimore; the railroad operated the immigrant station as a privately-owned business. In New York, the Castle Garden immigration station was owned by the state government, and the railroad companies within it operated as a pool, distributing immigrant traffic among the different rail lines and paying rent to occupy a space within the building. 73 Unlike the procedures at New York, the only medical inspections for immigrants sailing into Baltimore occurred quickly aboard the ship as it slowly sailed into the harbor. One steamship employee, a German man who later immigrated to the United States, recalled:

The quarantine men boarded the boat on its way up the bay. Every immigrant went through a quick medical examination. Checking of the luggage by Customs was a quick and cursory affair. From that point, most of the immigrants who landed in Baltimore stepped aboard B. & O. trains and traveled on to Chicago, St. Louis or Cincinnati. 74

To be sure, there were government officials at the Baltimore station; it was the government agents that interviewed the arriving immigrants as they entered the building, asking the standard questions of name, age, city of birth, occupation, and amount of money in the immigrant’s possession. Yet this was the extent of the government presence at the Baltimore port in the 1880s. It was ultimately the railroad that was in

72 Ibid. Prior to this, Baltimore had been in the fourth position. New York remained the port of arrival with the highest number of immigrants. In the early twentieth century, however, Baltimore slipped down the list.
73 The following chapter analyzes this railroad pool and the operations at Castle Garden in depth.
charge of the immigrants arriving in Baltimore and the process to register, inspect and release immigrants was considerably more relaxed than the fast-paced and stricter procedures occurring in New York, where the numbers of immigrants arriving annually was significantly higher than in Baltimore.75

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Baltimore & Ohio immigration station had become too small to contain the tens of thousands of immigrants arriving annually and the ships had outgrown the old pier building. The Baltimore & Ohio constructed a new landing station on piers east of the prior immigrant station, which could accommodate four of the new large steamships simultaneously (Figure 1.14). The old immigrant station was used for storage thereafter, as its long, open-plan construction readily accommodated cargo. The building’s design, while purpose-built for immigration nevertheless resembled a building for freight storage and handling. The ease with which railroad officials changed functions of the building indicated the way in which immigrants, in the eyes of the Baltimore & Ohio, were a form of human cargo.

On the occasion of the opening of the new immigration station in July 1904, an article in the Baltimore & Ohio’s monthly publication The Book of the Royal Blue described the new station in detail and emphasized the inadequacies of the old pier, where “each successive [landing] platform designat[ed] the growth of the ships, till the last landing was built on the roof itself, and from there it was necessary to walk down the stairs to the entrance of the pier.”76 As the ships docked, ship employees raised the gangplanks to connect with the doors on the second floor of the pier building, the crowds

75 While approximately eleven million immigrants entered New York between 1855 and 1892, Baltimore welcomed approximately two million.
76 George B. Luckey, “America’s Largest Immigrant Pier,” Book of the Royal Blue VII, no. 10 (July 1904) 1.
of passengers packed the main deck, eager to disembark (Figure 1.15). The immigrants gathered their baggage—packed in bundles, baskets, and boxes—and proceeded into the new immigrant station, a two-story wooden pier building (Figure 1.16).

Upon the building’s completion, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad advertised it as “America’s Largest Immigrant Pier,” not be confused with the largest immigrant station, which was the title held by Ellis Island in New York. The pier building was of simple construction: a wooden interior frame, corrugated iron exterior siding, windows along either side of the building on the first and second floors, and skylights and ventilation turbines running the length of the pitched roof (Figure 1.17). The second floor was where inspection and registration occurred while the first floor contained the train track and platforms, in addition to the baggage room. When immigrants disembarked from the docked steamer, they entered into a large open room on the second floor of the building, which featured steel support beams and trusses, and was lined with long, wooden benches. As they entered this room, medical inspectors checked for signs of visible disease, particularly trachoma, a contagious eye disease (Figure 1.18). With this new facility, the medical inspections occurred at land, not on board the ship as had been the practice with the nineteenth-century Baltimore immigrant station. Even still, however, medical inspections remained cursory since the steamship companies conducted more thorough examinations at the port of departure. The ship’s manifest had been sent to custom and immigration officials at the pier prior to the ship’s arrival (a faster steamer was sent first to New York and then the manifest was mailed to Baltimore) and officials in Baltimore grouped the passengers by destination—to ensure the travelers boarded the

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77 The Ellis Island Immigration Station was comprised of several buildings occupying the majority of the island.
correct trains—and assigned each group a letter. These groups were guided into separation pens, surrounded by waist-high wooden fencing, to await their turn for registration (Figure 1.19). As each group was called, the immigrants filed into the long lanes formed by iron railings, at the end of which a government inspector questioned them and confirmed their entry into the United States.

Upon viewing this procedure, one Baltimore & Ohio railroad employee observed that the processing of the immigrants “at times seems similar to that of the manipulation of cattle or sheep.” This comparison of moving livestock was in no small part a result of the design of the immigrant pier. The immigrants were, in fact, separated into pens—a term used by the railroad officials themselves—and then shuttled through registration and ultimately onto trains headed west. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had established its marine terminal to efficiently handle and move cargo between rail and sea; they had also established an immigrant building in which to shuttle foreigners in the same way. Because of this efficiency, and in addition to the ventilation and sanitary requirements met, the Commissioner General of Immigration, Frank P. Sargent, commended the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad for the building’s construction. What the immigrants thought of the space, however, is unknown since first-hand accounts of the Baltimore & Ohio immigrant station are rare. After the long sea voyage and the railroad journey which lay ahead, the brief time at the immigrant station was most likely a hurried and stressful affair, despite government praise for the building’s design.

Once immigrants completed inspection and registration, they proceeded to the railroad ticket window. In most cases, tickets for the immigrant trains departing from the

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78 Luckey, “America’s Largest Immigrant Pier,” 5.
79 Sargent had inspected the pier building several times during its construction. Ibid., 10.
Baltimore & Ohio station were sold in conjunction with the passengers’ steamship ticket. At the railroad window, passengers picked up their tickets, which agents would have had ready upon receiving the orders from the steamship company prior to the ship’s arrival at port. The money exchange counter, also on the second floor, was the next stop for the immigrants as they waited for the train. At this counter, the currency exchange rates were listed on signs written in several languages. With American currency and a railroad ticket in hand, the immigrants proceeded to baggage inspection. Railroad employees inspected the contents of each immigrant’s baggage, a time-consuming and frustrating process for the foreigners, who then had to quickly repack all of their belongings (and as any traveler knows, hastily repacked items can never quite fit into baggage in the same way). With the inspection over, the railroad employees checked the passengers’ baggage and weighed it. If the weight exceeded that covered by their railroad ticket (each passenger received a freight allowance), the railroad charged the immigrant the difference in cost. Employees brought the luggage to the first floor baggage room, where it was loaded onto the train when it arrived at the station.

While immigrants waited for their trains on long wooden benches in the main sitting area, they could purchase refreshments at the lunch counter and socialize with one another (Figure 1.20). The railroad painted a picture of this waiting period as idyllic, no doubt in an effort to present their facilities as superior to other immigrant stations and attract potential customers: “Accordions are requisitioned and the songs of their native

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80 Ibid., 7.
81 About this baggage inspection, George B. Luckey declared in his article “America’s Largest Immigrant Pier”: “This inspection is one of the most disagreeable features to the immigrant of the entire entrance proceedings […], the seeming impossibility of again getting into their original compass the mass of his belongings. Packed in their homes abroad where time was not considered, these bundles when taken apart present for re-assemblement [sic] a puzzle worthy a place with the ‘Age of Ann.’” The ‘Age of Ann’ was a well-known contemporary riddle; for a discussion of this riddle, see William J. Lampton, “The Vicissitudes of a Problem,” The Scrapbook I (1906) 1106-1109.
land are played. Sometimes a group of Swiss mountaineers will break into the peculiar yodel songs of their native hills and peasant women sing their babies to sleep with the folk song of their country.” Yet the Baltimore & Ohio author belied his intentions, instead revealing his disappointment that, in his eyes, the immigrants were not, in fact, as quaint as those arriving in decades past:

The costumes of the immigrants of the present day are not nearly as picturesque as those worn eighteen or twenty years ago. The wooden shoes of the lowlands of Germany are never seen now, and it is difficult to guess their nationality from their dress alone. The total absence of hats is conspicuous, for the women all wear handkerchiefs, generally of gaudy colors and often of silk. Now and then can be seen short skirts and boots to the knees, but the majority have no striking mode of dress.

In another reference to immigrants as commodity, the author prefers the earlier model of foreigner, the parochial immigrant out of place in her new homeland and easily discernible from American citizens. The idea of immigrant as ‘picturesque’ further dehumanizes the foreigners and turns them into curiosities for the American public. If their dress did not distinguish them as foreigners, the railroad company certainly did by keeping them separated from the American citizenry, shuttling the immigrants directly onto segregated trains.

The Baltimore & Ohio did not allow immigrants to exit the pier building while they waited for their train. The Baltimore & Ohio stated that “nearly one-half of the upper portion of the big pier is used for a depot; the trains are pushed up an incline directly into the pier and the entire business of the Immigration Bureau is confined directly to the structure, thus obviating the use of the barges, as at Ellis Island.” At Ellis Island, immigrants transferred from their steamships to barges in order to get to the

82 Luckey, “America’s Largest Immigrant Pier,” 8.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., 10.
immigration station, since the waters surrounding the island were not deep enough to accommodate large ships. The Baltimore & Ohio marine terminal, on the other hand, not only allowed the steamship to dock and unload its passengers directly into the immigration station but also accommodated the train that would carry the passengers out of Baltimore.

In the eyes of railroad officials, this segregation protected the immigrants. The federal government did not interfere with the privately-owned facility and even praised the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad for providing a sanitary and safe landing pier for incoming foreigners, reflecting the free-market economy and laissez faire economics of the early twentieth century. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had largely controlled immigration to the Port of Baltimore and it was not until the second decade of the twentieth century that Congress began advocating for a federally-owned and operated immigration station in Baltimore. In 1912, Honorable J. Charles Linthicum of Maryland introduced a bill asking for funds for an immigration station and hospital to be located on the federally-owned lands surrounding Fort McHenry, further east of the Baltimore & Ohio immigrant station (Figure 1.21).\(^85\) Linthicum argued: “at no other port along the coast does the railroad run into the immigrant station” and that, as a result, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad has “absolute control over it at this time, and the Government has nothing to say.”\(^86\) In another Congressional hearing, the Honorable James H. Preston, Mayor of Baltimore, declared that “the immigrant question in Baltimore is practically in the hands of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. […] The narrow and contracted quarters

\(^{85}\) Linthicum was also instrumental in making the “Star-Spangled Banner” the American national anthem.

here for immigration purposes, with only one railroad station, has been practically determined by the Government to be inadequate.”\(^{87}\) The government agreed to construct an immigrant facility that would no longer allow the Baltimore & Ohio its control over immigration to the port.

Congress approved construction of a federal immigration station just northwest of Fort McHenry and opened it in 1914, a decade after the Baltimore & Ohio opened its most recent immigrant station at Locust Point (Figure 1.22). During the Congressional hearings on the new immigrant station, Henry G. Hilkens, representative for the North German Lloyd, was questioned as to whether the company’s choice of landing pier subsidized the Baltimore & Ohio railroad. Hilkens affirmed this statement and explained the company’s contract with the Baltimore & Ohio. Since about eighty-five percent of the North German Lloyd’s passengers traveled further west and south via the railways, the Baltimore & Ohio received the bulk of those passengers. However, he made it clear that the immigrants were under no obligation to travel via the Baltimore & Ohio; passengers bound for stops along the Pennsylvania Railroad departed from that company’s station in the Inner Harbor.\(^{88}\)

In support of a federal immigrant station in Baltimore was the Southern Settlement and Development Organization, a group established in 1911 by state governors and southern businessmen to promote settlement in the postbellum South, historically a region that was least-settled by immigrants and migrants in search of new


\(^{88}\) “Statement of Mr. Henry G. Hilkens, of the Shumacher Co., Representing the North German Lloyd,” ibid., 7-8.
homes. The Vice President and General Manager of the organization, W.H. Manss, argued:

We need more people to work our farms and we ought to have such facilities as will induce the boats to come here with their passengers and freight, and we need such facilities of rail and water as to enable these people to go into the south, southwest, and southeast portions of the country. Baltimore is the natural port of entry for immigrants. Unless we have adequate facilities for landing immigrants the steamship companies will not bring their passengers here.

Even though there was an immigrant station in Baltimore, the fact that it was operated by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, whose trains most frequently traveled west to Chicago and St. Louis—not to the South—meant that the southern states lost potential business. It was in the best interest of the Southern Settlement and Development Organization, and indeed, the southern state governments, for the establishment of a federal immigrant station from which multiple railroad lines could operate. The biggest concern expressed during the Congressional hearings was that the present immigrant station was in the hands of private interests, specifically the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and members of Congress deemed the establishment of a federal station necessary.

The selection of the site near Fort McHenry allowed the government to use land it already owned, thus lowering the total cost of a new facility, but the land selection was not without controversy. Fort McHenry held an important place in American history as the site where the Americans successfully defended Baltimore Harbor against the British during the War of 1812. Some citizens, such as A.C. Hubbard, were vehemently against appropriating this site as an immigrant station. Hubbard wrote a letter to the editor of the

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89 See Matthew Carl Paoni, *Dixie’s Arms are Open: The Promotion of Settlement in the Postbellum-Era of the South, 1870-1920* (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2010).

Baltimore American arguing that “this unweeded crowd is proposed to be landed on one of the most sacred spots of American soil on no less a spot than that which holds the fort where floated the flag which inspired ‘The Star Spangled Banner.’”  

Citizens like Hubbard, who were opposed to the use of Fort McHenry grounds for immigration purposes, wanted to defend the site from foreigners yet again—except this time they were unsuccessful.

Designed in the office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, the immigrant station included a main administration building with the space to inspect and register 1,200 immigrants, a 124-bed dormitory—which would effectively put Koether’s boarding house out of business—and a sixty-five bed hospital. During Congressional hearings to determine what sort of facility the government would build, U.S. Public Health officer Dr. J.A. Nydegger declared a need for a hospital at the new immigration station specifically for the incoming foreigners. Baltimore hospitals refused to admit foreigners with certain illnesses. Using the example of measles, Dr. Nydegger declared that “no other hospital in the city of Baltimore will take these cases” and that “in all the large cities they have their own Government hospital.” By the early twentieth century, American anxiety toward foreign disease had continued to grow, partially because immigrants were increasingly coming from southern and eastern European countries.


92 “Statement of Dr. J.A. Nydegger, United States Public Health Service,” Hearings before the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, House of Representatives, no. 13, February 19, 1914 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914) 14. One newspaper article stated that despite the sheer numbers of immigrants admitted by Koether over her fifty year career, she was a cash-poor woman at the time of her retirement. Haynor, “Immigrant Tide Here is Slowly Rising Again.”

93 “Statement of Dr. J.A. Nydegger,” 5-6.
The federal station, however, was not approved in order to provide better facilities for the incoming immigrants, but rather to take control of immigration out of the hands of the railroad companies. Congress authorized the construction so that “the proposed station will be absolutely independent, not under control of any one company, but equally accessible to all through lighterage, and over the tracks of the municipal railway, part of which is already construction.”

Either by means of a city railway or by barge, the Baltimore & Ohio would no longer hold the monopoly of rail traffic, and thus, immigrant traffic, on Locust Point.

Construction began in 1913 and the federal immigrant station opened in 1915. Yet with the start of World War I, immigration came virtually to a halt and would not begin to increase again until around 1925. In 1922 only 163 immigrants were admitted through the Port of Baltimore, a drastic decrease from the twenty thousand immigrants arriving annually between 1909 and 1914. With the start of the war, the North German Lloyd steamers ceased service to the United States and thus, halted the flow of immigrants and trade between Baltimore and Bremen until the 1920s. The War Department took over the facility from the Bureau of Immigration. The administration building was used for department headquarters; the detention building was used for army sleeping quarters as well as a store-room; and the hospital became crowded with soldier patients arriving back

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95 In 1916, the Commissioner of Immigration in Baltimore reported to the Commissioner-General that “the immigration port of entry Baltimore has suffered from the war in the decrease of arrivals proportionally as much if not more than any other [port].” Bureau of Immigration, *Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor for the Year Ended June 30, 1916* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916) 187.

96 The North German Lloyd steamships that took refuge in American ports were seized by the US government in 1917. It was not until 1920 that the company reinstated service by chartering ships from the US Shipping Board.
from the front via American steamships. Wooden barracks built on the recreation
grounds also housed recovering soldiers. During the war, the Baltimore & Ohio’s Piers 8
and 9, which had formally housed the immigrant station and were being used by the
railroad for storage, were destroyed by fire on October 30, 1917.97

Since the war effectively ceased immigration to Baltimore, it cannot be
ascertained whether the Baltimore & Ohio would have suffered decreased immigrant
ridership due to the new federal station that opened up immigrant traffic to other railroads
operating within the city. Yet one thing is certain—the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had
in fact succeeded in its endeavor to establish the Port of Baltimore as a commercial and
industrial center. This position was in no small part due to the connection between
markets, both in the United States and abroad, and among the transportation networks,
overland and by sea. Immigrant traffic formed a crucial link in this system, providing
revenue for the Baltimore & Ohio by means of ticket sales, by providing labor (for
handling cargo at the marine terminal and constructing tracks), and by producing grain
and other commodities to ship along the railroad’s lines.

At the railroad-owned immigrant station in Baltimore, immigrant traffic was a
commodity, an integral part of the Baltimore & Ohio’s established trade links between
Europe and the United States. While other railroad companies, such as the Pennsylvania
Railroad in Philadelphia, operated privately-owned immigrant stations for a time, the
Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was the only remaining privately-owned station by the early
twentieth century. The immigrant pier’s position at the marine terminal, set among the

97 The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, in an article about the fire published in its employee magazine,
insinuated that the fire was most likely set by foreign sympathizers, “the result of an act of a serpent in our
midst.” The company beseeched employees knowing anything about the arson to help “ferret out those
who are murdering our people and destroying our property.” “Torch Applied to Locust Point Terminals of
the Baltimore and Ohio,” *Baltimore and Ohio Employes [sic] Magazine* 5, no. 7 (November 1917) 7.
Baltimore & Ohio’s extensive built environment at Locust Point, which included warehouses, grain elevators, and rail yards, literally placed immigrant traffic within the space of those commercial markets, enabling the company to maintain a monopoly over immigrant traffic within the city until 1914. The Baltimore & Ohio serves as an example of the way in which railroad companies played an integral role in the migration of foreigners into the country and throughout its interior, illustrating how these companies had a vested interest in immigration as a source of labor and of profit. This company also serves as an example of how the railroad shaped the economic, industrial, and commercial development of the city of Baltimore. Immigration operated somewhat differently in other port cities, specifically New York, the focus of the following chapter, where railroad companies cooperated with one another and distributed immigrant traffic equally between their lines.
CHAPTER II. PORTS OF ARRIVAL: NEW YORK CITY

While immigration into the Port of Baltimore was largely in the hands of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company, multiple railroad companies operating out of New York worked together with the government to establish immigrant transportation as a separate industry. Immigrants traveling to New York were mainly arriving from Europe, and an estimated thirty-two million foreigners sailed into New York Harbor between the years 1855 and 1924. The formation of a railroad pool and subsequent elimination of competition among transportation companies led to inadequate immigrant services and facilities. In 1855, the state-owned port of entry, Castle Garden, became the first facility in the United States renovated for the purpose of examining and registering immigrants, almost all of whom arrived by ship. This type of building would be the first of its kind in the United States. Yet Castle Garden, a circular building designed in 1808 as a fort to protect Lower Manhattan, proved inadequate to serve and protect the increasing numbers of immigrants entering the country; the Commissioners had to accommodate the functions of an immigration depot into this unusual round structure. When the federal government took control of immigration in 1891, it established Ellis Island, a purpose-built immigration station that, while addressing the inadequacies of Castle Garden, also

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1 Sydney, Australia had an immigration depot as early as 1848, located in the repurposed Hyde Park Barracks. These barracks were part of a walled compound built by convict labor in 1819 to house the working convict population sent from England. When convict emigration ceased, the building served as an immigration depot for single female immigrants seeking employment or awaiting reunion with family members. For more on this female immigration depot, see Bridget Berry, *Female Immigration Depot: 1848-1886* (Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2005); Jan Gothard, “Wives or workers? Single British female migration to colonial Australia,” in *Women, Gender, and Labour Migration: Historical and Global Perspectives*, edited by Pamela Sharpe (New York: Routledge, 2001), 145-162; and Bridget Berry, *Place for the Friendless Female: Sydney’s Female Immigration Depot*, 2006, [http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/friendlessfemale/index.html](http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/friendlessfemale/index.html) (16 July 2012).
presented issues of its own, including frightening medical inspections and corrupt employees.

This chapter examines the architecture of Castle Garden and Ellis Island as representative of the shift from state to federal control of immigration. The architectural design of the immigration station, as a building type, developed in response to the various shortcomings of former arrangements, to shifting immigrant demographics, and to new immigration policies. At both Castle Garden and Ellis Island, transportation played a key role in getting the immigrants to the depot by steamship and then to their destinations in the country, mainly by rail. Both the immigrant depot and the transportation system controlled the circulation of immigrants and reassured the general public that officials could contain the supposed danger posed by foreigners.²

Prior to the establishment of a central immigration depot in New York State, immigrants were subject to general quarantine and poor-laws or to local ordinances. Physicians inspected passengers for contagious diseases aboard docked ships and immigrants disembarked at one of the many piers in New York City, passing through customs and directly into the eager hoards of swindle rs waiting to take advantage of them. Cartoons in contemporary periodicals, such as Puck magazine, portrayed the dangers threatening the immigrants in their new homes (Figure 2.1). Fraudulent money changers and baggage handlers, “friends” from the old country, and temptresses are shown as pits into which immigrants might fall. Immigrants lost money on counterfeit railroad tickets or non-existent accommodations. One of the biggest rackets was set up in the city’s boarding houses. Boarding house “runners,” as they were called, seized the baggage of newly-arrived immigrants and headed off toward one of the many immigrant

² Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 182-3.
boarding houses in the city. For fear of losing their baggage, immigrants had little choice but to follow. Boarding houses frequently charged high rates and runners often received a commission for each person recruited.\(^3\) One Irish immigrant lamented, “I have met with so much deception since we have landed on the shores of the New World that I am fearful of trusting [anyone].”\(^4\) Without specific legislation for immigration and specialized facilities to transfer immigrants directly from the ships into the hands of approved agencies, there was no end in sight to the deceptive practices.

Yet the danger posed to immigrants was not the only reason why the state chose to establish an immigrant depot. Foreigners, the majority of whom were starving Irish seeking relief from the potato famine that plagued their home country in the 1840s, were seen by American citizens as a threat to public health, as a burden to society (since many were cash-poor), and as competition for employment. In response, on May 5, 1847 the New York State government established the Board of the Commissioners of Emigration for the protection of both the arriving immigrants and the general public.\(^5\) Immigrants had little to no services available to guard them from mistreatment during their travels and upon their arrival. From the Commissioners’ point of view, immigrants would now have an ally to assist them upon their arrival in New York. For the general public, the Commissioners would be held accountable for the care of the immigrants and the rejection of those liable to become a public charge. The Commissioners, who served without official pay, collected vital statistics, authorized physicians to board and inspect

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\(^3\) For a contemporary testimony of defrauding as practiced by boarding house keeper and runners, see Friedrich Kapp, *Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York* (New York: Nation Press, 1870) 62-67.


steamships carrying immigrant passengers, established and managed an immigrant hospital on Ward’s Island, and quarantined those with communicable diseases. The Board consisted of ten members, six of whom were appointed by the governor and four of whom were *ex officio* members, including the mayors of New York City and Brooklyn, as well as the presidents of the Irish and German Emigrant Societies.

The Board’s first headquarters were in a former almshouse building located at the north end of present-day City Hall Park. The state-funded almshouse had served the poor until 1812, when the building was slated for public use, eventually becoming part of City Hall in 1831. After its opening in 1847 as an immigration station, the two-story brick building proved to be too small for the needs of the Commissioners, in addition to being located too far from the piers. In 1855 the Commissioners selected Castle Garden, the former fort-turned-entertainment space located on the southernmost tip of Manhattan, as the new location for an immigration station. At this site, passengers could disembark directly from the ships into the facility.

The massive, circular, open-air sandstone structure was built as the West Battery by John Williams and John McComb, Jr. and was meant, along with the East Battery on Governor’s Island, to protect the vulnerable lower end of Manhattan against the potential

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8 The almshouse was built in the 1797, replacing a former almshouse that had been built on the site in the 1730s. When the building was destroyed by fire on January 19, 1854 and the Commission set up temporary offices on Franklin Street, between Broadway and Elm Street, and also on Canal Street. See the Archaeological Institute of America, “Almshouses,” *Archaeology*, 2007, archive.archaeology.org/online/features/cityhallpark/almshouses.html (10 July 2013). In 1861, the construction of a courthouse was begun under William M. Tweed, New York’s notorious political boss. During renovations of the Tweed Courthouse in 1999, archaeologists discovered the almshouse burial ground. Archaeological Institute of America, “Excavation,” *Archaeology*, 2007, archive.archaeology.org/online/features/cityhallpark/excavation.html (10 July 2013).
threat from British battleships during the War of 1812 (Figure 2.2). The structure had openings for twenty-eight guns that could sweep the harbor. This threat from the British was never realized, however, and a few years later, in 1815, the West Battery was renamed Castle Clinton in honor of famed New York Governor Dewitt Clinton. The structure was demilitarized in 1821 and leased to the city in 1824 with the purposes of creating space for public entertainment. The city renamed it Castle Garden to reflect its entertainment purpose. During the next two decades, the building served as the location for band concerts, wrestling matches, Indian war dances, and fireworks shows.

When entrepreneurs Philip French and Christopher Heiser took over the lease from the city and converted Castle Garden into a privately-run music hall in the early 1840s, the facility reached the height of its popularity (Figure 2.3). They renovated the building by adding a stage, seating for six thousand ticket-holders, and standing room for four thousand more. The gun embrasures were left open to provide ventilation. Workers constructed a roof to protect patrons from the elements and to provide better acoustics for performers. Slender cast-iron columns fanned out at their capitals along the perimeter of the rotunda and around the central domed cupola, supporting the new roof (Figure 2.4). The cupola allowed for natural lighting and the chandeliers hanging from ceiling medallions provided both artificial lighting and an opulent atmosphere. The interior design of the music-hall with its delicate columns, cupola, chandeliers and ceiling medallions was a stark contrast to the austere exterior of the former fort (Figure 2.5). The

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9 The military requirements for the West Battery were planned and outlined by Col. Jonathan Williams of the Army Corps of Engineers, grandnephew to Benjamin Franklin. John McComb, Jr., one of the architects of New York City Hall (along with Joseph Francois Mangin), designed the entrance, selected construction materials, and oversaw construction. Barry Moreno, *Castle Garden and Battery Park* (Chicago: Arcadia, 2007) 13.

interior had been drastically transformed to suit the entertainment purposes intended by its owners. This renovation was quite a success and contributed to its selection as the site of the American debut of Swedish songstress Jenny Lind on September 11, 1850.\footnote{Lind’s performance at Castle Garden was the first of her nine-month America tour contracted under P.T. Barnum. Although 5,000 patrons attended the first concert, Barnum writes that “their entrance was marked with as much order and quiet as was ever witnessed in the assembling of a congregation at church.” The rotunda was divided into four compartments, each designated by lamps of a different color, and tickets were printed in corresponding colors. The ushers wore rosettes and carried wands in the color of the each section’s lamp in order to direct patrons to their seats. Proceeds for the night totaled over $17,000 and Lind contributed $10,000 of her share to New York City charities. P.T. Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum* (London: Sampson Low, 1855) 314. See also W. Porter Ware and Thaddeus C. Lockard, Jr., *P.T. Barnum Presents Jenny Lind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).} The concert was the most successful event in Castle Garden’s short history as an entertainment venue. In fact, the vast majority of interior prints and drawings of Castle Garden during its music-hall era depict this singular event. In the years following Lind’s appearance, however, no performance ever attracted the same numbers; the music-hall plummeted in popularity.

French and Heiser’s lease expired in 1854 just as the Board of the Commissioners of Emigration was looking for an adequate space to process arriving immigrants. The structure would once again see a renovation of its interior to suit another purpose. Residents and businessmen who owned property in the fashionable First Ward, such as railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt, vehemently opposed turning Castle Garden into an immigration depot. First Ward residents hoped the area would continue to be a popular harbor-view promenade, providing a recreation site for citizens and contributing to increased property value (Figure 2.6).\footnote{Castle Garden was originally isolated from mainland Manhattan, accessible only by footbridge; the area surrounding it was built up with landfill by the early 1850s and had become a recreation site, ideal for promenades and picnics.} They worried that an immigrant depot in their
neighborhood would result in declining property values and that “pestilential and disagreeable odors” would waft into their respectable homes.13

The use of Castle Garden as an immigrant depot was widely disparaged in city newspapers. The New York Times noted the irony that the structure had been “built to keep off the British, and now it is used as a nursery for them,” by which the journalist meant lower-class English immigrants.14 The New York Tribune described a meeting of boarding-house runners outside Castle Garden at which they argued that the “next step would be to take possession of the houses of citizens for hospitals,” and that Castle Garden was now “a pest-house,” that is, a location for those infected with plague or other infectious diseases.15 Fear that Europe’s “riffraff” would congregate around the building led the Commissioners to propose enclosing the area with a high board fence, making it accessible only by water, a suggestion that proved impracticable and thus, was never realized.16 Statements by the Commissioners ensuring the seclusion of the facility and its patrons did little to quell the fears and disapproval of New Yorkers.

The Commissioners moved forward with their plans to convert Castle Garden into an immigration reception center, signing the lease in May 1855. Under the sky-lit domed roof, workers removed the six thousand seats and replaced them with wooden benches to accommodate seating for two thousand to four thousand people.17 Where the stage once

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15 New York Tribune, 14 August 1855, 7. The boarding-house runners feared losing their income if immigrants were protected within the walls of Castle Garden; therefore, they tried to instill fear in the neighborhood’s residents in the hopes they would be successful in preventing the facility from opening.
16 Although a wooden fence was erected around the facility, Castle Garden remained accessible by land. Novotny, Strangers at the Door, 47.
17 The progress of converting Castle Garden into an immigration facility is reported in “Progress at Castle Garden,” New York Times, 14 July 1855, 8. The Annual Reports of the Emigration Commission vary in listing the number of immigrants that could be accommodated in Castle Garden. The reports of 1877,
stood, an iron staircase now rose to the Office of the Superintendent of the Commissioners of Emigration. Signs posted in English displayed the location of the Registration, Information, and Railroad Departments in the center of the rotunda at an enclosed quadrangle of desks (Figure 2.7). Upon entering the rotunda, the English-speaking immigrants were led to an alleyway set up to the left of the entrance and non-English-speaking immigrants headed toward the right. Barriers were on either side of the entrance, encompassing both alleyways, and extended to the central quadrangle of desks to ensure all were registered. Multi-lingual employees aided immigrants during this process. Two contemporary accounts describe a fountain in the rotunda, with one reporter stating that its “purifying influence upon the atmosphere is most perceptible.” The cast-iron columns and decorated ceiling allowed the rotunda to retain its air of elegance from its days as an entertainment space.

With no separate rooms designated for dining, sleeping, or for those waiting for transportation, hoards of immigrants crowded the rotunda and its galleries (Figure 2.8). The open plan of the building resulted in an often chaotic and crowded atmosphere as thousands of people waited to depart for their intended destinations. Immigrants were forced to sleep on the wooden benches or bare floors since no dormitory areas were

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1880, and 1881 cite potential for two thousand occupants (pp. 6, 5, and 7, respectively); the reports from 1876, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1887, and 1888 go as high as three thousand occupants (pp. 10, 7, 9, 9, 12, 13, respectively); and reports from 1873 and 1875 cite room for four thousand occupants (pp. 16 and 7, respectively).

18 Don H. Smith, “Castle Garden, the Emigrant Receiving Station in New York Harbor,” Nauvoo Journal 10, no. 1 (Spring 1998) 44; Novotny, Strangers at the Door, 48; and Svejda, Castle Garden as Immigrant Depot, 84.

19 “Castle Garden as an Immigrant Depot,” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, 29 December 1855, 46 and New York Daily Times, 11 June 1855, 3, 8 (quote from 3). Although these two accounts mention a fountain, contemporary interior prints and drawings do not depict this feature. It is possible the fountain existed near the refreshment rooms and was retained when the structure was converted into an immigrant facility; however, I have yet to accurately determine its placement.
Groups of people gathered in areas, some clustered around benches and some blocked stairways and walkways. This open plan provided a sharp contrast to the carefully organized space that would later be built at Ellis Island.

Physicians conducted medical inspections as immigrants disembarked from the ships; they looked for visible ailments and signs of contagious disease. This inspection was counterpart to the shipboard quarantine inspections. Those requiring medical attention or further examination were sent to the hospital on Ward’s Island, built specifically for the immigrant population. There were no facilities at Castle Garden for the sick or diseased until the late 1860s or early 1870s, when Medical Quarters were erected in an outbuilding for immigrants with minor ailments.

After their long and arduous sea journey, immigrants needed a space where they could completely cleanse themselves. The once lavish refreshment rooms of the music-hall near the main entrance of Castle Garden were converted into two restrooms, one for each gender. Each room featured huge twenty-foot long bathtubs with continuously running water and rows of basins and towels. In an 1855 article describing the facilities at Castle Garden, *Albany Evening Journal* emphasized that immigrants were given the opportunity to cleanse themselves before going on to their destinations: “[...] soap is not only suggestively handy, but has to be used. Every immigrant landing at the Castle, well

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20 This was revealed during witness testimonies in investigations conducted by the Congressional and Senatorial committees in August 1887. Novotny, *Strangers at the Door*, 52-53.

21 The Commissioners selected Ward’s Island for the location of an immigrant hospital in 1847 and erected a structure there in 1848. Over the following years, they purchased more of the island and expanded the medical facility to adequately care for the increasing numbers of immigrants. For a description of Ward’s Island see Kapp, *Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration*, 125-141.

enough to stand the process, inevitably is washed clean before he, she or it gets out.”

The Commissioners deemed sanitization stations necessary for both the health of the immigrants and the health of the public. Publicly advertising these stations was most likely an attempt on the Commissioners’ part to quell the fears of the public.

Those who passed health inspection proceeded into the rotunda to begin the registration process. Registration clerks were seated on the interior of the quadrangle facing out toward the two corridors segregating the English and non-English speakers. They recorded the immigrants’ names, former place of residence and intended destination, and the amount of money in their possession in ledgers with columns running vertically down each page. As the registration process occurred, station employees transferred luggage from the ship into Castle Garden to be weighed and stored. Once registered, immigrants proceeded to other agents in the quadrangle to exchange money, have their baggage transported to their destinations, buy railroad tickets, or find a job or place to stay from persons or organizations previously inspected and licensed by immigration officials.

The area surrounding Castle Garden changed drastically over the years with the construction of numerous small buildings to ease the congestion inside the rotunda. Initially the activities of the Commissioners, including their facilities, were funded by the state government; in 1882, however, the federal government levied a fifty-cent head tax on all immigrants and allotted a portion of that tax to New York to maintain services at Castle Garden. From the federal money, the Commissioners were able to expand Castle Garden. The crowds of immigrants waiting inside Castle Garden, who were seeking

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23 Albany Evening Journal quote reprinted in “Castle Garden as an Immigrant Depot,” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, December 29, 1855, 46.
24 Dinnerstein and Reimers, Ethnic Americans, 37.
employment, transporting baggage, buying railroad tickets and contacting relatives, became too chaotic for the agents to deal with efficiently. The circular plan of the building and the six-foot thick stone walls made it impracticable to build additions to Castle Garden itself. Instead, independent structures were erected around the former fort and the entire facility was enclosed by a wooden fence, and later by a masonry wall (Figure 2.9). A new baggage house was built on the south side of the main building in order to contain and protect the baggage transferred from the steamships to the immigrant depot (Figure 2.10). Previously, baggage had been stored in a small section of the rotunda where, according to the 1858 *Annual Report of the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York*, “baggage was heaped up in a contracted space, and every person who had a claim, or pretended to have a claim, was necessarily permitted free access to overhaul it, disarrange checks, and thus, too frequently, had opportunity to purloin the property of other parties.”

By 1868, a Labor Exchange (the nineteenth-century title for employment office) was added to Castle Garden to aid immigrants in seeking jobs without falling prey to those defrauders waiting outside the facility. Commissioners noted that “every facility is provided at the Depot, for those whose destination is to the interior, to proceed without unnecessary delay; and without need or pretext for intercourse with the class of persons in the city before mentioned [swindlers].” Every effort was made to keep the immigrants within the walls of Castle Garden until they were either picked up by relatives or ready to depart by rail to their destinations.

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26 Novotny, *Strangers at the Door*, 54.
27 *Annual Reports of the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York, May 5, 1847 to 1860*, 189.
The Commissioners argued that converting Castle Garden into an immigrant depot was beneficial for a number of parties. Shippers were relieved of supervising their passengers upon arrival instead of being held responsible for any sick or poor passengers. The discovery and rejection of passengers who were paupers, criminals, or liable to become a public charge meant less state funds would be used for poor-houses and jails. Accurate and reliable data on the numbers of those arriving, their destinations, and the amount of money they carry could now be provided by the city statistician. Finally, the entire community would benefit, they claimed, from the diminution of human suffering and the dispersion of outlaws at the port. The Commissioners stated that immigrants were now protected from deceptions, able to continue their journeys without delay and thus, were “enabled to depart for their future homes without having their means impaired, their morals corrupted, and probably their persons diseased.”

From the moment the Commissioners chose the site, lower Manhattan residents objected to the depot’s presence in their neighborhood. The Board of the Councilmen of New York City adamantly opposed the creation of an immigration depot at Castle Garden for several reasons: the supposed endangerment for the health of the city; the presence of immigrants, filthy in both dress and body, that would destroy the use of the area for recreation; declining property values and thus, less taxes for the city; and finally, they accused the Commissioners of forcing immigrants to pay exaggerated rates for their baggage and railroad tickets than they would otherwise. Residents feared losing their jobs to immigrants willing to work for lower wages. Newspaper coverage revealed that

28 Ibid., 187-188.
29 Ibid., 187-188.
the mobs holding the noisiest demonstrations against the development of an immigrant
depot were boarding house keepers and runners as well as ticket vendors—those whose
livelihood was most immediately in jeopardy.31

Two opposing views of immigration during the mid-nineteenth century
surrounded the establishment of an immigration depot in New York. On the one hand,
manufacturers and business owners argued that the arriving immigrants contributed to the
economy by supplying much-needed labor and by spending the money they earned within
the United States. On the other hand, many citizens felt that immigration was a detriment
to the American economy.32 They believed immigrants took away earnings from citizen-
producers and filled streets, ports, and almshouses with beggars, not to mention the
supposed moral degradation among such classes. New Yorkers feared that their streets
would be inundated with these foreigners. In reality, three-quarters of all immigrants
sailing into the Port of New York traveled by rail further into the interior United States to
settle. In fact, having transportation services at Castle Garden meant that the majority of
immigrants barely stepped foot in the city.

Immigrants traveling to destinations outside of New York purchased tickets from
railroad agents in Castle Garden. For the first few years of operation, the only railroads

31 “The Commissioners of Emigration and the Railroad Interest at Castle Garden,” New York Herald, 4
April 1855, 5 and “Castle Garden as an Immigrant Depot,” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, 29
December 1855, 46.
32 Part of the fuel for this argument was that information regarding trends in immigration was made readily
available to the public. Statistics from the Commissioners of Emigration published in New York
newspapers kept residents abreast of the numbers of immigrants arriving in New York, along with their
country of origin and occasionally their destinations and amount of money they carried. In the 1858
Annual Report of the Commissioners of Emigration the practice of inquiring into the financial state of
immigrants was claimed to “[show] to the public that […] part of the emigration is among that class of
persons who seek our shores as a refuge, and for a subsistence by labor, with little or no cash means, yet a
large portion bring with them of that kind of property a sufficient quantity to sustain themselves, and to aid
in the enrichment of the country.” By highlighting this issue, the Commissioners addressed the growing
concern among American citizens that those arriving in the country would become a public burden. Quote
from “Commissioners of Emigration: Annual Report of the Superintendent of Castle Garden, January 14,
1858,” reprinted in New York Herald, 21 January 1858, 5.
allowed to sell tickets inside Castle Garden were the New York Central Railroad and the New York & Erie Railroad. An 1858 article in the *New York Herald* stated that instead of accommodating all railroad companies with lines extending west, the New York Central and the New York & Erie monopolized rail traffic within Castle Garden, selling tickets at their own rates without restriction from the Commissioners of Emigration.\(^\text{33}\)

The Pennsylvania Railroad had been trying for years to gain admission into Castle Garden.\(^\text{34}\) The New York Central and New York & Erie admitted the Pennsylvania Railroad into their transportation agreement in the early 1860s, forming a railroad pool called the Castle Garden Agency.

The participating railroads of the Castle Garden Agency decided upon fixed passenger rates and divided the immigrant traffic among themselves: 35 percent each to the New York Central and the New York & Erie, and the remaining 30 percent to the Pennsylvania Railroad. Although these three railroad companies sold tickets to all immigrant passengers leaving Castle Garden by rail, their lines did not carry all immigrants to their destinations in the western United States. The Castle Garden Agency

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\(^{33}\)"The Commissioners of Emigration and the Railroad Interest at Castle Garden," *New York Herald*, 4 April 1858, 5. The *Herald* went on to point out that the bill providing funds for the Commission of Emigration was engineered by Erastus Corning, President of the New York Central Railroad, and Thurlow Weed, whose relative was general agent of the New York & Erie Railroad. Also involved in the drafting of the bill was William H. Seward, who would go on to become Secretary of State in both the Lincoln and Johnson administrations and to negotiate the purchase of Alaska.

\(^{34}\)There were a number of possible reasons for its exclusion. The first, obviously, was the political patronage afforded to the New York Central and the New York & Erie. John A. Kennedy, one of the Commissioners, offered the explanation that the Pennsylvania Railroad was excluded because the company only wanted to deal with Castle Garden through an agent, not through the officers of the railroad, as was the Commissioners’ policy. Another explanation was given by Andrew Carrigan, President of the Irish Emigration Society and *ex officio* Commissioner (1854 to 1865). He stated that the Pennsylvania Railroad wanted half of the immigrant traffic rather than the third it would have been given, a claim which was supported in part by Leopold Lorenz, an agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Lorenz further alleged that the participating railroad companies at Castle Garden split the traffic in a way that did not allow the immigrant to travel the shortest or most convenient route and that they were often overcharged. According to Lorenz, both of these practices were unacceptable for the Pennsylvania Railroad. State of New York, *Report of the Majority of the Committee Appointed to Investigate Certain Charges against the Commissioners of Emigration, No. 53, In Assembly, Jan. 18, 1859.* (Albany, New York: C. Van Benthuyisen, 1859) 13-15, 21, 63; Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 194-195.
lines had separate agreements with other railroads further west and south of New York. Trains for the three companies carried passengers to transfer cities, such as Chicago, where immigrants then transferred to other railroad lines to continue their journey—all on the one ticket purchased at Castle Garden. Therefore, Commissioner Kennedy estimated, there were actually more than seventy railroads whose tickets were sold inside Castle Garden even though there were agents for only three railroad companies present in the building.\(^{35}\) Thus, even though these three lines were in control of immigrant traffic in the early years of Castle Garden, many other lines benefitted from the immigrant traffic departing the facility.

The transportation network in Castle Garden provided means for immigration officials to control and regulate immigrant traffic, to keep immigrants away from the general public, to get passengers safely to their destinations and, of course, allowed the railroads to maximize their profits.\(^{36}\) Despite later accusations and corruption charges, the railroad pool was viewed by the Commissioners as the lesser of two evils. They now had some control over the transportation offered to immigrants instead of allowing them to be placed in the hands of the defrauders waiting outside the building. A railroad pool also effectively reduced competition among the railroad companies and allowed them to increase profits by gaining exclusive access to immigrant traffic and fixing their own rates. Yet even though the Castle Garden Agency was under the supervision of the Commissioners of Emigration, they still had some freedom in their operations since they


\(^{36}\) Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 182.
paid rent and the cost of utilities for the space they occupied within the depot.\textsuperscript{37} When accused by the media of overcharging immigrant passengers, railroad representatives cited the cost of operating within Castle Garden as the reason for not offering better rates.\textsuperscript{38}

Although no longer prey to the hoards of runners outside Castle Garden, immigrants were subject to mistreatment within its own walls. The chaos surrounding the central quadrangle of desks was partially the result of the inadequate design of the building for immigration purposes. The Registration, Information, and Railroad Departments were all located in the center of the rotunda, forcing immigrants to crowd the area. At the Railroad Department, clerks would place before the immigrant maps of the various routes available to their destination and list the differences in time, price, and various details such as train transfer points.\textsuperscript{39} The press launched complaints against the Castle Garden Agency that, because of its efforts to divide traffic evenly and also make a profit, immigrants were often left to draw their own conclusions about routes or told to go a certain route without explanation. The Superintendent of Castle Garden, Henry J. Jackson, testified that immigrants arriving with prepaid tickets, that is, tickets that were purchased in their native country for both steamboat and railroad transportation, did not have a choice of railroad route to their final destination.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, routes were potentially longer for immigrants depending on which line carried the passengers. One extreme

\textsuperscript{37} In 1858, for example, the transportation companies paid $10,000 for rent and utilities to the Commissioners. Twenty percent of gross revenue from transportation and luggage was set aside by the cashier of the transportation companies to pay this expense.


\textsuperscript{39} Kvale, \textit{Emigrant Trains}, 197.

\textsuperscript{40} “Testimony taken by the Select Committee of the House of Representatives to Inquire into the Alleged Violation of the Laws Prohibiting the Importation of Contract Laborers, Paupers, Convicts, and Other Classes, 1888,” 50\textsuperscript{th} Congress, 1\textsuperscript{st} Session, \textit{House Report No. 572} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888) 415.
example took a Danish immigrant en route to Chicago through a long detour into Canada.\textsuperscript{41}

The media accusingly stated that since the opening of the immigrant depot “the process by which the [immigrants] have been imposed upon has only been changed, while in no particular has there been any improvement.”\textsuperscript{42} By the 1880s even the Commissioners of Emigration expressed concern in their Annual Reports that they would not be able to suppress the system of railway companies paying commissions on the sale of immigrant transportation tickets in Castle Garden.\textsuperscript{43} Missionaries and immigrant aid societies argued that immigrants paid twenty percent more for tickets at Castle Garden than they would have otherwise and that they were overcharged for baggage. Both the Commissioners and Castle Garden Agency denied all charges brought against them in an 1858 inquiry by the New York legislature, which, in the end, resulted in no change to the way the Castle Garden Agency operated out of Castle Garden.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41} “We were separated and taken to the various railroad stations where we were to board the trains […] At 6 pm we left on the New York Central line by which we will go on a long detour up into Canada. Immigrants get sent with whichever railroad can accommodate them, regardless of how long the route is, and therefore, if I ever make the trip again, I'll only have a ticket where we land and purchase the railroad ticket separately. Then I can decide for myself which train I'll take. With a through ticket one is altogether at the mercy of whichever line and train they want to send us with.” Diary entry by Marius Larsen, May 30, 1912 in National Park Service, \textit{The Ellis Island Museum (Final Draft Text Package)}, February 1, 1989.


\textsuperscript{44} Further investigations in 1866 under the direction of former Commissioner of Emigration and current Superintendent of Castle Garden John P. Cumming revealed that the Castle Garden Agency circumvented regulations on immigrant fares by charging low rates on only part of the route. It was also discovered that Castle Garden Agency immigrant trains took longer to reach their destinations than trains providing regular service and that this lost time added to the overall expense of the immigrants’ journey. Although operations in Castle Garden remained unchanged, as they had after the 1858 investigation, the Commissioners decided to increase control of the immigrants’ journey outside of the depot by employing agents at common transfer points and destinations in New York State to assist in train transfers and offer assistance to those in need. Agents were stationed at destinations including Poughkeepsie, Albany, Utica, Syracuse, Buffalo, Suspension Bridge (Niagara Falls), and Dunkirk. They met the trains and assisted with transfers, inquired about the treatment of immigrants by the railroad and its employees, and investigated complaints and reported them to the General Superintendent at Castle Garden. By 1875 the Commissioners
On July 9, 1876 Castle Garden was almost entirely destroyed by a fire that left little more than the exterior walls of the main building and a few outbuildings on the northern side—the Labor Exchange, Medical Quarters, and Intelligence Offices. The Commissioners temporarily transferred immigrant processing to the nearby Barge Office. Damages to Castle Garden were estimated at over $40,000, not including destroyed baggage. Nearly one thousand pieces of luggage, belonging mostly to German-Russian Mennonites who had arrived that day, were destroyed. In the days after the fire, the Commissioners resolved to rebuild the structure. In the meanwhile, the Commissioners formed a Castle Garden Committee to handle temporary accommodations for immigrants. The committee proposed to erect awnings to shelter immigrants from the sun and to use barges as temporary waiting areas for those passengers awaiting their train departures. Area residents and newspaper editors argued that the structure not be rebuilt for immigration purposes and that, instead, the area be left as a park for the citizens of New York to enjoy. The investigations into the corruption at Castle Garden provided further evidence for those suggesting demolition of the facility.

The State of New York continued with the plan to rebuild the facility, however, and construction was completed on September 11, 1876. Reconstruction cost only half of the purported damages but Commissioners stated that the facilities were “better

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46 The Commissioners of Emigration used insurance money to pay nearly $9,000 to the Mennonites for their losses after they submitted their baggage checks along with a description of the luggage lost and its value. “Castle Garden Affairs,” New York Times, 12 July 1876.
47 The Castle Garden Committee consisted of Commissioners Huribut, Lynch, Scnack, Starr, and Forrest.
48 Novotny, Strangers at the Door, 51.
49 The first immigrant passengers arrived at the facility on the 27th of November.
adapted than ever before for the purposes of a landing place for immigrants.”50 The reconstructed interior featured none of the elaborate decorations of the former music-hall (Figure 2.11). The interior gallery of the rotunda was not replaced during reconstruction; only the floor of the rotunda was now available to the waiting immigrants. The new roof provided better lighting and ventilation than the previous one and the gun embrasures in the walls of the structure were enclosed in glass windows for the first time in the building’s history. Where the delicate cast-iron columns had once stretched upward to support the roof and decorated ceiling, thick timber posts with splayed trusses supporting exposed cross-beams now stood. It was readily apparent why the reconstruction of this barn-like interior cost far less than the cost of damages. There was no attempt on the part of the Commissioners to provide any decorative embellishment or evoke any feeling of grandeur that was once associated with Castle Garden. The structure also needed to be rebuilt as rapidly as possible, to accommodate the ever increasing numbers of immigrants. The building was a transitory, and necessary, location for the immigrants arriving into the country. The Commissioners’ concern was to move the growing numbers of immigrants through the facility as quickly, and presumably as cost-effectively, as possible.

In the 1880s, European immigration to the United States rose due to the rapid urbanization, overpopulation, and religious persecution occurring in Europe. Immigrants increasingly arrived from southern and eastern European countries. To deal with the growing immigrant and railroad traffic, a new railroad pool, the Castle Garden Joint Agency, formed in the early 1880s and allowed more railroad companies into Castle

50 Annual Report of the Commissioners of Emigration, for the Year Ending December 31, 1876, 10.
The difference between this agency and the former was that the Castle Garden Joint Agency was part of a larger organization known as the Immigrant Clearing House, which divided and regulated all immigrant traffic from eastern ports. Therefore, instead of reporting solely to the Commissioners of Emigration, the Castle Garden Joint Agency was held accountable by this larger organization formed specifically to deal with immigrant traffic. What remained the same, however, was that the new agency continued to charge fraudulent rates and immigrants were not allowed to choose direct routes to their destinations.

During the 1880s, the nefarious operations occurring at Castle Garden became a national concern. Congress conducted an investigation in 1886 that led to the termination of the railroad pool in Castle Garden in 1888. This investigation was prompted by a complaint filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission against the Castle Garden Joint Agency by the attorneys James C. Savery & Co., representing the American

51 In 1887, the Castle Garden Joint Agency consisted of seven railroads: the New York Central; the West Shore; the Ontario & Western; the Erie; the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western; the Pennsylvania; and the Baltimore & Ohio. “An Attack on the Pool,” New York Times, 8 September 1887. The Castle Garden Joint Agency allotted immigrant traffic among its members as equitably as possible; however, this proved difficult when routes were served by several different railroad companies. Not surprisingly, various railroad lines in the Castle Garden Joint Agency felt they were allotted unfair percentages of passengers. For example, the Baltimore & Ohio, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, and the New York, Ontario & Western were dissatisfied at various points in the late 1880s and 1890s and subsequently contracted agents outside Castle Garden in efforts to reach their desired percentages. Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 211.

52 The Immigrant Clearing House, in turn, was part of the Trunk Line Association (TLA), a powerful railroad pool founded in the late 1870s that negotiated rates for numerous railroad lines east of the Mississippi River. The Trunk Line Passenger Committee of the TLA dealt with passenger traffic and established a subcommittee, the Immigrant Clearing House Committee, to set fixed immigrant fares and baggage rates, regulate the sale of immigrant tickets, and handle the rail business of combination tickets booked from steamship companies. See Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 208-9 for a description of the Trunk Line Association and its members. At each immigrant port city, one local agency carried out the terms set forth by the Immigrant Clearing House. In New York, this agency worked out of Castle Garden where one employee called the “Joint Agent” represented all the lines there and reported back to the Trunk Line Passenger Committee. Trunk Line Association Commission, Passenger Department, Contract, Organization, Agreements and Rules, 1885-86 (New York: Russell Brothers, 1887) 24-25; 33-41.

53 Several railroads contracted with steamship lines to offer lower immigrant rates than those offered inside Castle Garden in attempts to secure more passengers than they had been allotted by the Joint Agent. Other railroads began selling tickets outside of Castle Garden at lower rates that threatened the railroad pool altogether. “Protecting the Immigrant,” New York Times, 22 April 1888 and Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 211-212.
Emigrant Company, an organization whose goal was to assist immigrants in settling in the United States. One of the allegations was that the thirteen-dollar immigrant rate for railroad tickets from New York to Chicago was unjust and unreasonable since the train accommodations were poor and the journey sometimes took up to sixty hours. Furthermore, Savery & Co. claimed immigrants were not given a choice of routes and subsequently, friends and often, families, were separated on their journeys. Even though the Castle Garden Joint Agency was shut down, the need for an organized transportation network at Castle Garden, however, led to the formation of another pool, with even more railroad lines, the following year.

During the investigation by Congress, Joseph Pulitzer’s New York World vehemently attacked the operations at Castle Garden, citing violations of the Interstate Commerce Act as well as the laws of New York. Pulitzer, who had emigrated from Hungary at the age of seventeen, had a personal interest in the treatment of immigrants.

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55 By comparison, the second-class fare for non-immigrant passengers was seventeen dollars. “An Attack on the Pool,” New York Times, 8 September 1887.

56 Officials at Castle Garden refuted the charge that families and friends were separated by the pool, stating that “every effort is made to protect the strangers, and if they become separated it is owing to their own ignorance.” Ibid.

57 The 1889 pool included the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, the Pennsylvania, the New York Central & Hudson River, the West Shore, the Baltimore & Ohio, the New York, Ontario & Western, the Lehigh Valley, and the New York, Lake Erie & Western lines. “Protecting the Immigrant: The Railroad Pool, as a Combination, Driven from Castle Garden,” New York Times, 22 April 1888 and “New Immigrant Railroad Pool,” New York Times, 18 July 1889.

58 “Castle Garden’s Monopoly: Cogent Reasons for the Abolition of the Emigration Commission,” New York World, 27 July 1887, 5. The Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 was the first piece of legislation to oversee the conduct of the railroad industry which, until this point, had been privately owned and entirely unregulated. Among other things, the law required “just and reasonable” rate changes; prohibited pooling of traffic or markets; and established the five-member Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC).

59 Pulitzer was known for launching crusades against corruption and also concentrating on issues of concern to marginalized groups, such as immigrants, women, and the working class, groups whom Pulitzer recognized as potential readers. Jean M. Lutes, “Newspapers,” in The Oxford History of Popular Print
In one article, the World complained about the contract on rail transportation that had been awarded to a few lines:

It [Castle Garden] was organized in order that the hundreds of thousands of immigrants that come to these shores every year might be protected and cared for until they reached their destination; but instead of doing this, the commission throws the immigrants into the hands of a heartless railroad pool that treats them most shamefully and squeezes all it can out of them [...]⁶⁰

As a result of the scathing media coverage, the Secretary of the Treasury called for another investigation.⁶¹ The subsequent hearings held in New York revealed charges of abuse toward immigrants, evasion of laws, and mismanagement. Agents were found to be knowingly charging immigrants twice for baggage shipment; railroads made enormous profit from ticket sales, often selling tickets at higher than usual rates; and money-changers did not list rates at market value.⁶² Congress determined that Castle Garden’s facilities were inadequate for the numbers of foreigners passing through its doors daily. Investigators and the press alike proposed that the Castle Garden facility be shut down.

The corruption rampant at Castle Garden was not the only reason for closing the facility. The building was not purpose-built for immigration and attempts to turn the space into a processing facility were inadequate.⁶³ Additional buildings were required to accommodate people, baggage, and other departments in the decades following Castle Garden’s opening. The rotunda limited movement of people through the space and the central location of the Registration, Information, and Railroad Departments, while meant

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⁶¹ This investigation was led under Treasury Department official David Okey.
⁶² Novotny, Strangers at the Door, 52-53.
⁶³ New York Times, 8 August 1887, 8; New York Times, 26 August 1887, 8; Svejda, Castle Garden as Immigrant Depot, 127-128; Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 214.
to be easily accessible, proved not to be since people crowded around them. In Castle Garden’s formative years, Superintendent John A. Kennedy stated that

no other establishment bearing any resemblance to it had ever had existence; all the details of its construction and management were necessarily experimental and uncertain. Many important requirements were omitted to be provided for, while other things were supposed to be indispensible which are found, on trial, to be of little or no value.\(^{64}\)

As Kennedy acknowledged, no immigrant depot of this scale had ever been built and thus, a multitude of problems arose in both the physical space of the depot and on the administrative level.

During the investigations into Castle Garden, the appointed committee, chaired by Congressman Melbourne Ford of Michigan, revealed:

It was almost impossible to properly inspect the large numbers of persons who arrive daily during the immigrant season with the facilities afforded; and the testimony taken puts it beyond the question that large numbers of persons not lawfully entitled to land in the United States are annually received at this port. In fact, one of the commissioners of immigration himself testified that the local administration of affairs at Castle Garden, by the method and system now followed, was a perfect farce.\(^{65}\)

The report cited witnesses who stated that charitable institutions in the State of New York were overrun with paupers and insane persons, a condition the committee claimed was due to the improper inspection at immigration. Similar claims were reported at other cities. Furthermore, at some ports outside of New York the states were reluctant to hand over to the federal government the revenue from the fifty-cent head tax on immigrants. Ford recommended that immigration be placed in the hands of the federal government, a

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recommendation that was enacted on March 3, 1891. The Bureau of Immigration was established as part of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, since immigration was a fiscal concern for the federal government—the head tax levied on foreigners funded the staff and facility maintenance necessary for immigrant inspection in port cities.

The shift of immigration from state to federal control was part of the gradual expansion of the federal government that had begun following the Civil War. In the antebellum years, the federal government’s role was relatively minor; it established a network of national banks and promoted agricultural and transportation development through land grants, yet individual state actions largely overruled the weaker central government. Disputes over state’s rights led to the Civil War in the 1860s, with the issue of slavery polarizing the nation. Railroads were a strategic resource during and after the war, as the nation transitioned from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. This industrial economy attracted foreigners in search of employment. Industrialists capitalized on this influx of labor and benefitted from strong government relations. In 1861, for example, Andrew Carnegie was hired by Assistant Secretary of War Thomas A. Scott, the Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad as well as Carnegie’s boss at the time, to manage railroad and telegraph operations for the Union. The wealth of men like Carnegie skyrocketed after the war, largely at the expense of immigrant labor. This

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66 Ford also proposed enforcement of strict immigration laws including the prohibition of additional classes, the tightening of contract labor laws, enacting severe penalties for evasion, raising the head tax to five dollars a head, and providing legal examination of prospective immigrants in overseas U.S. consulates. These drastic measures were not carried out. Thomas Pitkin, Keepers of the Gate: A History of Ellis Island (New York: New York University Press, 1975) 11.

67 In 1903, when all operations associated with business within the Department of the Treasury were moved to the newly-established Department of Commerce and Labor, the Bureau of Immigration was transferred as well, since immigrants were a large part of the American workforce.


69 See Shane Mountjoy, Technology and the Civil War (New York: Infobase, 2009).
industrial growth resulted in quickly built infrastructure, which benefitted the nation economically but brought about many social ramifications, such as job competition between citizens and foreigners and the eventual rise of labor unions to combat the social injustices of appalling and unsafe working conditions in factories.

In the decades that followed the war, during Reconstruction and beyond, the federal government became increasingly centralized, taking over matters—including immigration—that had once been state responsibilities. Lines between public and private interests began to blur. The railways and the state governments formed partnerships to handle the wave of intense immigration to the United States in the postwar years, when rapid industrialization and the availability of jobs attracted millions of foreigners at the turn of the twentieth century. This partnership had its flaws; the insufficient facilities at Castle Garden and the corruption that pervaded its administration were ill-equipped to handle the high numbers of immigrants arriving in New York. When the federal government took over immigration from the states, it also took over the partnership with the railways. Government officials resolved to establish a new federal immigrant facility in the Port of New York that could handle and transport the hundreds of thousands of arrivals each year, in addition to supporting a more organized administrative system.

In designing the new immigrant receiving station, the Bureau of Immigration addressed the problems of location, design, and administration that had been experienced by the New York Commissioners of Emigration at Castle Garden. First, immigration

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70 The federal government gained even more power with the passing of the Sixteenth Amendment in 1913, which implemented a federal income tax, and the Seventeenth Amendment in the same year, which established direct election of State Senators and thus shifted the balance of power from the states to the centralized government.
officials determined that the new facility should be in an isolated location away from potential swindlers and away from the citizens of New York, many of whom feared the foreigners. Congress considered an island location ideal, a move that set a precedent for the federal immigration facility on Angel Island erected decades later on the West Coast. Second, multiple departments including registration, medical, transportation and baggage, would need to be arranged in a coherent manner to facilitate the daily movement of thousands of bodies through the space. Finally, transportation was another major issue, especially since government officials did not want immigrants to leave the depot without guaranteed passage to continue their journey. The new facility would accommodate agents from the transportation companies and provide ferry connections to the railroad stations in the area. The federal government depended on the success of this new facility to assert its control over immigration, a much stricter control than the states had previously provided.

Treasury Secretary William Windom, who would be in control of the new federal immigrant depot, did not consider Ellis Island an ideal location although Congress thought otherwise. On his initial trip to New York Harbor in 1890 to scout out potential locations, Windom dismissed Ellis Island as an impossible place on which to build anything: “the difficulty of reaching [Ellis Island] and the observations we had at that distance from us, where it seemed to be almost on a level with the water, presented so few attractions for an immigrant depot that we steamed away from it under the impression that […] it was not a desirable place.” Windom proposed Bedloe’s Island, the site of Frederic Bartholdi’s Statue of Liberty, for the construction of a new immigration depot. Not surprisingly, this proposal was met with consternation from the

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71 *Congressional Record, 51st Cong., 1st Sess.*, 3085-3086.
New York press, with the most aggressive attacks coming from Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World*, which had led the campaign to raise money for the pedestal of Bartholdi’s statue. The *World* even contacted Bartholdi himself, who believed the proposed plan to be a “downright desecration.” Bedloe’s Island became a tourist destination immediately following the statue’s dedication on October 28, 1886. The statue, however, would not come to symbolize liberty for immigrants until well after the establishment of Ellis Island as an immigrant receiving station. Windom noted that those opposed to the immigration depot on Bedloe’s Island believed “that the Goddess of Liberty would gather up her skirts in disdain and contempt of the immigrants from foreign countries, and that the arrival of the immigrants upon our shores would contaminate her.”

The proposed location of the depot on Bedloe’s Island presented the same problems as Castle Garden’s location in Manhattan. The reason the Treasury Department decided on an island location was to keep immigrants away from citizens and potential swindlers away from immigrants. Coincidentally, at the same time that the media was attacking Windom’s proposal to build on Bedloe’s Island, New Jersey legislators and newspaper editors launched a third crusade asking Congress to remove the highly explosive naval powder magazine located on Ellis Island (Figure 2.12). Removing the explosives and building the immigration station on Ellis Island would appease both parties, those promoting safety in the harbor and those promoting preservation of

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72 One editorial claimed that surrounding the statue with buildings “will be to dwarf and humiliate it.” See Cunningham, *Ellis Island*, 56 and Pitkin, *Keepers of the Gate*, 11-12.

73 In 1903, Emma Lazarus’ poem, with its infamous lines, “Give me your tired, your poor,/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,/ [...]” was mounted on the inside of the statue. By this point Ellis Island had been in operation for a decade and the Statue took on new meaning as a symbol of liberty for the arriving immigrants.


75 Earlier crusades occurred in 1869 and 1876. The military had occupied part of Ellis Island since the 1790s but the navy began using Ellis Island to store ammunition in 1835.
Bedloe’s Island. Despite Windom’s reluctance, Congress decided to build the federal immigration facility on Ellis Island.

On April 11, 1890 President Benjamin Harrison signed the bill to remove the powder magazine and appropriate $75,000 “to enable the Secretary of the Treasury to improve said Ellis Island for immigration purposes.”\textsuperscript{76} The project cost a total of $500,000 and included several major endeavors: dredging a channel for the ships; enlarging the island by landfill to nearly double its 3.3 acres; building over 850 feet of docks; and constructing a three-story wooden building for inspection and registration, with separate structures for a hospital, boiler house, laundry, cisterns, and electric light plant (Figure 2.13).\textsuperscript{77} The dock basin and ferry slip were on the southwest side of the island. The wharves were so arranged that immigrants could disembark from two vessels at once. Once they disembarked, immigrants passed through a covered walkway with adjacent shelter shed that extended from the landing to the main building on the northwest side of the basin.\textsuperscript{78}

Jacob Bachmeyer of the New York office of the U.S. Public Buildings Service prepared drawings for the new immigration station. The main building was a rectangular two-and-a-half-story gable-roofed structure with four towers, two on either end. It featured a blue slate roof and buff-colored wooden walls with long rows of windows on each story. The main building housed areas for medical inspection and registration as well as baggage, dining, and transportation services; additional buildings housed hospital wards, dormitories, a laundry and bathing house, and a power plant. The design of the

\textsuperscript{76} The powder was brought to Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island on May 24, 1890. \textit{Congressional Record}, 51\textsuperscript{a} Cong., 1\textsuperscript{a} Sess., vol. 3053, 638 and Novotny, \textit{Strangers at the Door}, 69.

\textsuperscript{77} Pitkin, \textit{Keepers of the Gate}, 13.

\textsuperscript{78} The main building measured approximately 400 feet by 150 feet.
main building was a unique combination of railroad station, hospital, prison, and hotel. The first floor included a baggage room, two private offices, a general office, a customs baggage room and space for the customs inspector, and water closets. Officials examined and registered immigrants on the second floor which, in addition to the registration room, contained a railroad ticket office, railway clerks’ room, information bureau, lunch counter, telegraph office, money changer’s office, six waiting rooms, a linen counter, three detention rooms, administrative offices, a vault, and water closets. The third floor or balcony floor contained no room designations on plans of the building dating from 1896.

Although the main building received praise from contemporary architectural critics, the auxiliary buildings were simply-built wooden structures with little to no decoration. Commissioner Joseph Senner called them “a row of ugly, ramshackle tinderboxes.” Some of the existing military buildings on the island, constructed of brick and stone, were remodeled for new purposes. For instance, workers enlarged one of the barracks buildings to form a two-story dormitory for detained immigrants. Bachmeyer initially considered iron construction for the facility; however, he selected Georgia pine as the primary building material in order to lessen costs, a move that the government would regret in just five years’ time.

79 Novotny, Strangers at the Door, 72-73.
The immigration depot at Ellis Island opened with little ceremony on January 1, 1892. It received much praise by government officials and the media. A journalist in *Harper’s Weekly* compared the management of the facility with that of its failed predecessor: “the Federal government does not appear to be overestimating its needs so much as to be putting to shame the neglectful State officials who previously mismanaged the business.” The layout of the building allowed for a systematic inspection and registration process, one that far surpassed the chaotic procedures at Castle Garden. Those employed with the Immigration Bureau were pleased with both the spacious accommodations of the facility and its island site. The services offered at Ellis Island each received their own space in the building, instead of shared space in the rotunda of Castle Garden. “The new receiving station,” stated the secretary’s report for 1891, “besides adding vastly to the comfort, convenience, and sanitary well-being of the arriving immigrants, will enable the inspection officers to perform their duties much more thoroughly, effectively, and expeditiously.” The building was a success, and a vast improvement on the facilities at Castle Garden. That success, however, would be short-lived.

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83 Col. John J. Toffey and Major Edward J. Anderson, who were awarded the refreshments contract, wanted to have a grand ceremony to celebrate the opening but the authorities at Washington decided to open the facility with little fanfare. It is possible that with the barrage of media criticisms directed toward them for the conditions at the Barge Office, officials did not want to welcome even more criticisms and were determined to begin processing the immigrants as soon as possible. “Landed on Ellis Island,” *New York Times*, 2 January 1892, 2.

84 Quoted in Pitkin, *Keepers of the Gate*, 17.

85 The only complaints of the new building published at the time were from railroad officials, who believed the building to be too large, which required much running around on their part to get various passengers together. At Castle Garden, the rotunda made it easier for railroad agents to gather up passengers. A *New York Times* reporter rebuked that given the number of immigrants the facility must accommodate, “finding fault with its size was like complaining of a circle for being round.” “Landed on Ellis Island,” *New York Times*, 2 and Cunningham, *Ellis Island*, 61.

86 *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury*, 1891, LXII-LXIII.
Shortly after midnight on June 14, 1897, a fire broke out on the island and destroyed the main building and several smaller structures.\textsuperscript{87} Word spread quickly of the fire since the completion of cables to New York City for telegraph and telephone communication via Governor’s Island had been completed only the day before. Medical staff and night guards worked quickly to evacuate the approximately one hundred and ninety-one immigrants detained on the island that evening. The rescue and evacuation of all immigrants and employees lasted seventeen minutes from the time a night watchman first sounded the alarm. All escaped unharmed to New York by ferry. Commissioner Senner expressed his relief to a \textit{New York Tribune} reporter that no lives were lost and declared that “when the government rebuilds, it will be forced to put up decent fireproof structures.”\textsuperscript{88} In the five years that the station had been open, nearly one and a half million immigrants passed through its doors. The purpose-built facility at Ellis Island allowed immigration officials to inspect and register immigrants with increased efficiency and to accommodate the foreigners comfortably. Yet with seven hundred immigrants arriving in New York the day after the fire, and another seven thousand known to be on ships bound for New York Harbor, the Treasury Department needed an immediate solution.

The Immigration Bureau sent arriving foreigners to the Barge Office, a two-and-a-half-story granite structure with corrugated iron annex located in the southeast corner of Battery Park (Figure 2.14).\textsuperscript{89} It had been built in 1883 for cabin-class passengers to

\textsuperscript{87} Also destroyed in the fire were many of the New York State records on immigration and the records since accumulated at the Barge Office and Ellis Island. Pitkin, \textit{Keepers of the Gate}, 26-27.

\textsuperscript{88} Later investigations into the cause of the fire were inconclusive. “Fire on Ellis Island: Many Buildings Burn,” \textit{New York Tribune}, 15 June 1897, 1 and Pitkin, \textit{Keepers of the Gate}, 26.

\textsuperscript{89} The Department of Parks for the City of New York had converted Castle Garden into an aquarium in 1896 and thus, those facilities were not available to be used for immigration purposes after the Ellis Island fire.
disembark and pass through customs inspection. The Barge Office had previously been used during construction of the original Ellis Island facility; however, it was far too small for long-term processing and the unsatisfactory conditions at Castle Garden remained in recent memory for government officials. Crowding at the Barge Office was far worse than that at Castle Garden, and unfortunately, so was the corruption under the administration of Commissioner Thomas Fitchie and his assistant Edward F. McSweeney. As the New York press continuously published stories of corruption at the Barge Office, Commissioner-General of Immigration Terence Powderly launched an investigation in 1900, resulting in the dismissal of several employees. Powderly stated in his report for the fiscal year “that before the close of the calendar year 1900, the contractors will have completed the new buildings and turned them over for the occupancy of the immigration force at the barge office, thus relieving a tension that had become almost unendurable.”

The dreadful conditions at the Barge Office amplified the need for a properly designed immigration station. The *New York Tribune* described the Barge Office as “grimy, gloomy […] more suggestive of an enclosure for animals than a receiving station for prospective citizens of the United States” (Figure 2.15). The new facility could not be finished quickly enough; the federal government was beginning to feel the same pressure the New York Commissioners of Emigration had felt when the corruption and inadequate facilities at Castle Garden were scrutinized by the press. Ellis Island was

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90 Terence Powderly served as Commissioner-General of Immigration from 1897 to 1901. Powderly, Fitchie and McSweeney were all active politicians during their tenure in the Bureau and often feuded. In 1896, President Cleveland ordered that staff be civil service employees, not political appointees. For more on the occurrences at the Barge Office, see Pitkin, *Keepers of the Gate*, 27-29 and Novotny, *Strangers at the Door*, 71-72.

91 *Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration*, 1900, 49.

thought to be the solution to the problems encountered at Castle Garden but its wooden construction ultimately proved otherwise.

In September 1897, a couple months after the fire, the Treasury Department opened up a competition under the Tarsney Act, which allowed architects in private practice to participate in competitive design programs for federal projects. Treasury Secretary Lyman Gage, under the recommendation of the president of the American Institute of Architects, George B. Post, invited several prominent New York firms to participate including Boring & Tilton, Alfred E. Barlow, Carrère & Hastings, McKim, Mead & White, and Bruce Price. Washington architect John L. Smithmeyer, who had been hired by the Treasury Department to conduct preliminary studies of the island after the fire, was also invited to join. The Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, James Knox Taylor judged the competition along with Robert S. Peabody of Boston, and Theophilus P. Chandler of Philadelphia. The firm of Boring & Tilton won the competition.

Competition requirements set forth by Taylor’s office determined much of the character of the new facility. Taylor called for two buildings: a main building with annexes accommodating the reception, registration and examination of immigrants in

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93 The Tarsney Act was passed in 1893 but not implemented until 1897 under the tenure of James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department. The act stipulated that no less than five architects shall be invited to any competition and that any subsequent drawings and specifications would remain under the direction of the Supervising Architect. The Ellis Island competition was one of the first projects under this act. Antoinette J. Lee, *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect’s Office* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 166-167, 201.
addition to sleeping quarters; and a hospital building, to be located on about twenty acres. The Treasury Department requested the initial buildings accommodate several thousand immigrants daily as well as several hundred employees. The Office of the Supervising Architect enclosed sketches of the placement of staircases, executive offices, information bureau, railroad annex and ticket booth along with the rules of the competition. Of paramount importance was that the buildings “be of fireproof materials” with the finish exhibiting “as small amount of combustible material as possible and it is to be plain, but substantial and durable.” Taylor planned for the new immigration station to be fireproof and permanent, unlike its hastily built wooden predecessor.

New York architects William Alciphron Boring and Edward Lippicott Tilton, both graduates of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, submitted a competition design with a linear, southwest-northeast axis of three primary fireproof buildings—an immigration building to be located on the site of the former main building, a kitchen and laundry building, and a powerhouse—as well as a new island south of the original, with a ferry slip between the two, on which the hospital would be built (Figure 2.16). The first island served the public functions of inspection and processing while the second island

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97 This would not be the last expansion of the building complex; as numbers of immigrants increased in the early twentieth century, the federal government continued to use landfill to expand the island to support new structures. Prior to the development of the immigrant station, the island had a land area of 3.3 acres. In 1892, the island covered about eleven acres. By the time Ellis Island closed in 1954, the island covered 27.5 acres.


99 The Supervising Architect also recommended that “the building used as a dormitory [is] to have such openings from the main floor, so many doors swinging outward, and to be surrounded by spacious outside balconies made of iron, with iron staircases leading therefrom, as to afford speedy exit in case of fire.” Ibid.

100 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Historic American Buildings Survey: Ellis Island*, 5. I have been unable to locate the other competition drawings; they are presumably lost.
served the more private functions of the hospital complex. The size and plan of the main building was approximately the same as its predecessor, with the exception that the railroad ticket office was now on the first floor, not the second.\textsuperscript{101} The main building opened for service on December 17, 1900 but the hospital did not open until the following year. The architects added auxiliary structures to the original plans, such as a hospital laundry and surgeon’s house, throughout the construction process. The cost of the project totaled approximately $1.5 million dollars, more than double the original amount Congress had appropriated for its construction. Congress not only underestimated the cost of the new facility but they also underestimated the numbers of immigrants who would arrive on American shores in the decades that followed.

Visually and logistically, the main building forms the centerpiece of Ellis Island (Figure 2.17). It is the largest and most visible structure of the complex as well as the space through which all immigrants entering through the Port of New York had to pass for admission into the country. The dichromatic façade features red brick laid in Flemish bond with limestone trim and quoining. On both the southwest and northeast facades, massive triple-arch entrances rising two stories high mark the three-story central pavilion, which is flanked by three-story wings on either side (Figure 2.18). Four towers topped with copper spires mark the corners of the central pavilion. At the time of its completion, the building received praise from both the popular press and architectural critics. The \textit{Architectural Record} lauded the “manner in which the light limestone and the red brick are used together” and noted that the arches function in “relieving and animating the sky

\textsuperscript{101} The main building measured 385 feet long, 165 feet wide, and 62 feet high with the corner towers reaching a height of 100 feet. Pitkin, \textit{Keepers of the Gate}, 33.
line without disturbing it.”

Boring & Tilton meant for the heavy-handedness of the façade to be read from a distance and form a focal point in the New York Harbor. The *Architectural Record* noted that “the effectiveness of a ‘distant prospect’ is more important than that of a nearer view. […] The [scale of detail] is so inflated and the fronts so ‘scaled up’ for the benefit of the distant spectator that, close at hand, the detail undoubtedly takes on a forced and almost bloated aspect.” Similarly, the monumental building was experienced differently by the citizens admiring its reassuring presence from a distance and the harsher reality of those passing through its doors. For many immigrants, Ellis Island was a frightening place, one where medical inspectors poked and prodded, where government officials launched a series of questions in an unfamiliar language, and where the fear of being separated from one’s family was all too palpable.

The existence of Ellis Island was, in reality, a testament to the class system in the United States. Historians have often noted the disparity of conditions for steerage passengers and those in cabin-class on overseas journeys. Upon arrival in New York Harbor, that disparity continued. The steamships arriving from Europe first docked at the piers in New York City so that citizens and cabin-class passengers could disembark. In many cases, these wealthy passengers were only briefly inspected at the Barge Office while the steerage passengers were required to undergo inspection at Ellis Island. Although the immigration law of 1893 required steamship companies to provide detailed manifests for *all* passengers, it was common practice for employees not to ask cabin

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103 Ibid.
104 Reeves, *Ellis Island*, 11.
passengers the personal questions required. When Commissioner William Williams insisted in 1902 that cabin passengers undergo the same inspection as those in steerage, the Washington office backed him for a brief period of time before pressure on the Commissioner-General mounted, presumably from the very passengers this would affect. He instructed Williams that “a literal compliance with the law as relating to steerage passengers and a reasonable compliance so far as concerns cabin passengers” would be the new rule.  

While established to protect the immigrants, Ellis Island was also a physical reminder to citizens that they would be protected from the potential danger, physical and economic, that immigrants posed. Unlike wealthy passengers, who were presumed to be healthy and unlikely to become public charges, the government examined steerage passengers in order to determine their eligibility for American residence. Landing at the Barge Office signaled the end of the overseas journey for wealthy passengers; however, the journey was far from over for steerage passengers. They disembarked from the steamship and guards led them onto a ferryboat headed to Ellis Island. There, immigrants disembarked from two boats at a time and entered the main building by means of a covered passageway, which sheltered them from the weather as well as from “the observation of the curious,” as one New York Times reporter noted (Figure 2.19).

Here began the systematic registration process developed by government officials, where immigrants passed from inspector to inspector, each executing their duties as

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106 Commissioner-General to Williams, May 26, 1902, Bureau of Immigration, Letters Sent, 1892-1903, William Williams Collection, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library (hereafter referred to as the William Williams Papers). See also Pitkin, Keepers of the Gate, 91-93.
107 The ferryboat often filled quickly, and those that did not fit on it were loaded onto barges to be carried over to Ellis Island. Often they had to wait tightly packed on the boats and barges, which had no restrooms or refreshments, until all passengers disembarked from vessels already docked. Novotny, Strangers at the Door, 12-13.
quickly as possible in order to shuttle immigrants through the building and into the country. Once disembarked, each ship’s passengers traveled together into the main building so that federal inspectors could cross-check that specific ship’s manifest. Upon entering the building on the ground floor, where baggage was stored, guards shouted instructions in multiple languages and arranged immigrants in numerical order according to the numbers printed on tags and pinned to their coats, which corresponded to each immigrant’s respective entry on the ship’s manifest. Once sorted, immigrants walked through a dark tiled corridor and climbed up a staircase to the brightly-lit Registry Hall.109

The Registry Hall, the site of medical inspection and registration, was a two-story barrel vaulted room, the largest in the building (Figure 2.20).110 The three large arched windows that ran the length of the room on either side and the lunette windows on each end wall bathed the room in natural light. The effect was awe-inspiring as the immigrants ascended from a dark corridor on the first floor into this vast space. They were unaware, however, that as they climbed the stairs a medical inspection was already underway (Figure 2.21). A uniformed medical officer from the U.S. Public Health Office stood at the top of the stairs looking for those with difficulty walking, shortness of breath, or any other visible malady.111 Officers marked the clothing of those with general health problems with a piece of chalk before the immigrants filed on to a second doctor who inspected them for specific diseases such as tuberculosis, leprosy, or a contagious skin

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109 The baggage department was for storage of large trunks and luggage. Many immigrants chose to carry smaller luggage with them, however, throughout the registry process, presumably for fear of losing it.
110 The Registry Room measures 200 feet long, 100 feet wide and 56 feet high.
111 In oral histories of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island, many of them mistook doctors for military servicemen on account of their blue uniforms.
disease of the scalp called *favus*. A third doctor then inspected the immigrants’ eyes for trachoma, a contagious eye infection that caused blindness and was grounds for deportation (Figure 2.22). The doctor looked for inflammation on the inner eyelid using his fingers, a hairpin, or a buttonhook. The procedure lasted only seconds but was incredibly painful; immigrants dreaded these appropriately dubbed Buttonhook Men.

One immigrant, Fannie Kligerman, recalled, “This I remember well—the eye exam. It was such a fright, such a fright.” Inspectors directed those who did not pass medical inspections into an area enclosed by a wire screen where they waited to be sent to the hospital or to be put on a ship heading back to Europe.

For those who passed medical inspection, registration commenced and the immigrants filed into the rows of iron railings that divided the main floor of the Registry Hall into narrow corridors (Figure 2.23). The press and immigrant aid societies criticized these pens, as they were called at the time, as insulting and inhumane and the Commissioner eventually replaced the pens with wooden benches in 1911 (Figure 2.24). The wait time usually lasted an hour or two on busy days when up to, and occasionally more than, five thousand immigrants were processed. Interpreters guided immigrants into adjoining rows as they moved up in line. An inspector sat at the end of each aisle with the ship’s manifest in front of him (Figure 2.25). He noted the number

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112 About two of every ten or eleven immigrants were marked with a letter – H for heart trouble, X for suspected mental illness, X with a circle around it for definite mental illness, E for eyes, SC for scalp, CT for trachoma, C for conjunctivitis, S for senility, F for face, B for back, P for physical or lungs, L for lameness, PG for pregnancy, FT for feet, N for neck, G for goiter, and K for hernia. The second doctor inspected for diseases that were specifically mentioned in the law as reasons for deportation. Novotny, *Strangers at the Door*, 17-18.


114 Williams addressed the concerns posed by the press and immigrant aid societies that immigrants were treated “like cattle” and “herded,” by stating that “Insofar as this statement may mean that they are at times crowded, and that the portions of the building set over to the use of the railroad companies are inadequate, the statement is correct. The condition is one which cannot be wholly remedied except by the creation of additional quarters. To this matter I will, in due time, give my attention.” Letter from Williams to Treasury Secretary Shaw, May 1, 1902, William Williams Papers.
pinned on the immigrant’s clothing and found it on the manifest. For approximately two minutes, the inspector questioned the immigrant on his/her name, profession, destination in the United States, criminal record, and financial holdings. If the inspector was satisfied with the answers, the immigrant received a landing card and proceeded to the Money Exchange at the end of the hall before returning downstairs to collect baggage and continue his/her journey (Figure 2.26). If not completely satisfied with the answers, the inspector sent the immigrant to the Board of Special Inquiry in the office located in the west wing on the second floor. Given the sheer numbers of immigrants passing through the building daily, officials had to make rapid judgments on whether an immigrant’s health and responses to inquiries were sufficient enough to be admitted into the United States.

The system for inspection and registration established at Ellis Island could only be effective with an appropriate layout of the departments within the building. In contrast to Castle Garden, the architectural plan of the Ellis Island buildings allowed the inspection and registration of immigrants to become a streamlined process in terms of the physical movement of bodies. For example, once immigrants completed processing in the Registry Room of the main building, they exited down the popularly named Stairs of Separation (Figure 2.27). The right-hand side led to the railroad ticket office; the left-hand side, to the New York ferry; and the central steps, to the detention rooms. The

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115 The Board of Special Inquiry consisted of three inspectors and an interpreter. No lawyers could be present although the immigrants’ friends or relatives could be brought in to testify on his/her behalf. A stenographer recorded the proceedings. Two votes out of three determined whether an immigrant was deported or not. The third inspector or the immigrant himself could appeal to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor in Washington, at which time the immigrant could hire a lawyer. Novotny, Strangers at the Door, 22.

116 At this point in their journey, immigrants who had befriended one another on their sea voyage often separated for the last time. Immigration officials sought to avoid long goodbyes and did not inform immigrants it was unlikely they would encounter one another again. Moreno, Ellis Island, 8.
railroad ticket office and waiting rooms took up most of the ground floor, along with baggage storage and various missionary and immigrant aid offices. The distribution of people throughout the building and the designated areas for each department allowed a form of organization to exist that was impossible to achieve in the rotunda at Castle Garden. In designing an immigrant station, one of the architects’ primary concerns was circulation. Boring & Tilton’s design surpassed the competitors’ with its “uninterrupted circulation for a continuous human flow […], not subject anywhere to stoppage or congestion,” as a critic for the *Architectural Record* pointed out in a 1902 article.117 In the same article, the architectural critic noted that the problem facing the architects in designing the main building of Ellis Island was “quite without precedent. The closest analogue to it, in familiar buildings, is doubtless the railway station […] the requirement which characterizes its main and central features is the same as that of a railway station, the requirements of ‘landing,’ collecting and distributing great and sudden crowds with a minimum of confusion or delay […].”118 Yet the design of Ellis Island was even more complex than that of a railway station in that it also functioned as a medical facility, dormitory, and detention center. The press praised Boring & Tilton’s arrangement of these functions. The *New York Times* reported “the interior arrangements are what, after all, make the station a model of completeness.”119

The Beaux-Arts design of the entire complex expressed both contemporary trends in federal architecture as well as the government’s goal of making Ellis Island the precedent for immigrant receiving stations. Supervising Architect Taylor expressed aspirations for an official national architecture:

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118 Ibid.
During his tenure from 1897 to 1912, Taylor announced that the government had turned to the classical architectural style in its building projects because “this style is best suited for government buildings. The experience of centuries has demonstrated that no form of architecture is so pleasing to the great mass of mankind as the classic, or some modified form of the classic.” This interest was hardly unique to Taylor as the preference for classical forms was heralded by architects at the École des Beaux-Arts and dominated the buildings of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Yet the desire for monumental architecture at Ellis Island was not only steered by contemporary trends in architecture. Treasury Secretary Gage commented that the Ellis Island Immigrant Station “will form what the Treasury Department set out to make it, the model immigration station of the world.” Taylor and the Treasury Department succeeded in establishing Ellis Island as a cultural monument, the first purpose-built immigration station; Ellis Island achieved international fame. Boring & Tilton’s design won awards at three world’s fairs: a gold medal for Architecture at the Exposition Universelle, Paris (1900); a gold medal for Architecture at the Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo (1901); and a silver medal at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis (1904).

Despite the architectural success of Boring & Tilton’s design for Ellis Island, there was one significant flaw—the facilities were too small to handle the influx of

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121 Ibid.
immigration in the early twentieth century. When the first facility was constructed in 1892, immigration was still on the rise. Nearly one half million immigrants entered through New York that fiscal year. Yet in late August of 1892, immigration slowed due to a cholera scare in Europe. President Benjamin Harrison imposed strict quarantine on all vessels carrying immigrants into the United States and subsequently, many of the steamship companies refused to carry emigrant passengers from foreign ports.\textsuperscript{123} Congress’ approval of stricter immigration laws, such as the Act of 1893, also contributed to the decrease in immigration. These reasons, along with the financial panic of 1893 and subsequent years of nationwide depression, worked concurrently to stem the flow of immigration into the country. In 1898, less than two hundred thousand immigrants entered the country through Ellis Island.\textsuperscript{124} When plans to rebuild Ellis Island were underway in the year after the fire, the Commissioner-General of Immigration reported, “I do not apprehend that immigration will ever reach the volume of past years, notwithstanding the most prosperous conditions in our country.”\textsuperscript{125} Congress authorized funds to rebuild a facility that, at most, could handle five hundred thousand immigrants a year. The Immigration Bureau, however, was unaware that a record mass movement of foreigners into the country would occur in the early years of the twentieth century.

Once the American economy recovered at the turn of the century, greater numbers of immigrants began arriving once again; they sailed overseas to escape the religious,

\textsuperscript{123} See Pitkin, \textit{Keepers of the Gate}, 19-21 for a more detailed description of the falling off in immigration in the late nineteenth century.
\textsuperscript{124} The total number immigrants into the country in 1898 equaled 229,299 and those arriving in New York Harbor numbered 178,748. Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration}, 1897, 5. See also Pitkin, \textit{Keepers of the Gate}, 21.
racial and political persecution experienced in their native countries or sought relief from famine and economic hardship. Construction crews became a permanent fixture at the facility in the first decade of the twentieth century as they struggled to expand the complex to keep up with the growing numbers of immigrants. In 1904, when detained immigrants occupied sidewalks for several hours a day to alleviate overcrowded rooms, workers built a new dining room and also erected a playground on the roof to occupy detained children.\textsuperscript{126} The following year Congress authorized funds for a much-needed addition to the hospital building. Despite the addition, Ellis Island lacked facilities to treat and isolate those with contagious diseases. Immigrants with contagious diseases such as typhus, cholera, leprosy, and smallpox were subject to quarantine and sent to the New York Quarantine Station on Hoffman and Swinburn Islands after medical inspectors examined them aboard the ship.\textsuperscript{127}

In 1907 a record number of immigrants entered Ellis Island, with as many as ten thousand foreigners arriving daily to a facility that was built to handle eight thousand.\textsuperscript{128} Commissioner Robert Watchorn took over supervision of Ellis Island in 1905 and found lack of room, time, and money. He begged Congress for funds to build a larger refrigeration plant to contain more than one day’s supply of food (as the current plant did) and a new Baggage and Dormitory building since the old one produced intolerable conditions where, in one instance, seventeen hundred women and children slept in a dormitory with bunks for six hundred.\textsuperscript{129} Although the majority of immigrants passed

\textsuperscript{126} Novotny, \textit{Strangers at the Door}, 23.
\textsuperscript{128} Dennis Wepman, \textit{Immigration} (New York: Facts on File, 2002) 210-211.
\textsuperscript{129} Congress granted Watchorn $400,000 for the construction of a new Baggage and Dormitory Building in 1905. In 1914, a third story was added to it. Novotny, \textit{Strangers at the Door}, 23-24.
through Ellis Island in approximately three hours, about twenty percent remained overnight to await hearings by the Board of Special Inquiry.

In Ellis Island’s early years, both national and international press printed tales of the mistreatment of immigrants. When the new federal immigrant station was completed in 1900, it provided better accommodations for immigrants and a systematic approach to the registration process, yet the employees treated the immigrants in the same manner as they had at the Barge Office and at Castle Garden. Tales of shortchanging at the Money Exchange, filthy conditions in the dormitories, and meager food supplies filled the newspapers. When William Williams, a New York City lawyer, was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1902 as Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island, he instituted a number of substantial reforms in response to the corruption he observed firsthand.

Under Williams’ administration, the welfare of the immigrant became a main concern. Williams’ first memorandum to his employees directed them to treat every immigrant with “kindness and consideration” or else they would be suspended or dismissed from service. Williams often examined firsthand the companies contracted

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130 The corruption under Commissioner Thomas Fitchie and his Assistant Commissioner Edward McSweeney was highly publicized, including McSweeney’s deal with the railroad companies to supply free passes to Ellis Island employees in exchange for turning a blind eye to overcharging. McSweeney took with him many public documents when he was discharged, some of which would later be found incriminating during later investigations. Series I, Ellis Island 1902-1914, 1939, I.A. Correspondence, 1902-1914, William Williams Papers. See also Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 227-229 and Unrau, *Historic Resource Study: Ellis Island*, vol. 2, 220-241.

131 Williams served as Commissioner of Immigration for the Port of New York at Ellis Island for two terms, from 1902 to 1905 and from 1909 to 1913.

132 Notice from Williams, 12 June 1902, William Williams Papers. Despite Williams insistence on treating immigrants with respect, it should be noted that he supported immigration restriction. Specifically, he felt that the immigrants arriving from Southern and Eastern Europe were a lesser class of immigrant and needed to be screened. Robert Watchorn, Williams’ successor, favored liberal immigration policies and subsequently, Williams returned to his post as Commissioner in 1909 and mandated all immigrants arriving at Ellis Island needed to have at least twenty-five dollars and a train ticket to their destination. William Williams Papers and Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 229.
to work in Ellis Island; he was even known to eat in the dining room from time to time to judge the quality of food. He refused to renew contracts with the current food, money, and baggage service companies, whom he found guilty of overcharging and mistreating immigrants. In one instance, a telegraph boy had given a counterfeit coin to an immigrant. When discovered, Williams promptly sent the boy to jail and issued a notice that “swindling immigrants is a contemptible business, and whoever does this, under whatever form, should be despised […]”. He opened up the bidding for concession services and preferred to give contracts to companies that would benefit the immigrants but also make a profit, since companies that underbid would resort to shortchanging and exploitation of immigrants.

While immigrant welfare was a concern for Williams, he did not want anything to interfere with rapid inspection and registration processes. Williams banned the presence of missionary and immigrant aid workers from the Registry Hall since they often interfered with the inspection process, causing delays. He relegated them to work only on the lower floor, where immigrants headed after registration. To the general public, the presence of immigrant aid societies on Ellis Island was lauded; the Commissioner, however, had a more reserved view of them. In a review of Williams’ administration in 1902, Leslie’s Weekly gave enthusiastic approval of the missionaries who care for and protect the rights of the immigrant, preventing injustice and continually alert to distress and need, reporting that “the work they are doing is of the kind that merits unstinted

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133 Williams to Treasury Secretary Shaw, 7 November 1902, William Williams Papers.  
134 Notice from Williams to employees, 16 July 1903, William Williams Papers. See also Pitkin, Keepers of the Gate, 66.  
135 Williams to Treasury Secretary Shaw, 7 November 1902, William Williams Papers.  
136 Williams also investigated the various missionaries and immigrant aid organizations with agents at Ellis Island to determine their validity, a controversial move that received negative press. See I.B. Newspaper Criticism, 1902-3, 1909-1913, William Williams Papers.
praise.” Yet Williams noted that some of these so-called benevolent societies were in fact successors of the boarding-house runners, luring immigrants to their businesses under the pretense of protection. Williams’ goal was to “draw a line between the true missionaries (of which there are a number on Ellis Island) and the boarding-house runners who, parading under false colors, are for that reason the most dangerous people to whom an immigrant may be turned over.”

Careful review and admittance of missionaries continued under Robert Watchorn’s administration. The religious organizations and immigrant aid societies worked independently from the government officials, although they remained under the government’s watch. Commissioner Watchorn required these groups to not collect any fees for their services, to submit monthly reports of their activity, and cautioned them to curb religious zeal, specifically in consideration of the Jewish population who had arrived on American shores to escape religious persecution.

The transportation companies were also under the careful eye of Williams. The transportation network that had developed at Castle Garden played a significant role in the operations at Ellis Island, because hundreds of thousands of immigrants passed through on their way to western destinations each year. Williams instated a general policy at Ellis Island that no immigrant destined to western points would be allowed to

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137 Leslie’s Weekly, 7 August 1902, 126 and Pitkin, Keepers of the Gate, 78.
138 Williams to Pastor Berkemeier, 10 October 1902, William Williams Papers. In one case, Williams received word that Reverend Berkemeier of the German Immigrant House in New York City had been taking funds for himself and was making immigrants work for him at the home. Commissioner-General Sargent castigated Berkemeier in a letter to Williams, stating that the “scoundrel ought to be treated to a coat of tar and feathers and cast off the island, without any regard to his means of transportation to the mainland.” Williams banned Berkemeier from Ellis Island, presumably without the coat of tar and feathers.

139 Watchorn spoke directly to the American Tract Society which had been distributing Christian tracts in Yiddish and Hebrew to Jewish immigrants at Ellis Island. He stated “a great many of our immigrant are Hebrews, who are on their way from persecution by one style of Christians, and when they have Christian tracts—printed in Hebrew—put in their hands, apparently with the approval of the United States Government, they wonder what is going to happen to them there.” See Pitkin, Keepers of the Gate, 79-80.
enter New York City under any circumstances, lest they “fall into the hands of unscrupulous people.”\textsuperscript{140} The government allowed the railroad companies access to Ellis Island, yet government officials were not allowed to interfere with the way those companies ran business. This put the Commissioner of Immigration in a precarious position; he had authority to deal with agents treating immigrants unfairly but otherwise had no control over the companies. Despite his relative lack of authority over the railroad companies, the Commissioner had no qualms about monitoring their activities. Both Williams and Watchorn hired undercover agents to inspect immigrant trains and waiting areas. One undercover inspector, Philip Cowen, went so far as to expend “the amount of $1.50 for false hair, etc.” in order to travel as an immigrant.\textsuperscript{141} The subsequent reports from these operations highlighted areas for improvement and served as warning to the railroad companies that they were under observation by the government. During Williams’ two nonconsecutive terms as Commissioner, he sent out notices regarding the behavior and practices of the railroad agents. He directed railroad department employees to “maintain the same standard of courtesy that is required of Government officials.”\textsuperscript{142}

The companies involved in the railroad pool at Ellis Island functioned in the same capacity as they had at Castle Garden—as part of the Immigrant Clearing House which regulated all immigrant traffic from eastern ports. Like the medical officers and inspectors in the Registry Hall, railroad agents functioned methodically and swiftly. Agents at Ellis Island sold as many as twenty-five tickets per minute during the busiest

\textsuperscript{140} “Notice from the Department of Commerce and Labor, Immigration Service, 9 April 1903,” William Williams Papers.
\textsuperscript{141} Williams later stated that “the money spent in collecting these reports [was] extremely well spent.” Kvale, \textit{Emigrant Trains}, 230-231. In his autobiography \textit{Memories of An American Jew} (New York: International Press, 1932), Cowen wrote of his appointment at Ellis Island.
\textsuperscript{142} Williams to Supervising Inspector, Ellis Island, 19 September 1903, Ellis Island Letters Sent, William Williams Papers.
times (Figure 2.28). The majority of tickets sold were based on immigrant rates for travel on segregated trains, although immigrants did have the option of purchasing first-class tickets for non-immigrant trains or rail cars. Williams issued strict orders to the railroad companies, however, not to solicit first-class tickets to immigrants for fear that they would be deceived by the railroad agents into thinking the first-class rate was the only one offered. With the help of translators from immigrant aid societies, the agents used maps to point out various routes, noting the differences between the fastest routes and the cheapest price. Agents did not always perform their duties to Williams’ satisfaction. In another notice from Williams to the railroad agents, he stated: “It has come to my attention that immigrants headed to Chicago took 52-78 hours instead of the less that 36 hours it should take. The cost for the long journey with multiple transfers is $14 but a direct route is only $1 more.” He urged agents to be more conscientious when selling their tickets.

Even with the help of translators, agents occasionally had a difficult time determining where immigrants were headed since they often had incomplete information or the address was illegible. A contemporary observer noted that “the spoken name of an American city is apt to be absolutely unintelligible even to the trained interpreter, and often the address is far from legible.” One Hungarian woman handed an agent a slip of paper on which was written “Szekenevno Pillsburs.” After puzzling for a few moments, the agent finally deciphered it as “Second Avenue, Pittsburgh.” In many cases, agents

144 “Notice Concerning Sale of First-Class Transportation to Immigrants at Ellis Island,” 24 November 1911, William Williams Papers.
146 Notice from Williams, 9 April 1903, William Williams Papers.
147 Cited in Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 221.
made educated guesses about an intended destination based on an immigrant’s nationality. Large German families were often traveling to the Midwest and thus, an agent translated “Linkinbra” to Lincoln, Nebraska. However, agents did make mistakes from time to time. In one instance, an agent sold a group of fifteen Italian immigrants destined for Amsterdam Avenue in New York City tickets to Amsterdam in upstate New York.\footnote{Novotny, \textit{Strangers at the Door}, 20.} A physician at Ellis Island during its initial years recalled another instance where a Jersey Central conductor accidentally mixed up the destination envelopes for a Syrian woman with plans to meet her husband in Memphis and a Finnish woman meeting her husband in Cincinnati, “to the general dissatisfaction of all four parties generally concerned.”\footnote{Victor Safford was a US Public Health Service physician at Ellis Island from 1892 to 1902 and wrote of his experiences on the island in his book \textit{Immigration Problems: Personal Experiences of an Official} (New York: Dodd, 1925).} Upon arrival, the parties involved realized the mistake and railroad employees sent the women to their correct destinations. Even though there were twelve railroad lines operating out of Ellis Island, mistakes such as these were surprisingly few in number.\footnote{Ibid.}

Once immigrants purchased tickets at the Railroad Office they proceeded to one of the several passenger waiting rooms, arranged according to the destination of the immigrants, located on the ground floor of Ellis Island (Figure 2.29). When the building first opened, there were three waiting rooms: one for passengers bound for all points west and south; another for New England; and a third for New York.\footnote{Ibid.} In the annual

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\footnote{While at Ellis Island, ticketed immigrants remained the responsibility of the steamship companies that had carried them over. Those travelers with a long wait ahead of them in the railroad rooms received provisions at the expense of the steamship companies, which they provided sparingly until Williams reprimanded them and threatened the companies with fines. While they waited, immigrants had the opportunity to purchase boxed lunches for their journey. On average, these lunches cost fifty cents and}
report of 1903, the Commissioner noted the urgent need for additional accommodations for those proceeding west by rail, since “the ticket room is much too small and the waiting rooms are so inadequate that a sidewalk is now frequently used as a temporary waiting place.” Inadequate space interfered with the ordered arrangement of waiting rooms. In 1904 the Treasury Department authorized an addition near the rear of the Main Building to be used as a waiting room for the growing numbers of passengers (Figure 2.30). Immigration officials pinned numbered tags, referencing the intended rail line, onto the immigrants’ clothing as they headed into the waiting rooms (Figure 2.31). One Hungarian immigrant, Ann Vida, recalls of her journey in 1921 that “when we were getting off Ellis Island, we had all sorts of tags on us. Now that I think about it, we must have looked like marked-down merchandise in Gimbals’ basement store or something.”

Railroad conductors used the tags to quickly determine what rail line an immigrant should be traveling on and what connections s/he had to make.

Immigrants heading to all points west and south took government boats, docked at the rear of the main building, to the railroad depots in Jersey City, Weehawken and Hoboken, where they often had another long wait ahead of them before the immigrant train left the station. Those traveling to New York or New England took the ferry back to the Barge Office, where they could meet in-town relatives and friends. Passengers heading north on the New York Central & Hudson River or the New York, New Haven & Hartford lines transferred at the Barge Office to boats heading to Pier 71 at Thirty-First provided enough food including meat, cheese, bread, fruit and beverages for about three to four meals. Heaps, *The Story of Ellis Island*, 96-97 and Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 222.

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153 Interview with Ann Vida, 1986, Ellis Island Oral History Project. In addition to the railroad tags, the immigrants would have been tagged with their steamship name and the number corresponding to the entry on the ship manifest as well as any chalk marks on their clothing for certain medical conditions.
Street and Thirteenth Avenue. There, in compliance with Williams’ orders not to expose immigrants to potential threats in the city, the railroad companies boarded the travelers directly onto immigrant trains at the freight yards on West Thirtieth Street instead of boarding them at Grand Central Station.\textsuperscript{154} The immigrant’s journey by rail opened up several investigations by government officials into the conditions of station waiting rooms and immigrant trains, particularly the discrepancy between the cost of the ticket and the accommodations provided.\textsuperscript{155}

Although the transportation network remained virtually the same from Castle Garden to Ellis Island, the shift from state to federal control of immigration did bring about a number of changes in the way officials processed immigrants. At the state-owned Castle Garden, the inspection and registration processes took place in the rotunda’s open plan, where immigrants also waited for transportation, searched for their relatives, purchased concessions, or sought employment opportunities. The chaotic environment, paired with the corruption occurring at the administrative level, reached such levels that the federal government intervened. When the Treasury Department opened Ellis Island, the inspection and registration process became systematic and the building’s plan allowed immigration officials to process more immigrants each day than had ever been possible at Castle Garden.

In many ways, Ellis Island functioned as its own city, with its own transportation network, hospital, lodging, sanitation department, power plant, etc. Its island location, however, emphasized the isolation of the immigrant population occupying the facility.


\textsuperscript{155} See Chapter 4 for a discussion of railroad waiting rooms and immigrant train cars.
This isolation pervaded several areas of the immigrants’ journey: in steerage on the ships that carried them overseas; isolation from American citizens at the immigrant receiving stations; and isolation from non-immigrant passengers in railroad waiting rooms and on train cars. The millions of individuals arriving at Ellis Island were, in a sense, treated as one; the speed with which these government officials processed and directed the flow of people moving through this carefully designed space emphasized that notion. This speed was a necessity, of course, since officials had to process thousands of immigrants daily; it resulted in the majority of immigrants passing through Ellis Island in several hours or within a day. Care for individual immigrants was left to the missionaries and immigrant aid societies operating independently within the building.

New York’s immigration stations reveal the complicated relationship that formed between the government and the railroad companies in the nineteenth century. The presence of the railroad pool at Ellis Island, and at Castle Garden before that, protected immigrants from swindlers but also allowed the government to ensure that the immigrants were on their way to a specific destination, with money in hand, and that they would not become public charges. In this way, private and public interests served one another in a mutually beneficial relationship. At the same time, however, the nature of these two parties kept them at odds. Even with the reforms at Ellis Island initiated under Williams’ tenure, the profit-seeking railroads still operated independently of government officials. In 1912 Williams’ noted: “The duty of this office is, and presumably always will be, to execute statutes enacted to restrict immigration, while the interests of the powerful transportation companies represented at Ellis Island demand liberal immigration
laws and a liberal execution of the same.”

While the goals of railroad and government officials may have differed, they worked together to manage the flow of European immigrants into the United States—first on a smaller scale, by directing the movement of bodies through their buildings, and then on a larger scale, by channeling the movement of foreigners throughout the country.

CHAPTER III. PORTS OF ARRIVAL: SAN FRANCISCO

In contemporary American culture, San Francisco’s Angel Island Immigration Station is popularly referred to as “Ellis Island of the West.” Yet the federal immigration station was in reality quite different from its East Coast counterpart. European immigrants entering through Ellis Island formed a part of a larger network, one in which the railways and the government worked together to transport foreigners into the country and settle the nation’s lands. At Angel Island, however, Asian immigrants had incredible difficulty entering the country and even those that had been born in the country or entered legally were always considered foreign, and therefore, inferior, to Americans because of their race. Historian Robert Eric Barde notes that “while Ellis Island was built to let Europeans in, Angel Island was built to keep Asians out.”¹ In fact, immigration officials working at Angel Island referred to it as the “Guardian of the Western Gate.” This era of the United States as a gatekeeping nation began with the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, a law that was the first in American history to bar a group of immigrants because of their race and class; it also marked the first large-scale deportation of one specific immigrant group.² Scholarship on Angel Island tends to focus on interrogation methods, detainment periods and individual immigrant stories, and while historians have often referred to Angel Island as the physical manifestation of Chinese

exclusionary legislation, they have yet to fully examine how the architecture of Angel Island Immigration Station communicated exclusion.\textsuperscript{3}

The racial, economic, and political forces that supported this restrictive immigration legislation resulted in a particular architectural design for Angel Island, one in which detainees were segregated by race and constantly monitored. Built in 1910 and closed in 1940 after a fire destroyed the administration building, the station’s history is intimately linked with imprisonment: its location and architectural design; proposals in 1913 to transfer the station to the nearby military prison on Alcatraz Island; and finally, to Angel Island’s own role in housing prisoners of war during both World Wars. This chapter examines the physical environment of Angel Island—its secluded location, segregated facilities, furnishings, constant surveillance, and oppressive atmosphere—as the embodiment of the discrimination inherent in the Chinese Exclusion Act. Since San Francisco was the main port of entry to the United States for Chinese immigrants, Angel Island Immigration Station was built as a means to enforce exclusionary legislation.\textsuperscript{4}

Although Angel Island did receive immigrants of many nationalities, including Japanese, Korean, Indian, Russian, Mexican, and Italian among others, this chapter focuses on the majority of immigrants detained there—the Chinese.\textsuperscript{5}

In the mid-nineteenth century, tens of thousands of Chinese sailed across the Pacific to what they called \textit{Gam Saan}—“Gold Mountain.” The discovery of gold in California had sparked the hopes of the Chinese, who were suffering from political and

\textsuperscript{3} The most complete study to date of Angel Island Immigration Station is Erika Lee and Judy Yung, \textit{Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
\textsuperscript{4} Lee and Yung, \textit{Angel Island}, 16.
\textsuperscript{5} See Lee and Yung, \textit{Angel Island}, for the experiences of the other nationalities that entered the country through Angel Island.
economic instability in China as a result of the Opium Wars and the Taiping Civil War. Word first spread to China of the discovery of gold in California in 1848. In 1852, more than twenty thousand Chinese left their war-torn and famished country and sailed to San Francisco in the hopes of earning enough money to pay for their livelihood and make extra to send back to their struggling families. After the gold rush fervor subsided in the 1860s (when many of the gold fields and mines had been exhausted), Chinese miners found work with the railroads, particularly with the Central Pacific Railroad Company in the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, which was begun in 1863 and completed in 1869. By 1880, over three hundred thousand Chinese were living in California, amounting to approximately one tenth of the state’s population. With the increasing population of California came the development of towns and railways—and the need for laborers to build them.

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6 The First Opium War between England and China lasted from 1839 to 1842 and resulted in greatly increased taxes as well as civil unrest. The Second Opium War began in 1856 and concluded with China’s reaffirmation of the Treaty of Tianjin. Nearly a decade after the end of the First Opium War, the Taiping Rebellion broke out in southeastern China. This widespread civil war brought with it famine and social chaos. An estimated twenty million were killed and tens of thousands of Chinese left for California. Wepman, Immigration, 93. For more on the Opium Wars and their effect on modern China, see Julia Lovell, The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China (London: Picador, 2011). On the Taiping Rebellion see Stephen R. Platt, Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, the West, and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

7 The Chinese were not the only ones traveling to California in search of gold. Most gold-seekers, called “forty-niners” (in reference to 1849, the year in which they arrived), came from throughout the United States but many also arrived from Europe, Latin America, and Australia. J.S. Holliday and William Swain, The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002) and Kenneth N. Owens, ed., Riches for All: The California Gold Rush and the World (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

8 The Central Pacific faced a shortage of laborers in the West and subsequently relied mainly on Chinese immigrant laborers. Leland Stanford, President of the Central Pacific, stated that “a large majority of the white laboring class on the Pacific Coast find more profitable and congenial employment in mining and agricultural pursuits, than in railroad work. The greater portion of the laborers employed by us are Chinese, who constitute a large element in the population of California.” Leland Stanford, Central Pacific Railroad Statement Made to the President of the United States, and the Secretary of the Interior, on the Progress of the Work, October 10, 1865 (Sacramento: H.S. Crocker, 1865). The Union Pacific, which built the eastern line of the Transcontinental Railroad, employed mostly Civil War army veterans and Irish immigrants.
The Transcontinental Railroad joined east and west in more ways than one. It geographically united the east and west coasts of the country and its construction also brought Chinese immigrant laborers to the Western world (Figure 3.1). Yet the hiring of Chinese laborers caused increased hostility toward the Chinese from white, or European American, laborers. Chinese laborers were willing to do the strenuous and often dangerous work required to build the railroads; furthermore, they did this work for lower wages than those given white laborers. This labor competition contributed greatly to mounting anti-Chinese sentiment. Not only were the Chinese viewed as taking jobs from whites, but their appearance, language, and manner were viewed by whites as inferior and even offensive.

From the moment the Chinese set foot on American shores, cartoonists expressed these xenophobic fears by producing racialized portrayals of them published in periodicals. Images of the Chinese as sub-human and animalistic, unaware of basic hygiene, living in squalor, and high on opium pervaded the popular press (Figure 3.2). Chinese women were categorized as prostitutes and the nature of Chinese style and dress, for example, the fact that men wore their hair in a queue (long hair worn in a single braid down the back) suggested ambiguous sexuality (Figure 3.3). The fact that many Chinese men lived as bachelors instead of with their families (wives and children usually

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9 With the influx of Chinese during the gold rush, the state and county government imposed taxes on foreign miners. The legislature seriously considered exclusionary laws as early as the beginning of the Chinese migration to the United States but there was significant opposition among mining representatives and certain legislators. Historian Mark Kanazawa proposes one explanation for this opposition. He asserts that Chinese miners contributed significantly to state and local tax revenues yet required relatively little public services (schools, hospitals, etc), since most Chinese immigrants were adult males. This additional revenue was particularly welcome after statehood, when the state and localities were in dire need of money. Kanazawa notes that by 1858, when California’s finances improved, the state first enacted exclusionary legislation. Mark Kanazawa, “Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California,” The Journal of Economic History 65, no. 3 (September 2005) 779-805.

remained in China) challenged gender roles that also frightened the European American population. These images perpetuated negative attitudes toward the foreigners whom Americans had labeled as undesirable and they visually represented emerging social hierarchies—where Americans once believed the Irish to be the least desirable sort of immigrant, the Chinese were fast filling that role (Figure 3.4). The presence of the Chinese meant less work for whites, in the eyes of European Americans, and thus the Chinese were a threat to their very existence.

The severe discrimination toward Chinese immigrants on the part of American citizens, European immigrants, the media, and government officials eventually resulted in strict legislation against entry of Chinese into the United States. The anti-Chinese agitation that had begun in the 1840s culminated in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, signed into law by President Chester A. Arthur, and its subsequent renewal in 1892 and 1902 (Figure 3.5). The law restricted entry for all Chinese laborers for a period of ten years and prohibited Chinese immigrants already in the country from becoming naturalized citizens. The extension of the 1882 law, the Geary Act of 1892, stated that “if a Chinese resident were found without a certificate, he would be subject to immediate and summary deportation unless he could find one white witness to confirm that he had resided in the United States before November 17, 1880.” The government’s strict law that required the word of a white person to testify to the immigrant’s claim to have

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12 This exclusion law was not the first, or only, legislation to affect Chinese immigrants but it was one of the most significant restrictions in American history. The Page Act of 1875, for example, prohibited the entry of immigrants the federal government deemed undesirable, such as immigrants from Asia arriving to perform forced labor, Asian women suspected of engaging in prostitution, and any immigrants considered convicts in their own country.
resided in the United States not only demonstrated the blatant racism evident in immigration policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also pointed to the many ways in which the Chinese community was demoralized at the western port of entry to the United States. Even if the individual had been born in the country or had arrived legally, every Chinese person was considered suspect by inspection officers; it was only through the testimony of a white witness that the Chinese individual’s claims could be validated. Even after they entered the country legally (or even if they were born in America), the government remained distrustful of the Chinese.

Prior to the construction of Angel Island Immigration Station, inspection took place in a two-story shed owned and operated by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company at San Francisco’s Pier 40 (Figure 3.6). Like the port of Baltimore in the mid-nineteenth century, San Francisco was served primarily by one railroad company, the Central Pacific Railroad, which became part of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in 1885. The Southern Pacific acquired the Pacific Mail Steamship Company in 1893, developing freight and passenger service from Asia to San Francisco and on to New York via rail or to Central America via the Pacific Mail steamships. This merger was thus instrumental in opening up the Pacific for passenger travel between Asia and the United States. Yet as Asian immigrants arrived in San Francisco, they did not board waiting immigrant trains or were not able to enter the city, as was the case for European immigrants arriving in Baltimore; rather, they were detained for days and even weeks in the Pacific Mail Steamship Company detention sheds for inspection from immigration officers.
The Chinese immigrants referred to the detention shed as *muk uk* or “wooden barracks,” but also as the “iron cage,” or “Chinese jail.”

Measuring 100 feet by 50 feet, the wooden structure with pitched roof contained only six windows on each floor and had a single exit. The wooden building was “a veritable fire trap,” according to one immigrant inspector. As many as five hundred people occupied it at once, although it had been built to house only two hundred. To accommodate the extra detainees, additional bunks were placed in the aisles, which further contributed to overcrowding, not to mention increased fire hazard. With poor ventilation, many detainees fell sick and there were even some cases of death. Editors of the *Chinese World* wrote that “the mistreatment of us Chinese there was worse than for jailed prisoners.”

The unsanitary and dangerous conditions under which these detainees were held became the focus of Chinese community leaders in San Francisco’s Chinatown. In one case, the Chinese daily *Chung Sai Yat Po* reprinted a petition signed on behalf of the Chinese community in California by the Officers and Mercantile Members of the Chinese Six Companies. In the petition, the authors described the “harsh treatment accorded the Chinese by the United States Immigration Officials” and expressed that the Chinese were “habitually subjected to delay and embarrassment.” In creating and publishing this petition, the authors hoped to secure the attention of the American government.

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14 Lee, *At America’s Gates*, 124. Lee notes that conditions weren’t any better at other west coast ports.

15 Richard Taylor to the Commissioner-General of Immigration, 25 March 1909, File 52999/44, Subject Correspondence, 1906-32, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington D.C.

16 F.H. Larnard to Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor, 23 November 1908, File 52770/21, ibid; P.A. Surgeon to Collector of Customs, 13 January 1909, File 52999/44, ibid.


18 The petition was presented to Prince Tsai Tao on the occasion of his journey to San Francisco. *Chung Sai Yat Po*, 2 May 1910, Box 948, File 52961, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington D.C.

19 Ibid.
Merchants in China also protested American discriminatory policies by staging a boycott of American goods beginning in May of 1905 that continued for several months. Groups such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese-American League of Justice of Los Angeles published complaints about the harsh treatment and discrimination during inspection and processing of Chinese immigrants at the immigration station. Chinese leaders such as the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wu Tingfang, sent petitions and letters to American presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson, complaining of the harsh treatment and discriminatory procedures of exclusion enforcement.

The government finally responded to the objections although never fully addressed the physical environment in which the detainees were held. President Theodore Roosevelt instituted several changes to immigration practices after acknowledging that “in the effort to carry out the policy of excluding Chinese laborers […] grave injustices and wrongs have been done to this nation and to the people of China.” Several of the changes affected interrogation proceedings: attorneys could now examine testimonies and make copies of it in preparation for their cases; attorneys were allowed to lengthen the time given to make an appeal; and Chinese detainees could also now have their attorneys and interpreters present at the hearings, although they

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themselves could not actively participate. Finally, one of the most significant changes was the end of the Bertillon system of identification, an anthropometric system of physical measurements of body parts that was utilized in the field of criminology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Figure 3.7). The process, which had been used for immigrant inspection since 1903, was time-consuming and its adoption at immigration stations inherently linked arriving immigrants with criminals. Even with the eradication of the system, Asian immigrants would still unfortunately be treated with suspicion by government officials and the public-at-large.

When the Commissioner-General of Immigration, Frank P. Sargent, finally inspected the Pacific Mail Steamship Company detention shed on November 2, 1902, he found that conditions were “disgraceful—cramped in dimensions [and] lacking in every facility for cleanliness and decency,” yet no efforts were made by the steamship company or the government to improve conditions. Only after the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Victor H. Metcalf, recognized the facility as endangering government employees, in addition to the Chinese, did the Immigration Bureau take action to construct a new station. Metcalf felt that “the sanitary conditions are so poor that not only is the health and physical welfare of the detained persons constantly subjected to serious menace, but

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the danger to the Government employees and others who are compelled to transact
official business at the detention quarters is a matter of grave consequence.”

Until this point, conditions for the detainees were abominable but excused or ignored by the
government, since after all, it was mainly Chinese held there. Yet once the government
realized that their employees—white American citizens—were affected, it finally took
action to build a new facility.

Congress required a new immigration station that would be as isolated as possible
to prevent escape or communication with the outside Chinese community. Immigration
officials were concerned by Chinese detainees’ attempts to escape from the Pacific Mail
Steamship Company shed—thirty-two Chinese detainees had escaped between
September and November 1908.27 Commissioner-General Sargent recommended that a
new immigration station be built and proposed several stipulations: first, that it would be
isolated from the mainland in order to prevent escape and the spread of communicable
disease; second, that it would provide more suitable accommodations than the Pacific
Mail Steamship Company detention shed; and finally, that it would prevent
communication between detainees and any friends or relatives who attempted to coach
them on how to pass interrogations.28 He also requested the sum of $200,000 to construct
the new federal immigration station.

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27 Only three were caught. F.H. Larned to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, 28 January 1909, File 5220/71, ibid.; San Francisco Call, September 9 and November 29, 1908; Lee, At America’s Gates, 125.
Congress approved the use of the federally-owned Angel Island, the largest island in San Francisco Bay, to be the site of the new immigration station (Figure 3.8). The island’s first known inhabitants were the Hookooeko tribe of the Coast Miwok American Indians. In 1775, Spanish explorer Juan Manuel de Ayala landed on the island and named it *Isla de Los Angeles*—Angel Island. Contagious diseases, brought by these Europeans, all but destroyed the indigenous population. The Spanish governor of California granted the land to Antonio Maria Osio in the 1830s for use as a cattle ranch.

In 1858 the United States government gained control of the island and established Camp Reynolds, later renamed Fort McDowell (Figure 3.9). The federal government also built a quarantine station on Angel Island in 1892 to prevent entrance of “loathsome or dangerously contagious” diseases. The facility consisted of forty buildings including a detention barracks with four hundred beds, a disinfecting plant, laboratories, and housing for employees (Figure 3.10). Given that it was already the location of a quarantine

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29 San Francisco was the main port of entry for immigrants arriving on the West Coast and thus required a large immigration station. Several smaller federal stations were also located in Seattle, San Diego and San Pedro. Diane Rogers, “Angel Island: Breaking the Silence,” *Stanford Magazine*, January/February 2002, http://alumni.stanford.edu/get/page/magazine/article/?article_id=38166 (13 February 2013).

30 The government hoped that the island’s function as a meeting place for smugglers and as a dueling range would cease if it was in private ownership. Valerie Natale, “Angel Island: ‘Guardian of the Western Gate’,” *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1998) 125.

31 The military built three artillery batteries to protect the bay against the Confederate army—an attack that never happened. The island’s history as a detention center began at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, when it held captured soldiers and Native Americans who had been taken prisoner during campaigns in Arizona. For more on the history of Angel Island, see John Soennichsen, *Miwoks to Missiles: A History of Angel Island* (San Francisco: Angel Island Association, 2001).


33 The U.S. Public Health Service eventually moved its headquarters to San Francisco although the quarantine station itself remained in use until 1946.
station, the seven hundred and forty acre island could readily accommodate the proposed immigration station.

Architect Walter J. Mathews received the contract to design the new immigration facility at Angel Island. There was no architectural competition, as had been the case in the design for Ellis Island. The Oakland architect had met with Commissioner Sargent in Washington, D.C. in March 1905, just as the Commissioner was charged with opening up the San Francisco facility. Mathews assured Sargent that “if I should be appointed the architect and carry out the construction of this station, I would come to Washington and while there would make the sketches for the station under your personal supervision, which, in my judgment, is the only method to get complete and satisfactory results to all parties concerned.” Sargent then wrote to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor asking whether he would like to open up a competition for architects or if Sargent should secure the services of Mathews. Mathews was offered the job and by September, had signed his contract. Construction on the facility began immediately but was interrupted by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake since workers were unable to get machinery and supplies to the island from the city; the wharf at Angel Island also had sustained damage during the disaster. Work resumed the following year and the facility was completed in 1908.

When the planning of the immigration station at Angel Island began, Senator George C. Perkins of California recommended that the facility model the cottage system

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34 It is unclear whether there was any relationship between Mathews and Sargent or if Mathews had ties in Washington, D.C. that may have secured him a meeting with Sargent.
35 Letter from Mathews to Sargent, 24 March 1905, Box 49, Folder 51456/16-34, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington D.C.
36 Letter from Sargent to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, 30 March 1905, Box 49, Folder 51456/16-34, ibid.
of Ellis Island (Figure 3.11). The cottage plan, as it was begun to be used by hospitals and asylums in the second half of the nineteenth century, consisted of a series of smaller structures housing separate functions rather than one large institutional building.

Although the hospital of Ellis Island did employ the cottage plan on the second and third islands, the majority of immigrants only passed through the massive main building on the first island. Mathews traveled to Ellis Island to study the layout of the facility before planning Angel Island. The cottage plan appealed to the architect and his superiors for several reasons: first, the hilly island could accommodate smaller, separate structures more readily than one monolithic building; second, separate structures could enforce segregation of the sick from the healthy and the Asians from the non-Asians; and finally, the total cost of these smaller structures would be significantly less. Mathews’ final design for the immigration station of Angel Island consisted of an administration building with adjacent dining hall, a detention barracks, a hospital, staff housing, water supply and power house, and a pier with boat service to the mainland (Figure 3.12). Architect Julia Morgan, who had been hired by her brother-in-law, Commissioner of Immigration Hart Hyatt North, designed twelve employee cottages to house staff members and their families (Figure 3.13). The cottages were constructed during the facility’s opening year.

The immigration station was situated on fifteen acres on the northeastern coast of the island (Figure 3.14). Former Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor William R.

37 Letter from Senator George C. Perkins to George B. Cortelyou, Secretary Department of Commerce and Labor, 29 April 1904, Box 49, Folder 51456/1-15, ibid.
38 For more on the cottage plan, see Carla Yanni, The Architecture of Madness: Insane Asylums in the United States (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007) 79-104.
39 Morgan was one of the first women admitted to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and in 1904 became the first woman licensed to practice architecture in the California. The Angel Island cottages were completed early in her career and were destroyed in 1971 as part of a training exercise for Marin County firefighters.
Wheeler inquired into the expense involved in opening the facility and believed its remote location would result in an additional fifty thousand dollars per annum.\footnote{Williams cites transporting food to the island as one of the major additional costs. U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, \textit{Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration for the Year Ended 1908} (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909) 144-145.} Furthermore, while “the station is delightfully, located, so far as scenic, climatic, and health conditions are concerned,” Wheeler stated, “[it] is rather too remote from San Francisco, the trip from wharf to wharf consuming approximately forty-five minutes.”\footnote{Ibid., 144.} Although the remote location would require additional expense, in the eyes of the immigration officials, the protection of American citizens and the isolation of Chinese immigrants were worth the cost.

Angel Island Immigration Station officially opened on January 21, 1910. Chinese community leaders feared the treatment of detainees would not improve at the new site. San Francisco’s Chinese-language newspaper, the \textit{Chinese World}, printed an editorial reflecting on the past and anticipating the future:

\begin{quote}
Ever since the establishment of this wooden shed at the wharf, the mistreatment of us Chinese confined there was worse than for jailed prisoners. The walls were covered with poems; traces of tears soaked the floor. There were even some who could not endure the cruel abuse and took their own lives. The ropes they used to hang themselves are still visible. Those seeing this cannot help but feel aggrieved and gnash their teeth in anger. Now the Chinese had been moved from this wooden shed. From now on we will be confined on a barren offshore island.\footnote{\textit{Chinese World}, 22 January 1910, reprinted in Lai, “Island of Immortals,” 91.}
\end{quote}

For immigration officials, seclusion was a positive attribute of the new facility. For detainees and the Chinese community in San Francisco, the remote location of Angel Island only reinforced the isolation felt by detainees as they waited, full of fear and anguish, for officials to determine their future. At the wharf shed, the physical building absorbed the despair of the detainees held there—tears stained the floors and poems
inscribed on the walls expressed feelings about their incarceration. The Downtown Association of San Francisco petitioned the Commissioner of Immigration not to remove the immigration station from the city, claiming that the establishment of a station on the island “will not only work a hardship on the incoming Orientals themselves,” but would also inhibit the ability of their witnesses to submit their testimony. The Chinese community, despite efforts to convince the government to build on the mainland, feared the new facility would instill the same oppression on its inmates, yet this time, beyond their reach.

When immigrants sailed into San Francisco Bay, their race, nationality, immigrant and economic status determined whether they would enter the country immediately or remain out to sea, so to speak, awaiting their fate at Angel Island. The primary medical and immigration inspections took place onboard the steamship (Figure 3.15). Immigrant inspectors, interpreters, doctors and nurses boarded the steamship to examine passengers, conducting cursory health examinations and asking identifying questions such as name, age, marital status and occupation. First-class passengers, the majority of whom were white, wealthy American citizens or European travelers, were typically examined by medical officers in the privacy of their own rooms aboard the steamships and thus spared the humiliation of public exams and lengthy interrogations at the immigration station. Those with satisfactory papers were allowed to go ashore in San Francisco. Many second-class passengers and all third-class or steerage passengers

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43 Down Town Association to Hon. Julius Kahn, 18 February 1910, Box 948, Folder 52961/24, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington D.C.

44 Public health officers believed that wealthier passengers were less susceptible to disease since they could afford better conditions and nourishment on board. Lee, *At America’s Gates*, 33 and Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 184.
boarded the ferry *Angel Island* for further inspection at the immigration station and to await hearings to determine whether they would be allowed entry. The *Angel Island* contained segregated cabins for its passengers; officials directed Asians to the main deck and Europeans to the upper deck. When the ferry docked at Angel Island, Asians were segregated from non-Asian passengers and among the Asians, Chinese were separated from the Japanese, Koreans, and South Asians (Figure 3.16).

The ferry system was the only transportation to and from the island and there was no extensive transportation system between water and rail at the immigration station, like the one that had developed on the East Coast. The ferry service, which completed four round-trips daily between the mainland and the island, was the only transportation contracted with the Bureau of Immigration. The immigrants detained there were suspect and liable to be deported and thus, there was no need on the government’s part to form an agreement with railroad companies to transport them outside of the San Francisco area. For European immigrants arriving at eastern ports, the inspection and registration process was a relatively brief interruption to their travels. For many Asians, however, the Angel Island Immigration Station was not a transitory experience; it was a place where they were suspended in time, remaining there for days, weeks, or months before learning where their travels would ultimately take them—into America or back to Asia.

After landing at Angel Island, passengers followed guards to the administration building located at the end of the wharf.\(^{45}\) This two-story Italian Renaissance Revival style wooden structure formed the focal point and administrative center of the entire

\(^{45}\) Luggage, ultimately stored in the baggage shed at the end of the wharf, was first fumigated at the quarantine station at Ayala Cove. Architectural Resources Group, *Historic Structures Report: Hospital Building, Angel Island Immigration Station*, prepared for the National Park Service, California State Parks, Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (2002) 36, 44.
station; it was the site of inspection, registration, the administrative offices, and the
dining hall. The building’s classical design featured a symmetrical façade with
colonnaded porch, a low pitched roof, and shallow projecting pavilions with hip roofs at
either end (Figure 3.17). One detainee noted the simple wooden construction of Angel
Island’s buildings in contrast to the grander structures he had heard of that existed in the
United States: “The Western styled buildings are lofty; but I have not the luck to live in
them. How was anyone to know that my dwelling place would be a prison?”46 Angel
Island Immigration Station was nowhere near as complex, in scale, material, or design, as
Boring and Tilton’s Beaux-Arts buildings on Ellis Island. While Ellis Island stood as an
architectural monument in New York Harbor and was visible from all surrounding
shores, the buildings on Angel Island were on the land’s northeastern coast, visually
tucked away behind the island’s natural hills, facing away from the city of San Francisco,
which lay to the south. The imposing nature of the immigration station lay not in its
grand architecture but rather in its secluded location and spare buildings.

Stepping onto the raised porch and passing through the colonnade, the new
arrivals entered into the main examination room of the building, which constituted the
majority of the ground floor. Three entrances marked the building: the large central
staircase was used by immigrants proceeding into the building for inspection; the left
entrance led to the inspectors’ rooms, dining rooms, detention quarters, and the
stenographers’ pool; the right entrance to the commissioner’s office. The waiting area in
the main examination room segregated individuals by race and gender. The largest room,
on the first floor, was filled with rows of wooden benches (Figure 3.18). Here,

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46 Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim and Judy Yung, Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel
immigrants were kept segregated according to ethnicity, with the largest section of room reserved for the Chinese. Men and women, including husbands and wives, were also separated at this point and not allowed to communicate with one another until they were either admitted to the country or deported. After preliminary inspection of papers and receiving their identification numbers, the new arrivals ascended a half flight of stairs to the registry division room, where four large, caged areas with benches lined the sides of the room and the processing desk. In these caged areas, individuals were grouped according to ethnicity (Figure 3.19). These cages were frightening for the new arrivals. A twenty-three year old Chinese detainee, Mrs. Woo, recalled that the Angel Island inspectors “locked us up like criminals in compartments like cages at a zoo.”

Once the inspections were completed, guards led detainees to their dormitories. European quarters were located on the second floor of the administration building, while the dormitory for Asians was in separate building on the hillside above the administration building. The two-story, wood-framed dormitory building was even more subdued in its exterior design than the administration building (Figure 3.20). It was a boxy structure with balanced facades, vertical window alignment, and a shingled hip roof. The exterior was painted in a three-color scheme: gray at the base; yellow at the first floor; and white at the second floor and trim. Barbed wire fencing surrounded the rear and sides of the building and extended around the entire perimeter of the immigration station.

The dormitory, or detention barracks, was meant to house separately the Chinese and Japanese, and the men and women (Figure 3.21). The first floor was reserved for the Japanese, with males in the east wing and females and children in the west. Chinese

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47 Children under the age of twelve remained with their mothers. Lai, “Island of Immortals,” 94.
48 Lai, Lim and Yung, Island, 73.
immigrants were on the second floor, with the same division of men and women. Each floor contained washrooms, lavatories, sitting and recreation areas, and storage closets. This was the intended plan for the building; however, during the facility’s history, the structure often served as an all-male dormitory since men were much more numerous than women.\textsuperscript{49} Chinese males occupied rooms on the first and second floors and the Japanese, Korean, and South Asian men were in a room on the second floor. Russian males were also housed there during periods of high immigration. The females who had been moved from the detention barracks stayed in the second floor rooms of the administration building after its renovation in 1911, although racial and ethnic segregation was reinforced there as well. The dormitory windows were secured with thick wire screens (Figure 3.22).

Detainees spent the majority of their time in the cramped barracks, which were overcrowded and demoralizing, not to mention unsanitary given the facility’s limited janitorial services.\textsuperscript{50} The men’s and women’s rooms each contained four rows of bunk beds, three high and two across. These metal bunks folded up to allow more space in the aisles when unoccupied (Figure 3.23). Contemporary images from the barracks show that any free space in the dormitories was covered with the detainee’s belongings and clothes hung from their bunks and the ceilings (Figure 3.24). In the women’s dormitory, this arrangement allowed room for between seventy to one hundred detainees; the larger men’s dormitory fit between two and three hundred. The large, open rooms allowed for minimal privacy and optimal surveillance. Yet the architecture did not serve as the only

\textsuperscript{49} Lee and Yung, \textit{Angel Island}, 56.  
\textsuperscript{50} Lai, \textit{Island of Immortals}, 95.
method of surveillance—guards stationed themselves at the door of each dormitory to enforce separation of the sexes and to ensure no one escaped.

Race defined the treatment and accommodations received by the detainees. Not only were European immigrants passed through inspection as a faster rate than their Asian counterparts, but they also received preferential living quarters. Assistant Surgeon M.W. Glover of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service observed that the quarters for Europeans were “in better condition than any other.”

Before the immigration station opened in 1910, the local press was already praising the quarters provided for European immigrants, which they claimed were “excellent accommodations” that had “most of the conveniences of a first-class hotel.”

The “Oriental quarters,” on the other hand, were not described with the goal of appeasing its future occupants, as the description of the European quarters does, but rather its description as “the perfect scheme of sanitation” and references to the modern hospital facility addressed the concerns of the dangers to public health posed by the Asian population.

Race also played a factor in the furnishing of the barracks. In 1908, as construction of Angel Island was underway, the Bureau of Immigration requested a proposal from the Standard Wire Mattress Company of Boston for the use of their Patented Folding Bunk Bed #118, a similar model to the bunks that furnished the federal immigration station in Boston (see Figure 3.23). E.S. Fuller of Standard Wire submitted the proposal and suggested “that a thin, compact, extra-close tufted mattress […] be used, filled with cotton of a good staple and color. As these mattresses are likely to receive

51 M.W. Glover to Acting Commissioner of Immigration, 21 November 1910, File 52961/26F, Central Office Subject Correspondence and Case Files, Entry 9, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
52 San Francisco Chronicle, 18 August 1908.
53 Ibid.
hard usage and become soiled in a short time we have submitted for your consideration a bid for furnishing loose covers made of Khaki Drill [...] These covers could be easily removed and washed."

Standard Wire expected to furnish each of the bunk beds they provided; however, Commissioner North advised the Immigration Bureau to order only half of the mattresses and khaki covers for the beds in the Asian quarters. He sent a detailed list of the number of beds to furnish: all of the one hundred and twenty beds in the European men’s dormitory; all of the fifty-four beds in the European women’s dormitory; and in the Asian men’s and women’s dormitories, North eliminated over three hundred mattresses from the nearly seven hundred beds in those quarters.

Commissioner North based his decision on his own knowledge of Chinese and Japanese culture. Explaining his position, he argued that this practice would be both culturally sensitive and save the government money:

> It is customary for Chinese and Japanese both in their own country and here to sleep on wooden beds without mattresses, and I therefore think that when provided with blankets and a wire spring bed they will, not only require, but probably would not wish mattresses of any kind, and I certainly am of the opinion that if 350 mattresses are furnished with the appropriate covers, they will be all that is necessary, and these changes would reduce the cost of furnishing a very considerable amount.

North believed that since the detainees slept on wooden beds in their home country, bare wire mattresses would be similar and thus preferred by the Chinese and Japanese (Figure 3.25). Yet this decision was made by North himself, with no input from the Asian community. In fact, when Commissioner General Larned contacted Standard Wire to

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54 E.S. Fuller of Standard Wire Mattress Company to Bureau of Immigration, Washington, DC, 30 July 1908. Box 50, MLR A1-9, Folder 51456/58, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington, DC. Swatches of the proposed materials were included with Fuller’s letter.

55 Telegram from North to the Bureau of Immigration, Washington, DC, 11 August 1908, ibid.

56 Commissioner North to the Commissioner General of Immigration, 13 August 1908, ibid.
inform them that only half of the beds would require mattresses, the explanation given
was “that Chinese immigrants are not accustomed to the use of mattresses, and prefer to
use blankets on woven wire springs.” The Immigration Bureau gave the impression this
decision was made by the Chinese; however, it was American government officials who
made the decision, claiming to act in the detainee’s best interests while in reality serving
their own.

The racial segregation that defined the administration building and the barracks
continued at the hospital, where individuals were brought for medical inspection. The
structure, like the administration building, was a two-story, wood-framed building in a
highly restrained classical style and featured a raised porch with colonnade. It consisted
of four wings symmetrically laid out and connected by a large central wing, with a fifth
wing projecting perpendicular from the central wing (Figure 3.26). The administrative
rooms and communal spaces, surgery facility, mortuary, kitchen and dining rooms,
employee quarters, and a disinfector room were located on the first floor. This
disinfector room was intended for fumigation of the patients’ clothes and any additional
items that required further disinfection than that provided at the quarantine station.

Patient wards were on the second floor, with each wing corresponding to the segregated
wards (Figure 3.27). The Chinese and Japanese men’s wards were at the south end of the
building; the shared Chinese and Japanese women’s ward occupied the center of the
building; and the European men’s and women’s wards were located at the north end of
the building—as far as possible from the Asian men. Stairwells and smaller rooms such
as the nurses’ rooms, the doctor’s office, dressing rooms and bathrooms separated each

57 Commissioner General F.H. Larned to Standard Wire Mattress Company, 12 August 1908, ibid.
58 The disinfector room was added, at the request of Dr. W.M. Glover, during the first operating year at the
station. Lee and Yung, Angel Island, 36 and Architectural Resources Group, Hospital Building, 36, 44.
ward, thus preventing interaction between the white and Asian patients. To limit the spread of germs, the rooms contained high, coved plaster ceilings and large windows that provided light and ventilation.\footnote{Requiring ventilation in hospitals began in the nineteenth century, when doctors believed contagious disease to be a result of miasma, or stagnant air. As germ theory grew to be accepted in the early twentieth century, doctors grouped patients suffering from the same illness together in smaller, private rooms. Coved ceilings, by limiting the number of corners in a room that could potentially harbor germs, were believed by doctors to be necessary in hospital wards. The wards at Ellis Island also featured high, coved ceilings. Dan Osanna, 	extit{Cultural Resources Inventory: Angel Island Immigration Station Building Stabilization, Poem Restoration and Site Improvement Project} (Northern Service Center, Department of Parks and Recreation, November 2002) 28; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 	extit{Historic American Buildings Survey: Ellis Island, Contagious Disease Hospital Measles Ward G} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, n.d.) 8; and Yanni, 	extit{The Architecture of Madness}, 33-34. Architectural historian Annmarie Adams has shown, however, that it took time for hospital architecture to respond to germ theory. Annmarie Adams, 	extit{Medicine by Design: The Architect and the Modern Hospital, 1893-1943} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).}

Medical inspections at Angel Island were more thorough than the majority of those at Ellis Island. American citizens feared the spread of foreign-borne illness, to be sure, but foreign-borne Asian illnesses were believed to be even more loathsome.\footnote{Shah, 	extit{Contagious Divides}, 179-203.}

Public health officers first performed a line inspection, as was also the custom at Ellis Island, searching for visible symptoms of excludable diseases, such as trachoma, and any medical defects. Yet at Angel Island, the medical examinations also included inspection of the undressed body, searching for abnormalities and symptoms of disease (Figure 3.28). Doctors also took blood and stool samples in order to detect parasitic diseases such as uncinariasis (hookworm), filariasis (threadworm), and clonorchiasis (liver fluke).\footnote{Lee and Yung, 	extit{Angel Island}, 37-38.}

The hospital at Angel Island contained an advanced bacteriological laboratory in order to conduct bacterial examinations of the blood and stool samples from incoming
foreigners. The U.S. Board of Public Health labeled these parasitic diseases as dangerously contagious and therefore, excludable. However, because these diseases primarily afflicted the Chinese, particularly those from rural China, leaders in San Francisco’s Chinatown felt these regulations to be further barriers to grant entry to the United States. For example, hookworm was a disease transmitted through exposed skin on the foot or ingestion of contaminated soil, thus making this disease more common among farm laborers working in the rice fields. Some of these parasitic diseases, such as threadworm and liver fluke, were not actually contagious in the United States and were indeed treatable, yet since they were borne by Asians, government officials believed them highly contagious and therefore, excludable. After testimonies by Chinese and American doctors, public health officials eventually amended their regulations in the 1920s, allowing those afflicted with threadworm and liver fluke to remain in the United States.

Even with those changes, immigration officials remained diligent in medically inspecting the Asian population entering through San Francisco.

Each of the buildings at Angel Island Immigration Station was intentionally designed to enforce a racially segregated system and Bureau of Immigration wholeheartedly approved. In a letter to Commissioner Sargent, Mathews explained his design:

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62 The list of excludable diseases changed over time; diseases were added as outbreaks occurred and they were omitted from the list once doctors established treatments that eradicated them. Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 180.

63 Lai, “Island of Immortals,” 94.

64 In 1922 San Francisco’s Chinese community sent Dr. King H. Kwan (Guan Qiangting) of China to Washington, D.C. to convince the Department of Commerce and Labor that filariasis was not a dangerous contagious disease. In 1927, the Chinese Chambers of Commerce of Honolulu and San Francisco sent Dr. Fred Lam (Lin Ronggui) of Honolulu to Washington, D.C. to prove that clonorchiasis was not contagious in the United States. Both doctors were successful in getting the regulations amended. *Chinese World*, 30 January 1922 and Lai, “Island of Immortals,” 94.
I also wish to call your attention to the Hospital Building and the principle upon which I have arranged it, which is that the Japanese and Chinese wards are entirely separate and distinct, with the rooms connected herewith. The entrance for the Chinese and Japanese to their quarters is entirely separate and distinct from the Europeans' entrance to the Hospital and their wards, practically making it two distinct buildings. The plan for the Chinese and Japanese Detention Quarters will explain itself, and I will call your attention to one point, that is, that after the Chinese and Japanese leave the detention room they pass under a covered way leading up to the covered bridge over road. This covered bridge extends up to their quarters, and the covered way and covered bridge over road is enclosed on the side with heavy wire screens. At the foot of the covered bridge over the road is a gate separating the Chinese and Japanese in going to and from their dining room to their quarters from the Europeans' dining room, and practically makes the dining room and their quarters one enclosed space to which they can be confined [emphasis added].

Sargent replied to Mathews that “you have submitted a most complete, comprehensive and well arranged plan. It gives further evidence that you fully understand what is needed for the service at San Francisco. […] The entire arrangement, as explained by you, meets with my hearty approval […].” Mathews design ensured complete segregation and containment of the Asian immigrants on the island, thus protecting the European population from the perceived threat of the supposedly dishonest and diseased Asian immigrants. Furthermore, Mathews included certain security measures to prevent escape, such as the covered walkway enclosed with wire screens that connected the dormitory and dining hall (see Figure 3.20). Government approval of the design, however, did not secure that the facility would be satisfactorily built, nor did the Immigration Bureau anticipate the large numbers of immigrants entering its doors.

Although the immigration station was intended to be a state-of-the-art processing facility, its design and construction proved highly inadequate, even during its earliest years. Faulty structural design, poor maintenance, shortage of fresh water, and chronic

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65 Mathews to Sargent, 4 January 1906, Box 49, Folder 51456/16-34, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
66 Sargent to Mathews, 17 January 1906, ibid.
overcrowding were some of the most pressing issues facing immigration officials.\textsuperscript{67} The
wood-framed buildings were also not fireproof and posed a serious threat.

Commissioner-General of Immigration, W.W. Husband declared in 1922 that

> the plant has practically nothing to commend it. It is made of a conglomeration of
ramshackle buildings which are nothing but firetraps. They are illy \textit{[sic]} arranged
and inconvenient. The sanitary arrangements are awful. If a private individual
had such an establishment he would be arrested by the local health authorities.\textsuperscript{68}

Like the rest of the immigration station, the hospital also suffered from overcrowding,
unsanitary conditions, water shortage, poor ventilation, and lack of proper toilet facilities.
In its first year of operation, Assistant Surgeon M. W. Glover of the Public Health and
Marine Hospital Service criticized the facility, stating that “in no way does the hospital
meet the requirements for this station. At best it is and always will remain a
makeshift.”\textsuperscript{69} In fact, Mathews, the architect of the facility, had been fired in 1909 over
the constant problems encountered from the engineering and design of the facility’s
buildings, piers, and auxiliary structures.

Just three years after its opening, the inadequacy of Angel Island prompted
government officials to look elsewhere for possible locations to house a new immigration
station, including Alcatraz Island (Figure 3.29). In 1913 the Bureau of Immigration
submitted a memorandum to the Department of Labor that suggested the transfer of the
immigration station to the military prison on Alcatraz Island, which had recently been
renovated.\textsuperscript{70} The island had been used for incarceration since the mid-nineteenth century.

\textsuperscript{67} Gareth Hoskins, “A Place to Remember: Scaling the Walls of Angel Island Immigration Station,”
\textsuperscript{68} Luther C. Steward, Acting Commissioner, Immigration Service San Francisco, to Commissioner
General, Immigration Service Washington, D.C., 19 December 1910, Subject and Policy Files, 1893-1957,
U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
\textsuperscript{69} Architectural Resources Group, \textit{Hospital Building}, 25; Lee and Yung, \textit{Angel Island}, 38.
\textsuperscript{70} Memorandum from the Secretary of the Bureau of Immigration, 21 October 1913 and Memorandum
from the Bureau of Immigration, 12 April 1915, Box 1833, Folder 53620/175, Subject and Policy Files,
In 1858, the government erected a prison on the island that subsequently housed inmates during the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and convicts from the city prison after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Throughout the building’s history, several additions were made to the original structure and between 1910 and 1912 the prison was entirely rebuilt in stone, brick, and concrete. By 1915, the Bureau of Immigration was seriously considering the transfer of the immigration station to the Alcatraz prison for several reasons: the buildings were fireproof; the island was significantly closer to the mainland, allowing for reduced travel time on the ferries; and the prison was secure enough to prevent escape, a concern officials had in mind when selecting the site of Angel Island in the first place.

The choice of an existing penitentiary as the potential site for a new immigration station is significant. Angel Island Immigration Station had been designed to enforce a type of incarceration of Asian immigrants from the start; the proposal to transfer the immigration station to Alcatraz would only serve to reinforce the practices that prompted the Chinese to refer to Angel Island as a prison. A couple decades after the initial proposal, in 1934, the prison at Alcatraz became a maximum security federal penitentiary under the U.S. Department of Justice. The site that had once been considered as the new location for the immigration station would now house high-risk inmates. Indeed, there were architectural differences between the immigration station and the prison, the most important being that the prison housed inmates in small cells as opposed to the open floor plan of the Angel Island dormitory rooms. The constant surveillance, barbed wire fencing and barred windows, however, paralleled the prison environment of Alcatraz.

The transfer of the immigration station from Angel Island to Alcatraz never occurred, since the progression of the war limited government resources for such an undertaking, yet even without the title of prison, Angel Island Immigration Station remained a place of imprisonment for the detainees held there.

Detainees suffered the effects of the facility’s enforced segregation and constant surveillance. Sam Hubert Huey, detained in 1923, felt that Angel Island was “terrible, […] there were people there for years, months. It was like a prison.” Some immigrants were forced to remain on the island while their family members passed inspection and went on to San Francisco. One detainee, Dong Kingman, later recalled in his autobiography the distress of being left behind in what he felt was a prison: “Watching my family leave with other passengers on the ferry for San Francisco while I remained behind barb-wired windows was like a stab in my heart. […] So unfair to treat me like an outcast or criminal.” The island location and the buildings themselves worked together effectively to produce the government’s intended enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act. To the Immigration Bureau, a building like that at Ellis Island was entirely inappropriate as an immigration facility on the West Coast.

Life at Angel Island was difficult, not only because of the exhaustive interrogation sessions and the poor living conditions, but also because of the lack of freedom for the immigrants held there. Detainees were allowed to leave their quarters only once or twice a week for one-half hour, to exercise and breathe fresh air in small,
fenced outdoor recreation areas adjacent to the barracks.73 Women and children, who numbered far less than Chinese males, were given somewhat more freedom since they were allowed to walk the grounds in a supervised group (Figure 3.30). But for the majority of the day, with the exception of mealtimes, detainees were locked inside the barracks under the supervision of an armed guard. Languishing in the barracks, detainees found various ways to occupy their time: some found entertainment in gambling (though the stakes were typically low given their limited funds); some women sewed or knitted; the literate read the Chinese newspapers sent from San Francisco; and by the late 1920s or early 1930s the detainees had raised enough money to purchase a phonograph and Chinese opera records.74

Yet even with these distractions, their imprisonment was difficult to forget because the detainees were under constant surveillance. Mr. Leung, a twenty-four-year-old detainee recalled that “The windows had barbed wire. They opened the door. They watched you go into the mess hall. They locked the mess door and they watched you. No way you could get away. We played volleyball, but the courtyard was fenced all around so you couldn't run away” (Figure 3.31).75 Detainees could only visit the storehouse their collect personal belongings once a week and authorities routinely inspected letters and gift packages for possible coaching messages that would assist the detainee in passing interrogations.76 Armed guards escorted detainees throughout the compound and were stationed at each dormitory room. There was minimal privacy, not only in the dormitories and communal rooms but also in the bathrooms, where there were no doors.

73 Lee, At America’s Gates, 128.
74 Lai, Island: Poetry and History, 16.
75 Ibid., 75.
76 Lai, “Island of Immortals,” 94.
on toilet and shower stalls, at least in the first decades of operation (Figure 3.32). One female detainee recalled that, during her stay in 1940, “there were two bathrooms and three or four stalls inside of each. The toilet doors were cut off at the bottom so they could see your feet. Maybe it was because they were afraid of people committing suicide.”  To the Asian population, this invasion of privacy was altogether humiliating and demoralizing.

The detainees suffered the degradation of imprisonment at Angel Island Immigration Station. Sixteen-year-old Mr. Lowe recalled “The worst part was the toilet. It was a ditch congested with filth. It stank up the whole barracks. We slept on three tiers of canvas bunks. The blankets were so coarse that it might have been woven of wolf’s hair. It was indeed a most humiliating imprisonment.” The medical examinations were also a major source of humiliation for Asian immigrants; they believed the medical procedures and tests to be invasive and unfair. One Chinese detainee in 1930 recalled, “The doctor told us to take off everything. Really though, it was humiliating. The Chinese never expose themselves like that. They checked you and checked you. We never got used to that kind of thing—and in front of whites.” The Chinese detainees, by and large, endured these humiliating and oppressive practices much more than any other ethnicity detained at the immigration station.

The buildings at Angel Island stressed containment and imprisonment with their locked doors, caged waiting areas, barbed wire fences, and enclosed stairways. Repetitive interrogations, invasive medical examinations and constant surveillance further enforced the confinement inherent in the architecture at Angel Island. Ellis

77 Quote by Mrs. Woo, age 23 in 1940, printed in ibid., 73.
78 Lai, Island, 75.
79 Quoted in Lee and Yung, Angel Island, 39.
Island, on the other hand, had been designed, architecturally and administratively, to process immigrants as quickly as possible through its massive main building. This circulation of bodies in space continued as the immigrants took ferries from the island to the railroad stations and onto the trains—bodies in continuous migration until reaching their destinations. The majority of European immigrants entering through Ellis Island were released within a matter of hours; in contrast, the average length of detainment for a Chinese immigrant was two to three weeks. Furthermore, the rejection rate at Angel Island, eighteen percent, was significantly higher than that occurring at Ellis Island, which totaled only one percent. The direction of migration of Europeans into the United States largely flowed in one direction—from Europe, to the ports, to immigrant settlements—motion that is expressed in the architectural plans of Ellis Island. During the exclusion era, Asian migration into the United States was halted, at worst, or limited, at best, and the Angel Island Immigration Station served as the physical manifestation of that obstruction.

In many ways, officials at Angel Island did everything in their power to find evidence to deny entry to the United States. Commissioner Hart Hyatt North estimated that “nearly ninety percent” of Chinese people who gained entry into the country did so fraudulently, a highly speculative estimate that indicated the government’s inherent distrust of the Chinese population. However, the barring of Chinese laborers, as part of

81 Notably, Chinese traveling in cabin class had a slightly shorter detainment period than those traveling in second class, and significantly shorter than those traveling in steerage. Therefore, for Chinese immigrants who purchased a higher class ticket in the hope of avoiding detainment, the strategy only worked if they purchased first-class tickets. Ibid., 121-126.
the Chinese Exclusion Act, had in fact given rise to the “paper son” system, where many immigrants falsely claimed status in one of the classes exempt from the exclusion laws—Chinese merchants and native-born American citizens. The practice of selling illegal documentation became even more prevalent after 1906, when the San Francisco earthquake and fire destroyed the city’s birth records. Mr. Chan, a former detainee of Angel Island, explained that “we didn’t want to come in illegally, but we were forced to because of the immigration laws. They particularly picked on the Chinese. If we told the truth, it didn’t work. So we had to take the crooked path.” Whereas officials at Ellis Island sought to verify a foreigner’s right to entry through a series of questions lasting approximately two minutes—questions such as name, place of birth, occupation, monetary means, and criminal status—interrogations at Angel Island were far more probing and exhaustive (Figure 3.33). Inspectors conducted questioning over several days and weeks, comparing answers from the transcripts in order to catch any discrepancies that would indicate false identities. Since a stenographer transcribed every single interrogation session (which totaled several hours per individual), Samuel Backus, Hart’s replacement as Commissioner at Angel Island, stated in 1911 that “the proper disposition of one Chinese case may require stenographic work equal to that required in the handling of several hundred aliens of other races.” Commissioner-General Sargent defended the practices of the Angel Island employees, arguing that any cruel treatment in

1920s and 1930s. It is impossible to accurately provide exact numbers of those who entered the country illegally, as many would never have admitted it. Lee, *At America’s Gates*, 190-191. Lee also notes that North was obsessed with Chinese criminal behavior, and published two articles on Chinese criminal gangs in the period after his retirement from immigration service.


85 Samuel Backus to Commissioner-General of Immigration, 1 November 1911, File 52961/24-E, Central Office Subject Correspondence and Case Files, Entry 9, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
their enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws was not because of “the injustice or inhumanity of the officers, but of the failure of the Chinese themselves to comply with the provisions of the law.”

The interrogation procedures and the architecture at Angel Island were meant to intimidate, and to control, those detained there; however, those individuals found a way to resist the architecture that contained them. Locked in their barracks, unsure of the fate that awaited them, detainees expressed their feelings of disillusion, resentment, and bitterness about their treatment at Angel Island by inscribing poems on the walls of the barracks (Figure 3.34). Many of the poems were written in pencil and ink, while others were carved into the walls. The majority of them were undated and unsigned. Nearly half of the poems express the authors’ resentment of their confinement, while others dreamt of the home and families they had left behind. One detainee, who only identified himself as an old man from Taishan, carved:

Imprisoned in this wooden building, I am always sad and bored.  
I remember since I left my native village, it has been several full moons. […]  
Prisoners in this wooden building constantly suffer sadness and boredom.  
I remember the hardships I had to endure when I was coming here.  
I cannot prophesy which day I will cross the barrier.  
The years and months are easily spent in vain.

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86 “Memorandum,” c. 1905, by Frank P. Sargent, File 52704/12, Subject Correspondence 1906-32, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
88 A large number of the poems were written before 1930. Two detainees, Smiley Jann and Tet Yee, detained in 1931 and 1932, respectively, copied most of these poems. Lai, Lim and Yung, Island: Poetry and History, 23.
89 Ibid., 25.
90 Ibid., 152.
The uncertain outcome of detainment, the feeling of imprisonment, and the length of time spent at Angel Island expressed the foreigner’s state of flux during migration. While this particular detainee had endured many hardships to finally arrive on American shores, he remained an outsider, unsure of when, or if, he would be able to enter.

Like the poem above, several others referenced the wooden building in which they were imprisoned. One anonymous poem illustrated both the physical and emotional effects of detainment:

I, a seven foot man, am ashamed I cannot extend myself.
Cuddled up in an enclosure, my movements are dictated by others.
Enduring a hundred humiliations, I can only cry in vain.
This person’s tears fall, but what can the blue heavens do?91

For the immigrants at Angel Island, the emotional anguish experienced during their imprisonment was inextricably linked to their physical confinement. Kept from family members, alone in a foreign country and effectually locked behind bars, the detainees found emotional release by imprinting their feelings on the very building that confined them. Although the poems were written by immigrants of varying education (some of the poems are written by those familiar with classical poetry while others employ incorrect characters and usages), the raw emotion that compelled them to be written in the first place remained constant. To modern readers, the poignant nature of the poems is all too evident, yet immigration officials viewed these inscriptions as graffiti. Angel Island employees covered up the poems by plastering over the carvings and painting over the written lines, methods which ultimately served the purpose of preserving them.

Prisoners of war and non-Chinese immigrants also inscribed their frustration onto the walls of Angel Island’s barracks. Historians have focused on the Chinese poems,

91 Ibid., 60.
however, because not only are they more visible and numerous but also because they contained a sustained poetic form not present in the inscriptions written in other languages. World War I had brought greater numbers of non-Asian immigrants to the United States; a large percentage of non-Asian immigrants arriving in San Francisco were citizens of the Russian Empire, as well as European relatives of American residents arriving on the West Coast by means of Siberia, Manchuria, and Japan. In the 1930s, immigration officials also detained and interrogated those that the American government considered alien enemies, namely citizens of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as resident immigrants under arrest for purported radical political activity. These federal prisoners shared the facilities with the detained immigrants. Immigration officials added a guard tower near the recreation yard for increased surveillance. Alien enemies, like the Chinese detainees, also complained about the conditions at the immigration station. In a letter to the district director of immigration of the San Francisco area, the German prisoners of war detained at Angel Island complained of the unsanitary conditions at Angel Island including inadequate toilet and bathing facilities, unclean kitchen and dining areas, poor ventilation in overcrowded rooms, and no available drinking water.

In addition to the sanitary concerns, throughout the immigration station’s history immigration officials noted the lack of fireproofing in the wooden buildings, concerns that were finally realized on the evening of August 12, 1940 when a fire, caused by an

92 See Lai, Lim and Yung, Island: Poetry and History.
93 Maria Sakovich, “When the ‘Enemy’ Landed at Angel Island,” Prologue 41:2 (Summer 2009) 27.
94 San Francisco Immigration Commissioner Edward White and his staff conducted interrogations for more than eight hundred German, and later, Austrian and Hungarian, alien enemies and at least 63 resident aliens of varying nationalities. Ibid., 26-28.
95 Natale, “Angel Island,” 133.
overloaded circuit in the basement, broke out in the administration building. It destroyed the structure and the covered staircase behind it that led to the detention barracks (Figure 3.35).\textsuperscript{96} Reports in both 1915 and 1923 had indicated that the administration and detention buildings lacked “any fire protection at all,” and furthermore, if fire broke out at the hospital building, “there would be a serious loss of life.”\textsuperscript{97} Even still, the Angel Island facility had a much smaller construction budget than the fireproof facility at Ellis Island, and some immigration officials felt that Angel Island Immigration Station, though certainly lacking, was suitable for the Asian population it served. Special Immigrant Inspector A. Warner Parker opined in 1915 that the hospital was “fairly well adapted to the present needs of the Station,” referencing the Asian detainees that occupied it; however, should European immigration increase, Parker stated that improved facilities would be necessary [emphasis added].\textsuperscript{98} Even with the extreme circumstances of the fire, the guards maintained the segregation that defined the buildings of Angel Island as they evacuated the detainees: women stayed at the hospital; the Chinese men in the Army stables; the European men in the guardhouse; and the German sailors that had been at Angel Island waiting to return home by means of the Pacific were stationed at the Quarantine Station.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{96} During the entire ordeal, only two people were harmed. One of them, Private Herman C. Schneider was killed when a wall collapsed on him. “A Mystery Fire on Angel Island,” \textit{San Francisco Chronicle}, 13 August 1940, 26 and Lee and Yung, \textit{Angel Island}, 300.

\textsuperscript{97} Cited in Natale, “Angel Island,” 133-134.

\textsuperscript{98} A. Warner Parker to the Commissioner-General of Immigration, 21 August 1915, File 53438/54, Central Office Subject Correspondence and Case Files, Entry 9, Records of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives, Washington, D.C. and Lee and Yung, \textit{Angel Island}, 38.

\textsuperscript{99} Lee and Yung, \textit{Angel Island}, 299. The German sailors of the \textit{Columbus} had been at Angel Island since January 1940 after they were rescued by the Americans from capture by the British in the Atlantic Ocean. After the fire they were sent to a facility near Roswell, New Mexico until the end of the war. Soenichsen, \textit{Miwoks to Missiles}, 141-150; John Joel Culley, “A Troublesome Presence: World War II Internment of German Sailors in New Mexico,” \textit{Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration} 28 (Winter 1996): 279-295; and Natale, “Angel Island,” 134.
Given all the complaints and structural problems posed by the facility since its construction, the government shuttered the immigration station and turned the location over to the U.S. Army on February 4, 1941. The Army renamed the immigration station North Garrison and used it to process and house American troops during World War II. They also held Japanese and German prisoners of war and enemy aliens in the barracks of the former station. The U.S. Military changed little, if anything, in the existing detention barracks as they were already suited to house prisoners. Unlike the thousands of Chinese detainees that remained there for long periods of time, however, the facility served as a temporary holding place for prisoners of war before they were transferred to various places throughout the American West.

The arrival of the war also brought about the long-overdue repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The Magnuson Act, or as it is also known, the Chinese Exclusion Repeal Act, was passed on December 17, 1943, in the same year the United States and China became allies in World War II. Even with the repeal of the act, however, the Chinese were only allowed to enter the country at a rate of just one hundred and five people per year, a quota that had been set by the Immigration Act of 1924. Additionally, the act allowed for some Chinese already in the country to become naturalized citizens yet property-ownership rights remained banned until the Magnuson Act itself was fully repealed in 1965. Prior to the repeal of the act, the Chinese remained outsiders in a country that had closed its doors to them. After struggling to enter the country, they experienced further hurdles as they applied for naturalization. The discrimination

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101 The Immigration Act of 1924 set quotas based on national origin, where the numbers of those entering the country were derived from the percentages of that population already in the United States. Thus, the citizens immigration officials considered undesirable faced highly restrictive quotas.
experienced by the Chinese thus continued in the United States for over a century, from their arrival in the 1840s until the full repeal of the Chinese exclusion in 1965.

Angel Island Immigration Station stands as the physical manifestation of the discrimination and exclusion of the Chinese in America yet the facility’s historiography also reveals much about the formation of American national identity. While Ellis Island Immigration Station was written into the country’s historical narrative early on in the station’s history, perpetuating the myth of the United States as open for all, Angel Island illustrated the exclusionary nature of American immigration policy. The juxtaposition of Ellis Island and Angel Island, and the subsequent attention (or lack of attention) paid to each of these facilities in American history indicates a conscious shaping of the historical narrative. Although Americans may have once tried to forget this part of the nation’s history, those detained at the immigration station could never forget. Carved onto the barracks walls by a poet identifying himself only as “one from Xiangshan,” the author proclaimed that this part of history must never be forgotten:

> There are tens of thousands of poems composed on these walls.  
> They are all cries of complaint and sadness.  
> The day I am rid of this prison and attain success,  
> I must remember that this chapter once existed.\(^{102}\)

The immigration station stands as a reminder of the hardships endured by those attempting to enter the United States.

The architecture at ports of entry to the United States, built to process the thousands of immigrants arriving annually on its shores, reveals much about the political and cultural attitudes of Americans toward incoming foreigners during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Chinese immigrants at Angel Island had a vastly different

experience, spatially and emotionally, from the European immigrants arriving at Ellis Island. Indeed, immigrants arriving at Ellis Island were just as frightened by the threat of deportation and the inspection procedures and medical examinations they endured; however, the Chinese at Angel Island suffered from longer and harsher interrogations, more invasive medical examinations, and were confined for long periods in the unsanitary and cramped buildings in which they were treated as prisoners. Architects and immigration officials determined whether these immigrants would be relegated to an island or shuttled through a transportation network to the interior of the country. The fact that there was no transportation network in place at Angel Island, aside from the ferry service to and from the mainland, implied that the immigrants arriving were not encouraged to settle in the United States or that those entering the country either remained in the San Francisco area or were left to arrange their own transportation.

Immigration stations, whether federally-owned or operated by the railroads, theoretically shared the same purpose—to determine an immigrant’s eligibility to enter the country. In practice, however, the immigration stations revealed vastly different agendas. On the East Coast, European immigrants became part of a network; the railways and steamship companies worked together to encourage emigration from Europe and once the foreigners arrived in America, the railways carried them from the port inland, where vast tracts of land were sold to them by railroad land agents. In Baltimore, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company worked with the North German Lloyd Steamship Company to direct immigrant traffic to its port and in New York, railroad companies and the government worked together at the Ellis Island Immigration Station. On the West Coast, however, immigration officials succeeded in preventing a
transportation network from forming by building a physical barrier to the country—the immigration station—in addition to the intangible barrier of lengthy detainments, exhaustive interrogations and exclusionary legislation. In this way, Angel Island Immigration Station did indeed fulfill its intended role as guardian of the Western gate.
CHAPTER IV. ALONG THE RAILS: IMMIGRANT TRAIN CARS AND WAITING ROOMS

Railway stations and train cars were spaces in which different races and classes were likely to converge and company officials sought to minimize that contact, since the American public largely viewed the incoming foreigners as threatening. For white, middle-class American passengers, railroad companies provided physical comfort, in the form of amenities, upholstered seating, and lavish waiting areas, as well as comfort in a social context, by separating travelers according to class and race.\(^1\) Railroad officials claimed they established segregated spaces for the immigrants’ own protection; the design of these spaces, however, reinforced contemporary ideas of the immigrant as poor, dirty, and diseased. Train cars featured few amenities and their plain, wooden interiors were designed to be easily cleaned. Similarly, the sterile space of the immigrant waiting room, covered in white tile, sparsely furnished, and far removed from the grand, opulent waiting rooms provided for citizen travelers, reveals an attempt on the part of railroad officials to quell contemporary fears of immigrants as bearers of infectious disease and filth. This chapter examines how railroad officials organized and designed their built environment in accordance with contemporary attitudes toward immigration, ultimately reinforcing and perpetuating class and ethnic hierarchies in the United States.

IMMIGRANT TRAINS

\(^1\) See R. David McCall, “Space and Comfort in Travel” in “Everything in its Place”: Gender and Space on America’s Railroads, 1830-1899 (MA Thesis: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1999) 44-60 for a discussion of contemporary concepts of comfort and ideal space provided for the Victorian American middle-classes during rail travel.
In the United States, immigrant trains existed as far back as the founding of the railroad itself.\(^2\) The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was one of the first major companies to use special immigrant cars when it offered reduced rates to German immigrants in the 1840s. Several other railroad companies also began running immigrant cars and by the 1850s, most lines running from port cities utilized immigrant trains. Transporting immigrants brought increased ridership and the cheaper immigrant fares legitimized the lack of comfortable accommodations afforded other passengers, or so railroad officials believed. Although the case was made by railroad and government officials that segregated travel offered protection for the immigrants at an affordable rate, in reality, the accommodations onboard, particularly in the eastern states, were hardly favorable. Immigrants were indeed able to travel economically but their journey was often difficult.

Railroad companies used outdated passenger cars for immigrant trains or, more frequently, they permanently converted boxcars into passenger cars by installing wooden benches and adding windows to the car doors (Figures 4.1a and b). Boxcars did not have the same spring construction as passenger cars, since they were not meant for human traffic; consequently, they produced a jolting ride.\(^3\) One Norwegian immigrant wrote, “Travel by rail—on the main immigrant routes, at least—was especially rugged because most newcomers […] rode in immigrant cars, which were ordinary springless boxcars.

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\(^2\) One of the earliest mentions of immigrant cars dates from 1836, when the Utica & Schenectady Railroad ran reduced fare cars. For a full history of the origin of the immigrant car in the United States, see Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 239-253. For a discussion of immigrant trains and stations throughout the world, see MacKenzie and Richards, *The Railway Station*, 137-159. The authors note that internal migration and segregated immigrant traffic in the United States paralleled that of the Russian Trans-Siberian Railway. Eastern stations in Russia had special facilities for migrants, just like the western stations of United States. Train accommodations were also similar in both countries.

equipped [...] with crude benches for seats and providing neither bunks nor other furnishings, much less personal services." Some lines, such as the Illinois Central and Michigan Central Railroads, temporarily converted grain cars by installing seats for immigrants on the westbound leg of the trip and then removing the seats to transport freight back east. Like steamship companies, the railways received additional profit by transporting passengers west and then transporting freight eastbound on the return trip. To discourage passenger travel back east, railroad companies offered cheaper fares for westward journeys only.

Conditions on these immigrant trains were unpleasant, to say the least. Railroad companies did not provide any cushions for the hard wooden benches; immigrants had to provide their own or sit uncomfortably on bare wood for the duration of the journey. Robert Louis Stevenson, on his journey to San Francisco, noted the “extreme plainness” of the immigrant train car and remarked that “the benches are too short for anything but a young child. Where there is scarce enough elbow-room for two to sit, there will not be space enough for one to lie.” Lack of upholstery both minimized costs for the railroad companies and allowed for easy cleaning. After a journey, a railroad employee hosed down the wooden seats and floors. Designing these spaces to facilitate cleaning (instead of promoting passenger comfort as was the case in non-immigrant cars) pointed toward the purported filthiness of immigrants as viewed by railroad officials and the general public.

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6 MacKenzie and Richards, The Railway Station, 147.
Before the introduction of the immigrant sleeper car in the 1880s, amenities such as water, toilets, lighting, and stoves for cooking were minimal, if present at all.9 Immigrants had to use the facilities and obtain food and water at stops along the way. This had its disadvantages since stops lasted only approximately twenty minutes and many immigrants complained of not having enough time to get a meal.10 One Dutch immigrant recalled, “We had a burning thirst, and only at the stations, whenever the train stopped, could we get water. As the train did not wait for us while we filled our jugs, we always had to hurry.”11 Stevenson noted that he kept an eye on the train even while eating, since “the train stole from the station without note of warning.”12 On standard trains, conductors alerted passengers with a resounding “All Aboard!” yet conductors of immigrant trains pulled away without alerting passengers and the immigrants, understandably, feared being left behind.

There was another notable difference between immigrant cars and standard passenger cars—the opportunity to view the passing landscape. Unlike standard passenger cars, where travelers could enjoy the landscape through large glass windows, many immigrant trains did not offer such windows. The converted boxcars, or “economically constructed” cars, as one 1889 source described them, offered little in the way of scenery.13 On his 1872 journey from Omaha to San Francisco, William B. Stockton wrote that windows on the immigrant train were “small peek-holes high up on

9 Stevenson noted the “inefficacy of the lamps, which often went out and shed but a dying glimmer even while they burned.” Stevenson, The Amateur Emigrant, 133.
10 Ibid., 138-139; Kenneth O. Bjork, West of the Great Divide: Norwegian Migration to the Pacific Coast, 1847-1893 (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1958) 412-414; Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 243-244.
12 Stevenson, Amateur Emigrant, 139.
13 Clarke, The American Railway, 251.
the sides where one at a time might stand to see out” (see Figure 4.1b). Not only did these small openings offer little fresh air but they also denied the panoramic views available to other passengers, for whom the speed of travel offered a continuously moving landscape. German philosopher Dolf Sternberger termed the latter form of viewing ‘panoramic perception’ and attributed its creation to the railroad:

The railroad transformed the world of lands and seas into a panorama that could be experienced. Not only did it join the previously distant localities by eliminating all resistance, difference, and adventure from the journey: now that traveling had become so comfortable and common, it turned the travelers’ eyes outward and offered them the opulent nourishment of ever changing images that were the only possible thing that could be experienced during the journey.

It is with this panoramic perception that “the traveler saw the objects, landscapes, etc. through the apparatus which moved him through the world,” stated cultural historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch. These views were inaccessible to immigrant passengers, or only partially visible. One immigrant passenger traveling from Boston to Milwaukee remarked, “Surely any person with plenty of money would be happy to travel for days through such beautiful and ever changing scenery. But travelling as we did on an immigrant train […] was a sore trial, enough to make us downhearted.” Just as they would be allowed only partial use of the railroad stations, on the train immigrants could only catch glimpses of the land which would be their new home.

The railroad journey was long and arduous for immigrant passengers, not only because of the poor accommodations but also because of the slow service. Immigrant cars were often attached to freight trains, which ran on a much slower schedule than

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16 Italics in original. Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 64.
express, passenger, and mail trains, to which railroad personnel gave the right-of-way on tracks. The slower journey added inconvenience and further expense for immigrants. Longer travel time meant that immigrants put more money toward purchasing additional food and also toward boarding, if they had to wait in a city overnight to transfer trains. For many immigrants, finances were running low by the last leg of their journey. John Remeeus, a Dutch immigrant traveling with his family to Milwaukee, was rerouted to Boston instead of New York, as his steamship ticket indicated, and purchased railroad tickets there to travel west. In addition to the cost of the tickets, checking his baggage cost him eighteen more dollars than he had expected. At an overnight stop in Albany, his family stayed at a boarding house that cost six dollars—"a large sum for a poor immigrant," Remeeus noted. When Remeeus arrived in Chicago, he had only one dollar left in his pocket and with it he had to support his family until they arrived to their relatives in Milwaukee.

Improved conditions on immigrant trains occurred in 1879, with the introduction of the immigrant sleeper car. It was modeled after the fashionable Pullman sleeper cars and allowed, as the name suggests, room to sleep during the journey (Figure 4.2). Immigrant sleeper cars typically featured an upper and lower berth. The backs of the wooden seats could be folded down and joined at the center to form the lower berths on which passengers slept. The upper berths were closed during the day and lowered down, supported by iron rods, at night (Figure 4.3). For those in the upper berths, fumes and lack of ventilation threatened to suffocate passengers. Although related in principle to

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18 Ibid., 217.
the Pullman design, these immigrant sleepers lacked the amenities and luxurious interiors of Pullman cars—plush cushioned seats, carpeting, mattresses and linens, brass fixtures, and separate cars for seating during the day (Figure 4.4). The immigrant car, with its plain oak wooden interior, hard wood seats and cast iron fixtures, could not have been further from the Pullman model. No mattresses or cushions were provided; immigrants had to supply their own or on some lines, like the Santa Fe Railroad, they could purchase them onboard.\textsuperscript{21} In fact, the Santa Fe Railroad prided itself on its immigrant accommodations and advertised that the company’s sleeper cars included lamps, water, a stove and separate toilet facilities for men and women.\textsuperscript{22} Like the trains operating in the eastern states, there was no dining car and passengers could either bring their own food or purchase it at stops along the journey (Figure 4.5). Immigrants deemed these sleeper cars far superior to the immigrant cars of the eastern lines, where passengers had less room and had no choice but to sleep on the uncomfortable seats, on the floor under the seats, or even in the aisles.\textsuperscript{23}

Railroad companies operating west of Chicago had more to gain from the immigrants than the companies based on the East Coast. For western companies, immigrants were viewed as travelers, land buyers, settlers, and customers for the railways’ subsequent services.\textsuperscript{24} The companies that traveled west of Chicago offered improved accommodations on sleeper trains in the hopes of enticing passengers to

\textsuperscript{21} On the Santa Fe immigrant sleeper, mattresses, blankets, and curtains to separate the berths were available for purchase. Santa Fe pamphlet, “Fast Time. Free Sleeping Car for Emigrants. Santa Fe Route. Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, circular No. 7-A,” April 15, 1884. See also Kvale, \textit{Emigrant Trains}, 247-253 for description of immigrant sleeper cars.

\textsuperscript{22} Kvale, \textit{Emigrant Trains}, 251.


\textsuperscript{24} Kvale, \textit{Emigrant Trains}, 237.
purchase the land owned by the railroads along their lines (Figure 4.6).\textsuperscript{25} Railroad companies offered special incentives to prospective settlers such as applying the train fare toward land purchased, offering discounts to groups of settlers, or free tickets to families of settlers who traveled west to purchase land.\textsuperscript{26} Improved conditions on western lines did, in fact, attract more immigrant passengers.\textsuperscript{27} Conditions on immigrant trains departing from the eastern seaboard, however, left much to be desired.

Immigrant aid societies and the press were often critical of the railroad companies’ methods to transport immigrants. In 1887, an article in \textit{The World} condemned the New York Emigration Commission and the railroads, stating that instead of protecting and caring for immigrants until they reach their destination,

The immigrants are not only huddled like cattle in the uncomfortable and foul-smelling cars of this unlawful pool, that run on a freight schedule, taking two days instead of one to reach Chicago, but they are deprived of the right to select by which one even of the pool lines that shall purchase their tickets, and are charged exorbitant rates for baggage (Figure 4.7).\textsuperscript{28}

Furthermore, Senate investigations in 1871 discovered that the railroad companies ran “slow ‘extra’ trains for the immigrant” and that “engineers were not responsible to the


\textsuperscript{26} See Chapter Five for discussion of the railroad companies’ colonization efforts.

\textsuperscript{27} Immigrants comprised a high percentage of passenger traffic on western lines. For example, in 1888 Union Pacific operated eighty-four immigrant sleeper cars and only fifty-three Pullman cars. Other lines such as the Santa Fe and the Northern Pacific also had a higher number of immigrant cars. Kvale, \textit{Emigrant Trains}, 249-250.

company for arrival at any certain time.” The practice of giving other trains the right-of-way and delaying or rerouting immigrant trains occurred more frequently in the east than on the longer transcontinental journeys, since passenger and mail trains did not run as frequently further west as they did in the East. The eastern trains, cramped with immigrant passengers, became a target for immigrant aid societies. Their criticisms, however, did not affect change in the same way as it had at the government-owned immigrant receiving stations. The railroad companies were private enterprises with the aim of capitalizing profits. For them, immigrant traffic was a huge source of revenue. Even though the western railroad companies had more to gain from their immigrant passengers, they still provided far inferior conditions and services in comparison to the accommodations provided to middle-class passengers.

The segregated spaces of the railways not only expressed American prejudices toward newly-arrived foreigners but also revealed, and effectually reinforced, a racial hierarchy present among the immigrants themselves, with the Chinese relegated to the lowest class. Railroad companies tried to increase immigrant traffic by catering to racial prejudices among the travelers themselves. Railroad officials advertised the fact that they did their best to keep members of the same nationality together. Immigrants sometimes expressed annoyance at traveling in train cars with ethnic groups other than their own. Dutch immigrant John Remeeus and his family “were much annoyed during the night by strange Irish people, a low class who had attained only a slight degree of civilization.” The Santa Fe Railroad promised to “take special pains to locate passengers of the same

30 Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 247.
31 Remeeus, Journey of an Immigrant Family, 215.
nationality, and whose manners indicate that they would prove congenial, in the same car, so that all may be associated with agreeable traveling companions.\textsuperscript{32} The degree to which this promise was fulfilled is unclear; however, railroad officials did separate the Chinese from other immigrant passengers.

Robert Louis Stevenson noted that in the space of the railways “hungry Europe and hungry China [came] face-to-face.”\textsuperscript{33} The Chinese received the most scorn from their fellow immigrant travelers, who claimed that the Chinese immigrants were the filthiest and most foul-smelling of the other passengers. Railroad companies relegated Chinese passengers to their own car. Stevenson remarked in his travel journal that the Chinese car was, in fact, the tidiest of all the immigrant cars and that the Chinese travelers’ “efforts at cleanliness put us all to shame.”\textsuperscript{34} The complaints from other immigrants about the Chinese expressed a prejudice toward Asians rather than an honest reaction to hygiene. In the space of the railways, contemporary prejudice toward the Chinese was reproduced; not only were they segregated from other immigrant passengers but the Chinese car was also, notably, the passenger car closest to the engine and thus, the most dangerous location on the train.

This racial hierarchy also extended to other ethnic groups, including Native Americans. In the Western United States, treaty rights gave certain Native American tribes access to the rails. Shoshani and Paiute Indians in Nevada often took advantage of

\textsuperscript{32} Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe pamphlet, “Fast Time. Free Sleeping Car for Emigrants,” April 15, 1884. The Chicago & Northwestern Railway also noted in their promotional booklet that immigrants traveling on their line are “carefully distributed according to the departure of their trains in family groups, or according to nationalities.” Chicago & Northwestern Railway, The Care and Protection Afforded the Immigrant in the New Passenger Terminal (Chicago: Chicago & Northwestern Railway, 1912) 13.

\textsuperscript{33} Stevenson, The Amateur Emigrant, 159. By and large, immigrant trains mainly departed the east coast, where immigrants arriving were largely European, and traveled west; however, immigrant trains and waiting rooms were also present on the west coast, where Asian immigrants largely entered the country.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 161.
this opportunity and were relegated to the immigrant cars (Figure 4.8). However, when the immigrants complained that the Native Americans were dusty and unwashed, railroad officials forced them to ride in the baggage cars or on the boarding steps. Native American passengers were not even afforded the courtesy of a seat; instead, they were treated as sub-human by other passengers and railroad officials. Whereas immigrant passengers had potential to become citizens and assimilate to American cultural norms, many nineteenth century American citizens doubted Native Americans could ever fully assimilate, despite the federal government’s most fervent, and extreme, efforts.

The same system that provided immigrant trains and waiting rooms also supported Jim Crow train cars and architecture (Figure 4.9). African Americans, even if able to pay the higher fare to ride in first-class cars, were not afforded the right to move

35 Mackenzie and Richards, The Railway Station, 152.
36 Government efforts to assimilate, or “Americanize,” Native Americans included the establishment of boarding schools, suppression of native religions and promotion of Christianity, and introduction of agriculture, among other practices. President Ulysses S. Grant summarized the government’s progress in his 1871 State of the Union Address: “The policy pursued toward the Indians has resulted favorably […] Many tribes of Indians have been induced to settle upon reservations, to cultivate the soil, to perform productive labor of various kinds, and to partially accept civilization. They are being cared for in such a way, it is hoped, as to induce those still pursuing their old habits of life to embrace the only opportunity which is left them to avoid extermination.” His comments indicate contemporary American attitudes toward Native Americans as an uncivilized people. See Francis Paul Prucha, Documents of United States Indian Policy, 3rd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); David Wallace Adams, Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Brian W. Dippie, The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991); and Frederick E. Hoxie, A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).
from segregated cars.\(^38\) Ladies’ cars were only available to white women; black women and children were not allowed to ride in the ladies’ car, even if they paid the fare.

Instead, with a first-class ticket they were forced to ride in the men’s smoker car—a place where no respectable white woman would travel.\(^39\) Race dictated the space of African American travel, as well as Chinese travel, but for non-Chinese immigrants, segregation from other passengers was predominantly an issue of class, since those foreigners able to pay higher fares were not forced by railroad officials to travel in immigrant cars.

The American railway differed from railways abroad in that it did not explicitly label varying classes, giving a veiled appearance of democratized travel.\(^40\) The immigrant car was the lowest class of travel, both in cost and accommodations.\(^41\) For other passengers, American railroad companies offered parlor cars, ladies’ cars, men’s smoking cars, and coach cars instead of ‘first-class’ or ‘second-class’—terms used abroad for the same accommodations of travel.\(^42\) The immigrant car was roughly equivalent to British third-class travel. British travelers to America noted the lack of official class difference but recognized the divisions all the same. In an 1885 article in Harper’s

\(^{38}\) Kvale, *Emigrant Trains*, 263-265, 267-268. Most southern railroad stations maintained segregated areas for African Americans. These southern stations, however, typically did not feature immigrant waiting rooms since the vast majority of immigrants entered ports further north or west. Union Depot in St. Paul, Minnesota (Charles Frost, 1918) is a unique example of a station containing segregated waiting rooms for both immigrants and for African Americans. Charles S. Frost papers (N 48), Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis.


\(^{40}\) Britain set up three classes of travel and the rest of Europe followed suit. In Africa and India, however, there were often four or more classes of travel. MacKenzie and Richards, *The Railway Station*, 137-139.

\(^{41}\) For trains departing from eastern cities, the high numbers of immigrants usually warranted full immigrant trains without accommodations for other passengers.

\(^{42}\) For simplicity’s sake, however, I use the terms ‘first-class’ and ‘second-class,’ unless specifically referencing a particular accommodation such as the ladies’ car.
Monthly comparing British and American railways, the author asserted: “Your palace cars are only another form of first and second class carriages. [...] Why not admit the class distinction as openly as you adopt it?”\textsuperscript{43} Despite attempts at democratizing travel, American railways clearly responded to contemporary cultural ideals in the regulation of public space. Hierarchies of class and race were evident in the placement of the cars on the train. Immigrant cars were located closer to the engines (the Chinese car being the closest) than the other passenger cars, which railroad officials placed further from the engine in order of increasing ticket cost. Not only did those passengers closest to the engine experience higher levels of fumes and noise, but they were also most in danger if an accident occurred. By the 1870s, railroad officials realized the safest part of the train was actually the center; however, the cultural order had been set by that time and despite the danger, railroad companies and passengers defined the proper place for ladies and gentlemen to be the rear of the train.\textsuperscript{44} The organization of space within the train, even though it was not marked as first, second or third class, clearly represented class and racial distinctions.

**IMMIGRANT WAITING ROOMS**

In many respects, the railway station serves as a microcosm of the city—thousands of people coming and going, the presence of commercial activity, a combination of public and private spaces —yet railroad officials attempted to form a model of social and architectural order by controlling circulation throughout the space,

\textsuperscript{44} McCall, *Every Thing in its Place*, 18-20.
creating an idealized microcosm. Sociologist Charles Cooley wrote in his 1909 book, *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind*, that technology, which he defines as “the present regime of railroads, telegraphs, telephones and the rest,” reinforced democracy and social well-being and produced social order. In citing Cooley’s work, architectural historian Anthony Raynsford asserts that within the railway station, then, there was potential for an organized, modern and democratic crowd. Railroad officials contributed to the ordered appearance of this crowd by segregating the lower classes in their large city stations. In New York’s Grand Central Terminal, for example, immigrants and laborers were supposed to be “brought into the stations and enter a separate room without coming into contact with other passengers.” In keeping immigrant passengers out of view, railroad officials attempted to create a more homogenous crowd, a crowd unthreatened by unfamiliar foreigners. This intention was almost if not altogether impossible to achieve, however, since the train concourse was unavoidably a place in which different races and classes converged. Yet railroad officials persisted in this endeavor.

In these stations, railroad companies segregated immigrants in two ways: architectural isolation, in which the waiting room was physically removed from the main building, and by architectural partitioning, in which immigrants were segregated within the shared space of the station. These distinctions between architectural isolation and architectural partitioning were labeled by historian Robert Weyeneth in his study of Jim

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Crow architecture.\textsuperscript{49} Weyeneth’s concept of racial segregation as a spatial system can be readily applied to the immigrant segregation occurring in railroad stations across the United States. Although not all railroad stations contained immigrant waiting rooms, the stations that did contain them were usually located in large cities where immigrants transferred lines and at ports of entry to the United States, where large numbers of immigrants were concentrated. In stations near ports of entry, immigrant waiting areas were usually isolated from the main structure. At Union Stations where several railroad lines converged, in cities such as Columbus, Indianapolis, Chicago, Kansas City, Salt Lake City, Spokane, and Seattle, immigrant facilities were included in the building but partitioned from the main waiting areas.

While railroad officials claimed they provided segregated spaces for the immigrants’ own protection, there was clearly another population meant to be protected—American citizens. In his 1916 book, \textit{Passenger Terminals and Trains}, John Droege recommended that an immigrant waiting room, which he stated was “a necessity in large stations,” should be located “in an out of the way place, and may even be a separate building.”\textsuperscript{50} The location of immigrant rooms in railroad stations were often far removed from station amenities such as shops, the post office, restaurants and most importantly, far removed from other passengers. This distance from the main waiting areas minimized interactions between American citizens and immigrants.

In cities where a railroad company had more than one station, no provisions were made for immigrants in stations intended for elite passengers. The Pennsylvania Railroad in Philadelphia directed immigrant traffic to its South Philadelphia station, not the

\textsuperscript{49} Weyeneth, “The Architecture of Racial Segregation,” 11-44.
bourgeois Broad Street station.\textsuperscript{51} Similarly, the Pennsylvania Railroad directed New York immigrant traffic to its nearby Jersey City terminal, instead of Manhattan’s grand Pennsylvania Station built by McKim, Mead and White.\textsuperscript{52} Architectural historian Hilary Ballon notes that the construction of the Manhattan Pennsylvania Station in the first decade of the twentieth century was part of larger efforts by social reformers, business people and city planners to remake the area called the Tenderloin, home to New York’s growing black population, into an affluent neighborhood.\textsuperscript{53} City reformers targeted the area, drawing attention to its brothels, nightclubs, bars, and tenements, resulting in the displacement of the neighborhood’s black population and low-income residents. Approximately five hundred buildings were demolished and between five to six thousand people forced to move from their homes and businesses to make room for Pennsylvania Station. In addition to keeping away black and lower-class citizens from the intended middle-class patrons of the new station, the Pennsylvania Railroad’s removal of immigrant traffic from selected stations ensured that the middle-classes remained safe and content in their travels, with no opportunity to interact with the newly-arrived foreigners.

At stations where removal of immigrant traffic was impossible, the railroad companies tried to control passenger circulation. For passengers traveling first- or second-class, stations often provided a main waiting area, ladies’ waiting room, and

\textsuperscript{52} The immigrant facilities at the Pennsylvania Railroad’s Jersey City station were in a separate pier structure. This building measured 620 feet long by 120 feet wide and was used for both the immigrant waiting area (which measured 160 feet long by 120 feet wide) and freight storage. “Railroad Structures,” \textit{Railroad Gazette} 42, no. 7 (1907) 226. "Notes on Conferences on New York Terminal Facilities, Held Feb. 13, 1908, in New York City and Feb. 25, 1908, at Broad Street Station, Philadelphia," Acc. 1810, Box 146, Folder 5, page 2, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE.
men’s smoking room. Ladies’ waiting rooms and men’s smoking rooms were standard in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and conformed to contemporary notions of middle-class gentility and respectability.\textsuperscript{54} Segregated waiting rooms for immigrants or for African Americans—the supposedly inferior populations—were not separated by gender, suggesting that societal notions of femininity and respectability only applied to white middle and upper-class Americans.

For middle-class commuters traveling through the railroad terminals in the Port of New York, the proximity to Ellis Island was a constant reminder that the immigrants had only just arrived to the country. The medical inspections at Ellis Island did little to suppress the citizens’ apprehension that immigrants were a threat to public health. Immigrants who passed inspection at Ellis Island and purchased railroad tickets to continue their journey were brought by ferry from the island to the terminals in Jersey City, Hoboken, or Weehawken (Figure 4.10). To reduce health risks, immigrants were kept from commuters at the furthest distance possible in the space of the railway station.

The terminals of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Central Railroad of New Jersey and the Erie Railroad in Jersey City, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Terminal in Hoboken, and the West Shore Railroad Terminal in Weehawken each provided immigrant facilities separate from the main depot building. Passages connected the immigrant waiting room to the train concourse; therefore, immigrant passengers did not have to walk through the head house to reach their train. Of the seven railroad lines operating west from these stations in the early twentieth century, each was assigned a day

\textsuperscript{54} See McCall, \textit{Everything in its Place}. 
on which it carried all westbound immigrants from Ellis Island. Since the ferry traveled to only one station each day, this arrangement simplified ferry traffic and made it less confusing for railroad agents at Ellis Island who would otherwise be responsible for making sure each immigrant arrived at the correct terminal. This also ensured that each railroad company received its fair share of immigrant traffic. By evening, enough immigrants arrived from Ellis Island to the station of the day to make up one or more immigrant trains.

The closest station to Ellis Island was the Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal in Jersey City, which served as the point of departure for nearly two-thirds, or approximately eight million, immigrants departing from Ellis Island. The Victorian-style head house, designed by Peabody & Stearns in 1889, drew inspiration from both the French Renaissance Revival and the Richardsonian Romanesque (Figure 4.11). With its arched windows and doorways and its Picturesque silhouette, the red brick building with sandstone trim faced the harbor and formed an imposing presence alongside Ellis Island. The façade was divided into a five-part plan: a large central pavilion of three and one-half stories; wings flanking the central pavilion on either side; and two smaller pavilions at either end with a height of two and one-half stories. The interior of the building, praised by contemporary architectural critics for its “light and cheerful appearance,” featured a sky-lit hall spanned by three wrought-iron tresses and walls

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55 These seven railroad companies included: the Pennsylvania; West Shore; Delaware, Lackawanna & Western; Lehigh Valley; Erie, Ontario & Western; Baltimore & Ohio; and Jersey Central. Each of these companies had their own terminal, with the exception of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and Lehigh Valley Railroad, both of which operated out of the Jersey Central Terminal.

56 The Directors of the Port of Boston studied the operations in New York in the hopes of creating a similar policy of transportation and plan of construction for Boston Harbor. Directors of the Port of Boston, Massachusetts, Supplementary Report to the General Court, March 31, 1915 (Cambridge, 1915) 52.

57 The Central Jersey Terminal remains standing to this day although its ferry house was demolished in the late twentieth century.
veneered with glazed cream-colored English brick (Figure 4.12). The ground level contained the ticket counter, men’s and women’s waiting rooms, a lunch room, dining room, restrooms, newsstand, telegraph office and fruit stand. Railroad administrative offices were located along the iron balconies on the upper level of the central pavilion.

The immigrant waiting room was located in the single-story ferry house, on the dock between the two northernmost ferry slips. Men’s and women’s toilets were the only amenities available and immigrants waited on wooden benches in this room until their evening departure by rail. The architecture of the ferry house was not as complex as that of the head house (Figure 4.13). The timber construction featured simple, low-pitched gable roofs that did not obstruct the view of the head house for those seeing the station from across the harbor. Passageways at the northern and southern ends of the head house connected the ferry concourse to the train platforms and bypassed the main waiting area. The wide southern passage, clad in the same glazed brick of the main waiting area, allowed commuters to bypass the pedestrian traffic of the head house and proceed directly from the ferry to the train concourse. Employees transferred baggage from the ferries to the train by means of the much narrower northern passage, which was clad in red brick, a cheaper material than the glazed brick. It was this passage that also connected the immigrant waiting area to the train concourse and allowed immigrants to

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58 *Railroad Gazette* (1889), 422.
59 No images of the interior of this immigrant room survive.
60 The ferry concourse protected passengers from the elements as they passed from the docks to the main building. With the single story structure, pedestrians and vehicular traffic shared the space of the ferry concourse. During renovations in 1914, the ferry house was rebuilt as a two-story structure, separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The new structure’s steel frame was sheathed with copper and designed in a neoclassical style. For more on the architectural history of the building, see Joseph Osgood, “Central Railroad Company of New Jersey,” *Coupler* (April 1949): Supplement; Charles Parrot, “The Central Railroad of New Jersey, Jersey City Terminal,” *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1975); and Herbert J. Githens, et al., *A Reuse Plan for the Central Railroad of New Jersey Marine Terminal* (Newton, NJ: Historic Conservation and Interpretation, 1980).
proceed directly from their own waiting area on the dock to the segregated train waiting on the north platform, thus minimizing contact with commuter passengers (Figure 4.14).

One of the other prominent stations in the area was the New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad Station in Jersey City, further north of the Central Jersey Terminal and immediately south of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Terminal in Hoboken. The Queen Anne style building was built in 1887 by architect George Archer and engineer C.W. Buchholz (Figure 4.15). At the time of its construction the New York Times deemed it a “handsome structure.” Half-timbering on the façade emphasized its wooden construction. Four towers marked the corners of the building, with a clock tower rising taller than the others. Skylights and louvered sash windows ran the length of the pitched roof, allowing ample light and ventilation. Within the station were the general waiting room, ticket office, ladies’ waiting room, restaurant, smoking room, and lavatories. The New York Times described its main waiting area as “finished in hard woods in their natural colors” and noted the abundant light that entered the room through stained glass windows.

Like the other New Jersey terminals on the harbor, the immigrant facilities at the Erie Station were not included in the main building. Instead, immigrants disembarked from the Ellis Island ferries and waited for their train departure in a wooden structure located on Pier 5 (Figure 4.16). The two-story building was simple in construction with little architectural embellishment. The brightly-colored and ornamented interior of the head house’s main waiting room starkly contrasted the plain wooden interior of the

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62 The building measured 600 feet long by 140 feet wide and sheltered eight railroad tracks. The clock tower rose to a height of 115 feet.
63 “A Handsome Structure,” 9. I have been unable to locate any images of the interior.
immigrant room, which featured exposed cross-beams and trusses along the ceiling and long rows of wooden benches with cast-iron supports (Figure 4.17). Multi-pane windows let in light and air to the otherwise crowded space. The pier building gives the appearance of a storage facility—not that of a waiting area for rail passengers.

The immigrant facilities at the New Jersey waterfront terminals were largely ignored by contemporary sources. If mentioned at all in architectural descriptions of terminal, authors merely noted the presence of an immigrant area and any description of the space was limited to its dimensions. For example, in historian William Shaw’s 1884 book on Essex and Hudson counties, he describes the West Shore terminal in Weehawken in detail, noting that the main waiting area is “finely paneled in red cherry and yellow pine wainscoting, and all elaborately ornamented in the Eastlake style.” In contrast, his cursory description of the immigrant room is only that it measures sixty by sixty feet. In the Midwest, however, immigrant facilities received more attention by railroad companies and contemporary sources. Improved conditions for immigrants were not limited only to trains owned by western railroad companies but were also evident in their railroad stations. As immigrants traveled further into the country, they were treated by the railroad companies as the potential customers that they were. These new foreigners not only purchased railroad tickets and paid for their freight but would purchase land from the railroad companies, thus providing continuous profit.

Further inland, immigrants were not relegated to separate, and vastly inferior, structures as they had been in the New Jersey terminals. Railroad companies included the immigrant waiting areas in the plan of the main building. In most stations, however,

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they still remained segregated from other passengers. The design and location of these immigrant rooms sustained the segregation present on trains. In stations where the immigrant waiting area was located within the head house, there was an increased chance for contact between immigrants and other passengers, particularly in the space of the train concourse. However, this contact was carefully monitored by railroad officials. Designated agents hired by the railroads directed immigrant passengers to their waiting room and to their trains. Advertising superior immigrant facilities was one way for railroad companies to attract immigrant passengers while simultaneously demonstrating to the public that the immigrant population would be segregated within the space of the station.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Company went to great lengths to describe and promote the facilities and services available to immigrants in their new Chicago terminal, which opened in 1911 (Figure 4.18). The five other stations servicing Chicago in the early twentieth century housed between three and eleven carriers each; the Chicago & Northwestern terminal was the only Chicago station dedicated to one railroad company, which perhaps explains the company’s extensive advertising campaign. The Chicago & Northwestern published a thirty-two page booklet entitled *The Care and Protection Afforded the Immigrant in the New Passenger Terminal* in efforts to promote

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66 Chicago was the greatest rail center in the United States. In addition to the Chicago & Northwestern Terminal, the other city stations included Central Station, Dearborn Station (also known as Polk Street Station), La Salle Street Station, Grand Central Station, and Union Station. The Chicago & Northwestern began advertising its new station, in the form of picture postcards, brochures, and booklets, shortly after its completion in 1911. The cost of the new station, which replaced the company’s Wells Street Station, was over twenty million dollars. See H. Roger Grant, *The North Western: A History of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway System* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996).
the railroad line to potential immigrant passengers.67 The booklet, published in English, French, German, and the Scandinavian languages, was distributed in the United States and Europe. Additionally, the Chicago & Northwestern published several pamphlets with pertinent statistics for immigrants on employment, geography, housing, etc.68 By providing this information to immigrants, the Chicago & Northwestern Railway declared that they “hoped that those who are deeply interested in the development of the Western States, will aid, and appreciate the labor and expense incurred by the Railway Company in these publications, by extending their patronage, and advising their friends when traveling to patronize the Chicago & Northwestern Railway.”69 The company described the immigrant facilities in their Chicago station as “unequalled in any other railway station in the world.”70 The waiting area included such amenities as tubs to bathe, sinks and dryers to launder clothing, a lunch-room in which to purchase food, wicker rocking-chairs to recline (with a noted lack of upholstery), and tables to sit and write letters to loved ones at home (Figure 4.19).

Although the Chicago & Northwestern rightfully presented their immigrant rooms as a space that far exceeded any other railroad’s immigrant facilities, there was a marked difference from the areas of the station provided for non-immigrant passengers.71 The immigrants’ facilities had none of the grandeur associated with the rest of the building.

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68 Many railroad companies and state governments published pamphlets such as these to promote immigration to the United States. See Chapter 5 for more on publications of this type.
69 Immigration Association of California, California (Chicago & Northwestern Railway, 1882) 1.
70 Chicago & Northwestern Railway, Care and Protection Afforded the Immigrant, 9.
71 The Chicago & Northwestern did provide more amenities than other railroads and in fact, received much praise from immigrant aid societies for doing so. Grace Abbott, Director of the Immigrants’ Protective League and resident at Hull House, wrote a letter commending the Chicago & Northwestern for its “really thoughtful provision for the comfort of the immigrants passing through Chicago.” The Chicago & Northwestern reprinted the letter in its promotional booklet. Chicago & Northwestern Railway, Care and Protection Afforded the Immigrant, 26.
Passengers entered into the public lobby through the colonnaded entrance of the Renaissance Revival structure designed by the architectural firm of Frost & Granger. From there, non-immigrant passengers ascended a staircase to the massive waiting room on the track level. The main waiting room was a lavish space: abundant light streaming in through lunette windows along the sides and ends of the barrel-vaulted roof; light pink Tennessee marble walls and pilasters; columns of pale green Greek Appollino marble; bronze light fixtures; and mahogany seats (Figure 4.20). It was vividly colored and opulent—a stark contrast to the sterile immigrant waiting rooms. Immigrant passengers did not ascend the staircase to this waiting room but instead, an immigrant agent hired by the railway directed them to the waiting room at the corner of Randolph and Clinton Streets, toward the rear of the building. The immigrants, although allowed to enter the main building, were kept at a far distance from the other passengers, a large number of whom were commuters.

Other Chicago stations advertised their immigrant facilities to potential customers, although they did not go to the same lengths as the Chicago & Northwestern Railway in their attempt to secure immigrant passengers. For example, the railroad officials at Chicago’s Grand Central Station described the immigrant facilities in this way:

Poverty and luxury are closely allied, they say, and so it is that just beyond the kitchen of the restaurant is a long, clean, well-lit and well-ventilated hall, where the West-bound immigrants rest and wait for their cars. Unlike other places one could name, the Grand Central Passenger Station seems to have immigrant accommodations suitable for human beings, and though, of course, there is not the glitter of marble there, nor does the cheeriness of a hickory fire help to brighten the prospects of the foreigners in search of new lives; still they can have their comforts there. There they can feel, at least, that they are coming to a land where there is room for all and comfort, and through the windows they can watch the
tides of traffic and trade as they wait the cars that are to carry them to the farther, wider West.\textsuperscript{72}

In so many words, the officials at Grand Central Station claimed that their immigrant accommodations were superior to the inhumane quarters of other (unnamed) railroad stations but that this space was, in fact, inferior to the main waiting areas. This passage spoke more to the concerns of other passengers at the station than it did to the immigrants’ own interests, although the latter was addressed. The railway assured passengers that immigrants were out-of-the-way and would not inconvenience the public; it also assured immigrants that its facilities were better than those of their competitors.

As immigrants traveled further into the country, western railroad companies offered them the opportunity to cleanse themselves—literally—of their old world. John Droege, General Superintendent of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, recommended that the immigrant room be “furnished with complete sanitary equipment, and, if possible, tubs for washing clothes and dryers. […] Immigrant rooms should be well ventilated and the interior of them so designed that they may be easily cleaned” (Figure 4.21).\textsuperscript{73} Throughout their promotional booklet the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad referenced the cleanliness of the space with descriptions of the “sanitary waiting room,” “shining white porcelain bath tubs [and] sanitary towels,” “sanitary bubbling drinking fountains,” and noted that “its construction of vitrified brick and cement makes

\textsuperscript{72} “Grand Central Passenger Station, Harrison St. and Fifth Ave. Chicago, U.S.A.” pamphlet. Wisconsin State Historical Society Library, Madison. Quote reprinted in Kvale, Emigrant Trains, 275. Grand Central was the smallest of Chicago’s passenger rail terminals. It serviced the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the Chicago Great Western Railway, the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway, and the Pere Marquette Railroad Company.

\textsuperscript{73} Droege, Passenger Terminals and Trains, 29.
scrupulous cleanliness possible” (Figure 4.22). The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad was directly responding to public fears that immigrants bore filth and disease.

Immigration officials, certain politicians, and writers for the popular press viewed foreigners as carriers of infectious diseases and associated them with poor hygiene. The design of these spaces expressed the railroad companies’ attempts to control the circulation of foreign-borne illness. In describing the white-tiled, sterile areas of the immigrant waiting room, railroad companies sent the message that other travelers could be protected from the assumed filth and disease the immigrants carried. Offering a sanitary space in which immigrants could bathe and launder their clothing meant that they could continue their rail journey cleansed—something immigrants surely wanted to do after their arduous overseas journey.

The opportunity for immigrants to cleanse themselves of the Old World as they traveled to their new home had figurative meaning as well. Railroad companies sought out the “settler who has ‘staying qualities.’” The Chicago & Northwestern viewed new foreigners as potential citizens and thus, urged employees to “do our share—prompted not alone by our sense of duty to the Company but by genuine humanitarian considerations—in helping to shape the bewildered foreigner into the ideal of American citizenship.” By offering clean facilities and improved amenities (or at least, better facilities than the competitors’) railroad companies hoped to impart their own standard of morality on immigrant passengers, who were not yet integrated into American society. In the eyes of railroad officials, immigrants could begin to shed their foreign ways as they

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74 Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, Care and Protection Afforded the Immigrant, 13, 15, 21.
77 Ibid.
traveled by rail to their new home and once settled, could eventually become model citizens. The Chicago & Northwestern Railway cautioned its employees to treat every immigrant well since “as we do not know from sight the future winners of the yet unwon West, wisdom advises us to treat all as prospective winners, for we shall want the good will of the man who sticks when he finally comes into his own.”78 The treatment of immigrants was thus tied up in the potential profit to be made by the railroads. Although the Chicago & Northwestern Railway went to great lengths in their humane treatment of immigrant, ultimately the better the treatment they gave the immigrants, the more profit to be gained, a fact not lost on railroad officials.

In stations with a high number of commuter passengers, like the Chicago & Northwestern Terminal or the Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal in Jersey City, the immigrant facilities were removed from general waiting areas, either within the main building or outside of it entirely. At Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri, the majority of traffic was through passengers—not suburban commuters.79 Most of the rail lines terminated at Union Station and thus, a large number of the twenty thousand to thirty-five thousand passengers that passed through the station daily were there to transfer trains. Many of the lines that traveled through Union Station, such as the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, catered to large numbers of immigrant passengers who traveled west in segregated sleeper cars. The low number of commuters at the station meant that the immigrant room did not need to be completely isolated from the main waiting areas. In

78 Ibid.
79 Droege notes the Kansas City’s Union Station “is an unusual one [because] it handles practically no suburban traffic but the number of through passengers is out of all proportion to the size of the city.” Droege, Passenger Terminals and Trains, 93.
fact, the immigrant room in this station was adjacent to the main waiting room with a lunch room separating the two areas (Figure 4.23).

The construction of the Beaux-Arts Union Station, designed by architect Jarvis Hunt and completed in 1914, was initiated by the Kansas City Terminal Railway Company, a corporation owned equally by the twelve railroads that would occupy the station.\(^{80}\) At the time of its completion, it was one of the largest stations in the country (Figure 4.24).\(^{81}\) The T-shaped masonry structure opened onto a southern public plaza and the stem of the ‘T’ projected north over the tracks. The building’s steel-construction was covered with Bedford limestone and trimmed with Maine granite. Three deeply recessed arches, separated by double columns, faced the plaza and marked the grand entrance to the neoclassical building. There were two entrances to the building, one located in each of the end archways, which flanked the semi-circular ticket office in the lobby. A telegraph office and telephone booths were located on either side of the ticket office and an octagonal information booth and similar booth for the transfer company were located in the east and west ends of the lobby, respectively. The east wing contained a restaurant and lunch room, women’s waiting room, and pharmacist; the west wing contained the baggage and parcel rooms, men’s smoking room, and barber shop.

The grand lobby opened into the main waiting area where eight train gates lined either side of the room. These gates opened to a concourse (called the Midway) with stairways to track level. The Midway also led to the grand lobby, allowing incoming

\(^{80}\) These railroad companies were the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, the Chicago & Alton, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, the Missouri Kansas & Texas, the Missouri Pacific, the St. Louis & San Francisco, the Union Pacific, the Wabash, the Chicago & Great Western, and the Kansas City Southern.

\(^{81}\) The head house measured 510 feet by 150 feet and the length of the building over the tracks measured 410 feet by 165 feet. The central pavilion measured six stories high while the side wings were half that height. Droege, *Passenger Terminals and Trains*, 93. The building remains standing today although passenger service to the station ceased in 1985.
passengers to pass directly into the lobby and out the main entrance without having to walk through the main waiting area. The main waiting room featured forty-four double mahogany benches, terra cotta walls with a base of Great Bend marble, a paneled plaster ceiling, and large triple windows over each train gate (Figure 4.25). Its design and decoration far surpassed that of the immigrant waiting room.

The immigrant waiting room, with seating for one hundred and fifty persons, was located north of the main waiting area (Figure 4.26). The walls of the immigrant room, capped with a plaster cornice, were constructed of the same buff-colored bricks that were used in the Midway. The room was sparsely furnished with oak wood benches. Bands of metal-framed windows high on the north and south walls lit the room. The brick construction of the immigrant room, as opposed to the marble and terra cotta walls of the main waiting area, indicated the lower status of the room’s occupants. Hunt intended future expansion of the station and designed the north end so that the brick immigrant room could be removed and the building extended to the north.\footnote{With the decline of rail travel beginning in the 1920s, this extension was unnecessary and thus never built.} A marble-toped lunch counter on the south wall of the room was duplicated on the other side of the brick wall for the station’s non-immigrant passengers (Figure 4.27). A small kitchen area separated the two counters although passengers at one counter were partially visible to the other side, an encounter that would have been impossible at stations where the immigrant room and dining areas were physically separated from the main waiting areas by solid walls, entire rooms, or even entire buildings. At these lunch counters, commuters and immigrant passengers visually confronted one another but remained segregated from one another within their respective waiting rooms.
Many immigrants traveled the railroads of the Kansas City Terminal Railway Company to reach their new homes, located on land likely purchased from the railways in Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, New Mexico, and elsewhere. With a minimal number of commuters, there was less of a need for railroad officials to protect the local population from any real or imagined threat posed by the foreign passengers. The Kansas City Terminal Railway Company did however, address the threat posed by passengers with contagious diseases or criminal records. These passengers were contained in the Isolation Room adjacent to the immigrant waiting room. The Railway Gazette reported in its description of Union Station’s facilities that “the isolation and immigrants’ waiting rooms are connected directly with the concourse on each side, eliminating the necessity for this class of passengers passing through the main waiting room or coming in contact with the other passengers.”

Through a close reading of the architectural plans for the building, the hierarchy of travelers is made evident; railroad officials deemed the passengers confined to the isolation room unfit to associate with first- and second-class passengers and in this contemporary description are grouped, architecturally and socially, with immigrant travelers. In contrast to the port cities, in the Midwest, where immigrant travelers were viewed by the railways as customers and potential land-owners, they were no longer completely isolated from other passengers yet they were still associated, however tenuously, with the criminal and the diseased.

In a floor plan from the Kansas City Terminal Railway Company printed in the Railway Gazette prior to the building’s completion, the waiting room at the rear of the structure was labeled the “Second-Class Waiting Room.” After the building’s

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83 “The New Kansas City, MO., Union Passenger Station,” Railway Gazette 57, no. 18 (1914) 801.
84 “New Kansas City, Mo., Passenger Terminal,” Railway Gazette 54, no. 21 (1913) 1121.
completion, in both the *Railway Gazette* and Droege’s *Passenger Terminals and Trains*, the same space was renamed the “Immigrant Waiting Room.”85 The change in terminology suggests that the Kansas City Terminal Railway Company had originally labeled the space according to the class of travel—not by singling out passengers for their foreignness—but upon completion of the building the company conformed to the segregation of immigrant travelers evident in other railroad stations. Only immigrant passengers could be in proximity of the criminal and diseased—people who could have been immigrants themselves, whether newly-arrived or migrating from the East.

Passengers riding trains west included both newly-arrived foreigners and migrants from eastern states (both foreign and native-born). In the Pacific Northwest especially, there was a confluence of these passengers, a large number of whom were traveling second-class or on immigrant trains.86 The presence of the railroads in Spokane—the arrival of the Northern Pacific in 1881 was followed by Great Northern Railroad and the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company—contributed to the increasing size and economic growth of the city.87 The Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railways developed westward from Minnesota and brought immigrant settlers along their lines. The Oregon Railway originated in Portland and extended northeast toward Spokane. Each of these three railroad companies built a station in Spokane and eastbound and westbound passengers riding along these routes converged in those buildings.

86 See Kristofer Allerfeldt’s *Race, Radicalism, Religion and Restriction: Immigration to the Pacific Northwest* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003) for more on immigration history in Oregon.
As Spokane developed, the city’s three railway stations served as physical symbols of the urbanization occurring in the area. At the turn of the century, Spokane was the largest city in the Pacific Northwest and was considered by railroad officials to be the commercial capital of the Inland Empire.\(^{88}\) When the Northern Pacific Railroad reached Spokane in 1881 (then known as Spokane Falls), the population of the city was twelve hundred. By 1890 the population had risen to nearly twenty thousand and in 1920 it had reached over one hundred thousand people. The state of Washington became an important region for industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, drawing settlers and businessmen alike with its seemingly endless supply of timber and trapping.\(^{89}\)

With railroad development and its subsequent urbanization, government and railroad officials, as well as the logging and trapping industries, not only depleted natural resources but also advanced the removal of the indigenous population out of the area and onto reservations. As settlers moved into the area, they supplanted the Spokane Indians. One group of displaced Native Americans in the area was the colony of Deep Creek, who had initially appealed to non-Indian settlers with their efforts to assimilate to white culture by taking up farming, converting to Christianity, and erecting wooden homes (Figure 4.28).\(^{90}\) Yet as the town grew and the railroad sought to extend its holdings,

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\(^{89}\) In the early nineteenth century, settlers traveled over the Oregon Trail to the Pacific Northwest; the introduction of railroads made the journey faster, cheaper and safer. For more on the Oregon Trail see Will Bagley, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing Trails to Oregon and California* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2010); T.J. Hanson, *Western Passage* (Ashland, OH: Bookmasters, 2001); and John Unruh, *The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860* (University of Illinois Press, 1993).

\(^{90}\) The agricultural colony of Deep Creek was established under the Indian Homestead Act of 1875 and it was comprised of Spokane Indians who had refused to move from Spokane Falls to the nearby Colville and Coeur d’Alene reservations. In his memoirs, General Oliver Otis Howard recalled his favorable impression of one Deep Creek colonist’s newly erected “bona fide white man’s house. […] Its plan was as nearly square as an Indian could lay it out” (italics in original). Howard, *My Life and Experiences Among our
prospective settlers, businessmen, and railroad officials found the Native American presence unsettling. Henry Villard, president of the Northern Pacific Railway, stated: “the settlement of Indians in the vicinity of a town or village is not usually promotive [sic] of either the welfare of the Indians or the whites.” Additionally, some of the Deep Creek colonists’ farms were located on sections of land granted by Congress to the Northern Pacific Railroad. For railroad officials, these Spokane Indians stood in the way of their development of the area. After years of turmoil between representatives of the colony and the federal government, Congress ratified an agreement in 1892 that obliged colonists to relocate on nearby reservations. Not only in Spokane but throughout the American West, the removal of the indigenous population to reservations, along with the expansion of the railroad, indicated to many Americans that the western frontier had finally been tamed and successfully transformed into their version of a civilized society.

The railroad reinforced class hierarchies that were seen as constitutive of civilization. The labeling of the immigrant waiting room as the “Second-Class Waiting Room” was not uncommon in the early decades of the twentieth century. Historians

92 Reprinted in Mann, “‘No More Out’,” 176.
93 John Wilson Sprague, general agent and superintendent of the Northern Pacific, assured the Deep Creek colonists that the railroad would work with the Interior Department to allow the colony to remain on the land—a promise that was eventually broken. *North-West Tribune*, 7 July 1880, 4. See also Mann, “‘No More Out’,” 173.
94 Spokane Indians agreed to relinquish claims to land outside reservations and relocate to the Coeur d’Alene or Jocko Indian Reservations. In exchange, Congress promised them $95,000 to cover removal costs and assistance in their agricultural pursuits. Mann, “‘No More Out’,”179 and Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, *The Spokane Indians: Children of the Sun* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006) 189, 192-193, 203-204.
Jeffrey Richards and John MacKenzie state that the immigrant waiting areas that were designated as second-class “neatly reflect[ed] the American attitude to recently arrived immigrants.”

Passengers traveling west on second-class fare included migrants from the east, many of whom were foreign-born but had already been in the country for several years. In the Oregon-Washington Station in Spokane, completed in 1914, the second-class waiting room, for both migrants and immigrants, was accessed by its own street entrance and opened only to the train concourse, not the rest of the station. This separate entrance reinforced the idea that immigrants were not yet integrated into American society and thus, could not share the same spaces as American citizens.

The Oregon-Washington Station was a four-story brick and granite French Renaissance Revival building (Figure 4.29). Four doorways, located under a copper and glass-covered marquis, marked the main entrance of the building. Large arched windows rose above the marquis between stone pilasters. First-class passengers entered under the marquis into the lobby, where a ticket office was located directly opposite the doors (Figure 4.30). On the east side of the lobby was a barber shop, which was also accessible from the street. Past the barber shop, at the southeastern corner of the building was the second-class waiting room. At the southwestern side of the building was a dining room, accessible from the lobby and the sidewalk, and a store accessible only from the street. North of the lobby were the baggage and mail rooms. Staircases at either side of the ticket office led first-class passengers upstairs to the main waiting room—a brightly-lit space with marble floor, mahogany benches, decorated plaster ceiling and bronze light

96 MacKenzie and Richards, The Railway Station, 147.
97 The Oregon-Washington Railway & Navigation Company later became part of the Union Pacific Railroad. The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway also serviced the station.
fixtures (Figure 4.31). A ladies’ room and a men’s smoking room were at the east and west ends, respectively. The second floor of the immigrant room was also on this upper level. Passengers in the second-class waiting area could not access any parts of the main waiting areas, except through the train concourse.

Immigrant passengers and others traveling second-class did not receive a protective marquis over their doorway. Instead, the marquis sheltered first-class passengers from the weather as they entered or exited the station and as they waited for transportation into the city. Immigrant passengers entered through an unceremonious doorway into a waiting area completely segregated from the public areas of the station, with the necessary exception of the train concourse (Figure 4.32). The railroad’s attempt to minimize visibility of the immigrant passengers to citizen-travelers is analogous to its attempt to diminish contact with the Native American population in the city—the difference being, of course, that the indigenous population was removed altogether.

Indigenous peoples, as evident in the example of train cars, were at the lowest level of the racial hierarchy in rail travel. Immigrants had the potential to become model citizens, to shed their foreign ways and assimilate to American society. Native Americans, even when they did assimilate, as in the example of the Deep Creek colonists, would never be considered model citizens, or even citizens, for that matter. For both government and railway officials, Native Americans impeded their notion of progress and civilization.

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99 This is not to claim that Native Americans wanted to be viewed as American citizens. For Native American perspective on the settling of the American West see Dee Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian Perspective of the American West (New York: Pocket Books, 1970) and James J. Cassidy, Jr., Through Indian Eyes: The Untold Story of Native American Peoples (Pleasantville, N.Y.: Readers Digest Association, 1995). On U.S. government policy toward Native Americans, see Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).
Immigrants, on the other hand, while still posing a threat to American citizens, could further the nation’s progress by settling the lands previously occupied by the indigenous population.

Railroad officials balanced their own needs with those of the public and in so doing, perpetuated prejudices toward foreign populations. On the one hand, railroad companies were merely catering to contemporary demand for regulation of public space. In promoting spaces that were sterile and easily cleaned, the railroad companies addressed American fears of foreign-borne illness. On the other hand, the extent to which they segregated immigrant passengers served to reinforce racial prejudice and class distinctions. This prejudice pervaded all levels, even among the immigrants themselves, where certain groups, such as the Chinese, were treated as inferior. Railroad company advertisements promoting superior accommodations on their trains and in their stations were directed toward a specific class of immigrant, one that could become model American citizens.

When immigrants first entered the country they were isolated from American citizens at government receiving stations. The ideological role of the railroad station as the modern city gateway contained deeper meaning at the New Jersey terminals, which were gateways to the country for immigrants arriving in New York Harbor. These stations served as the literal and metaphorical point of departure for immigrants traveling further inland to their new homes. Yet the immigrants who departed from these terminals were denied the symbolic passage through the main building. Further inland, where immigrant traffic was a lucrative business for the railways, immigrants were allowed to enter the head house but remained segregated from other passengers. Railroad officials
believed that the immigrants purchasing their land and settling along their lines had the potential to assimilate to American life and become citizens. Traveling to their destination, however, they remained outsiders; railroad companies viewed them as unfit to interact with the American public. The transitory spaces of the train cars and railroad stations, in which the immigrant was marked as foreign and inferior, symbolized the transient state of the immigrants themselves—no longer part of their homelands and not yet citizens of their new country.
CHAPTER V. SETTLEMENT: ETHNIC ENCLAVES IN THE MIDWEST

When the federal government began granting lands to the railroads in the mid-nineteenth century, it initiated a new era in which railroad companies served as land agents. The purpose of the railways was no longer just to transport settlers throughout the country but also to actively promote and sell land along their lines. This new role resulted in changes to company operations but more importantly, directed patterns of settlement in the American Midwest, namely the establishment of ethnic enclaves. Railroads in the western United States, as opposed to the rest of the world, were unique in that their construction actually preceded settlement of the land. It was the railroad companies themselves, then, that determined the placement, layout and architecture of towns along their routes. Railroad officials also played a significant role in determining who would settle those towns. Through targeted promotional campaigns, these officials sought immigrants from Northern Europe and the British Isles—nationalities they felt exhibited high morals, a strong work ethic, and knowledge of agriculture. At the same time, however, the railroads displaced the indigenous population and in choosing the immigrants they felt would make ideal American citizens, railroad officials excluded certain races and ethnicities, such as Asians and southern and eastern Europeans.

This chapter examines railroad colonization efforts and the ensuing physical and cultural reshaping of the country. With the land grant system, railroad lands alternated with those of the government to form a checkerboard pattern of numbered sections, superimposed onto what was once open range inhabited by Native American tribes. The railroads platted towns on their sections along the tracks, anticipating settlement by individuals, families, and entire communities. Railroad officials began a series of
advertisements and promotional campaigns to entice settlers to the vast tracts of land now in their possession. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company initiated a comprehensive colonization effort in the 1870s that promoted the mass migration of German-speaking Mennonites from Russia to company lands in Kansas.¹ To facilitate the settlement of the Mennonites and indeed other colonies, railroad companies offered reduced transportation rates and provided temporary lodging houses for foreigners until they purchased their specific parcels of land and built their homes. Yet the immigrants brought with them their own architectural styles and village organization, complicating the railroads’ homogenous town plats. These colonization efforts by the railroad companies ultimately shaped both the built environment and the cultural landscape of the American Midwest.

Railway officials believed that their colonizing enterprise was the solution to creating a civilized and prosperous nation. To them, the removal of the indigenous population from the vast tracts of land west of the Mississippi River provided a blank canvas on which railroad officials could imprint their own notions of civility and morality. George S. Harris, Land Commissioner of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad, wrote in a letter to the company’s president that he felt inducing European immigration would serve a higher cause “by transplanting modern civilization and Christianity into these new Western states.”² The railroads repopulated what was once Native American land with another population, one that was light-skinned and adhered to

¹ The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad is hereafter shortened to the Santa Fe Railroad.
² G.S. Harris to J.W. Brooks, 21 July 1872, George Harris, Private In-Letters, September 1869-October 1872, Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago. The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Company was incorporated in Iowa in 1852 and in Nebraska in 1869. In 1872 the company was acquired by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad (CB&Q) to serve as a subsidiary. For simplicity’s sake, this company is hereafter referred to in the text as the Burlington Railroad, although footnotes will clarify which branch is referenced.
the Christian religion, even if they were in fact foreigners. In promotional literature for the Burlington Railroad, the company referred to the rapid changes brought on by westward migration—the construction of permanent buildings, the establishment of commerce and agricultural production, and most importantly, the relegation of the Native American population to that of a vanishing race:

One of the wonders we live is the rapidity with which the various Western States have been occupied and their lands brought under cultivation. Less than a generation ago the Indian pitched his tepee where magnificent public buildings now uprear themselves, or electric street-cars carry thousands of people daily through the busy avenues of trade and commerce, and vast herds of buffalo roamed where an unbroken succession of corn fields and orchards now annually yields its enormous wealth. The buffalo is gone—practically exterminated. The Indian is gone, likewise, and is now [...] an object of curiosity in Nebraska or Colorado [...].”

In this passage, the railroad company presented the drastic changes to the landscape and culture as a natural progression of time, as if the changes were inevitable, without referencing the actual cultural work done to institute the removal of native peoples and wildlife and the construction of towns, roads and buildings in their stead. The Native American tribes, once connected to the land on which they lived, had now become an object of curiosity to the new settlers, strangers on the land they had once called home.4

Those changes, however, were not a natural progression of time but were intentionally brought upon largely by the railroad companies themselves, who had a vested interest in the towns and farms they intended to locate on lands west of the Mississippi. In railroad parlance, settling the Wild West actually entailed removing the

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3 This passage is from a section entitled “Progressive Settlement.” Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, Burlington Route: Cheap Lands West of the Missouri River (Chicago: Poole Brothers, 1892).
4 The myth of Native Americans as a vanishing race, which posits that native peoples would eventually become extinct through contact with white civilization, was used to justify the government’s actions of forced assimilation. The perpetuation of this myth allowed American society to picture the Native American nations solely in the context of a split-off historical past. See Shari M. Huhndorf, Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
Native American tribes to make way for European settlers—displacing one population in favor of another. The railroads used the notion of the Native American as an object of curiosity as a way to capitalize the progress they had made. In 1866 the Union Pacific Railroad hired members of the Pawnee tribe to perform a war dance for the first train of excursionists traveling west from their Columbus, Nebraska station. The next day, to the delight of the upper-class guests, the tribal members staged a mock battle. This spectacle of ethnic entertainment succeeded in demonstrating, so the railroad officials hoped, how the west had finally been tamed and made safe for white tourists and more importantly, for settlers. In reality, the population of Native American tribal members decreased astonishingly due to war, famine and disease, and those that had survived were forced to live on reservations. Their removal, however, allowed the railroad companies to forge ahead in modeling their vision of a new American West.

Railroad companies were able to embark on a complete physical transformation of the land owing mainly to the land grant system. The federal government surveyed millions of acres of public lands and divided it into one-mile square sections, making way for the railroad and the white settlers it would ultimately bring along its lines (Figure 5.1). In exchange for building tracks in specific regions, the railroad companies received alternating sections of land while the government kept the title to the lands in-between, thus establishing a checkerboard pattern of land distribution (Figure 5.2). Government

lands were either used for homesteading or sold for a profit. In 1850, the Illinois Central Railroad Company became the first federal land grant railroad in the United States, receiving over two million acres under the Fillmore administration. Substantial land grants to build the Transcontinental Railroad in the 1860s allowed the railroads to eventually traverse the entire country. Using mostly immigrant labor (mainly the Chinese and Irish) railroad companies completed millions of miles of tracks, conquering the land by leveling the earth, constructing bridges and tunnels, and building stations, signal towers, and freight and power houses. The railroads received alternate sections of land on either side of their proposed tracks, with each section defined as one square mile or 640 acres, for distances ranging between six and twenty miles on either side of the track. By the end of the nineteenth century, the maximum amount of lands allotted for the railroads totaled nearly twelve percent of the entire land area of the United States at the time (Figures 5.3a and 5.3b).⁷

Once the railways began constructing their lines, the newly formed Land Departments in each company worked to establish towns in the railroad’s wake. The Illinois Central Railroad was one of the first to participate in townsite development and promotion. According to an amendment to the company’s charter, however, the railroad itself was forbidden to establish towns on or near its line.⁸ To work around this, several of the company’s directors banded together to form an independent group called the Associates Land Company, which would purchase the government’s alternate parcels of

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land in areas where the Illinois Central planned to establish stops along its line. The directors of the Illinois Central then located stations on or near the Associates’ land holdings, thus increasing the return profit when they eventually sold the lands.\(^9\) Many other companies also worked with individuals or groups that had financial ties to the railroad companies.\(^10\) This process therefore allowed the railroads to profit from towns in which they were not legally supposed to have a hand in establishing. For railroad officials, the purpose in establishing these towns was to bring continuous traffic to their lines and by directing town growth and development, they maximized profits.

The Illinois Central platted towns every ten miles along its tracks and indeed, other railroads also regularly spaced towns every seven to ten miles along their lines. The regular intervals discouraged independent promoters from starting towns and it also promoted business growth since these towns served as trade centers along a specific route.\(^11\) Railroad companies followed more or less the same model set forth by the Illinois Central: railroad survey engineers determined suitable town locations; they then turned their data over to private townsite agents; and finally, these agents hired surveyors to stake out the town lots (these men were occasionally railroad employees).\(^12\) Across the prairie, grids of wooden stakes formed the footprint of the towns that would soon come to life.


\(^11\) This is not to say that railway towns were the only ones to develop in the west. There were towns in place before the railroad arrived and many other independent towns (not necessarily the product of corporations) also sprang up throughout the country. See John W. Reps, *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

\(^12\) Hudson, “Towns of the Western Railroads,” 42.
The gridded towns developed in unexpected ways, as geographer John C. Hudson has pointed out, forcing railroad officials to modify their designs from a bilaterally symmetrical grid plan to a T-shaped plan. In the early bilaterally symmetrical plans, the railroad served as the center line running east to west, thus creating two business streets to the north and south of the tracks, with the buildings of each street facing one another (Figure 5.4). In this plan, the railroad was the main artery serving the lifeline of the town. The layout was utilized by several different railroad lines across the country: in the 1860s in the Burlington Railroad’s Iowa towns, such as Creston; the Union Pacific towns of Laramie and Cheyenne in Wyoming; and the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad town of Sedalia, Missouri. The plan was used as late as the 1880s by the Northern Pacific Railway in towns such as Billings, Montana and Bismarck, North Dakota (Figure 5.5). The wide strip of land between the tracks and the buildings was designed to support elevators, coal yards and other businesses requiring direct access to the trains.

Some land companies, such as the Associates working for the Illinois Central, developed a standard town plat to be utilized in their settlements. David A. Neal, Vice President of the Illinois Central and founding member of the Associates Land Company, established a standard plat in the early 1850s in which the streets running east and west were named after trees in the following order: Mulberry, Hickory, Walnut, Chestnut, Oak, Locust, Poplar and Ash and the streets running north and south were numbered. In Neal’s design, the train tracks ran directly through the center of town between Chestnut and Oak Streets thus adhering to the bilaterally symmetrical grid plan. All of the Associate’s thirty-three towns utilized a version of this plan, with Kankakee, Illinois

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13 Ibid., 41-54.
14 Ibid., 47.
proving to be their most successful.\footnote{By 1856, two years after the town’s establishment, the population numbered 1,200 and by 1858 it had increased to nearly 3,000 people. Gates, \textit{Illinois Central Railroad}, 126-127.} To hasten development of the town, the Associates donated lots to religious organizations to secure construction of churches.\footnote{These lots were in the vicinity of the Associate’s lands for sale in order to increase their value.} In Kankakee, the company donated a lot for the city courthouse as well as five thousand dollars towards its construction. Other railroad companies followed suit, offering lands for schools, churches, courthouses and other public buildings—the cornerstones of the civilization they hoped to bring to the American West.\footnote{Geographer John C. Hudson notes that while the townsite proprietors recognized the need for public buildings they “had a blind spot when it came to improvements that might make their towns more liveable,” for example, they usually overlooked any requests for parks, tree planting, or street maintenance. Those responsibilities, the proprietors felt, would be tended to by the local government after the town was formally incorporated. Hudson, “Towns of the Western Railroads,” 51.} Meanwhile, the railroad land departments actively sought businessmen and merchants to purchase the business lots and establish their industry in the vicinity of the railroad tracks.

In focusing on the sale of business lots and in providing lands free of charge for religious and civic purposes, land companies provided the institutions necessary to draw settlers to their lands. The Northern Pacific assured potential settlers that “the needs of all members of the community” would be met, since wherever a town was established “there will be found near its center the blacksmith, shoemaker, carpenter, mason, storekeeper, the Post-Office, the schoolhouse, the Sunday-school, the church […] and the farmers will find a market for their grain at the railroad station.”\footnote{George B. Hibbard, \textit{Land Department of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company} (n.p., 1873) 9, Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.} One English immigrant, searching for lands in Iowa or Nebraska along the Burlington Railroad, wrote a letter to the editor of London’s \textit{American Settler} explaining how “towns had sprung up
The towns along the railways were settling quickly and the brochures published by the railroad companies were part of what drew settlers to the new towns.

However, the grid did not guide development as railroad officials had planned. Instead of businesses and residences sprouting up in equal numbers on both sides of the tracks, one side of the street typically maintained businesses and storefronts, with residences spreading out behind it, while the opposite side became the proverbial other side of the tracks, home to saloons and other businesses of ill repute. In response to the failures of the bilaterally symmetrical grid, railroad officials developed another plan, where the main street was bisected diagonally by the train tracks instead of running parallel alongside them (Figure 5.6). Thus, the tracks remained in the vicinity of the businesses but now the commercial district was located on both sides of the same street. The Burlington Railroad utilized this new plan in its Nebraska towns; the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul used the plan in towns such as Aberdeen, South Dakota; and the St. Louis & San Francisco also followed suit in towns such as Seligman, Missouri. In theory, this new layout allowed pedestrians to cross the tracks only once as they strolled down Main Street, instead of crossing back-and-forth to stores on either side of the track (as the bilaterally symmetrical plan had been designed), and thus minimized the danger of crossing railroad tracks. In practice however, pedestrians would have to re-cross the tracks on their way home. Even though the railroad tracks did not completely divide the main street in half, towns established according to this plan were also inclined, as was the case in the bilaterally symmetrical plan, to develop to one side of the tracks.

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The final phase of railroad town development, the T-plan, solved the problems posed by the previous grid plans. No longer did the railway intersect the town; rather, in the initial plat the building lots were all located to one side of the railroad tracks (Figure 5.7). Railroad companies, such as the Soo Line, Great Northern, Canadian Pacific, and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, began using the T-plan from the mid-1880s on. As the towns continued to grow, settlers purchased land in the vicinity of the original townsite on both sides of the tracks. The changes in the layout of towns, from the railway bisecting the center of the town to its gradual push to the edges symbolized the changes in the railway’s role; in the mid-nineteenth century, the railroad was at the core of settlement in the western United States but by the twentieth century, the railways began to merely serve the populations it had initially planted there.

Drawings of the town plan supplied visual cues as to how the railroad and land companies planned for them to develop.22 Although just a series of wooden stakes to begin with, the size of the building lots indicated where the business district was meant to develop and where settlers would ultimately reside in relation to the railroad (Figure 5.8). Despite any differences in organization, each of the railway towns featured a grid of streets with building lots of varying sizes located on or near the rail lines. Residential streets and lots were typically wider than those of the business district. Many railroads imposed restrictions on the size of business lots, typically limiting its width to around twenty-four feet, ensuring that the businesses themselves remained small. That way, if a business failed, a smaller building would allow for quicker turn-over; it would be more difficult to find purchasers for a larger structure in the smaller developing towns where there was less demand for such a sizeable business. Railroad companies, such as the

22 Ibid., 46-47.
Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific, actually prohibited the sale of adjacent lots to the same purchaser, discouraging the development of larger businesses.\(^{23}\)

Railroad towns received negative attention from contemporary architecture critics, who rejected their unimaginative design and predicted them to be failures.\(^{24}\) One anonymous critic from *American Architect and Building News* felt that these towns were “dropped at random upon the flat and featureless prairies along our western railroads,” indicating a proclivity toward a picturesque landscape or perhaps a preference for towns that evolved more organically, not the forced development by railroad officials.\(^{25}\) The architecture critic went on to state, “in the ordinary course of civilization, such characterless sites are not the ones in which populations cleave.” For railroad officials, however, these towns were symbols of the westward movement of civilization and the successful removal of the indigenous population, whom many railroad and government officials felt stood in the way of their intentions. In platting towns, they provided a tangible aspect of that intended progress and offered the promise of civilization to the millions that eventually followed the rails west to obtain their share of the prosperity that had been marketed to them.

Although railroad companies did little to change the grid plans critics called unimaginative (grid plans were, after all, the most practical solution for division of property into saleable lots), they did attempt to alter the landscape of the “flat and featureless prairie” so abhorred by the architecture critic from *American Architecture and Building News*. Predominantly covered with a variety of grasses and shrubs, the prairie contained few trees. This, along with the relatively flat lands, contributed to high wind

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 48.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 42.
speeds. Furthermore, without access to woodlands the settlers would have to pay high prices to purchase their timber elsewhere—timber that was necessary to build homes and barns and provide fuel for heat and cooking. Some of the railroads used the lack of trees to their advantage, reminding settlers that they would not have to clear the land to plant crops and build homes but rather, could establish their farms as soon as they arrived and order the lumber as needed, while planting hedges for fences instead of using wood to build them.  

John Waugh, a Nebraska settler, affirmed the benefits of the prairie lands: “I found that in Nebraska there are no forest trees to be felled, no stumps to dig up, no rocks to be moved, [and] no deep ploughing to be done […].” While the lack of trees certainly made things easier for planting crops, it did in fact prove difficult for settlers when building shelter and fueling stoves.

Many of the railroad companies took action to make the prairie more appealing to settlers. The First Division of the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad began a campaign in 1872 to plant trees in order to entice more settlers to their prairie lands and encouraged farmers along their line to do so as well, by providing them with free seeds and seedlings. The Illinois Central realized early on that it would need trees to entice settlers. In the 1850s they contracted Chester B. Rushmore to cultivate locust trees on several sections of their Illinois lands. They also contracted Rushmore and another arborist, James Sumpter, to plant Osage Orange hedge fences along the Illinois Central tracks to serve as natural

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27 John Waugh to the editor of the *People’s Journal*, 7 August 1872, Scrapbook of English Clippings, 1871-1872, Foreign Agencies, Burlington & Missouri (Neb.), Newberry Library, Chicago.
28 Land Commissioner Hermann Trott created a proposal allowing the price to be lowered to six dollars an acre, free of interest and with no payments to be made for three and a half years, for those wishing to buy a section or more, on the condition that they break, cultivate, and fence the land, in addition to planting forty acres of trees with the seeds and seedlings furnished by the railroads. Ralph W. Hidy, et al., *The Great Northern Railway: A History* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1988) 21.
fences to protect the cattle that the railroad hoped would soon be grazing nearby. The Burlington Railroad corresponded with the Royal Danish Forester, F.C. Stannis, about a possible project “to undertake the most desirable improvement on [their] Nebraska lands,” which included the planting of forests “which in different ways may have a beneficial influence in the whole State of Nebraska.” By altering the prairie environment, the railroad companies sought to make it more habitable and to continue to direct the flow of migration westward.

As engineers and horticulturists designed the built environment of the railways, railroad officials began advertising the lands to potential settlers. Particularly from the late 1860s through the 1890s, railroad advertisements appeared in newspapers and other periodicals both at home and abroad and railroad land departments created pamphlets and circulars for distribution. Interested settlers were instructed to contact land department agents for further information on the lands available, on prices and credit terms, on statistics of the average rainfall, climate, etc., and other information necessary to settle in the American Midwest. Early promotional campaigns were directed at those residing in the eastern states and the advertisements were effective (Figure 5.9). In 1857 historian Fred Gerhard stated that “in the morning, long before the hour of opening, the doors of the Illinois Central Railroad Company's Land Office at Chicago are thronged with people; and when opened the office is soon densely filled with eager purchasers. […] Hundreds of people are weekly coming from the East to Chicago.” In response to the

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30 C.B. Nelson to G.S. Harris, 6 August 1871, G.S. Harris, In-letters, 1869-1872, Foreign Agencies, Burlington & Missouri (Iowa), Volume 2, Newberry Library, Chicago.
heavy advertising, land department agents were flooded with requests from both individual settlers and also from those hoping to sponsor colonies of settlers.

Despite successful campaigns in the 1850s, the flow of migration from the eastern states was not sufficient enough to sell the vast tracts of the railroad’s lands or to establish a substantial agricultural base west of the Mississippi.\textsuperscript{32} In order to stimulate migration to their lands, railroad officials increasingly focused their attentions on Europe, where economic and social instability due to rapid growth in population, industrialization and urbanization in the mid-to-late nineteenth century left many unemployed, landless, and struggling to feed their families. Illinois Central’s Vice President David Neal believed foreign immigration would provide a boost to settlement. He sent Oscar Malmborg to Norway, Sweden, and Germany to work as a foreign agent promoting Illinois Central lands.\textsuperscript{33} The efforts of the various land companies operating in the west, in establishing businesses and religious and civic organizations, were used to the advantage of the railroad companies, who hoped to bring more settlers west along their lines (Figure 5.10). American railroad companies offered cheap transportation, reduced cost of freight, temporary lodging, affordable land, and above all, the promise of prosperity to the struggling masses in Europe (Figure 5.11). Promotional material in the

\textsuperscript{32} Charles Dupuy took over for David Neal as head of the Illinois Central Land Department in 1854 and removed foreign agent Malmborg from his post overseas. Dupuy launched an extensive promotional campaign that focused the department’s energies on the eastern states, including such strategies as beseeching individual farmers already settled on Illinois Central lands to send circulars back east extolling the benefits of migrating. During the Civil War, however, the flow of migrants from the eastern states slowed drastically and the Illinois Central once again began its foreign immigration campaigns. Gates, \textit{Illinois Central Railroad}, 170-172, 188-224.

\textsuperscript{33} Malmborg, an immigrant from Sweden, had worked for the Illinois Central since 1852 and was fluent in French, German, and the Scandinavian languages. He translated promotional literature into these languages and visited rural communities throughout Scandinavia, inducing them to emigrate to the United States and to the Illinois Central’s land holdings in particular. Paul W. Gates, “The Campaign of the Illinois Central Railroad for Norwegian and Swedish Immigrants,” \textit{Norwegian-American Studies} 6 (1931) http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/nas/volume06/vol06_5.htm (24 October 2012).
form of pamphlets, circulars, and advertisements in periodicals pervaded the European press (Figure 5.12). The potential benefits available on American soil, along with the declining opportunities in Europe, were the incentives for hundreds of thousands of immigrants to migrate the United States.

Given that the railroad companies were profit-seeking, officials realized they would not always secure the trust of potential settlers. Companies addressed this issue in advertisements; for example, the Santa Fe Railroad published a statement assuring settlers that:

> it is as much *for our interest to tell you the truth* as it is for you to know the truth [...] we have the largest and keenest interest in your welfare both present and future, for upon your success, year by year depends our own prosperity. If we deceive you we injure ourselves, for it is largely to your efforts in the future that we look for aid and cooperation in building up the country and the business of our road [emphasis in original].³⁴

Railroad officials did not stop at assuring settlers of their well-intentioned motives; they formed partnerships with individuals and groups whom they knew potential settlers would trust—religious and missionary figures. The Burlington Railroad hired a British clergyman, Reverend King, to write letters to periodicals urging his fellow countrymen to immigrate to the United States. He also traveled throughout the British Isles giving lectures about colonization in America and organized several colonies of his own.³⁵

Railway companies employed these strategies in the hope that those who were skeptical

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³⁵ King organized two colonies of Scottish immigrants, among others. A. King to G.S. Harris, 14 November 1871, G.S. Harris, In-letters, 1869-1871, Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago. King was a persistent letter-writer to Burlington Land Commissioner George Harris, recounting his work in the colonization efforts and frequently asking for an increase in salary. In one letter, he was so bold as to ask for the elk horns that adorned Harris’ office in Lincoln, Nebraska—no doubt to entice potential settlers with the American curio.
of a railroad company’s motives would, perhaps, trust the good and faithful reverend to be sincere in his discussions of immigration and colonization.

Railroad officials also formed agreements with missionary groups in the United States to support the best interest of the immigrants in return for promotion of their railroad company. In 1887 the Burlington Railroad formed an agreement with the Board of Emigrant Mission of the City of New York in which the railroad company “engaged in the sale of lands and the transportation and location of emigrants among them,” while the Board “engaged in the benevolent work of protecting foreign emigrants arriving at New York from imposition and fraud and also in aiding and directing them in colonizing and settling on suitable lands in the West and elsewhere.”36 The Burlington Railroad officials agreed to several stipulations: to deduct transportation costs from the price of the land for those settlers purchasing eighty acres or more; to donate forty acres of land for religious and educational purposes to each colony of at least forty families; to aid the Board with the maintenance of their New York office and salaries of the Superintendent and clerk; to pay the transportation costs of the Board’s staff in visiting the settlement; and finally, to “provide an Emigrant House or Houses for temporary residence of the people newly arrived, and to provide a guide to assist them in their location.”37 In return, the Board would promote the railroad’s lands “by all proper measures.”

The Burlington Railroad followed through on its promise to erect two temporary lodging homes for colonists intending to purchase lands. Their temporary emigrant homes, as they called them, were in the cities of Burlington and Lincoln in Kansas, that

37 Ibid.
is, at major stops along the railroad line. The railroad hired multi-lingual caretakers, fluent in English, German and the Scandinavian languages, to manage the homes. At Burlington, the temporary lodging shared the space of the train station and land department offices (Figure 5.13). The boarding rooms were on the lower level of the wood-framed, one-and-a-half story structure. The land department offices were located on the upper level beneath the steeply pitched roof. Four dormer windows along the roofline and two windows at either end provided light and ventilation to the space. In contrast, the temporary lodging at Lincoln was located in a purpose-built structure, separate from the railroad’s land offices. Located next to the train station, the wooden building measured 100 by 24 feet. The first floor contained a washroom with running water, a dining room and kitchen, communal room and a baggage room. On the second floor were two rooms, meant to house ten families or, if there were more than ten, to house the women and men in separate quarters. The building’s proximity to the railroad station allowed weary travelers to unload their belongings directly from the train to their respective boarding rooms.

The temporary lodging at Lincoln was completed in 1871 and in its first year of operation, it housed more than six hundred land-seekers.\textsuperscript{38} Lodging was free and food was available at cost. At its opening, the local newspapers remarked that the new building was “very clean and orderly,” although one English visitor commented that those staying at the Lincoln building “are of course expected to rough it; for no railway, however opulent, would find it politic or profitable to provide luxurious quarters under

such circumstances.” The accommodations were indeed minimal and most of the furnishings, with the exception of the ovens, were provided by the immigrants themselves. However, the space afforded shelter to the newly-arrived settlers and was a welcome amenity to those who would otherwise have to pay for lodging (if they could find a reputable place) or camp outdoors. In establishing these spaces, the Burlington was one of the first railroad companies to provide free temporary lodging for settlers.

Frederick Hedde, a foreign agent stationed in Hamburg in the 1870s and working for the State of Nebraska, believed the Burlington to be the only railroad to establish these homes and urged other states and railways to follow their example.

The Burlington Railroad also offered land explorer’s tickets as another incentive to purchase their lands. With these tickets, potential settlers could alight at multiple stations along the route, deciding which lands were most suitable. When the settler purchased a section of land owned by the Burlington, the cost of the land-explorer’s ticket was deducted from the sale price, so that, as the company advertised, land-seekers rode the rails for free (Figure 5.14). The provision of free land-seeker’s tickets, however, was not a welcome strategy for competing railroad companies. The general passenger agent for the New York, Lake Erie & Western Railroad wrote a personal letter to the Burlington’s general passenger agent, A.E. Touzalin, beseeching him to stop providing free tickets from Chicago westward, for home business or foreign immigration, since other land departments had begun to complain that they would have to do the same.

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39 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln, Nebraska), 17 July 1871 and 28 April 1871. Quotes reprinted in Overton, Burlington West, 336-337.
40 Omaha Daily Herald, 4 December 1872.
41 J.N. Abbott to Touzalin, 3 July 1878, Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.
the 1870s, the Burlington Railroad was thus well ahead of its competition in offering incentives to the passengers riding their rails and purchasing their lands.

Yet other railroad companies quickly began to follow the Burlington’s example of providing temporary lodging. Only two years after the completion of the houses at Burlington and Lincoln, the Northern Pacific Railroad had begun to advertise its own colonists’ reception homes in Minnesota (Figure 5.15). Located in Duluth, Brainerd and Glyndon, these houses could accommodate several hundred persons, were under “the charge of competent superintendents,” and were outfitted with cooking-stoves, washing conveniences, and beds.\footnote{Hibbard, \textit{Land Department of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company}, 9.} Furthermore, each establishment had an adjacent hospital, although the extent of the hospital facility is unknown.\footnote{Nineteenth century hospitals differ from contemporary notions. For a history of hospitals in the United States, see Charles E. Rosenberg, \textit{The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America’s Hospital System} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).} Just as the railroad companies had advertised their superior immigrant trains in order to gain more passengers, companies also offered lodging and other amenities along their lines to remain competitive in the endeavor to secure immigrant patronage.

For some lands that were situated further from the railroad, Land Department officials devised ways to make the distance from the station appear less to the prospective settlers, thus making the location more attractive to buyers. In June of 1887, the Nebraska Land Department of the Burlington Railroad worked with one of its foreign agents to arrange for a group of Scandinavian immigrants to purchase land in Boone County, Nebraska. Once the group arrived in Columbus, Nebraska there were two options to reach their destination: they could either travel to their lots by wagon from the Columbus stop or transfer trains to Albion and then travel by wagon to their destined...
locations. Perceval Lowell, a Burlington land agent, suggested the latter option because the former gave the “impression that they were settling a long distance from the railroad, whereas, if they were taken by rail to Albion and thence by wagon they would form a more favorable impression of the region of country in which they locate.”

A favorable impression of the area was certainly what railroad officials hoped to impart on prospective settlers.

In reality, however, the land along the railroads in the Midwestern states was flat prairie punctured with wooden stakes, with houses infrequently dotting the landscape, and a train station often serving as the only indication of a town—with perhaps a row of buildings near it to denote the more prosperous railway towns. Railroad officials designed a wide-scale proselytization of the American Midwest to the settlers, relying on promotional literature, art, and the media to build a vision of America as a land of plenty—where rich, fertile soil yielded an abundance of bounty and financial gain awaited any person courageous enough to relocate to this Promised Land (Figure 5.16). Their exploitation of the religious beliefs of the settlers, by employing clergy and missionary groups to carry out their promotional efforts, insured that the railways remained in control of populating the nation. Once the lands were occupied and cultivated by industrious Christian settlers, the railroad companies’ goal of civilizing, or taming, the American frontier would be complete, resulting of course in exponential profits for those very companies.

The land departments of various railroad companies hawked their lands as a veritable Garden of Eden, forming relationships with the media in efforts to validate their

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44 Perceval Lowell to J.D. MacFarland, 20 June 1887, Agreements with Agents and Colonists, ca. 1877-81, Burlington & Missouri River Railroad (Neb.), Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.
claims, particularly after periods of unfavorable weather or blights on the land. The
drought and grasshopper plague in Kansas in 1874, for example, made the Kansas
railroads a subject of ridicule for railroad companies operating in other states. In
response, A.S. Johnson of the Santa Fe Railroad’s land department organized a
delegation of 225 journalists who ultimately proclaimed Kansas the “Garden of the West”
and put to rest the claims that nothing could grow in the state. In another instance, an
English journalist traveled to the United States in 1872 to visit the lands of Nebraska at
the expense of the Burlington Railroad. Upon his return to London, he wrote favorably
of Nebraska, declaring it a land where “all the cereals […] are grown with ease, certainty,
and success, […] every species of berry will ripen lusciously [and] sheep are never
diseased there.” This journalist, echoing the sentiments of others on the journey,
described the land of Nebraska as a “fragment of Heaven let loose upon the earth.” The
journalists assuaged the railroad companies’ and state government’s concerns over
negative press by providing potential settlers with the reassurance that the lands to which
they would potentially relocate were of the finest quality. Many immigrants, however,
were disappointed with the lands that had been advertised by railroad companies. One
settler complained, “no wonder they give this land away to the settlers for surely no one
would ever buy it.” Illustrated advertisements frequently did not depict the land the
settlers could purchase, for example, one advertisement for North Dakota provided

45 Keith L. Bryant, History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (New York: Macmillan, 1974)
66-67.
46 “The English Press on Nebraska,” Scrapbook of Newspaper Clippings, Burlington Archives, Newberry
Library, Chicago.
47 Kristina Gray, First Wave of Immigration from Ukraine to North Dakota at the Turn of the Twentieth
Century, Chester Fritz Special Collections, University of North Dakota (April 29, 2005) 11. The Gray,
Kristina Papers, General Collection, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota.
illustrations from the more fertile eastern part of the state, not the dry lands of western
North Dakota that were for sale.48

State governments, like the railroad companies, had a vested interest in
immigration. They, too, produced promotional literature extolling the virtues of their
lands and, just like the railroads, often exaggerated those virtues. In 1871 under the
direction of Governor Horace Austin, the State of Minnesota published a pamphlet with
the lengthy title Minnesota: Its Resources and Progress; Its Beauty, Healthfulness and
Fertility; and its Attractions and Advantages as a Home for Immigrants.49 In it, the
authors described the varied benefits of the land, including the soil, minerals, rivers, lakes
and agriculture, in an effort to draw settlers to the area. Even the climate of Minnesota is
praised, which the author stated had previously been the subject of unjust disparagement.
While it listed average winter temperatures ranging between ten to thirty degrees below
zero, sometimes even lower, the author claimed that “the severity of these days is much
softened by the brilliancy of the sun and the stillness of the air.”50 To confirm the
healthfulness of the climate, testimonials from various reverends, doctors, and professors
were included in the text, thus supporting claims that the Minnesota climate is home to
“joyous, healthy, prosperous people, strong in physical, intellectual, and moral
capabilities.”51

Pamphlets such as these served as guides to potential settlers, offering
information on obtaining lands and starting farms, in addition to population statistics.

48 Ibid.
49 Commissioner of Statistics, Minnesota: Its Resources and Progress; Its Beauty, Healthfulness and
Fertility; and its Attractions and Advantages as a Home for Immigrants (Minneapolis: Tribune Printing
Company, 1871).
50 Ibid., 20.
51 Ibid., 23.
The 1871 Minnesota pamphlet noted that the highest percentage of settlers relocated from the eastern states (although no mention is made of when those settlers arrived in the U.S.) and the next largest groups arrived from the Scandinavian countries and Germany.\textsuperscript{52} Listing the nationalities of the settlers would encourage their countrymen to immigrate to Minnesota, or so the state government hoped. At the same time, however, by listing only the nationalities of the majority and acknowledging others merely by stating that there are also “a smaller amount from elsewhere,” would perhaps discourage so-called undesirable immigrants, such as Eastern Europeans, from settling there, where they would be isolated from their countrymen.\textsuperscript{53}

The railroad companies, while publishing vast amounts of printed matter promoting individual companies and their lands, found more creative ways in the 1870s to secure passengers by reaching beyond print advertisement. Railroad officials and their foreign agents began giving lecture tours throughout the British Isles. The foreign railroad agents arranged lectures in which they described the benefits of immigration to the audience and then turned the podium over to a land department official to answer audience questions regarding specific lands, credit terms, agricultural opportunities, etc. On a lecture circuit in England, Burlington agent Henry Wilson spoke of the enormous wealth available in America. One of the attending journalists reported on Wilson’s lecture:

Speaking of American wealth, the lecturer said there was an old saying that no man ever saw a dead ass, [and] would ask how many present ever saw or heard of a poor American. This was the thing that always struck an English traveler, accustomed as he was to workhouses, soup kitchens, poor rates, and people dying of starvation. The reason was that the people of the United States were rich as a

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 51-53.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
whole. America with all her resources would be little without immigration. This was the secret of her immense property.\footnote{Scrapbook of English Clippings, 1871-1872, Foreign Agencies, Burlington & Missouri River Railroad (Nebraska), Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago. It is worthwhile to note, however, that there were more social welfare programs available in the United Kingdom than in the United States at this time.}

By drawing attention to the allegedly poor living conditions in England, and juxtaposing those conditions with the resources available in America, Wilson hoped to increase immigration to the United States and secure the sale of Burlington lands. These lectures were often well attended and the Land Department usually received several inquiries, if not complete applications for land, in the days following the event.\footnote{For example, after one lecture in England, Charles Schaller of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad wrote to the Land Commissioner that they received four or five applications for land the day after the lecture. Schaller to G.S. Harris, 26 August 1871, G.S. Harris In-letters, September 1869-December 1872, vol. 2, Foreign Agencies, Burlington & Missouri (Iowa), Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.}

The railroads also employed large-scale visual media to advertise their lands. One of the most successful of these promotional campaigns was Henry Gillard’s moving panorama entitled \textit{Over the Continent from New York to San Francisco}, which first exhibited in England in 1871 (Figure 5.17).\footnote{The panorama first exhibited on 2 October 1871 in Liverpool at Queen’s Hall. It was highly popular from the start and received much media attention. The Great Chicago Fire occurred nearly a week after the panorama’s debut and the public expressed increased interest in seeing a representation of how the city once looked. \textit{The Daily Post}, 13 October 1871, G.S. Harris In-letters, September 1869-December 1872, vol. 2, Foreign Agencies, Burlington & Missouri (Iowa), Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.}

The panorama opened with a bird’s eye view of the entire railroad route on a canvas measuring forty by eight feet, in front of which Gillard lectured for a half-hour describing the route and extolling the engineering feats of building such a railway. Gillard then unveiled the rest of the thirty-six paintings, unrolled as if the viewers were experiencing them through the window of a moving train. The paintings depicted scenes such as the Hudson River, the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge, the city of Chicago, the prairies of the Middle West, and the trees of California. The press praised what they believed to be the authenticity of the work, stating that
“intending travelers and emigrants ought to see the pictures and hear the hinds of a lecturer who has seen the districts he describes.”57 Not only do these “artistic gems,” as one critic called the paintings, depict the scenery along the route but they also conveyed the impressive feat of constructing the railroad over such vast territory, making it “one of the most gigantic undertakings which has ever been successfully accomplished in the annals of the human race.”58 The panorama, seen by the upper and lower classes alike, incited the interest of many of the attendees. For the upper class viewers, the panorama opened up to them possibilities for tourism; however, for the lower classes, the rolling prairies depicted in the panorama offered up agricultural opportunities that were unavailable to them in their homeland. The English press described the panorama as “highly instructive” to emigrants seeking to try their luck in America.59

C. S. Dawson’s Sylphorama of America by Sea, River and Railroad: The Great Overland Route to California was another example of a large-scale visual work meant to promote American railroads, specifically the Burlington Railroad along which the scenes took place (Figure 5.18). Consisting of eighty-five colored views, the moving panorama filled 250 square feet of canvas and like Gillard’s panorama, was unrolled onstage to simulate viewing the landscape through a train window. The audience was treated to scenes along the railroad, views of cities, waterways, prairies and mountain, along with a narration by Dawson himself. The viewers were provided the best version of train travel. Upon the opening of Dawson’s work in May 1871, a reviewer from Wakefield Free Press summarized parts of his presentation:

57 Daily Courier, 3 Oct 1871, ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Liverpool Mercury, 9 October 1871 and The Daily Post, 13 October 1871, ibid.
On the journey, the wants of the passengers are fully provided for. You may depend upon it, said the lecturer, we all did justice to the good things; and we washed them down with bumpers of sparkling Krug, whilst we sped along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, agreed it was the fastest we had ever experienced. We beat that, however, when we made twenty-seven miles in twenty-seven minutes, while our champagne glasses, filled to the brim, spilled not a drop!\(^{60}\)

The passengers of whom Dawson speaks, those that sip champagne while experiencing the thrill of train speeds, were undoubtedly traveling on first-class tickets—a far cry from the immigrant trains that most settlers would in fact be riding.

Touring exhibits like Dawson’s and Gillard’s were instrumental in capturing the interests of potential settlers and ultimately contributed to the railroad’s land sales. Dawson, for example, was employed by the Burlington Railroad to establish relationships with local religious and civic organizations in order to form colonies to emigrate to the American Midwest. The European Commissioner of the Burlington Railroad, Charles Schaller, wrote to the company’s land commissioner that “Dawson has a meeting in Birmingham on Thursday next arranged by the Good Templars with a view to set up a large colony for the spring. […] We may rely on fifty or seventy families of those understanding farming—Dawson shows his views of Iowa and Nebraska upon the terms of the Society providing advertising and printing so that it will cost us nothing and we shall reap all benefits […].”\(^{61}\) Given the crucial need for settlers along their lines, employing varied forms of promotional campaigns allowed the railway companies to cast a wider net in their attempt to secure immigration to their lands.

Land advertisements from railroad companies largely targeted northern Europeans, crediting those citizens with better agricultural skills. While Easterners and the merchant classes had mostly been the target for sale of town lots, the railroads turned

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\(^{60}\) *Wakefield Free Press*, 27 May 1871, ibid.

\(^{61}\) Schaller to Harris, 22 August 1871, ibid.
to foreign immigration to populate the rural lands surrounding those towns (Figure 5.19).

Easterners, whether native-born Americans or immigrants already living in the country for some time, were considered by railroad officials to be more suited to town life than the newly-arrived foreigners, many of whom did not yet know the English language. George Harris, Land Commissioner for the Burlington Railroad, targeted the nationalities he believed would be the best farmers. He wrote: “I have so poor an opinion of the French & Italian immigrants for agriculturists that I shall not issue any circulars in their languages. My efforts will be most confined to Germans, Scandinavians, English, Welsh, and Scotch, as they make good farmers […]”62 Other railroad companies followed a similar advertising program, limiting their foreign advertisement efforts to the British Isles, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. Eastern and southern Europeans, in the eyes of railroad officials, did not have the qualities necessary to thrive in the United States, that is, neither the agricultural or industrial skills nor the moral qualities. Asian immigrants were not allowed to purchase lands and although eastern and southern Europeans were able to, the railroads instead ran promotional campaigns only in regions from which railroad officials sought immigrants, such as Germany, the British Isles, and Scandinavia.

The immigrants, reading these promotional advertisements and hearing stories from their fellow countrymen who had already established themselves in the United States, were encouraged by the prospect of building a secure future for themselves. Yet immigration brought with it many challenges, physically and emotionally. The long and often arduous journey by sea, rail and wagon was exhausting, to say the least, and once the immigrants purchased land they set to the hard task of constructing homes and

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62 Harris to Hollub, 2 November 1869, reprinted in Overton, Burlington West, 303.
establishing farms. There were also emotional trials stemming from not knowing the English language and feelings of isolation that arose from living in a foreign land. For those traveling alone to the United States, the difficulty of leaving behind one’s family and friends proved almost too much to bear. Henrietta Jessen, a Norwegian immigrant who came to the United States in 1850 with her husband, wrote home to her family: “It was a bitter cup for me to drink, to leave a dear mother and sisters and to part forever in this life, though living. Only the thought of the coming world…[is] my consolation; there I shall see you all….I hope that time will heal the wound, but up to the present I cannot deny that homesickness gnaws at me hard.” For Jessen, life in America was a kind of death—of her old life, of her culture, of her family. She knew that the chance of seeing her family and homeland again was unlikely. And for many immigrants, this unfortunately was the case (Figure 5.20).

Traveling with extended family and community members, however, had the potential to lessen the difficulties of immigration, or at least make them somewhat more bearable. The railroads capitalized on this notion by printing circulars and newspaper advertisements that described the advantages of organized colonization:

Nearly all privations and discomforts complained of by settlers in a new country have arisen from the fact that they have emigrated as individuals, or as isolated families, instead of organized bodies. Let a small community, embracing as many families and individuals previously acquainted as possible, of various trades and professions, and intending to follow various pursuits, emigrate and settle together, then society, mutual help, comfort, security, and economy will be at once secured, the anticipated hardships and trials of an emigrant's life will vanish away, and the whole colony, bound together by a community of interest, will rapidly grow in strength and prosperity.

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Several other railroad companies also hammered out the point that immigrating in a large group was surely the most sensible course of action. In one of their pamphlets, the Northern Pacific discussed how the colony system was beneficial in immigration:

Settlers will find it to their advantage to go in groups or colonies. Fifty or one hundred persons combining may secure, on favorable terms, all the land held by the railroad company in a township. The Colony system is calculated to supply the needs of all members of the community, to furnish employment to every industry […] One hundred or more families uniting to form a community may insure everything that goes to make up the sum of civilization at once: good government, good neighbors, morality, security to property, comfort and prosperity.65

Surrounded by their own countrymen, the foreigners arrived with a community already in place, one that was bound by their own established standards and interests, and one that could use their cohesiveness to secure success. With these colonization efforts, the railroads effectively transported entire communities from Europe to the American Midwest.

Railroad companies did not want large numbers of just any immigrant; rather, they sought a specific class of immigrant, one possessing a strong moral character, a resilient work ethic, and knowledge of agriculture. For the first two of those reasons, the railroad companies often targeted religious groups in their colonization efforts. D.E. Jones of the Burlington Railroad believed that the company had previously “greatly erred […] in not having a well-understood and well-established system of Christian immigration” since “the benefits of such a method of immigration would not only have appeared in the concentration of moral power, by the saving of funds, and in the manifold blessings that come to any community where there is general co-operation in erecting and

65 Hibbard, *Land Department of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company*, 9.
maintaining the institutions of the Gospel [emphasis in original].” Better still, some immigrant groups met all the criteria sought by the railroads—good morals, hard workers, and expert farmers. The Burlington Railroad received a letter from an agent ranking religious groups

in point of agricultural worth as well as wealth, in the following order: Mennonites, Lutherans, Baptists, Catholics. The first two classes are especially a people possessing in a high degree the characteristics of industry, frugality, and temperance, and rank among the best farmers in the world.67

Mennonites ranked high on the list of those that fulfilled the railroad’s desired qualities in immigrants. In the 1870s, when Mennonites sought to flee Russia, they became the subject of an intense competition between the American and Canadian railways, as well as between the American railroad companies themselves.

The relocation of German-speaking Mennonites from Russia on the Santa Fe Railroad Company lands in Kansas formed one of the largest colonization efforts in American railway history. The Mennonite faith arose in the sixteenth century from the Anabaptist movement of the Protestant Reformation and its adherents lived in the Dutch and German-speaking parts of the Holy Roman Empire. The Mennonites experienced religious persecution in those regions and thus, when Russia’s Czarina, Catherine the Great, issued a manifesto in 1763 inviting Europeans to settle the lands of southeastern Russia (the region of present-day Ukraine), Mennonite communities began migrating there (Figure 5.21).68 Like the nineteenth century efforts by the United States government to populate the lands taken from American Indian tribes, the attempts of the

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66 D.E. Jones to Daniel M. Lord, Esq. of the Interior (Chicago), 4 October 1871. G.S. Harris, Private In-
letters, September 1869-October 1872, Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.
67 [Illegible] to Superintendent C.E. Perkins, 17 June 1878, Agreements between Agents and Colonists, ca
1877-1881, Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.
68 See Wally Kroeker, An Introduction to the Russian Mennonites (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005) 5-
22.
Russian Empire to colonize the land seized from the Turkish army during the Russo-Turkish War in the eighteenth century led to increased immigration to the empire. Beginning in 1789, Mennonite communities that had been living in the Netherlands relocated to Russia. Under an agreement with Catherine the Great, they eventually occupied several million acres of farming lands, with each family receiving 175 acres, and were able to act as a state within a state, speaking their own language of Plattdeutsch, establishing their own churches and schools (in which the German language was spoken), and forming their own elected board of administrators.  

After several years adjusting to the arid climate, the Mennonite community thrived. The land they had received was not as fertile as that in the Netherlands and they were faced with drought and grasshopper plagues, plights that would also affect the settlers in the American Midwest. Their colonies followed an agricultural village model, with fifteen to thirty families sharing large open fields and a communal pasture. The farming lands were divided into long, narrow strips and distributed equally to each family in the settlement; thus, they shared the benefits or drawbacks of the soil quality. In the 1830s the work of agriculturalist Johann Cornies, himself a part of the Mennonite colony, established the Mennonite farms as models for all agriculture in southern Russia. Due to Cornies’ development of two methods of increasing the supply of soil moisture, the Mennonites were able to yield fertile crops in an area prone to drought. He also encouraged farmers to plant orchards around their homes and promoted forestation.

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69 Ibid., 9-12.
70 The first technique was to plow the fallow land in the fall and the second method was to cut the grain high on the stalk at harvest time. Both of these methods would trap the snow on the field during winter instead of having it blow over, thus increasing the supply of moisture to the soil during the spring thaw. Overton, *Burlington West*, 123 n. 33.
programs throughout the settlements to serve as wind-breaks.\textsuperscript{71} The Mennonites’ experience with drought would ultimately help them thrive in Kansas, an area with a similar climate, and aid in establishing the state as a key agricultural producer for the United States.

In 1871, the Russian government established new regulations that forced many Mennonite colonies to emigrate from Russia. Czar Alexander II abolished Catherine the Great’s agreement with the Mennonites that had granted them freedom from military service due to their religious beliefs. Furthermore, under the Czar’s new Russianization program, the Mennonites would no longer be able to run German schools or have their own administration.\textsuperscript{72} The Russian government also imposed certain ownership laws on the Mennonite villages that would no longer allow farmers to sell, mortgage, or subdivide their lots.\textsuperscript{73} The Mennonite community contested these changes and the colonies elected representatives to travel to St. Petersburg for an audience with the Czar. When these delegations were unsuccessful, the Mennonites turned their sights to other countries where they might be able to carry on their way of life.

Cornelius Jansen, a merchant in the Mennonite colony of Berdiansk, wrote to the British consul about availability of land in Canada as well as to John F. Funk, editor of a

\textsuperscript{71} David Aidan McQuillan, \textit{Adaptation of Three Immigrant Groups to Farming in Central Kansas, 1875-1925} (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975) 70-71.

\textsuperscript{72} See ibid., 60-85.

\textsuperscript{73} In Mennonite villages, a farmer’s youngest son usually inherited the land and the oldest learned a trade or established farms on surplus lands outside of the village. Although military conscription is often cited as the main reason why the Mennonites left Russia, it was in fact these ownership laws that ultimately forced Mennonites to leave. The Russian government eventually agreed to let Mennonites perform other duties in exchange for military service, for example, work in forestry or in medical hospitals. Robert Collins, \textit{Kansas, 1874: Triumphs, Tragedies and Transitions} (CreateSpace, 2011) 129 and McQuillan, \textit{Adaptation of Three Immigrant Groups}, 75.
Mennonite newspaper in Elkhart, Indiana about settlement in America’s Middle West. To both the United States and Canadian governments, the Mennonites relayed their request to be free from military service, to live in closed settlements with autonomous local administration, and to allow German to remain their primary language. In having these demands met, the Mennonites hoped to retain their cultural heritage. In order to do so, they required vast amounts of unoccupied land—space that, conveniently, the American and Canadian governments, as well as their respective railroad companies, were eager to have occupied. The Canadian government ceded to the Mennonites on all requests; however, the Mennonites sent to scout the land found the region of Manitoba, which the government had offered to them, to be isolated and not well-served by the railroads. While some of the group did eventually lead their colonies there, others turned to the United States. The American federal government was not as immediately accommodating as Canada’s had been although the individual states of Minnesota, Kansas and Nebraska worked quickly to pass laws allowing freedom from military conscription in 1873 and 1874 as a means to attract the Mennonite farmers.

Congress was generally opposed to the creation of settlements that would allow the immigrants to retain their foreign ways. Senator Carpenter of Wisconsin vehemently opposed the bill, arguing that:

We do not desire to have a town or a county settled by any foreign nationality, speaking their own language, having their natural amusements, and in all things separated and different from Americans. The idea is and should be, and it should never be departed from, that in inviting foreigners to settle in this country they should take their place with our citizens, they should come here not to be Germans or Frenchmen or Italians, but to be Americans, to become American

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74 Funk was editor of *Herald der Wahrheit*. He would later sponsor many benefit campaigns and institutions to aid the Mennonites in America. Alberta Pantle, “Settlement of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren at Gnadenau, Marion County,” *The Kansas Historical Quarterly* 13:5 (February 1945) 260, n. 5.
75 Overton, *Burlington West*, 83.
citizens, to speak our language, to support our institutions, to be of us in all things.\textsuperscript{76}

Those resisting the Mennonite settlement were not necessarily opposed to the Mennonites themselves. Many of the Senators recognized the potential contributions to the country if the Mennonites did in fact immigrate to the United States. Some Congressman, however, such as Senator Thurman of Ohio, recognized that “if we pass this bill because they are worthy people, can we refuse to pass similar bills whenever other people ask us to do so? […] Are you going to refuse them on the ground that their sect of religion is not as good as the Mennonites or that you do not quite agree with their sentiments in morals or politics or something else?”\textsuperscript{77} The federal government ultimately refused to pass a bill that would allow tracts of land to be set aside in the promotion of ethnic enclaves.

Yet the Mennonites did indeed receive their fair share of supporters since they were known to be expert agriculturists. In a letter to the Superintendent of the Burlington Railroad, one land agent wrote of the Mennonites that “no better people in the world could be found to utilizing every acre of land in the various districts where they may settle, and wherever they may go, a dense population, producing a large export surplus will be the result of their location [emphasis in original].”\textsuperscript{78} That the Mennonites would contribute greatly to the agricultural production of whichever country to which they chose to migrate was a given. The British Consul at Berdiansk, Mr. Schrab, who was well acquainted with the Mennonite population after living in Russia for seven years, stated that:

The departure of the Germans will undoubtedly be a serious loss to Russia for they are not only much greater proficient in agriculture than the native

\textsuperscript{76} Congressional Record, 1873, II: 1, 3264.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 3299.
\textsuperscript{78} [Illegible] to C.E. Perkins, 17 June 1878, Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.
population and consequently produce heavier crops and finer qualities, but they
are very hardworking and therefore in proportion to each man they bring a much
larger quantity of land under cultivation and thus increase the produce of the
country.  

Certain members of Congress recognized the contribution the Mennonites would make to
American agriculture. Senator Windom of Minnesota argued that turning away “forty
thousand of the very best farmers of Russia who are now competing with us in the
markets of the world with some ten million bushels of their wheat,” would be giving
Russia, or Canada if they chose to settle there, the advantage. Windom was in the
minority of those that wanted to induce immigration of the Mennonites and furthermore,
the United States government was largely reluctant to interfere with Russian internal
affairs.

For the railroads, however, these were the settlers whom they had hoped for, ones
that would establish successful agricultural enterprises, building up the trade and traffic
along their lines and ultimately drawing more settlers to the region. From the beginning
of western line construction, railroad officials attempted to populate the American West
in order to establish continued patronage of their lines. Through promotional campaigns
they directed patterns of settlement. Forming Mennonite colonies was only the first step
in populating the lands with supposedly ideal settlers. Once a group settled, railroad

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79 Schrab to Lord Granville, 3 February 1872, reprinted in Georg Leibbrandt, “The Emigration of the
German Mennonites from Russia to the United States and Canada in 1873-1880: I,” The Mennonite
Quarterly Review 6 (1932) 212. The Russian government, in fact, was trying to prevent mass migration by
raising the cost of passports, by intercepting foreign mail, and making it difficult to sell property, among
other actions. See ibid., 23-28.

84. This is the same Senator Windom who would later serve as Secretary of the Treasury during the
establishment of Ellis Island.

81 U.S. Ambassador E. Schuyler wrote to the Secretary of State Hamilton Fisk concerning the requests of
the Mennonites. The Department of State replied that “it is not to be doubted that they [the Mennonites]
would be deserving of welcome in this country. As Russian law, however, forbids emigration or its
encouragement, it would not be advisable for this government to interfere in the matter until the disposition
of that government which you proposed to ascertain shall be known.” Instruction No. 136, 22 April 1872,
reprinted in Leibbrandt, “Emigration of the German Mennonites,” 225.
officials hoped more of those settlers’ countrymen would settle in their wake. By relocating entire communities of agriculturalists, railroad officials felt they could hasten settling of the American West. If the railroads had enough free sections and there were few, if any, homestead claims made by settlers in a specific region already, they could then legally proceed in establishing these proposed enclaves.

Despite the opposition of the government, American railroad companies began aggressive competition with one another as well as with the Canadian railroads, to secure the sale of their lands to the Mennonite immigrants. The competition began in earnest, with each company trying to meet the needs of the Mennonites and offer inducements to entice them. In fact, railroad agents went so far as to steal Mennonite passengers from competing lines. Carl Ernst, land agent for the Burlington Railroad, went to Castle Garden and “swiped a whole trainload [of Mennonites] from the two Kansas [rail]roads, each of which had a special train awaiting their arrival in Atchison, but I stole the whole bunch, except less than a dozen unmarried young men, and carried them all by special train, free, to Lincoln, Nebraska” (Figure 5.22). With the large quantities of time and money the railroads had dedicated to promotional campaigns and the organization of colonies, the mass migration of Mennonites proved to be an immediate, and easier, solution to settling the railroad’s lands. Ernst later recalled, “those were certainly strenuous days for settling up our prairie states.”

Of the American companies, the Northern Pacific Railroad, the Burlington Railroad, and the Santa Fe Railroad were the likely sources from which the Mennonites could purchase land, since their lines traversed vast tracts of open land. A Mennonite

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83 Ibid.
delegation of five traveled to the United States to scout possible locations. They considered the Northern Pacific lands in Dakota to be too stony and located to close too an Indian reservation, thus putting the Northern Pacific out of the running. The Mennonite delegation ultimately selected the Santa Fe’s lands in Kansas, where water was more readily available, over the Burlington’s lands in Nebraska, where deep wells would be needed (Figure 5.23). The Kansas lands were also covered with a fine grass to make hay for the winter. When the spokesman of the delegation, Rev. H. Richert, stated that the availability of hay was one of the reasons for selecting the Kansas lands, Burlington agent A.E. Touzalin promptly replied to the translator, “You tell Mr. Reichert that the [Burlington] Railway will furnish all hay needed for the winter free of charge.”

Thus began a bidding war between the two railroads, whatever Touzalin offered on the part of the Burlington Railroad, the Santa Fe land agent, Carl Bernhard Schmidt, also met. It was only when Touzalin offered the lands for free to the Mennonites, did Schmidt remain silent.

The Mennonites preferred the lands that the Santa Fe Railroad offered to them, despite the fact that they would have to pay for them instead of receiving the lands for free from the Burlington Railroad. Furthermore, Schmidt, the Santa Fe land agent, was a German immigrant himself, who had worked in Russia as General Foreign Agent for the Santa Fe and had already developed a relationship with many of the Mennonite colonies.

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84 Recollections of the delegation’s journey are reprinted in Smith, The Coming of the Russian Mennonites, 116-119, quote from 117. Agent Touzalin had previously worked for the Santa Fe Railroad and succeeded in reorganizing the company’s land and immigration departments. He left abruptly in 1874 due to conflict with the Santa Fe’s new president, Thomas Nickerson. No doubt it was difficult for Touzalin to lose the Mennonite settlement to his former employer. For more on Touzalin’s work with the Santa Fe Railroad, see Bryant, History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway.

85 Schmidt later stated that he realized the Mennonites would come to the Kansas lands and thus, did not need to meet Touzalin’s offer of free land although he had been told by his superiors to “bring those Mennonites at any cost.” Touzalin undoubtedly received similar instructions. Smith, The Coming of the Russian Mennonites, 118.
there.\textsuperscript{86} He had also accompanied the first Mennonite colonies on their journey from Russia. As one Mennonite settler recalled, their “dear friend and general agent C.B. Schmidt [has] treated us nicely and faithfully.”\textsuperscript{87} Despite the Burlington’s offers of free transportation and free lands in Nebraska, the majority of Mennonite colonies chose to remain with Schmidt and the Santa Fe Railroad. The Santa Fe Railroad offered the settlers reduced freight rates (on which they claimed to receive no profit), reasonable land prices between $2.50 and $5 per acre, and lots donated by the railroad for church and school purposes. The mass exodus of approximately 45,000 Mennonites from Russia began in 1873 and within five years, over ten thousand Mennonites had come to the United States, with over half settling in Kansas.\textsuperscript{88}

With the arrival of several hundreds of Mennonites in 1874 to Marion and McPherson counties in eastern Kansas, the railroad constructed temporary lodging for the settlers until they completed construction of their homes. In modern-day Goessel, Kansas, the Alexanderwohl community, most of whom arrived in September 1874, lived in five separate long, single-story wooden buildings measuring 200 feet long and 18 feet wide (Figure 5.24). The Santa Fe provided the materials and workers necessary to construct the buildings and the Mennonites furnished additional workers to complete the construction. Each building featured six windows along each side and two doors at either end. A kitchen shed projected out of the center of the structure and the interior was lined

\textsuperscript{86} Touzalin, in fact, had been the one to hire Schmidt as General Foreign Agent in 1873 while he still worked for the Santa Fe Railway. On account of his role in aiding the Mennonites’ mass exodus, Schmidt was exiled from Russia. Bryant, \textit{History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe}, 70 and McQuillan, 82. Schmidt described his work for the Santa Fe Railroad in his “Reminiscences of Foreign Immigration Work for Kansas,” \textit{Kansas Historical Collections} 9 (1905-1906): 485-497.

\textsuperscript{87} Quoted in Pantle, “Gnadenau Mennonite Settlement,” 268.

\textsuperscript{88} McQuillan, \textit{Adaptation of Three Immigrant Groups}, 139. While the majority of Mennonites settled in Kansas, others arriving from Russia did in fact select the Burlington’s lands in Nebraska as well as the Northern Pacific lands in the Dakota Territory, and still others formed colonies in Canada. See Smith, \textit{The Coming of the Russian Mennonites}, 132-193 for a discussion of each of these settlements.
with stoves so several women could cook at the same time. Once completed, these long houses were the site for all household activities: baking, sewing, washing, etc. The families lived communally in the space which often grew crowded, given the dozens of families residing in each building (Figure 5.25). The men quickly busied themselves with building homes, digging wells, making hay and completing other preparations for the upcoming winter. With all of the work to be done, for both individual family dwellings and community structures, most of the families lived in the temporary lodging throughout the winter.89 Once their homes were completed and occupied, the temporary homes served as the location for religious and civic meetings until the Mennonites could erect separate structures for those purposes.

The group purchased the railroad lands and was able to form homogenous communities that re-established, for the most part, the agricultural villages they had left behind in Russia. The village of Gnadenau, whose name translates to “Meadow of Grace,” was located near present-day Hillsboro, Kansas and was one of the best examples of a town modeled after the Russian agricultural villages (Figure 5.26).90 In August 1874 thirty-four families of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren arrived to the land several of their own had chosen the year prior. In the year of their arrival, Kansas had experienced a grasshopper plague—the land was dry and dusty and any crops they passed on their journey had been destroyed by the grasshoppers. Jacob Wiebe and his wife were some of

89 Georg Leibbrandt, “The Emigration of German Mennonites from Russia to the United States and Canada, 1873-1880: II,” Mennonite Quarterly Review 7 (1933) 29, 32-33. Many of the families that arrived were poor, despite erroneous reports by American journalists that they arrived with millions of dollars. American Mennonites organized funds to help these families get started in their American life. The approximate amount of funds raised was around $150,000 in the form of transportation fees, direct aid, or loans. See McQuillan, Adaptation of Three Immigrant Groups, 140.

90 The agricultural village model in some of these communities only lasted for a few years; if one of the families of the settlement relocated, their section of land would no longer form part of the communal system.
the first to arrive to the unoccupied territory. Years later Wiebe recalled: “We rode in a deep grass to the stake that marked the spot I had chosen. When we reached the spot, I stopped. My wife asked me, ‘Why do you stop?’ I said, ‘We are to live here.’ Then she began to weep.” Surrounded by barren prairie as far as the eye could see—its three-foot tall grasses scorched in the summer sun and waving in the hot, dry wind. There were no trees, houses, roads or towns in sight. Although they had arrived with their community members, the Mennonites would need to construct their new village from the limited resources of the land.

Gnadenau was located on twelve sections of railroad land, with a road running east to west through the center section. Because the railroad lands were distributed in alternate plots, the first farms of the settlement were cultivated on five sections, which formed a checkerboard pattern. The settlers in Gnadenau built their houses on the north side of the road that traversed the center section of land, although the houses could have been built on either side of the road (Figure 5.27). Visitors to the town noted this feature—Noble L. Prentis traveled to Gnadenau in August 1875 and remarked that “the houses of Gnadenau present every variety of architecture, but each house is determined on one thing, to keep on the north side of one street of the town and face to the south.” The settlers divided the center section into long, narrow strips on which they built their houses, which numbered about two dozen. The other sections of land were also divided into long, narrow strips, with each homeowner receiving an allotment in each section so

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that they shared any variations in soil (Figure 5.28). In this way, they continued the cooperative way of living they had established in Russia.

In addition to their village plan, the Mennonites’ structures also differed in architectural style from those of others settlers who had migrated to the Midwest. While most settlers constructed sod houses, and occasionally wood frame houses if, and when, they had the funds and access to lumber, many of the Mennonites constructed homes from adobe brick (Figure 5.29). On the prairie, wood was scarce and with the cost of traveling and setting up farms, most settlers did not immediately have the financial means to order lumber from other regions. Mennonite settlers first cleared their land of prairie sod, digging down a layer of earth or clay, loosening it and wetting it with water to create mud. They mixed straw in the mud and used their horses to tamp down the mixture. Using what wood they had to make a frame for the bricks—eighteen inches deep and several feet high—the Mennonite settlers formed their homes, cutting window and door openings once the mud walls dried. Wood was only needed for the brick frame, gables and ceiling, thus minimizing the settlers’ reliance on the scarce building material.

A quicker type of construction, often temporary as opposed to the longer lasting adobe homes, was a building called a saraj—an ‘A’ framed structure that used cottonwood poles to form the frame and sod, adobe, and thatch made of prairie grass as in-fill (Figure 5.30). One end of the structure served as the family’s house and the other, a barn. This type of construction was somewhat of a shock to Americans. W.J. Groat, upon a visit to Gnadenau only five months after its settlement, printed his observations in the Marion County Record:

93 Collins, Kansas, 1874, 131-2.
94 The word ‘saraj’ is a Low German spelling of a Russian word for shed. This type of architecture is also sometimes referred to as a burdei.
The majority of these ‘fix-ups’ have no side walls whatsoever, the roof starting from the ground, and only gables are laid up with these [adobe] brick. The roof is simply composed of poles thatched, or shingled, with prairie grass; with an adobe chimney, projecting twelve or sixteen inches only above the dry hay. We were not in the fire insurance business or we would not have halted. We were met at the door and invited in, and following, we were in the rear, and closing the door behind us, which darkened the room, we started in their wake; but what was our astonishment to find ourself [sic] plank upon the heels of a horse, but we were soon relieved by our hostess throwing open another door on the opposite side of the stable (for such it proved to be) revealing a small passage between a horse and a cow leading into the presence of the family; each one coming forward and saying ‘welcome,’ at the same time giving us a hearty shake of the hand.95

For the non-Mennonite settlers, this architectural form was unusual. Most settlers kept their animals in a separate barn structure or when funds and materials were lacking, in open stables.

The combination of house and barn under one roof, called byre-dwelling, was not common in the United States; however, it was a practical construction for the Mennonites in Russia, where the harsh conditions allowed farmers to check on their animals during winter without venturing out into bitter cold. This architectural form was also typical in the Netherlands, from where the Mennonites had migrated. As architectural historian Shirley Dunn points out, byre-dwelling had been utilized by the Dutch since at least the seventeenth century (Figure 5.31).96 Naturally, upon arrival in Russia, they constructed new homes similar to the ones they had occupied in their native land. In the nineteenth century, when they migrated to the United States, the Mennonites once again brought this architectural form with them. The byre-dwellings of the Kansas prairies, however, were a much more primitive design due to the necessity of rapid construction and limited availability of materials (Figure 5.32).

95 Marion County Record, Marion, 16 January 1875.
The settlement at Gnadenau became a curiosity for the non-Mennonite settlers already in the region. Visitors first encountered the Mennonites at the temporary lodging house in Topeka, where the Santa Fe Railroad housed them in their brick warehouse that had been built as a place to service the railroad cars. Constructed around the same time that the Mennonites arrived, the warehouse had not yet been outfitted with machinery, and thus offered a large empty space suitable to house the dozens of families heading to Gnadenau. Contemporary periodicals marveled at the dress of the Mennonites, which one journalist described as “primitive homespun garments” and stated that American tailors would be puzzled at “the choice appearance of those ancient dresses” (Figure 5.33). 97 A few months after the construction of the houses at Gnadenau, the journalist W.J. Groat marveled at the “strange village” he encountered. He noted that the triangular structure of the saraj gave the appearance of a haystack from a distance and only upon getting closer and seeing people bustling about tending their chores did he realize they were houses.

Another contemporary visitor to Gnadenau felt that the “greatest curiosity about their houses, [was] their oven fire-places, and with one of which the whole house is well-heated and the cooking done for twenty-four hours, the coldest seasons of the year, and all from the burning of four good-sized arm-fulls of straw.” 98 This oven, situated at the partition of the saraj or at the center of a wood-framed house, was built of brick and enclosed with the exception of a door in the kitchen and an opening for fuel (Figure 5.34). The straw was placed in the lower door and once set ablaze, the heat circulated

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98 Excerpt from the Newton Kansan of 9 December 1875 printed in The Commonwealth, Topeka, 19 December 1875.
throughout the oven and the smoke exited through a small opening near the top of the oven into the chimney. Meat could be smoked when hung from fittings in the chimney. With the limited availability of fuel on the prairie, this visitor looked “upon these ovens as among the grandest things in use for this country, and might with a sense of economy, neatness and practicability be adapted into every house where it is possible to do so.”

The Mennonites had indeed made an impression upon their neighbors.

In addition to their architecture, the Mennonite settlers brought with them their knowledge of agriculture, which ultimately proved to be one of their greatest contributions to the United States. When Noble L. Prentis visited the Kansas settlements for the second time in 1882 he observed that when he had last visited in 1875, he left bare prairie but “returned to find a score of miniature forests in sight from any point of view. […] Several acres around every house were set in hedges, orchards, lanes, and alleys of trees; trees in lines, trees in groups, and trees all along.”

The Mennonites continued the practices they had started under Johann Cornies in Russia: they planted orchards around their homes; they established lines of trees to serve as windbreaks (a necessary feature for settlements in the flat prairie); and they even grew mulberry trees to harvest silkworms.

Like the railroads, the Mennonites had transformed the barren prairie on which their settlements were located. Their knowledge of agriculture would also have a significant impact in the creation of the wheat belt in the United States.

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99 Ibid.
100 *Daily Companion*, Atchison, 4 May 1882.
101 Many of the Mennonites had been engaged in silk production in Russia. In 1887, the Governor of Kansas passed legislation allowing $13,000 for the “purpose of establishing, maintaining and conducting a silk station of Kansas.” The station was located in Peabody, Kansas and workers raised silkworm eggs for free distribution to residents interested in growing cocoons. Many settlers sold the cocoons back to the station but on account of the high costs of running the facility and paying its employees (wages were much lower in foreign silk producing countries), the station closed in 1897. Frank W. Blackmar, ed., *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History, Embracing Events, Institutions, Industries, Counties, Cities, Towns, Prominent Persons, Etc...* (Chicago: Standard Publishing, 1912) 694-696.
The Mennonite settlers became known for a type of wheat they had grown in Russia, Turkey red wheat. A winter wheat, this variety was harder and able to withstand the arid climate of Kansas. Many of the settlers arriving to the Midwest from the eastern United States and from northern European countries had little experience with the climate and soil of the Great Plains. The Mennonites emigrating from Russia, however, were accustomed to drought and their winter wheat thrived. Mark Alfred Carleton, a historian writing in 1914, noted the similarities between the Kansas lands and southeastern Russia:

A traveler on the Plains of Kansas, if suddenly transported while asleep to Southern Russia, and deposited in the Crimea, would discover very little difference in his surroundings except as to the people and the character of farm improvements and live stock. Even the last would be of the same kind, if he were transported from certain localities in Kansas where Russian immigrants now live.102

The Russian climate, however, was somewhat harsher than that of Kansas, meaning that the winter wheat had the potential to fare even better in the American Midwest. It is highly likely this variety of wheat existed in the United States prior to the Mennonites’ arrival; their success with it, however, led historians to credit the Mennonites with its introduction.103 Turkey red wheat did not become well known until the late 1870s, after the development of mill equipment able to process the hard winter wheat and after the Santa Fe Railroad had constructed a branch line from Marion to McPherson counties in Kansas.104 As the railroad began servicing the very settlements they had established, the

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104 Collins, Kansas, 1874, 146.
Mennonites began to conduct business with towns outside of their own, spreading their agricultural endeavors to the non-Mennonite community.

The continued success of the Mennonites was precisely what the railroads had hoped for in establishing colonies for them in the Midwest. Along the rails, many other communities thrived as well—communities that had also been started by foreign immigrants. One Danish immigrant, Hans Jacobsen (who had Americanized his surname from Jørgensen) arrived to the United States in 1892 and worked hard for three years until he could build a home and afford the overseas passage for his wife and six children (Figure 5.35). Jacobsen tried for years to also encourage his other family members to emigrate from Denmark; he wrote home that “there are much better conditions here and much more freedom. If it wasn’t for the fact that I don’t have a single relative here, I wouldn’t miss Europe for a moment.”

In efforts to encourage family members and friends to emigrate, however, many immigrants spoke only of the riches they encountered in this new land. Dan Perekrestenko, whose brother had emigrated to the United States from Ukraine, stated that settlers “never mentioned the hardships they endured…they did not want to admit what a hard time they were really having in this new country.”

Indeed, migration brought with it many challenges and immigrants struggled in this foreign land with its unfamiliar language, climate, and customs.

In their continued promotion of lands along their lines, railroad companies focused on the progress achieved by their towns’ citizens to encourage continued migration. Advertising went on into the 1920s, when the state governments and the

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106 Dan Perekrestenko, oral interview, 1940. General Manuscripts, Box 3, The Gray, Kristina Papers, General Collection, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota.
railroad companies worked together to boast of the booming agricultural and industrial industries in various regions. In a booklet highlighting the prosperity of northwestern Nebraska, published by the Burlington Railroad in conjunction with the Chambers of Commerce of several counties, one image depicted the great success of a pioneer family: a white-washed, one-and-a-half story bungalow-style house, complete with veranda, stands next to the family's original sod house, a simple structure built by the settlers when they first arrived, most likely in the 1880s (Figure 5.36).\textsuperscript{107} The deteriorating sod house next to the pristine white permanent structure tells the tale of the settler’s struggles upon first arriving to Nebraska and the prosperous life they have since built for themselves, ultimately encouraging the readers that they, too, could achieve such prosperity.

While it is highly likely the American Midwest would have eventually been populated by European Americans, the railroad companies accelerated westward migration by establishing towns along their lines and relocating entire colonies of immigrants to inhabit them. To do so, however, the government and the railroads displaced the indigenous population. American Indians were forced onto reservations to make room for the foreigners that would occupy their lands. For the purposes of the railroad companies, this removal of indigenous peoples enabled them to build towns from scratch. Instead of the people whom they considered to be savages, railroad officials worked to populate the lands with foreigners whom they believed to be industrious and moral. Aggressive advertising campaigns, which included print advertisements, lectures, and visual media, targeted the ethnic groups railroad officials deemed most likely to

\textsuperscript{107} Chambers of Commerce of Alliance, Hemingford, Marsland, Crawford, and Whitney in conjunction with the Burlington Railroad, \textit{Northwestern Nebraska} (n.p.: n.d.). Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago.
prosper in the western United States. This selective process formed the core of railroad colonization efforts.

Colonization served the immediate purpose of settling the lands and establishing agricultural and other business endeavors, thus ensuring continuous profit for the railroads; however, it also had a measured effect on the culture of the American Midwest. Since most of these immigrants settled in the United States alongside members of their own nationality and ethnicity, these ethnic groups influenced the architecture and planning of their towns and developed a local cultural heritage. In Marion and McPherson counties in Kansas, for example, where the Mennonite communities originally settled in the 1870s, there remains a large Mennonite population. One of the local Kansas history museums, the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum in Goessel, was established in 1974 to commemorate the centennial of the Alexanderwohl colony’s arrival. The site of the museum is in fact a replica of the longhouse erected by the Santa Fe Railroad that served as temporary lodging for the first arrivals of the Alexanderwohl colony. The Mennonite colonization of the area remains a vital part of that community’s cultural heritage.

The railroads reshaped the west according to their own terms, deciding which ethnicities would be most suited for the towns along the rail lines. Even though the United States government was against setting aside land specifically for the purpose of establishing European ethnic enclaves in the Midwest, they provided the railroad companies with the tools to do so, by granting them the land on which the railroads would work so fervently to occupy. The railroads built the tracks that would determine the locations of settlements in the Middle West and designed those towns rapidly and
economically. Once the foundations were laid, the targeted promotional campaigns and colonization schemes directed by railroad officials brought the settlers who would breathe life into those railway towns and ultimately mold it according to their own style, values, and beliefs. Thus, as the railways physically altered the landscape of the country, they were integral in shaping the cultural landscape of the nation.
CONCLUSION

Flows of capital and commodity were an integral part of the development of the United States. Similarly, the flow of people throughout the country was instrumental in building the nation. Migration into and across the U.S. was strictly controlled by railroad businessmen and immigration officials---a combination, that is, of corporate and federal actors. Railroad companies encouraged immigration in the nineteenth century and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, millions of immigrants were arriving on American shores annually, in part because of railroad efforts.\(^1\) The onset of World War I slowed immigration rates to the point where, in Baltimore, the newly-built federal immigrant station was far larger than necessary. The immigration service estimated so poorly, that upon the building’s opening in 1914, it was converted into headquarters for the United States military. At the time the facility was planned, officials could not have predicted that the government would soon enact limitations on immigration during and after the war.

Restrictive immigration legislation resulted in drastically reduced numbers of foreigners entering the country.\(^2\) In addition to already-existing legislation barring Chinese immigrants, Congress enacted legislation in 1917 that implemented a literacy test for foreigners over the age of sixteen, raised the tax paid by immigrants upon arrival, and excluded anyone from the so-called Asiatic Barred Zone, a region including nearly all of Asia and the Pacific Islands.\(^3\) Further restrictive legislation in 1921 and 1924 limited the total number of immigrants arriving annually and imposed quotas on the

\(^1\) Between 1892 and 1924, approximately twenty million immigrants entered the United States, with nearly three-quarters of them arriving through Ellis Island. Wepman, *Immigration*, 210-211.


number of people allowed to immigrate to the United States from foreign countries.\textsuperscript{4}

These restrictive immigration policies were not only informed by the war but also by American apprehension over the types of foreigners that had been arriving in the United States since the late nineteenth century. These immigrants hailed from countries like the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, Italy, Russia, Greece and Turkey—places with customs, institutions, and languages perceived as vastly different from immigrants from northern European countries such as Ireland, England, Germany, Scandinavia and Holland that had previously entered the United States.\textsuperscript{5}

Declining immigration was only one of the issues that altered railway operations. The 1920s marked the beginning of the decline of the American railroads, as the automobile emerged as an alternate form of transportation. The assembly line method of manufacturing automobiles increased the production of cars, making them more affordable to the general public. As the automobile gained in popularity, railroads continued to decline. The Great Depression of the 1930s furthered the negative impact on the railroad stations, as companies could not afford their upkeep and thus, neglected to maintain these structures. During World War II, the railroads saw a brief resurgence with the transportation of troops and a public that could not afford the rising gasoline prices.

\textsuperscript{4} The Immigration Restriction Act of 1921 (also known as the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921 and the Johnson Quota Act) set the quotas to three percent of the total population of the foreign-born of each nationality in the United States. The Immigration Act of 1924 (or the Johnson-Reed Act) lowered the existing quota to two percent of the foreign born population. Under this new law, the quotas were no longer based on those that were foreign-born but included the origins of natural-born citizens. As a result, the quotas for immigrants from the British Isles and Western Europe were significantly higher than those from Southern and Eastern Europe, who had only begun arriving on American shores in the late nineteenth century.

\textsuperscript{5} Wepman, \textit{Immigration}, 160.
Out of this resurgence came the optimistic view that passenger rail would once again be the dominant form of transportation in the United States.\(^6\)

In the post-World War II era, however, the suburban population expanded, and the suburbanites relied on cars. The development of the Interstate Highway System and commercial aviation during the 1950s and 1960s issued the final blows to the railroad industry. Despite new streamlined railcars promoted by the railroad companies, with exciting names like the *Super Chief* and the *California Zephyr*, the railroads continued to see major budget deficits and loss in profits. By the 1960s, the postal service, which had previously helped railroad companies break even, terminated its use of rail in favor of ground and air transportation.

The stations that had once been the pride of cities in which they were built deteriorated from deferred maintenance as railroad companies struggled financially.\(^7\) Once-grand railway stations fell into disrepair and many were lost to the wrecking ball during the mid-twentieth century. In 1963 the demolition of New York City’s Pennsylvania Station (McKim, Mead, & White, 1910) became the most infamous example of the decline of the railways in the United States. By the 1970s, the stations that had escaped demolition came to symbolize a bygone era; they either remain abandoned, such as the Detroit’s Michigan Central Station (Reed & Stem, Warren & Wetmore, 1913), or were repurposed for other uses in the following decades, such as Union Station in Indianapolis (Thomas Rodd, 1888) which now houses a restaurant,


hotel, and shops after its 1986 renovation. With the decline of immigration to the United States and the waning of railway travel in the interwar period, many railroad companies repurposed their immigrant waiting rooms, using the space for storage and offices. Other immigrant rooms were demolished altogether.

The story of the immigrant waiting room in St. Paul, Minnesota, for example, is emblematic of the decline of both railway travel and immigration. The immigrant waiting room in the basement of Union Depot (Charles Frost, 1917-1923) was demolished to make way for a parking lot below the building. The new Union Depot had replaced an earlier station, built in 1881, which had burned down in 1915. Construction on the building began in 1917 but was halted for several years during the First World War. Charles Frost based his designs on the needs of the railroad companies before the war, including an immigrant waiting room for those traveling through St. Paul to destinations in Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and the Great North. This immigrant room was located in the lower level of the building, with a separate entrance than that of the upper level, where the main waiting room was accessed (Figure C.1).

Yet once the station was completed in 1923, immigration had already slowed and the railways were in decline. By the mid-twentieth century, the immigrant room had become obsolete and parking lots became a necessity for commuters. Railroad officials converted the lower level of St. Paul Union Depot, where the immigrant waiting room was located, into a parking lot in the 1950s. Renovation of railway stations in the mid-twentieth century frequently featured accommodations for the automobiles that ultimately

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9 Architectural plans and drawings of Union Depot are located in the Charles S. Frost papers (N 48), Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis.
contributed to the demise in rail travel. The architectural renovations of the St. Paul Union Depot demonstrate this crucial moment of cultural change—the decline of both the railways and immigration in the United States.

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Immigration remains a controversial subject in present-day culture and politics. While Chinese and Irish immigrants were once accused of taking jobs away from American citizens in the nineteenth century, today Mexican and Central American immigrants are accused of the same. Although it is a mistake to oversimplify this hotly debated issue, in general, political opinions on immigration fall into two opposed camps. Conservatives support only legal immigration and do not believe in granting undocumented immigrants the same rights afforded citizens and legal immigrants. Securing the border has become a focus for conservatives in recent years, particularly due to the rise in illegal immigration from Mexico. Liberals, on the other hand, believe undocumented immigrants already in the country should be granted amnesty and that they have a right to the educational, health, and social benefits afforded citizens. Instead of focusing on securing the border, liberals feel more funding and energy should be spent on immigration reform and pathways to citizenship. What these two groups agree on, however, is that changes need to be made to our country’s immigration laws. As a society, we are no closer to solving problems of immigration than we were in the nineteenth century.

Nineteenth-century immigration was first in the hands of the states and only in 1891 did it become a federal matter, although many states, like Maryland, remained largely in control of their immigration stations. Today, the state and federal government
are at odds in dealing with immigration. While Congress is currently in the process of drafting immigration reform legislation, individual states have instituted their own immigration legislation. The state of Arizona, for example, passed the immigration law Senate Bill 1070 in 2010, which allows law enforcement to determine one’s immigration status when there is “reasonable suspicion” that the person entered the country illegally.\footnote{AZ SB 1070, Forty-ninth Legislature, 2\textsuperscript{nd} regular session, 2010, §2, Article 8, B.} Arizona democrats, in addition to activist groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, oppose the bill and are challenging its constitutionality, claiming that it encourages racial profiling.\footnote{American Civil Liberties Union, “Arizona’s SB 1070,” 2013, http://www.aclu.org/arizonas-sb-1070 (31 May 2013).} This controversial bill demonstrates how immigration remains a divisive subject in the twenty-first century.

As in the nineteenth century, contemporary national attitudes toward immigration are revealed in the built environment. The border between Mexico and the United States is marked by a fence, in actuality a series of fences, along the New Mexico, Arizona and California borderlines. To date, approximately 685 miles of the fence have been completed although the border measures a distance of nearly 2,000 miles. The completed fences, designed to prevent pedestrian or vehicular traffic (or both) are strategically placed in areas with a higher number of illegal crossings. The fences range in material and design, from walls of scrap metal, to steel mesh panels, to steel or concrete bollard fences.\footnote{See No Border Wall, “Wall Designs,” 2013, http://www.no-border-wall.com/wall-designs.php (31 May 2013) for more on the designs of the border fence.} These barriers are meant to be climb-proof; for example, the Sandia Fence extends vertically for ten-feet and then angles in toward the climber on the Mexican side.
“using gravity and the weight of the climber against them [sic]” (Figure C.2).\textsuperscript{13} Despite these construction efforts, tunneling remains problematic for the American government.

American history demonstrates that the federal government has long invested in constructing physical borders between Americans and foreigners. In one extreme case today, the American public has also invested in the construction of a physical border. The Arizona state government solicits funds from the American citizenry via online donations in order to counteract the lack of security that Senator Steve Smith declares to have “yielded an unparalleled invasion of drug cartels, violent gangs, an estimated 20 million illegal aliens, and even terrorists!”\textsuperscript{14} The website, www.buildtheborderfence.com, was established after the passing of Senate Bill 1406, which was proposed by Senator Smith because of the “Federal Government’s failure to stop this invasion [of illegal immigrants].”\textsuperscript{15} The bill allows the Arizona government to enter agreements with other states to “provide for the construction and maintenance of a secure fence along the Arizona-Mexico border line that is located on private, state, or federal property if permitted.”\textsuperscript{16} American citizens fund the project through online donations and, in efforts to cut costs, state inmates are used for labor in building the fence.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} AZ SB 1406, Fiftieth Legislature, 1\textsuperscript{st} regular session, 2011, § 41-108.
To be sure, there are anti-border fence campaigns simultaneously occurring, indicating the national divide on the issue. The No Border Wall Coalition has begun two national campaigns, a letter-writing initiative as well as a Border Wall Documentation Project, in which activist groups and individuals document the negative impacts of the border wall, “as well as the abuse, neglect and incompetence of the [Department of Homeland Security], [Customs and Border Protection], and Border Patrol in its implementation of the border wall project.” Each group—those for and those against the border wall—sees the other’s views as compromising the integrity of the nation. While some believe illegal immigration brings only drugs and violence, others view it as a desperate act by people seeking better lives in the United States.

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, American attitudes toward immigration were further complicated when U.S. citizens confronted the reality of worldwide terrorist networks. Americans were forced to reevaluate global transportation systems as well as ideas of national identity and foreign policy. The World Trade Center and the Pentagon stood as the architectural symbols of American economic and military power; terrorists turned high-speed global transportation, in the form of airplanes, against those symbols. This terrorist act gave rise to the Department of Homeland Security, under which the investigative activities of both the U.S. Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service are now conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security was intended to establish, in the words of the federal government, “a strengthened homeland

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17 Organizations like No Border Wall describe the effects the border wall has on the well-being of migrants, on the ecology and environment of the Southwest, and on the Native American tribes living near the border. No Border Wall, “Home,” 2013, http://www.no-border-wall.com/ (31 May 2013).

security enterprise and a more secure America that is better equipped to confront the range of threats we face. The integration of immigration, customs, and border patrol into the Department of Homeland Security reinforces the national understanding of foreigners as threats to American society.

The intersection of immigration and transportation is especially relevant today. Although railways may no longer dominate the transportation industry as they once did, this dissertation can serve as a model for studies on how transportation remains integral to migration. For example, in response to the 9/11 attacks the Transit Security Administration (TSA) imposed stricter policies and procedures in airport and customs security, a system made manifest in airport architecture, which serves to provide constant surveillance and to mitigate circulation of passengers and entry procedures for arriving foreigners. A passenger’s race, especially if he or she is of Middle Eastern descent, is often the reason why he or she may be detained or experience more thorough inspection.

There are many parallels to be drawn between railway stations and contemporary airports. Immigrant passengers were segregated within the space of the railways and monitored by railway officials; in today’s airports, a person’s race and/or immigrant status can determine how thoroughly he or she is screened by security. The presence of terrorism in America has affected the daily lives of immigrants and has influenced

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21 In a New York Times article about racial profiling at airports, one TSA employee, speaking on the condition of anonymity, stated that “they just pull aside anyone who they don’t like the way they look […].” The article focused on Logan Airport in Boston, where thirty-two TSA officials were accused by their co-workers of racial profiling. Michael S. Schmidt and Eric Lichtblau, “Racial Profiling Rife at Airport, U.S. Officers Say,” New York Times, 11 August 2012.
American attitudes toward immigration. As a result of terrorism, our society has retreated into familiar tropes of racism and xenophobia. Understanding the country’s complex immigration history can be a starting point in evaluation of the present-day. The built environment, as an expression of cultural and societal values, serves as a lens through which to view this aspect of American culture.

As cultural agents, railroad companies performed an important role. They tightly controlled migration of foreigners within the space of the railways and throughout the country. The railways symbolized a new era in America, an era in which industrialization and urbanization occurred at an astonishing rate and thus transformed the national landscape. But the railways were also a harbinger of cultural phenomena, that is, of mass migration to the country and settlement of the American West. Within the built environment of the railways, the spatial relationship between immigrants and citizen-travelers revealed how immigrants were largely viewed as foreign and inferior in contrast to Americans. Only when they proved their worth, for example, when the Mennonites developed wheat crops hardy enough to withstand the Kansas climate, were they accepted as positive contributors to American society. Even as the railways geographically united the country, within their built environment they constructed and reinforced societal divisions between immigrants and American citizens. Spaces of immigration along the railways thus served as the physical manifestation of the immigrant’s role in nineteenth and early twentieth century American politics, capitalism, and culture.
ILLUSTRATIONS

1840 THE NATIONAL PIKE

Figure 1.1
Map of the National Road in 1840, showing its origin in Baltimore and its terminus in Vandalia, Illinois. (Federal Highway Administration)

Figure 1.2
Francis Blackwell Mayer, The Founders of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 1891. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad commissioned Mayer to paint this depiction of the company’s influential leaders, from left to right, ranging from 1827 to 1880. John W. Garrett, the company’s president in 1880, is shown seated at right.
This map by A.P. Folie, drawn in 1792, depicts Baltimore four years before it was incorporated as a city. The peninsula extending to the southeast is what is now known as Locust Point; however, the name originally referred solely to the protrusion of land east of the word ‘Basin.’

(Maryland Historical Society)
Figure 1.4
This map shows the greater harbor of Baltimore. The location of Fort McHenry is circled.
(From Keith, *Baltimore Harbor: A Pictorial History*)

Figure 1.5
This map shows Whetstone Point (later Locust Point) around 1850. The first railroad piers were located at the east ends of Marriott and Nicholson Streets, outlined above. Note the location of Fort McHenry at the tip of the peninsula.
This undated photograph shows how the railroad tracks extended to the shoreline and allowed freight cars to travel directly to the steamship, thus making the transfer of goods more efficient.

(Maryland Historical Society)
Figure 1.7

This map shows the comparative distances between the Atlantic port cities and destinations west and south, demonstrating that Baltimore offered the shortest distance to the interior of the country. (From the Harbor Board of Baltimore, *Baltimore Harbor: Its Modern Facilities and Numerous Advantages*, 1916)
Figure 1.8
Camden Station, indicated by the small circle at left, was further inland than Locust Point, encircled at right. Immigrant passengers boarded trains at Locust Point while citizen-travelers used Camden Station at the corner of Camden and Howard Streets.
(Maryland Historical Society)
This photograph shows the façade of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company’s Camden Station in 1865.

*(Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum)*

The Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad Station at President Street was built in 1849.
Figure 1.11
Twentieth century map of Canton, showing the Pennsylvania Railroad pier. Note also the Baltimore & Ohio ferry dock toward the upper left of the image. The railroad ferried its trains over from Locust Point to make the cross-town connection in the later nineteenth century.
(From Keith, *Baltimore Harbor: A Pictorial History*)

Note how the train has traveled through the building to the end of the pier, illustrating how the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad formed a direct connection with the ships arriving in the harbor.

*(The Baltimore & Ohio Museum, Baltimore, Maryland)*
This photograph from the early 1880s shows newly arrived foreigners boarding the Baltimore & Ohio’s immigrant train directly in front of the immigrant building. The pier building at the rear of the train was used to house cargo.
Figure 1.14

This map of Locust Point, which dates from the 1980s, shows the location of Piers 8 and 9. Completed in 1904, these piers were located east of the original immigrant station, where Tide Point (the old Proctor & Gamble plant) is located.

(From Keith, *Baltimore Harbor: A Pictorial History*)
Figure 1.15
“Immigrants aboard ship, Locust Point,” photograph, ca. 1904.
Immigrants disembark from the steamship and enter the Baltimore & Ohio immigrant station.
(Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)

Figure 1.16
“Group after unloading, immigrants at Locust Point,” photograph, ca. 1904.
(Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)
Figure 1.17
The right side of the immigrant station at Pier 9, ca. 1910. The gangplanks along the side of the building are raised and barges occupy the space where a steamship ready to disembark its passengers would berth.
(Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)

Figure 1.18
“Doctor examines immigrant woman for trachoma,” photograph, ca. 1904.
(Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)
Figure 1.19
The immigrants, having been divided into groups, wait in fenced-in sections called separation pens. (Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)

Figure 1.20
Immigrants in the main waiting room of the Baltimore & Ohio Immigrant Station, ca. 1904-1910. (Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)
Figure 1.21
Aerial view of Locust Point, with Fort McHenry in the foreground. Originally the Fort McHenry grounds covered the entire tip of the peninsula. The federal government immigrant station encroached upon those grounds, and consist of the first several piers on the right side of the peninsula in this image. Note the extensive rail development on Locust Point in this photograph taken around the 1920s.
(Printed in Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*, vol. II)

Figure 1.22
Federal Immigration Station at Locust Point, Baltimore, 1916.
(*Maryland Historical Society*)
Figure 2.1
“The Pitfalls Awaiting the New Arrivals in New York City,” *Puck*, 1877
(New York Public Library Print Collection)

Figure 2.2
1808 plan of the West Battery, designed by Col. Jonathan Williams and John McComb.
(New York City Municipal Archives)
Figure 2.3
Interior of Castle Garden as music hall, depicting Jenny Lind’s 1850 performance.  
*Museum of the City of New York, Harry T. Peters Collection*

Figure 2.4
“Jenny Lind at Castle Garden, 1850.”  Detail of cast-iron columns.
Figure 2.5

Figure 2.6
This photograph from circa 1900 shows how the area surrounding Castle Garden had been built up by landfill. By the time of this photograph, the buildings surrounding the main structure had been demolished.
Figure 2.7
Renovated interior of Castle Garden showing the organization of the rotunda. Note the prominence of the Railroad Department (outlined in center). Immigrants enter via alleyways at right and proceed to the central desks.
(www.norwayheritage.com)

Figure 2.8
This image of the interior of the Emigration Depot at Castle Garden from *Harper's Weekly* depicts a crowded and chaotic atmosphere that was more true to life than the nearly empty interior of Figure 2.7. The fanned pillars and decorative ceiling from the building’s theater days were destroyed by fire in 1876. (*Harper’s Weekly*, September 2, 1865)
Figure 2.9
The appearance of Castle Garden changed drastically over the years as buildings were added to accommodate new departments.

Figure 2.10
“Castle Garden Baggage Room: Receiving and Storing Luggage of Arriving Emigrants,” from *Immigration and the Commissioners of Emigration* by Fredrich Kapp (New York: Nation Press, 1870).
Figure 2.11
Immigrants gathered in the rebuilt Castle Garden interior, 1878. Note the exposed wooden trusses supporting the clerestory windows. (www.norwayheritage.com)

Figure 2.12
This map, drawn for the Navy’s Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography on April 5, 1854, shows that the island was equipped with eleven heavy guns, several barracks, a large barn, a railway car to shuttle ammunition across the island, and the powder magazine, which forms the largest building located behind the guns.
This photograph of the original structures on Ellis Island was taken shortly after its completion in January 1892.

Figure 2.14
Barge Office, James G. Hill, 1882
This building was razed in 1911 and replaced with former Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor’s palazzo style design in 1914. Hill’s Barge Office had replaced the original Federal-style structure erected circa 1860.
Figure 2.15
This photograph shows the crowded conditions at the Barge Office. Immigrants eat their meals seated on the floor since no tables and few chairs are provided. Printed in the *New York Tribune*, “The Ellis Island Immigration Station Reopens,” December 17, 1900.

Figure 2.16
Ellis Island continuously expanded over the years. This photograph shows an aerial view of Ellis Island circa 1920. Island One contains the main building. Islands Two, in the center of the photo, contains the hospital complex and was part of Boring & Tilton’s original design for the immigration facility. Island Three was added in 1913. The landfill between Islands Two and Three was completed in 1934.
Figure 2.17
Main building of Ellis Island, Boring & Tilton, 1900. Photograph taken in 1905.

Figure 2.18
The approved elevation for the main building at Ellis Island by Boring & Tilton, 1897-1898.
This blueprint includes the signatures of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor and three cabinet secretaries.
Figure 2.19
A covered passageway sheltered immigrants as they disembarked from the ferryboat and entered the main building.

Figure 2.20
The Registry Hall as seen today. Note the abundance of natural light.
Figure 2.21
The immigrants’ path through Ellis Island as printed (with key below) from Broughton Brandenburg’s *Imported Americans* (New York: F.A. Stokes, 1904).

A. Immigrants landed from barges enter by these stairs.
B. Surgeon examines health tickets.
C. Surgeon examines head and body.
D. Surgeon examines eyes. Suspects go to left for further examination.
E. Female inspector looking for prostitutes.
F. Group enters and sits in pen corresponding to ticket letter or number.
G. Inspector examines on twenty-two questions.
H. Into special inquiry court.
I. Stamping railroad ticket orders.
J. Money exchange and telegraph office.
K. To railroad pen.
L. To New York pen.
M. To the ferry and New York,
Figure 2.22
A medical inspector lifts an immigrant’s eyelids to inspect for trachoma.

Figure 2.23
Registry Hall, 1903. The initial system of pens contained no benches and immigrants stood in line for about two to three hours while waiting to register.
Figure 2.24
Registry Hall, ca. 1912. Immigrants wait on wooden benches instead of standing in line as was the case with the former pen system. The pens were replaced with wooden benches in 1911 after the press and immigrant aid societies labeled the former system “insulting and inhumane.”

Figure 2.25
In this image dated October 1, 1912, an inspector (lower left) in the Registry Hall interrogates a young male immigrant (lower right) with an interpreter (seated) at hand to translate the exchange. The document before the inspector is the ship’s manifest sheet.
Figure 2.26
Immigrants wait in line at the money exchange, where the day’s official rates were written on a chalkboard. The “Money Exchange” sign above the tellers’ windows lists the department name in six other languages.

Figure 2.27
At the Stairs of Separation, the steps on the right-hand side led to the railroad ticket office, the central steps to the detention rooms, and the left-hand steps to the New York ferry.

(Photograph by Ed Karjala)
Figure 2.28
The Railroad Ticket Office

Figure 2.29
Immigrants wait in one of the railroad rooms after passing inspection and purchasing train tickets.
Figure 2.30
Ground plan of the main building, 1907. The railroad ticket office is the projecting wing labeled A and the additional railroad waiting area, built in 1904, is seen at the upper left corner of the plan labeled B.

Figure 2.31
In this 1926 photograph by Lewis Hine, an immigration official pins a tag onto a female immigrant denoting the railroad line on which she will travel to reach her destination. The small child on the woman’s left already has a tag.
Chinese immigrant laborers, shown here, built much of the Transcontinental Railroad.

“Let the Chinese Embrace Civilization, and They May Stay,” Harper’s Weekly, November 13, 1880. This illustration includes such highly stereotypical depictions of the Chinese as beggars, drunks, living in squalor or homeless, and unwilling to work.
Figure 3.3.
Thomas Nast, “Pacific Chivalry: Encouragement to Chinese Immigration,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 1869. With its ironic title, this illustration depicts a California native pulling the queue of a defenseless Chinese man wearing his traditional dress. The Californian is spurred on by the government actions that encourage his attack, which are inscribed behind him on a stone. It reads: “Courts of justice closed to Chinese; extra taxes to Yellowjack.”

Figure 3.4
“The Great Fear of the Period: That Uncle Sam May Be Swallowed By Foreigners.” In this lithograph from the 1860s, highly stereotyped Irish and Chinese males devour Uncle Sam until eventually the Chinese immigrant also devours the Irishman. The landscape in the background features several trains as a direct commentary on the fact that countless Irish and Chinese arrived to the United States to find work on the railroads.
Figure 3.5
The Democratic County Central Committee handbill announced its enthusiasm over the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

Figure 3.6
Pacific Mail Steamship Company Detention Shed, architect unknown, 1899. Chinese immigrants were detained at this shed, located at San Francisco’s Pier 40, prior to the establishment of Angel Island Immigration Station.
Figure 3.7
Chart demonstrating how to take measurements according to the Bertillon system, 1893.

Figure 3.8
Aerial view of Angel Island showing the Golden Gate Bridge in the background.
Figure 3.9
Aerial view of Fort McDowell on Angel Island, 1926.

Figure 3.10
Quarantine Station, Angel Island, 1892.
This aerial view includes only a handful of the forty buildings erected at the quarantine station.
The cottage plan of Ellis Island served as the model for Mathews’ design of Angel Island. When Mathews visited, the row of buildings at the far left, containing the measles and isolation wards, was separated by water from the main hospital buildings to their right. This post-1924 plan dates from after the buildings on the left half of the plan were joined, by means of landfill, to form one island. The majority of immigrants passing through Ellis Island, however, remained in the main building and adjacent baggage/dormitory structure on the island at right.

Figure 3.12
Architect Walter J. Mathews’ sketch of the Angel Island Immigration Station, ca. 1907. In this sketch, the administration building is the most prominent, located at the foot of the wharf and connected by a covered walkway to the detention barracks on the hillside behind it. To the left is the hospital building. The power house is at the lower right.  
(California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California)
Julia Morgan built the staff cottages at Angel Island in 1910, the year the facility opened. On account of the forty-five minute ferry ride to and from the mainland, the cottages were a necessary addition for those maintaining and operating the facility on a daily basis, such as the gardener, electrician, cooks and hospital workers.

Maps indicating the location of Angel Island in San Francisco Bay (A), the location of the immigration station on the island (B), and the layout of the facility circa 1913 (C). The quarantine station was located in Ayala Cove, west of the immigration station. (Map by Tim Cresswell and Gareth Hoskins)
Primary inspection took place aboard the incoming ships in San Francisco Bay. From there, Asian immigrants and any others requiring further inspection boarded the Angel Island ferry to the immigration station.

In this photo dated circa 1916, passengers disembark from the Angel Island ferry and proceed to the administration building.
Figure 3.17

Figure 3.18
The largest examination room inside the administration building (shown above) was reserved for Asian immigrants.
The caged waiting areas of the administration building were the detainee’s first experience of the prison-like atmosphere they would encounter at Angel Island. Above, Chinese women are kept separate from the males as they await registration.

The covered walkway connects the dormitory (above) to the rear of the administration building (below right). Note the fencing at the far left of the barracks.
Figure 3.21
Floor plan of the Asian detention barracks. This plan also shows how the immigrant quarters were used to house federal prisoners and enemy aliens during the first and second World Wars.

Figure 3.22
This 2009 photograph of the exterior of the detention barracks show the barred windows (at left) and the barbed wire fence (at right) which enclosed the building.

*(Photograph by Sherrie Thai)*

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Figure 3.23
Standard Wire Mattress Company patented this bunk bed design in 1904. The bunks are shown open (at left) and closed (at right).
The dormitories left little privacy or personal space for the detainees. They were often crowded, with the detainees’ belongings taking up any available space.

A museum exhibit at Angel Island displaying how the detainees lived shows the folded blankets used to cover the wire beds for Asian immigrants rather than the mattresses provided for European detainees. 

*(Photograph by Stephen Bay)*
Figure 3.26
Hospital, Angel Island Immigration Station, San Francisco, Walter J. Mathews, 1910.

Figure 3.27
Interior of one of the hospital wards, Angel Island Immigration Station, San Francisco. Unfortunately, the photograph does not include the coved ceiling, which was believed at the time to prevent the harboring of germs in corners.
Figure 3.28
The medical inspections at Angel Island were humiliating for the Chinese detainees, who were not accustomed to disrobing in front of strangers or to being probed by medical instruments.

Figure 3.29
Alcatraz Island Military Prison, San Francisco.
The concrete cell block of Alcatraz prison, designed by Major Reuben Turner and completed in 1912, is visible from a naval vessel in the bay in this 1923 photograph. (Golden Gate NRA, Chandler-Bates Alcatraz Photograph Collection)
Female detainees and their children were allowed to walk the grounds in supervised groups.

*(California State Parks, State Museum Resource Center)*

European detainees had their own recreation yard (above) while Chinese detainees used a separate facility (below). Note that both yards were fenced in with barbed wire. The guard tower in the photo above was added in the 1930s when prisoners of war were also detained at Angel Island.
Figure 3.32
Interior, washroom and lavatory, Angel Island Immigration Station.
Note that the stalls at right do not have doors.

Figure 3.33
A Chinese immigrant is interrogated by U.S. Immigration Officials in 1923. Interrogations were usually conducted with two immigration inspectors and a stenographer.
A translator (not pictured above) was also present.
Poems carved into the walls, like this one, were usually written with brush and ink first and then carved into the wood.

The fire of 1940 destroyed the administration building of Angel Island as well as the covered stairway that had connected the building to the detention barracks.
Figure 4.1a
Norfolk & Western Railway boxcar.
This boxcar was used for freight; note that there are no windows.

Figure 4.1b
Norfolk & Western Railway boxcar converted for passenger use.
Note that the door now includes windows.

Figure 4.2
Interior of a Pullman Palace Sleeping Car, 1877
Sleeping arrangements are shown at left, daytime arrangements at right.
Figure 4.3
Interior of an immigrant sleeper car. At left, the upper berth is pulled down for sleeping passengers; the first two upper berths on the right are closed. Passengers on the lower berths could lie down or remain seated upright. Curtains along the upper berths allow some privacy for sleeping passengers.

Figure 4.4
Interior, Pullman Palace Car. These cars featured plush upholstery, brass light fixtures, and carpeting. Its interior was entirely decorated, even on the berths.
Figure 4.5
Interior, Immigrant Sleeper Car. Instead of purchasing meals along the journey, many immigrants brought their own food supplies. The man in the front left prepares a meal. Pots and dishes crowd the table at right. The plain wooden interior is a stark contrast to the lush Pullman interior in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.6
Cover of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company promotional advertisement for their immigrant sleeper cars. The four-page pamphlet advertised the express service, low-cost, and similarities to the luxurious Pullman sleeping car.
Crowded interior of an immigrant sleeper car. Here, men and women share the same quarters. Passengers occupy every space of the car—the berths, aisles, and seats. Their belongings occupy the rest of the space; clothes and hats hang from hooks above the berths and a picnic basket obstructs part of the aisle.

Native Americans at a train station in Laguna, New Mexico. Railroad employees (wearing conductors’ caps) stand by watching them.
Figure 4.9
“Negro expulsion from railway car, Philadelphia,”
*Illustrated London News*, September 27, 1856.

Figure 4.10
Map indicating the railroad terminals in the Port of New York, circa 1900
Figure 4.11
Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal in Jersey City, Peabody & Stearns, 1889. The current photo shows only the head house. The ferry house was demolished in the late twentieth century.

Figure 4.12
Interior, Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal. Peabody & Stearns, 1889. Current photo of the main waiting room, which is now used for historical and cultural exhibits and events. Tickets for the ferry to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty may also be purchased at the terminal.
Figure 4.13
Vintage postcard showing the ferry house in front of the Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal. The immigrant room was located in the ferry shed immediately right of the ship.

Figure 4.14
Plan, Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal, Peabody & Stearns, 1889. The plan shows the ferry house and concourse at left, the head house in the center, and the tracks at right. The immigrant waiting room is outlined at left between the ferry slips. The arrow marks the narrow northern passage connecting the ferry concourse with the train concourse. The wide southern passage used by commuters is on the opposite side of the building plan. The main waiting area of the head house is the large shaded room at the building’s center.
Figure 4.15

New York, Lake Erie, & Western Railway Station, George Archer, 1887. The railway’s name can be seen along the façade of the building at right. Given its location on Pavonia Avenue in Jersey City, residents referred to it as the Pavonia Terminal.
The immigrant waiting room of the Erie Railroad Station in Jersey City was located on Pier 5.

Interior of the immigrant waiting room on Pier 5.
Figure 4.18
Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Terminal, Frost & Granger, 1911.

Figure 4.19
Immigrant waiting room with custodian in charge. This image was included in the Chicago & Northwestern’s promotional booklet, *The Care and Protection Afforded the Immigrant in the New Passenger Terminal, Chicago, Ill.* (1912).
Figure 4.20
Main waiting room of the Chicago & Northwestern Terminal (Frost & Granger, 1911). This vintage postcard highlights the colorful surfaces in the main waiting room. It is a stark contrast to the white-tiled space of the immigrant room in Figure 4.19.

Figure 4.21
John Droege describes that immigrant rooms should be “furnished with complete sanitary equipment.” In their promotional booklet, the Chicago & Northwestern write that “for tidying up [immigrants] find every convenience.” Some of the amenities included laundry facilities with wash-tubs and drying racks.
Figure 4.22
View of the men’s toilet room and showers in the immigrant waiting areas at the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Terminal. The cement floor, brick walls, and porcelain tubs and toilets made “scrupulous cleanliness possible,” according to the Chicago & Northwestern booklet.
Figure 4.23
Plan of Union Station, Kansas City, Missouri, Jarvis Hunt, 1914.
The lunch room and immigrant waiting area are outlined at the far right of the plan.
Figure 4.24
Opening Day at Kansas City’s Union Station in Missouri, October 30, 1914. Jarvis Hunt’s neoclassical design, triple-arch entrance, and low wings on either side of the central pavilion resembles Daniel Burnham’s 1907 design for Union Station in Washington DC, albeit on a smaller scale.

Figure 4.25
Interior, Kansas City Union Station. Looking north into the main waiting area. The lunch and immigrant rooms are located at the far end of this view. (Kansas Collection, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries)
This illustration, published before the building’s completion, shows the immigrant waiting room at the north end of the building. Customers are seated at the lunch counter in the center of the image. The caption indicates that the brick construction “will enable the terminal company at any future time to enlarge the main waiting room by tearing out the immigrant waiting room and extending it farther north.” This extension was never built.

Figure 4.27
Basket Lunch Room, Kansas City Union Station, Jarvis Hunt, 1914. This photograph dates from the 1940s. The main waiting room is accessed through the doorway at left. The band of metal framed windows above the counter can be seen from the other side of the wall in Figure 4.26.
Figure 4.28
Map of the greater Spokane area. The inset at lower left shows the proximity of the Deep Creek Colony to the city of Spokane.

Figure 4.29
Oregon-Washington Station, J. R. Holman, 1914.
Figure 4.30

Plan, Oregon-Washington Station, Spokane, 1914.

The image below shows the building on the street level; above is the second level of the building. The second-class waiting room is at the lower left corner of both plans.
Figure 4.31
Main waiting room of the Oregon-Washington Station. This photo, taken in 1971, shows the building’s original marble flooring, bronze light fixtures, mahogany benches, and large arched windows that decorated the main waiting area since its opening in 1914.

Figure 4.32
In this vintage postcard, the entrance to the immigrant, or second-class, waiting area can be seen to the left side of the marquis where the figures are congregated out front.
Figure 5.1
This bird’s eye view of Cheyenne, Wyoming (1882) illustrates how the sections of government and railroad lands formed grids that were superimposed onto what was once open space.

Figure 5.2
Alternating government and railroad lands formed a checkerboard pattern. The shaded odd-numbers indicate railroad lands and the even-numbered squares indicate lands owned by the government.
The map at left (5.3a) depicts the extreme limits of the railroad land grants. The map at right (5.3b) indicates the actual land claimed by the railroads. Not all railroad companies were able to maximize their holdings due to financial and logistical constraints.

In the bilaterally symmetric grid plan, the railroad runs east to west through the center of town. The shaded building lots to the north and south of the tracks indicate business lots. This plan (as well as the plans in Figures 5.6 and 5.7) indicates the initial town plat. As the town grew, developers platted the surrounding land.

*Plan by John C. Hudson*
Figure 5.5
Bird’s Eye View of Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1882. The railroad tracks run the periphery of the town at left and then continue along the wide tract of land (at the bottom of the image) that was meant to intersect the town’s main streets. Although the town was platted to be bilaterally symmetrical, this image illustrates how most of the development occurred to the north of the tracks, with only a scattering of buildings on the other side, at the lower left of the map.

Figure 5.6
In this plan, the railroad bisects the town’s main street diagonally. This arrangement allowed for the businesses to be located on the opposite sides of the same street. Pedestrians, however, would still have to cross the tracks.

(Plan by John C. Hudson)
Figure 5.7
Since railroad towns tended to develop on only one side of the tracks in both the bilaterally symmetric and diagonal plans, the land companies eventually accommodated this development and surveyed lots to one side of the tracks. The town’s main street ran perpendicular to the tracks.
*(Plan by John C. Hudson)*

Figure 5.8
This 1910 postcard illustration of East Main Street in Danville, Illinois depicts the varied business and commercial buildings running alongside the railroad tracks.
Figure 5.9
“In Line at the Land Office, Perry, Sept. 23, 1893. 9 o’clock A.M. waiting to file.” In this photograph taken by the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Land Management, a crowd of men wait to file their claim on lands on the Cherokee Strip in Oklahoma Territory.
(Still Picture Records Section, Special Media Archives Services Division, National Archives at College Park)

Figure 5.10
This circular published in 1863 by the American Emigrant Company notes that the lands for sale in Western Iowa are in locations “where Court Houses, School Houses, Churches, Roads and Bridges are already built.” Advertisements like these were meant to reassure potential settlers that civilization had already arrived in the western states.
Figure 5.11
In this advertisement for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, a farmer plows gold coins from the fields of Montana.
Figure 5.12
Map and description of the Santa Fe Railroad German Colony “Germania,” circa 1873. Written in German, this advertisement was distributed by the Santa Fe Railroad to induce immigration to one of its German colonies. It also illustrates the checkerboard pattern established by the distribution of railroad and government lands.
(Kansas Collection, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas)

Figure 5.13
Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Station, Offices, and Immigrant Home in Burlington, Kansas, 1871. The immigrants were housed on the lower level and the land department offices in the upper level.
Figure 5.14
Circular from the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Company (1872) advertising low land prices, free passes for those purchasing lands from the railroad, and the free rooms available to potential settlers.
*(Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago)*
The colonists’ reception house, as advertised by the Northern Pacific Railroad, was not only larger than the houses owned by the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad, but also featured more amenities. This illustration shows a much grander building than that in Figure 5.13. It is entirely possible, however, that the structure’s size is slightly exaggerated.

(Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago)

This Illinois Central advertisement depicts the bounty produced in the “finest farming lands” in the country.
Figure 5.17
Advertisement for Hardy Gillard’s panorama, *Over the Continent from New York to San Francisco*, ca. 1880.
Figure 5.18
Advertisement for C.S. Dawson’s Sylphorama of America,
*The Great Overland Route to California*, 1871.
*(Burlington Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago)*
Figure 5.19
This Illinois Central advertisement for the “best farming lands in the world” highlights the agricultural advantages of their lands in the hope of attracting farmers.

(Illinois Central Archives, Newberry Library, Chicago)
Figure 5.20
In this photograph, a settler leans against his sod home reading a letter. A newspaper rests at his feet. He has possibly just returned from a trip to the nearest town where he would have collected his mail. On the desolate prairie, letters and newspapers served as one of the only connections to the outside world.

Figure 5.21
Map indicating Mennonite settlements in southeastern Russia. The inset shows the Mennonite colonies in the context of greater Europe and the larger map indicates the location of the settlements in the Molochnaia and Khortitsa Colonies.
Figure 5.22

“New York City.—Arrival of Mennonite Emigrants, a Religious Sect Expelled from Russia and Seeking a Refuge in Dakota, America.—a Scene on a Steamer on the Hudson River.” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, September 6, 1873.

Figure 5.23

“Central Kansas—The Public Well at the Temporary Home of the Russian Mennonites,” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, September 6, 1873. The wells in Nebraska would have had to be dug much deeper than those in Kansas, one of the deciding factors in the Mennonite delegates’ decision to ultimately settle in Kansas.
Temporary immigrant home for the Alexanderwohl community provided by the Santa Fe Railroad. Once the immigrants built their homes, the temporary lodging house served as the location for civic and religious meetings.

From *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, September 6, 1873.

“Central Kansas—Interior of the Temporary Home of the Russian Mennonites,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, September 6, 1873. The immigrants at Alexanderwohl used every inch of the lodging house to accommodate all of the belongings they brought with them from Russia.
The Mennonites of Gnadenau built their houses on the north side of the street.

“Gnadenau—Looking East,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, September 6, 1873. The Mennonites of Gnadenau built their houses on the north side of the street.

Plan and bird’s eye view of the village of Hochfeld in Kansas. Etching by C.B. Schmidt. Schmidt’s etching demonstrates the distribution of lands in Mennonite agricultural villages. Houses are located along the road at the bottom of the image and the land behind the houses in that section is divided into long strips. In the adjacent section at right, the land is also divided into strips, with the numbers indicating to whom the land belongs.
Figure 5.29
Sod houses, like this one in Nebraska from the 1880s, were typical home construction in the prairie states due to the lack of lumber.

Figure 5.30
A saraj, erected more rapidly than sod or adobe homes, housed the family living quarters and stable under one roof. The stable doors are at the right and the family entrance is in the center of the structure. The chimney in the center of the roof indicates the position of the fireplace within the structure.
A seventeenth century farmhouse from the Gooi region in the Netherlands. Detail from an engraving, *Tobias and the Angel*, by Abraham Bloemaert, 1620. The family’s living quarters, at left, feature a tiled roof and its walls were constructed of brick, as were the stepped gable and chimneys. The barn section, at right, had wood siding and a thatched roof. The chimney at left served the fireplace and the chimney in the center of the house was the baking oven.
Figure 5.32

Section, elevation, and floor plan of the Dutch farmhouse shown in Figure 5.31. Drawings by contemporary restoration architect, Jaap Schipper. The byre-dwellings built by the Mennonites in Kansas were a smaller and simpler version of the building above since there was no transition of exterior building material between the family and barn portions of the house. The basic plan remained the same however, with the barn at the right, brick-oven fireplace located at the partition, and open family dwelling at left. The Kansas settlers, when starting out, most likely did not have as many animals as the plan’s stable indicates above.

Figure 5.33
“Central Kansas—The Russian Mennonites—Types of Faces and Costumes,” Frank Leslie’s Illustrierte Zeitung, September 6, 1873. Illustrations of the Russian Mennonites appeared in both the English and German versions of Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper. The Mennonites’ style of dress was a curiosity for settlers in the region. In an article from the Topeka Commonwealth of September 10, 1874, the journalist reported that the women “had funny old handkerchiefs tied around their heads” and the men’s “favorite headgear is a flat cloth cap which they pull off in saluting any person.”

Figure 5.34
Mennonite oven from the Friesen House (1911) at the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum, Goessel, Kansas. This oven was used for baking and for heating the entire house. The long trays resting against the front of the oven were inserted in the upper door for baking while fuel was inserted in the lower door.
Danish immigrant Hans Jacobson (formerly Jørgensen) sits in front of his home on Lake Michigan with his daughter and grandchildren in this undated photograph. Not only does Jacobson’s name change indicate his adoption of American ways but his grandson also proudly waves the American flag.

The sod house at right was the family’s initial home when settling on the prairie (although the roof was likely replaced over the years) but after decades of working the land, they were able to build the more substantial and permanent home seen on the left. Image from *Northwestern Nebraska*, a booklet published jointly by the Burlington Railroad and the Chambers of Commerce of several counties, ca. 1920s-early 1930s.
Figure C.1

Basement floor plan, Union Depot, St. Paul, Minnesota, Charles Frost, 1917. The immigrant room, marked at left, was located in the basement of the station. Entry to the building was on the ground floor and the main waiting area was on the upper level.

The space is currently occupied by a parking lot.

(Charles S. Frost papers (N 48), Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis)
A man attempts to climb the border fence from the Mexican side. The top of the fence angles inward to prevent climbers from crossing to the American side.
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