COMMON Ground

PRESERVING OUR NATION'S HERITAGE SUMMER 2004

SPANISH SPLENDOR

in the American Desert

jack boucher photographs death valley's **scotty's castle** *for the historic american buildings survey*

FIRST WORD

Saluting Excellence

BY EDWARD H. ABLE, JR.

ANNIE MOORE was 15 on January 1, 1892, when she and her two brothers arrived from Ireland to become the first of what would be 12 million immigrants whose first footstep in America would be on a small island in New York harbor. Gertrude Schneider arrived in 1921 holding onto the comfort of a remembrance from home: "I treasured him and he came over with me . . . the teddy bear was part of Switzerland." **"THIS MORNING IS FINE WEATHER** but there is very many sad & heavy hearts in this pen it is a gloomy place to spend the 4th of July & the first one I have spent away from home since I have been a soldier . . . I am in the Bull pen sad & lonely tonight." Private Levi Whitaker, Company H, 11th Connecticut Infantry wrote these words on July 4, 1864. Whitaker was imprisoned behind the 20-foot-tall pine logs that marked the perimeter of the Confederate prisoner of war camp at Andersonville. Used for only 14 months in 1864-1865, the prison held more than 45,000 Union soldiers, its poor conditions killing nearly 13,000 of them. **AFTER SO MANY YEARS,** how do we know about Annie Moore and Gertrude Schneider and Levi Whitaker? In large part, because of museums. **THIS YEAR,** the National Park Service celebrates 100 years of national park museums. In 2006, the American Association of Museums will observe its centennial. Throughout our intertwined histories, the National Park Service and AAM have collaborated to strengthen the ability of the Service and the national parks to serve the public, to preserve and share the stories of all the Annies and Gertrudes and Levis in our history. **AAM RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE** in museums through accreditation, the field's seal of approval. Nationwide, only 750 museums have achieved this distinction, including 10 national park museums. Through a rigorous process of self-study and peer review, these park museums have demonstrated that they meet or exceed national museum standards. The Accreditation Commission has commended several of the accredited park museums for exceptional institutional planning, excellent collections planning and stewardship, outstanding interpretive efforts, great strides in conservation and collections care practices, and first-rate programs for students. **THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE** has its own rigorous methods of evaluating its 350 museums. Why seek accreditation on top of this? **SUPERINTENDENT DONALD CAMPBELL** at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park puts it this way: "I have been through the AAM's accreditation process twice. Both times were highly rewarding experiences for me as park superintendent. The AAM's extraordinary visiting committee provided a rigorous, professional, holistic examination of our museum programs, and gave us clear goals for the future. The process provided an intense synergy between the visiting committee and park and regional office staff that benefited the park's museum program both short and long term." **AAM LOOKS FORWARD** to even more national park museums joining the ranks of accredited museums nationwide. By earning the highest recognition in the field, these museums help the National Park Service demonstrate its excellent stewardship of priceless and irreplaceable resources that have unique value to the American community. **MUSEUMS COLLECT** the functional and the priceless. The things that bring depth and life to the stories of history. The things that are tangible, that we can reach out and touch (but shouldn't!). The things that help us imagine what it might have been like to be a young Irish girl arriving at Ellis Island or a war-weary soldier horrified by the conditions of his imprisonment. They are one of our best tools for inviting the American people to learn more about our history. Their excellence is a goal we all share. **WE SALUTE** the National Park Service on the milestone of its museum centennial and look forward to another 100 years of partnership.

"By earning the highest recognition in the field, these museums help the National Park Service demonstrate its excellent stewardship of priceless and irreplaceable resources that have unique value to the American community."

Edward H. Able, Jr., is the President and next CEO of AAM.

The 10 national park museums accredited by the association are Andersonville National Historic Site, Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Clara Barton National Historic Site, Fort Sumter National Monument, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Independence National Historical Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Museum of Westward Expansion at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

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It's been mistaken for a mirage, the ornate estate deep in Death Valley. That's an apt description once you hear the story of how the place got built. **BY DAVID ANDREWS**

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Above: The New York skyline from the Statue of Liberty during its 1980s restoration.

Cover: The west gate of Scotty's Castle.

JACK BOUCHER/NPS/HABS

NEWS CLOSEUP

TRIBUTE TO A GENERATION

World War II Memorial Opens on the National Mall

For those who took part in one of the greatest struggles of the 20th century, this spring brings a momentous event: the opening of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. Now, a generation can see their sacrifice honored in a prominent place on the Mall.

By virtue of its setting on the long, open plain considered the ceremonial heart of Washington, the memorial pays homage to the gravity and ideals of the conflict. Architect Friedrich St. Florian, whose design was selected in a national competition, says the memorial intends to express "jubilance, celebrating the victory of democracy over tyranny."

Its visual anchors are a pair of 40-foot-tall pavilions representing the theaters of war. Arrayed in twin arcs are granite columns with bronze wreaths, one for each state and territory, sculpted by Ray Kaskey, whose work plays a focal role. The centerpiece is a 300-foot-wide sunken plaza with two fountains and a Kaskey sculpture, *Light of Freedom*, in a pool at the center. Visitors enter on granite ramps that bring them past the arches and a series of bas-relief panels honoring those who served overseas and at home, also by Kaskey. A wall is covered with 4,000 gold stars, each representing 100 Americans who died. St. Florian describes the goal as "continuity and timelessness."

The memorial touched off a debate between those who believed it overdue and those who felt it would spoil the sight line between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. "The site selection went through a very arduous journey," says Steve Lorenzetti, an official with the National Capital Region of the National Park Service. Legislation authorized a memorial in 1993. The American Battle Monuments Commission, the agency responsible for military cemeteries and memorials around the world, was tasked with finding a location.

The plan had to be approved by the National Capital Planning Commission, which provides guidance to the Federal Government on building and land use; the Commission of Fine Arts, an independent body advising on matters affecting the appearance of the capital; and the Secretary of the Interior. They all "felt a memorial of this importance required a site of equal importance, and that this would contribute to the stature of the National Mall," says Lorenzetti.

The memorial also survived a lawsuit by the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, which, though favoring a memorial, opposed obstructing the sight lines of what many believe to be a finished landscape.

The cost was $140 million, most raised through private donations (the government provided $16 million). Former senator and war veteran Bob Dole teamed with actor Tom Hanks to help the monuments commission raise over $193 million, with the surplus held for future repairs.

A website registry of Americans who served in World War II is accessible at the memorial or online (www.wwiimemorial.com). Any U.S. citizen, whether they served in combat or worked on an assembly line, is eligible.

For more information, contact the National World War II Memorial, 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 501, Arlington, VA 22201, (800) 639-4WW2, e-mail custsvc@wwiimemorial.com.

OVER HERE
STUDY EXAMINES HOME FRONT

To commemorate the effort on the home front, the National Park Service has launched a study to encourage nomination of landmarks that figured prominently in this often overlooked part of the story. The World War II National Historic Landmark Theme Study is being conducted in cooperation with the Organization of American Historians.

As a first step, the National Park Service has commissioned a series of essays on themes such as the integrated work force and civil rights, migration and resettlement in response to mobilization, technological advances, and architectural innovations.

The study—which sets up a framework for nominating sites as national historic landmarks or for listing in the National Register of Historic Places—was mandated by the legislation that established California's Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park.

For more information, contact John H. Sprinkle, Jr., National Park Service National Historic Landmarks Survey, 1849 C St., NW (2265), Washington, DC 20240, e-mail john_sprinkle@nps.gov.

ALL PHOTOS DAVID ANDREWS/NPS

Taking Measure of a Movement

Scholarship and Preservation Enrich Brown v. Board Anniversary

Sharp periods of self-reckoning loomed for America at the onset of the 1950s; among the most difficult was confronting a history of discrimination. The move to desegregate public schools—one of the era's major changes—has renewed resonance with the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*.

As the nation is reminded of the epic struggle, scholars and preservationists continue a protracted (and often unnoticed) quest to ensure that this history is commemorated for generations to come. The mission has yielded results. A 2000 National Park Service study of places associated with racial desegregation has led to the creation of five new national historic landmarks, the highest honor given a property for its connections to the past (see sidebar, right). Another five sites are in varying stages of the designation process.

Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States is one of a series of national historic landmark theme studies that examine places connected to a historic theme or event, determining their significance and integrity.

Landmarks designated as a result of the desegregation study are all related to events of the 1950s and 1960s. They illustrate the NAACP's involvement and the contributions of influential figures such as Thurgood Marshall and Charles Hamilton Houston. They also recall defining Supreme Court decisions and individual acts of conscience.

The study was mandated by 1998 legislation that created Central High School National Historic Site. "To have Congress say, 'do this' was wonderful, because it gave us a chance to put all of desegregation into context," says Sandra Washington of the National Park Service, the study's coordinator.

While the civil rights movement came to a head in the 1960s, the study shows desegregation as a long narrative with origins in the 19th century. Often associated with African Americans, the struggle included Latin, Asian, and Native Americans as well. The study also examined places that reveal what Chicana historian Vicki Ruiz calls "tapestries of resistance."

The new Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site opened for the first time on May 17, the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision. The event was marked with choirs, bands, speakers, and other observances.

To read the desegregation theme study, go to www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/nhl/school.htm. The National Register of Historic Places offers an online travel itinerary that includes many of the historic sites associated with desegregation (www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/index.htm). For more information, contact John H. Sprinkle, Jr., National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Survey, 1849 C St., NW (2265), Washington, DC 20240, (202) 354-2228, john_sprinkle@nps.gov.

WILL COUNTS/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT

LANDMARKS OF AN ERA

DAISY BATES HOUSE This modest residence in Little Rock served as an impromptu command center for local activists during the Central High crisis of 1957, which culminated in President Eisenhower's calling out federal troops.

BIZZEL LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA The state's attempts to bar graduate student George McLaurin from the university inspired him to challenge the "separate but equal" doctrine. The library was the setting for the events that led to the 1950 Supreme Court decision *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*.

NEW KENT SCHOOL AND GEORGE W. WATKINS SCHOOL These two rural Virginia schools were the focus of the 1968 *Green v. New Kent County* Supreme Court decision, which defined the standards by which compliance with desegregation law would be judged.

ANDREW RANKIN MEMORIAL CHAPEL, FREDERICK DOUGLASS MEMORIAL HALL, AND FOUNDERS LIBRARY On the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC, these buildings have a long association with African American intelligentsia. The talent and ideas that developed here would prove instrumental when the struggle for civil rights moved to the legal arena.

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL Site of a dramatic episode of brinksmanship by activists in Washington, DC. African American students were turned away for the 1950 school year at all-white Sousa, prompting a legal challenge and resulting in the 1954 *Bolling v. Sharpe* decision, another blow to the "separate but equal" doctrine.

"I Won't Run from You"

On a fall day in 1957—when the controversy over school desegregation erupted in an unforgettable episode of violence **(above)**—photographer Will Counts was there. On assignment for the *Arkansas Democrat,* Counts was covering the arrival of a group of African American students at Little Rock's Central High School for the first day of court-ordered integration. The Little Rock Nine, as they became known, were jeered and assaulted. Then-governor Orval Faubus called out the National Guard to block the school's entrance. **Elizabeth Eckford** remained stoic during her ordeal, a resolve that still awed Counts decades later. **Alex Wilson,** a reporter for the *Chicago Daily Defender* and a veteran, told his attackers, "I fought for my country. I won't run from you." **The episode at Central High**—designated a national historic site in 1998—convinced President Eisenhower to call in troops from the 101st Airborne Division. It was the first time the Federal Government had stepped in with force on the desegregation issue. The showdown marked a new phase in the struggle for equal education in America. The indelible images of the day capture the pain of a nation whose ideals were at war with its reality.

BELOW: JET LOWE//NPS/HAER; RIGHT: KHALED BASSIM/NPS MUSEUM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM/GRANT-KOHRS RANCH NATIONAL PARK

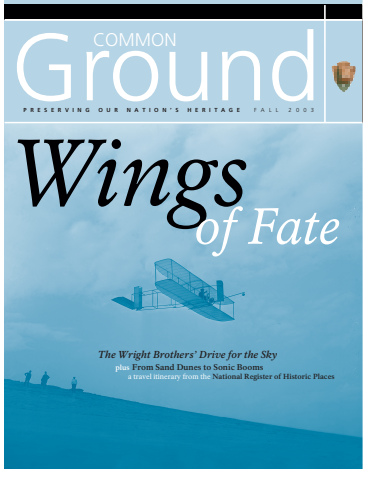
COMMON GROUND WINS AWARD

Common Ground has been selected from more than 8,000 entries worldwide to receive a design award from the Society for Publication Designers. In only its first year following a top-to-bottom re-engineering, the magazine has been honored with a bronze medal.

The society's annual show is one of the premier competitions for magazine design. Winners are typically a "who's who" of magazine publishing, including *TIME, Newsweek, Vanity Fair, Audubon, The New York Times Magazine,* and overseas periodicals like Spain's *Magazine El Mundo* and the *London Guardian*. This year's honorees were toasted at a May gala in New York.

"I could not be prouder of this important and richly deserved honor," says National Park Service Director Fran Mainella. "We all eagerly look forward to each issue of *Common Ground*. It is great reading and so beautifully designed. It is one of the Service's most impressive partnership tools. Congratulations to editors David Andrews and Joseph Flanagan, and to every contributor to this very impressive publication."

The show will be on exhibit at New York's Parsons School of Design, one of the country's foremost art schools, then travel to Copenhagen's Graphics Arts Institute. The honorees will also appear in a coffee table book published by the society in association with Rockport Publishers.



eBay Rescue

Statue of Liberty Ornament Returned

A decorative item taken from the balcony encircling the flame of the Statue of Liberty's torch was returned recently after a 19-year disappearance. The copper ornament depicting an ear of corn had been spotted on eBay by a Statue of Liberty enthusiast.

Brian Snyder, vice president of the Statue of Liberty Club, was immediately suspicious that the object looked like a stolen piece of the icon. The club is a group of hobbyists from around the world who collect statue-related memorabilia. The eBay posting called the item a "pre-restoration artifact," referring to the statue's extensive renovation in the 1980s. The ear of corn measured about four inches long by two inches wide. The starting bid was listed at $1,000.

Snyder e-mailed the National Park Service, including a link to the eBay site. This started a chain of events that ended in the ornament's safe return. The seller, a Great Neck, New York, man, could have been charged with a crime for selling a cultural item stolen from federal property. According to David Tarler, an attorney with the National Park Service's Archeology and Ethnography Program who consulted on the case, authorities decided to approach the seller and request the item's return. The man cooperated, explaining that the piece had been in the possession of his father, an ironworker during the renovation, who had since passed away.

While eBay forbids posting stolen property, there has been criticism over sales of cultural items whose origins are sometimes questionable. Says Tarler, "The message should go out to heirs who have cultural property belonging to the United States that they can do the right thing and return it."

Left: The statue during renovation in the 1980s. Below: The torch during restoration, flanked by ears of corn like the one that was stolen.

Keeping the Nation's Treasures

Web Feature Celebrates Centennial of Stewardship

CATTLE RANCHING ON THE FRONTIER was a rough business, but it attracted some well-heeled entrepreneurs. These sterling silver, ruby-studded sugar tongs belonged to cattle baron John Bielenberg of Montana's Grant-Kohrs Ranch. Now a national park, the ranch is preserved as one the best surviving examples of the western cattle industry of the time. **THE TONGS ARE BUT ONE EXAMPLE** of many objects in national park collections, objects surrounded by a wealth of history. This year the National Park Service celebrates 100 years of caring for the treasures from America's past. With over 350 collections in parks and other facilities, the National Park Service manages the largest museum system in the world, with more than 105 million objects, natural history specimens, documents, and images. **THE MUSEUM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM** of the National Park Service has launched a web feature to showcase these objects, tell the story of how the museums developed, and explain how the latest scholarship and science inform the mission of caring for this irreplaceable legacy. **REGULAR UPDATES WILL FEATURE** items from the collections as well as conservation tips. Go to www.cr.nps.gov/museum/centennial.

TREND LINE

RECLAIMING A LOST LEGACY

The Challenge of Preserving the Postwar Era's Invisible Gardens

by Charles Birnbaum

In the summer 2003 issue of *Common Ground,* preservationist Richard Longstreth argued that we would not question a modernist landmark's significance were it constructed 175 years ago. Time bestows import, he wrote, and the buildings of the modern movement do not have time to wait.

This is even more true for the era's designed landscapes. What comes to mind when preservationists talk about the great works? Usually pastoral places such as Central Park and the Golden Gate, or emblematic estates such as Biltmore or the Breakers. If a landscape is not picturesque, if it lacks the traditional scenic qualities championed by a Frederick Law Olmsted, it usually lacks a constituency.

A poll commissioned by Russian immigrant artists Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamid sought to discern how Americans perceive art and beauty. Respondees preferred soothing, realistic scenes with soft curves and blended colors. Postwar modernist landscapes, by contrast, are often characterized by crisp lines, hard materials, abrupt juxtapositions, and lack of symmetry. One begins to see why these works are so often overhauled or demolished.

Postwar America was a new world. With the automobile ascendant and cities exploding exponentially, the future looked like an endless horizon of Levittowns and interstates. In stepped a small group of landscape architects whose bold new ideas were a counterweight to the sprawl.

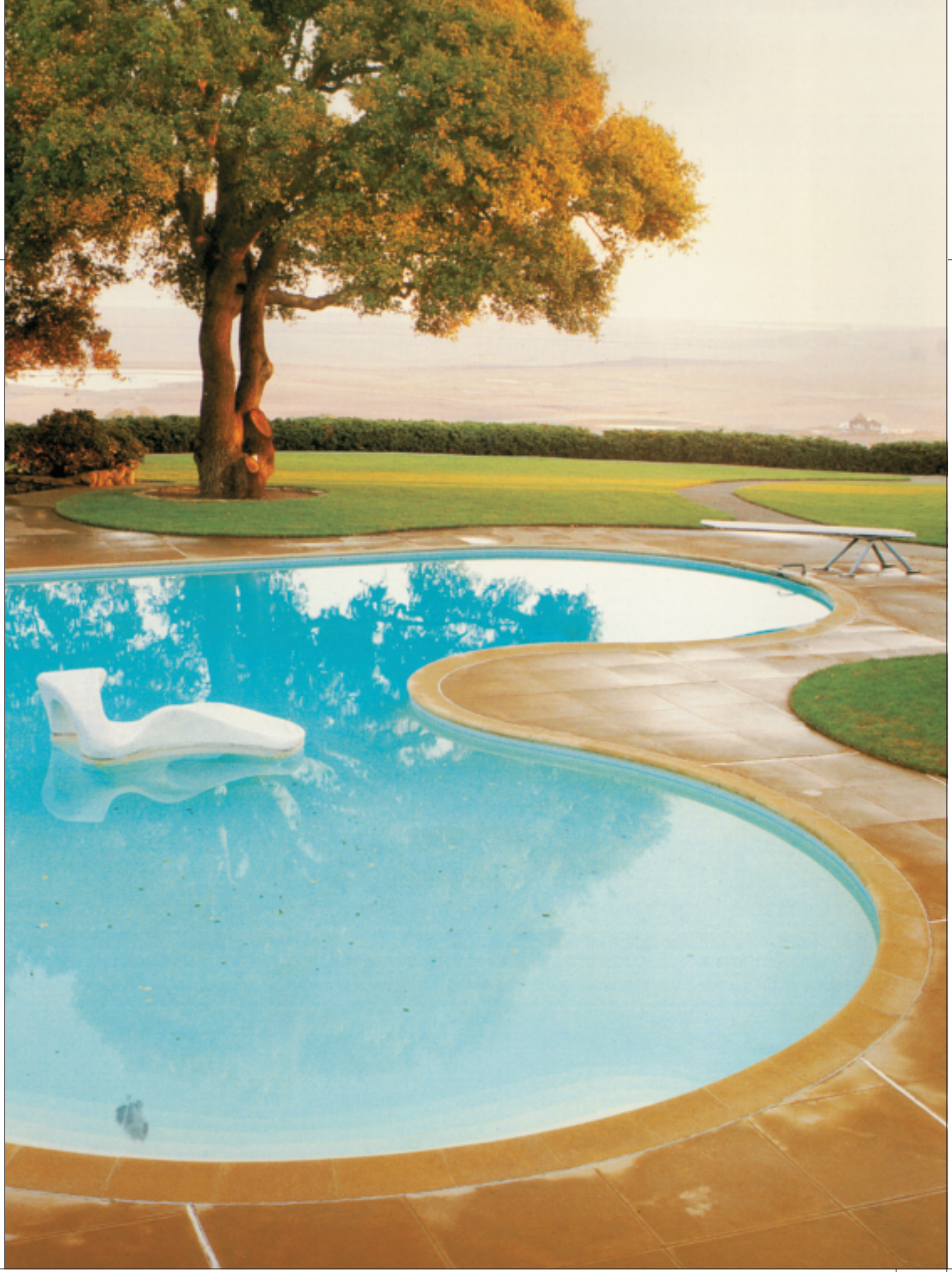
A hint of change emerged in the 1930s, with Thomas Church. He designed some 2,000 projects, from tiny urban yards to the estates of wealthy Californians. His hallmark was the creativity he brought to the constraints of the suburban lot. Boundaries either disappeared with a clever arrangement of vegetation, or were celebrated with the use of cement asbestos board, aluminum panels, and fiberglass partitions. His 1948 masterwork, the Donnell Garden in Sonoma, became the international icon of the California garden.

Garrett Eckbo, along with Harvard classmates Dan Kiley and James Rose, chafed against tradition, tapping into the social idealism of the Bauhaus. Eckbo derived inspiration from the latest architectural journals and contemporary fine arts. He saw the possibilities of the garden as an antidote to the built environment's stolid, linear forms. Circles, triangles, and irregular polygons recall the abstractions of Kandinsky and Miro. His pergolas and fountains dazzle with their glistening mesh aluminum. Some of his best-known works are the plaza in Old Monterey, Berkeley's waterfront, and the country's first pedestrian mall in Fresno.

Kiley numbers among his works the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado and New York City's Lincoln Center. Known for his seamless transitions of interior space to the outdoors, he maintained that there was no difference between designing buildings and landscapes. His work is a "series of roofless rooms defined by vegetation," writes Peter Walker in *Invisible Gardens*. Though he joined Eckbo and Rose in their disdain for the Beaux Arts, he was transformed by a trip to work on the site of the Nuremburg war crimes tri-

[THESE] LANDSCAPES ARE OFTEN CHARACTERIZED BY CRISP LINES, HARD MATERIALS, ABRUPT JUXTAPOSITIONS, AND LACK OF SYMMETRY—A SHARP DEPARTURE FROM THE CONVENTIONAL CONCEPT OF BEAUTY IN LANDSCAPE DESIGN.

Above: Oakland's Kaiser Center by Ted Osmundsen and David Abergast. Right: The Donnell Garden.



LEFT: TED OSMUNDSEN; RIGHT: FELICE FRANKEL

bunal, where he saw Europe's formal gardens first-hand. His style evolved into a signature fusion of modern and classical. In 1997, Kiley was awarded the National Medal of Arts. His masterpiece, the Miller Garden, a residential garden in Columbus, Indiana, has been designated a national historic landmark.

Expelled from Harvard for refusing to follow Beaux Arts dogma, Rose was perhaps the most iconoclastic of the trio. Rose often incorporated the existing site into his designs, its rocks and trees. He regarded his work as outdoor sculpture. "Earth is a plastic medium," he said, "which holds an infinity of sculptural combinations." He believed that a design should arise from the site itself, from its inherent light and native forms. He called it his "organic style."

Lawrence Halprin also gravitated to California, transforming the region's hillsides and urban backyards. By the '50s, his work expanded to encompass urban revitalization. At San Francisco's Ghirardelli Square, one of the first indoor malls, the site transcends its function as a retail space, with plants and fountains making a place for people to congregate. At his Freeway Park in Seattle, an ensemble of waterfalls, crevices, and plantings creates beauty and intrigue from the unlikely subject of a highway pedestrian crossing.

Robert Royston grew up on a ranch, building imaginary mountains, towns, and cities. His biomorphic playground sculptures—slides, chutes, and sandboxes—are modern art for children and adults.

In the end, the optimism of this group—and of their many compatriots and disciples in the field—was no match for the voracious appetite for land. By the 1970s, the promise faded.

IN THE END, THE OPTIMISM OF THIS GROUP—AND OF THEIR MANY COMPATRIOTS AND DISCIPLES IN THE FIELD—WAS NO MATCH FOR THE VORACIOUS APPETITE FOR LAND. BY THE 1970S, THE PROMISE FADED.

With time, we are starting to see their accomplishments anew. "Space was rediscovered as the great unifying medium," says Walker. "People, no longer merely spectators, became actors in the modern landscape." Postwar designs sculpted space and in so doing, shaped how it was experienced. With the striking contrasts, the subtle wedding of the natural and the manmade, the blurring of boundaries between indoors and out, these works offered a visual palette both serene and stark.

Yet, the poll implies that these works are hard to appreciate. Take Lyndhurst, a National Trust property in Tarrytown, New York, laid out in the mid-19th century by landscape gardener Ferdinand Mangold. It is a pastoral idyll, what the public seems to want. Then consider Boston's Copley Square, where, in the 1960s, Sasaki, Dawson, and DeMay Associates traded the comfortable for a modernist masterpiece. To some, it may seem monochromatic, unfamiliar, and even unnerving.

The same could be said for Lawrence Halprin's design for San Francisco's Embarcadero Center, or Dan Kiley's design for the Burr sculpture court in Hartford, Connecticut. Viewed in this light, it's no surprise that the shelf life for any of these projects has been less than 20 years. They are often controversial, leading to deferred maintenance and ultimately demise.

There is more than an incremental downward spiral. In some projects little attempt is made to understand the work within its broad historical context. Site furnishings, materials, and features were site-specific, one-of-a-kind, designed by the landscape architect. Today, Astroturf replaces grass and sycamores are dug up because their exfoliating bark is messy. The furnishings palette is homogenized with off-the-shelf items from a catalog.

As this legacy fades, the modern landscape is more and more out of sight and out of mind, the accomplishment obscure even to art historians. The National Register of Historic Places includes over a thousand buildings less than 50 years old, but landscapes from the postwar years are practically absent. While many of the designs have survived and are on the verge of reaching the 50-year mark, a National Register criterion, they still remain unstudied, their fate uncertain.

Many are the archetypes of the postwar landscape, including the first pedestrian mall (Fulton Mall) and the first vest pocket park (Paley Park). The first "recycling" of building and landscape, Ghirardelli Square in 1965, actually predates the National Historic Preservation Act by a year. Pittsburgh's Mellon Square, the oldest surviving park over a parking structure, is also among them.

Left top: McCormick Pool by Garrett Eckbo. Left below: Piedmont Park Playground by Isamu Noguchi. Right: Eckbo's ALCOA Garden, with aluminum screens and trellis.

LEFT ABOVE: GARRETT ECKBO; LEFT BELOW: ISAMU NOGUCHI; RIGHT: JULIUS SHULMAN

BELOW: OFFICE OF DAN KILEY; BOTTOM: ANN KOMARA

BELOW: JAME SHELDON/CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION

Across the nation, residential projects, roof gardens, streetscapes, squares, and plazas—the work of some of the best landscape architects of their day—are at risk of major alteration or destruction.

The past few years have seen many designs destroyed with little debate. Among them are M. Paul Friedberg's innovative play spaces for the Riis Houses in New York and Thomas Church's harmonious marriage between the formal Stanford Hospital and its courtyard, which turned traditional garden forms and features on their head. Boston's Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park, by Sasaki, Dawson, and DeMay, has gone down too. Today we take waterfront revitalization for granted; few seem to care about losing the project that pioneered the idea.

What can be done? Landmark status, and listing in the National Register, should be aggressively pursued. There have been some positive developments, namely the recognition of Kiley's Miller Garden, and a recent surge of publications. *New York Times* columnist Anne Raver recently noted that "these invisible landscapes are being taken up by a growing number of landscape architects around the country, who are organizing to protect their work, both as works of art and as vessels of cultural history." If this signals growing interest, the future may be brighter.

Thanks to recent coverage in both professional journals and the popular press, a diverse constituency may be emerging that includes landscape architects, students, developers, and grassroots advocates. Hopefully the attention is timely. In the long run, preservation must embrace a spectrum of professionals, academics, planners, historians, and the public.

THE SECOND WAVE

Inspired by their predecessors, a new breed of landscape architects continued the modernist experiment begun by masters like Church, Eckbo, and Kiley.

Robert Zion Zion worked with I.M. Pei before starting his own firm in 1957. He designed Manhattan's Paley Park, the first "vest pocket" park, which led to a proliferation of similarly intimate spaces around the city. Later projects included the 2,000-acre Phillip Morris manufacturing plant, Cincinnati Riverfront Park, IBM world headquarters, and the landscape for Liberty Island.

Hideo Sasaki Sasaki produced such signature designs as Boston's Copley Square and Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park. He also crafted pioneering corporate campuses for Upjohn in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and John Deere in Moline, Illinois. John F. Kennedy appointed him to the U.S. Fine Arts Commission in 1961.

M. Paul Friedberg Friedberg emerged on the scene in 1965 with his redesign of the site for New York's Jacob Riis Houses. The project was a first: a playground for adults and children. He worked on projects as varied as Harlem River Park in New York and corporate headquarters for AC Nielsen in Chicago.

BOTTOM: HENRY ARNOLD

A STRATEGY FOR PRESERVATION

Nominate Sites for National Recognition Nominate properties for designation as national historic landmarks and listings in the National Register of Historic Places. Dan Kiley's Miller Garden, designed for a private client in Columbus, Indiana, was designated a national historic landmark in 2000—a first, giant step for recognition of modern landscapes. In March 2000, Thomas Church's General Motors Technical Center in Michigan was added to the National Register.

Express the Historical Context There has been a surge of interest in recent years. More is needed to keep the modern landscape from once again slipping out of view. Books, monographs, and oral histories are needed to capture the evolution of this art form and its cultural impact.

Create Partnerships Preserving and managing these works is a difficult job. There are excellent examples of what is possible. The Halprin Landscapes Conservancy was created in Portland to preserve Lawrence Halprin's downtown parks. An Atlanta partnership has restored the Noguchi Playground in that city.

Document Threatened Work The Historic American Landscapes Survey of the National Park Service provides permanent documentation for landscapes threatened by alteration or demolition. Halprin's designs for Denver's Skyline Park and the sculpture court at the Virginia Museum of Fine Art in Richmond were recorded before they were altered.

Consult with the Original Designer There is no better way to preserve an original design than to go to the source. Clients and caretakers of the original are excellent resources as well. This was done recently at British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden in New York.

Catalog Drawings and Other Materials in Accessible Archives It used to be difficult to find a home for these materials but the situation is changing thanks to a handful of universities. The University of California at Berkeley, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard University are developing archives, which are essential to rehabilitating sites and inspiring scholarship.

Apply the Secretary of the Interior's Standards The standards require scholarship. The National Park Service recently produced reports on a pair of Dan Kiley landscapes—the mall at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis. Such research records the works in detail and informs management decisions.

Clockwise from lower left: Fountain in Denver's Skyline Park by Lawrence Halprin; Dan Kiley's Lincoln Center design "before"; Kiley's masterpiece, the Miller Garden; Lincoln Center "after," trees removed.

What we learn from these landscapes could inform our future. Consider the competition for the World Trade Center memorial, where the entries are, like their modern predecessors, minimalist. We know now that preserving the original intent of such designs will require special care.

The future of this legacy is in the hands of us all. The time to act is now, before it is too late.

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, is the Coordinator of the National Park Service's Historic Landscape Initiative in Washington, DC. He is the 2004 recipient of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation Rome Prize Fellowship in Historic Preservation and Conservation. For more information, e-mail him at charles_birnbaum@nps.gov.

Right: **Robert Edwards.** **Right below:** **The site under construction.** **Below:** **Destroyed pier; workroom.**

CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

the legacy of the port chicago disaster

BY TRACEY PANEK

The sleepy town of Port Chicago, surrounded by rolling hills dotted with oaks, hugged the shores of the Suisun Bay east of San Francisco. It was an unlikely place to test the nation's mettle. Yet that is exactly what happened on July 17, 1944, when a munitions explosion at the town's naval facility instantly took the lives of 320 people—most of them African American enlistees. The site of the worst home front disaster of World War II and the center of the largest mass mutiny trial in U.S. naval history, Port Chicago not only demonstrated the cost of war to those at home, it ignited a conflict that challenged the military's racial policy. In the explosion's aftermath, the Navy and the entire military were forced to take notice.

ALL PHOTOS PORT CHICAGO NAVAL MAGAZINE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

A NEW PACIFIC SUPPLY CENTER

As the nation mobilized in the wake of Pearl Harbor, military development on the West Coast accelerated at a frenzied pace. By 1942, the Navy's ammunition depot at Mare Island, 35 miles east of San Francisco, was overburdened. Nearby Port Chicago, site of a former shipbuilding factory, proved an ideal replacement, offering deep channels for docking, rail lines to ease munitions transport, and the safety of an isolated location.

In rainy December 1942, sailors began arriving. Most were young black men from the South. They were greeted by mud—sidewalks on the base had yet to be laid.

Claude Ellington had been working as a fireman for the Georgia Railroad Company when he met a recruiter in Augusta. "[Things were] changing in the Navy setup and they [were] going to let black[s] come in as . . . seamen," the recruiter promised, enlisting Ellington as a fireman first class. That promise was ignored at Camp Robert Smalls, an all-black base at the Great Lakes Training Center in Illinois. Sammy Boykin, who trained with Ellington, remarked, "We were reminded that we were made cooks, chefs . . . waiters and shoe shiners . . . We couldn't be sailors." The Navy refused to accept Ellington as a fireman first class, offering him third class status instead.

When Ellington heard that he would be shipping out of Camp Smalls, he asked where. "Port Chicago, California," was the reply. "We left Chicago one cold, rainy night. I'll never forget it. All the way we were asking the porters [about Port Chicago]. Nobody seemed to know."

WORK ON THE BASE

When Ellington arrived, he immediately was set to work loading one of the first ships to dock, a captured German vessel recommissioned for the American war effort. He found work divided along racial lines. Under the supervision of white officers, Ellington's all-black crew was instructed to half-load the ship, leaving room for additional supplies to be taken on in San Francisco. The inexperienced loaders stacked ammunition to the top of the hold, leaving the adjacent side empty. Within minutes of departing Port Chicago, supplies began shifting. Luck was on their side. The ship arrived safely in San Francisco where crews off-loaded the entire contents then reloaded them before sending the vessel to sea.

Once work fell into a regular rhythm, ordnance workers at Port Chicago formed divisions corresponding to the holds of the ships. Trains ran the length of the dock, bringing supplies to within feet of the waiting vessels. "One hundred men could be on the dock at one time," explained Boykin. The base operated three eight-hour shifts per day working around the clock. With sailors loading 35,000 tons of ammunition per shift, ships could be loaded within a week.

Below: **Loading and unloading.**

"BOYKIN REGULARLY FOUND MENACING RACIAL SLURS ON THE WALLS OF BOXCARS. 'THEY WOULD HAVE BOMBS DRAWN,' HE SAID. 'UNDERNEATH IT WOULD SAY, "THIS IS THE NIGGERS."' OTHER TIMES THE BOXCARS WERE BOOBY TRAPPED WITH MESSAGES LIKE, 'THIS IS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU . . . I HAD SOME NIGHTMARES THINKING ABOUT IT. IT WAS A FEAR . . . EVERY TIME THE DOORS WOULD OPEN.'"

Robert Routh and Dewhitt Jamison arrived at Port Chicago in 1944. Routh had just finished eighth grade and had begged his father to let him join the Navy. He hoped to make a contribution to the country and learn a trade. Jamison had similar hopes, enthused by the promise "Join the Navy. See the World." Jamison was assigned to police duty. He patrolled nearby Richmond and Pittsburg, where he had to contact white officers before making an arrest. One day he broke up a riot, arresting white sailors because no officer was present. Not long afterward, he was reassigned to check damaged ammunition in a unit known as the "Suicide Division."

GREAT RISK, LITTLE TRAINING

"All of us that loaded was people that hadn't seen a ship before," remembered Ellington, "and had no training or nothing about handling ammunition." Such experiences proved the standard for black loaders at Port Chicago. The Navy offered limited training. Boykin took courses in boating and operating machinery like the forklift. Ellington volunteered to operate the winch. He learned as he loaded, practicing when no ships were docked. "I got so good at it that I could fill a bucket of water right up to the brim and pick it up and take it and set it down in that hold without wasting a drop," he recalls.

Despite the lack of training, loaders handled bombs, torpedoes, shells, and bags of gunpowder every day. Boykin recalls a particularly dangerous practice: using nets to hoist shells aboard. "We had to stop using nets . . . because if the shells tipped in a certain way [they] would fall through. So we started using boxes to take the shells up."

Crews found a variety of loading methods. Some filled wheelbarrows with ammunition. Division leader Morris Soublet improvised a way to load 1,000-pound projectiles that were over 5 feet high and 16 inches in diameter. To prevent them from knocking against each other, he put a grass mat between each one.

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

Born in Camden, Alabama, Boykin joined the Navy to get away from the racism he experienced as a child. He grew up in a mining town where a fight broke out one Sunday afternoon among black and white youths. The police questioned the neighborhood, and afterward all the black families were moved into the mountains. The image of white residents dragging a black man behind a truck still haunted him.

When he arrived at Port Chicago in December 1942, he encountered the familiar strains of segregation. Exhausted, he and his buddies fell into bunks on the ground floor of a two-story barracks. The next day they discovered white sailors upstairs. Racial epithets soon followed and then a fight. The commander ultimately moved the white sailors into separate barracks.

Segregation began on nearby Mare Island. Barracks were reserved for white sailors while African Americans stayed on an old ferryboat dubbed the "U. S.S. Neversail." On ships, signs prohibited blacks from using the bathrooms. "We were not allowed in the head even if there was no one in there," Spencer Sikes explained. Instead, loaders had to walk half a mile to the rest room. One night after a tiring dayshift, a group of black loaders stopped work, demanding admittance to the head. The confused white officers instructed the entire crew to offboard. Eventually officers roped off a section of the head for the crew to use.

When it came time for promotions, black sailors at Port Chicago had limited opportunities. Boykin recalled a lecture the day after his arrival. Summoned to the parade grounds, enlistees were told there were "no promotions to be had . . . the ranks were closing." He was also discouraged to learn that although he could become certified in machinery and boating, he would receive no additional pay.

For black enlistees, exchanges with officers sometimes included racial slights. Outspoken Morris Soublet confronted an officer about the problem, asking if they could speak "man to man" rather than officer to enlisted. "If you ever call me 'boy,' or 'you people'—that was his name [for African Americans], 'you people'— if you ever call me that again . . ." Soublet ended with a threat.

"'ALL OF US THAT LOADED WAS PEOPLE THAT HADN'T SEEN A SHIP BEFORE,' REMEMBERED ELLINGTON, 'AND HAD NO TRAINING OR NOTHING ABOUT HANDLING AMMUNITION.'"

Below: The patrol boat *Mia Helo*. Above: Loading. Right: Harold Tegner.

Boykin regularly found menacing racial slurs on the walls of boxcars. "They would have bombs drawn," he said. "Underneath it would say, 'This is the niggers.' Other times the boxcars were booby trapped with messages like, 'This is what's going to happen to you' . . . I had some nightmares thinking about it. It was a fear . . . every time the doors would open."

Despite the environment of resentment and fear, work sped up in response to wartime demands. The Navy hired contractors to help, like Port Chicago resident Calvin Wiley, who used his carpentry skills bracing loaded boxcars. In early 1944, the Navy expanded the pier so two ships could load simultaneously. Workers completed the expansion in June. By July, ships were docking in pairs.

THE EXPLOSION

July 17, 1944, was a hot muggy day at Port Chicago. Ellington walked to the dock and boarded the *E. A. Bryan*. He noticed that the ammunition had been loaded to the top of the hold. He lingered for a time and returned to the barracks to finish his wash. Just after 10 p.m., he stepped outside to take his drying white cap off the clothesline.

When a ship was being loaded, Soublet usually checked in by 10 p.m. to determine the number of men needed for the upcoming shift. On this particular night he was delayed. He had purchased some underwear and had stopped to put his serial number on them.

Boykin lay dressed on his bunk awaiting the midnight-to-8 shift. The barracks were noisy. His crew was slow getting to the mess hall. They were due on the dock by 11:30 p.m. and then they would march down the pier to the ship to begin their shift.

The newly christened *Quinault Victory* had just arrived at Port Chicago that evening. Crewmember Morris Rich was eager to go ashore. He had been on deck twice, but had been turned away. Around 9:20 p.m., the gangplank was lowered. Rich and a few buddies passed the Marine on guard and walked to town, heading into the restaurant next door to the Port Chicago Theater. They sat down and ordered sandwiches. Only five minutes had passed when they heard two blasts. "We found ourselves across the room," said Rich. "The first thing we thought is, 'The Japanese are bombing.'"

Out on the bay, aboard the Coast Guard patrol boat *Mia Helo,* Harold Tegner finished a turn at the wheel and went below deck to rest. The boat had just passed the two ships docked at the Port Chicago pier. In the distance, the Roe Island lighthouse glimmered. At 10:18 p.m., Tegner heard two explosions—then black oil rained down. "It covered every one of us from head to foot with oil," he remembers. "We were black. Nobody could even call anybody by name—they couldn't recognize us."

The blast knocked out all light in the area. The *Mia Helo* crew dropped anchor and waited in the blackness. Port Chicago pier was gone. Scraps of metal and an upturned piece of bow rising out of the water were all that remained of the two ships. In all, 320 people were dead, 202 of them African American enlistees. Another 390 military personnel and civilians were injured.

Inside the barracks, Robert Routh blinked against the shattered glass that had lodged in his eyes. "It was a night that none of us would ever forget," he recalled. "It was the beginning and end of our lives as they were up to that point."

Ammunition inspector Ignatius Vouri arrived on base around midnight. Wailing sirens, thick smoke, and the smell of gunpowder met him as he searched through the rubble for ordnance that had not exploded. Unable to find anything but a piece of twisted metal from one of the ships, he pocketed the souvenir, signing the Navy's nondisclosure agreement before heading home.

Two days later, Morris Rich, who had left the *Quinault Victory* less than an hour before it exploded, called Oklahoma. "My mom and dad never heard about the explosion," he said. "I was kind of afraid that they had heard and they thought I was . . . they hadn't heard."

The next day recovery crews located contractor Calvin Wiley underneath a band saw and rushed him to the hospital. At Mare Island Hospital, Yeoman Robert Edwards was treated for head wounds.

"INSIDE THE BARRACKS, ROBERT ROUTH BLINKED AGAINST THE SHATTERED GLASS THAT HAD LODGED IN HIS EYES. 'IT WAS A NIGHT THAT NONE OF US WOULD EVER FORGET,' HE RECALLED. 'IT WAS THE BEGINNING AND END OF OUR LIVES AS THEY WERE UP TO THAT POINT.'"

Undeterred by the horror of the blast, the Navy sailed on, removing debris, rebuilding the pier, and repairing buildings. Within weeks, Port Chicago reopened, but morale could not be restored.

THE CHALLENGE

When Edwards returned to work in the office, he was told that he had been reassigned. He would now be loading ammunition. But even after the tragedy, no changes had been made to the process of loading ships with high explosives, and Edwards refused. Other terrified enlistees refused to load as well, bringing work to a standstill.

The Navy reacted forcefully to the 258 men who would not return to the dock. It court-martialed 208, forcing them to forfeit three months' pay. Across from San Francisco at Treasure Island, the Navy convened the largest mutiny trial in its history. Thurgood Marshall, NAACP attorney and later Supreme Court justice, handled the appeal in the mutiny case. When it ended, the Navy imprisoned 50 seamen as mutineers.

In the months that followed, tensions at Port Chicago mounted. Sixteen-year-old Joseph Simon of Louisiana and others arrived in November to fill the void. On the van ride to work one day, a black sailor yelled hello to a white girl from the base whom he knew. Later that day the lieutenant gathered Simon's crew, asking who had "molested the girl." As punishment, Marines woke the crew early the next day, instructing them to dress and report in front of the barracks. "They marched us from 4:00 in the morning until 6:00 [p.m.]," said Simon. "They rode in the jeeps with guns pointed at us . . . yelling at us and telling us what kind of niggers we were . . . "

Simon held out hope when the NAACP's executive director wrote that he would be inspecting the base. The Navy temporarily moved blacks into white barracks and held a parade, "the only time the blacks and the whites . . . marched together." The NAACP later reported that "conditions [were] satisfactory at Port Chicago."

Left: **Damaged barracks (above) and pier (below).**

On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb shipped out through Port Chicago was dropped on Hiroshima, hastening an end to the war. In early 1946, the Navy issued a desegregation order. By 1948, President Truman called for the integration of all of the nation's armed forces.

RECOGNITION

In 1994, African American Navy veterans who served at Port Chicago gathered for its dedication as a national memorial on the 50th anniversary of the explosion. The Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial honors those lost and recognizes the site's role in creating a climate for change.

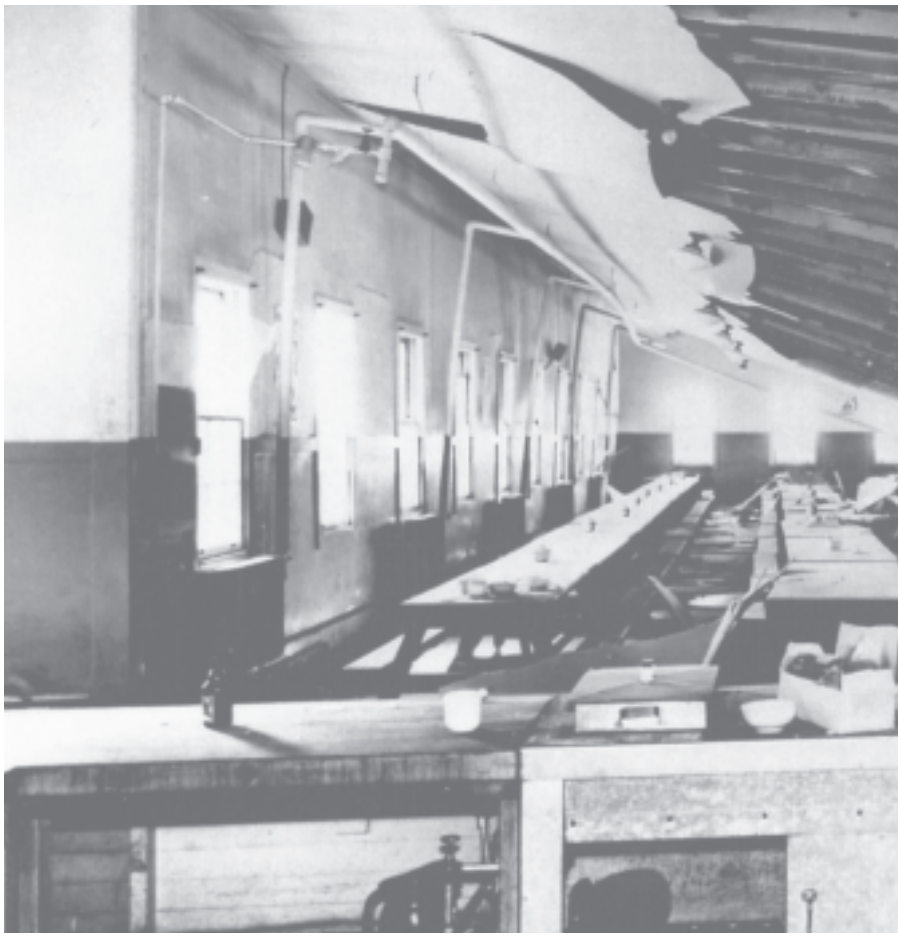
In the end, events at Port Chicago highlighted prejudicial practices common in the military and in society at large. The episode ultimately forced military leaders to reevaluate discriminatory policies, which helped create a political atmosphere that enabled integration.

The Port Chicago explosion also demonstrated a need to prevent a similar tragedy. In the years following the explosion, formalized training for loaders became standard practice, as did certification of anyone who was going to work on a dock where explosives were handled.

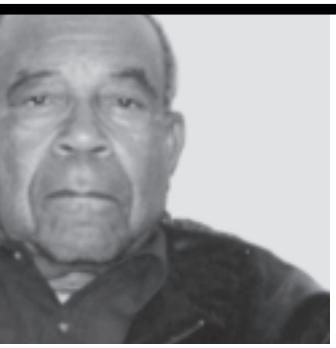
Robert Edwards, who had vowed never to return to Port Chicago, attended the memorial dedication. "The world has changed," he reflected. "The United States more than anyone has changed."

Tracey Panek conducted oral history interviews with the Port Chicago survivors for her master's thesis at California State University, Sacramento. She is now an archivist with the American Automobile Association. Contact her at tracey_panek@yahoo.com. For more information, go to the National Park Service website for the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial at www.nps.gov/poch.

"SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD JOSEPH SIMON OF LOUISIANA AND OTHERS ARRIVED IN NOVEMBER TO FILL THE VOID [LEFT BY THE MUTINEERS]. ON THE VAN RIDE TO WORK ONE DAY, A BLACK SAILOR YELLED HELLO TO A WHITE GIRL FROM THE BASE WHOM HE KNEW. LATER THAT DAY THE LIEUTENANT GATHERED SIMON'S CREW, ASKING WHO HAD 'MOLESTED THE GIRL.' AS PUNISHMENT, MARINES WOKE THE CREW EARLY THE NEXT DAY, INSTRUCTING THEM TO DRESS AND REPORT IN FRONT OF THE BARRACKS. 'THEY MARCHED US FROM 4:00 IN THE MORNING UNTIL 6:00 [P.M.],' SAID SIMON. 'THEY RODE IN THE JEEPS WITH GUNS POINTED AT US . . . YELLING AT US AND TELLING US WHAT KIND OF NIGGERS WE WERE . . .'"



Above: Morris Soublet; Joseph Simon. Right: Aftermath.



Left: **Claude Ellington.** Above: **On trial.**
Below: **Spencer Sikes; Ignatius Vouri.**

Roots of Segregation

Since the Revolutionary War, African Americans were principally limited to menial labor in the military. The Union Army, an exception during the Civil War, deployed black regiments in the South and West until the 1880s. Only by World War II had prejudicial policies relaxed enough for blacks to enter the Navy as stewards or yeoman. Segregation remained the policy during the war at training camps, bases, and in work assignments.

Port Chicago Killed or Missing

Navy Officer and Enlisted: **211**
Marine Corps Enlisted: **1**
Navy Armed Guardsmen: **30**
Coast Guard Enlisted: **5**
Merchant Marine Crewmen: **67**
Navy Civil Service: **3**
Civilian: **3**

Memorial ceremonies for the lost and injured are held every July at the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial. The memorial is on an active military base, with escorted tours available Wednesdays through Fridays most of the year. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/poch or contact the National Park Service, P. O. Box 280, Danville, CA 94526, (925) 838-0249.

splendor in the sand

by david andrews

photographs by jack boucher

"A lot of desert rats would claim the beauty of Death Valley is the lonesome, windswept plains of the floor, miles and miles across," says Jack Boucher of the Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service. Yet here sits splendor in his camera's crosshairs, in the cool

ALL PHOTOS JACK BOUCHER/NPS/HABS EXCEPT AS NOTED

***Right:** West side gate to Scotty's Castle.*

Left: View of east gate, looking north.

remove of the folded and crumpled flanks that rise up on the northern rim of the country's hottest spot. It's a whole lot of somewhere, in the middle of nowhere.

The road out of Furnace Creek, park headquarters and the nearest civilization—near as low as you can go in this blistered trough—rolls north through a blaze of sand and a horizon always just out of reach, ashimmer in a haze of heat. These hills are a litany of lives lost looking for the elusive. Hell's Gate . . . Deadman Pass . . . Coffin Canyon . . . the signposts testify to hard-begotten dreams and men gone mad with thirst. It's a place haunted by the spirits of short-lived mining towns, where the fact has yet to catch up with the legend.

On the valley's north perimeter, the road slants up into the hills, leaving behind the blanching radiance of the salt flats, winding through washed-out gullies on its ascent into Grapevine Canyon. A cloud's shadow caresses the slope, alight with ocher and streaks of red. "Scotty's Castle" says a small sign, with an arrow to the right. Through an arroyo, the road empties onto a sheltered plateau, an oasis alive with palm trees, the sound of water, and a castle straight out of *A Thousand and One Nights*. "And you think you're in the Alhambra," says HABS chief Paul Dolinsky. "You think you're in Seville or Granada." Looking at something out of a Hollywood dream.

"Here's this Mediterranean style building and there are no bodies of water anywhere," says architect Joseph Balachowski, who spent a summer with the HABS team, drawing the place to perfection. "Then you get inside and start hearing the story of the place. It's amazing that anything got built at all."

The castle is named for a con man, Walter Scott, whose legend sprang to life in the inhospitable soil during the waning days of gold dust fever. "Death Valley Scotty" mined a new ore—publicity—and the castle was his greatest con.

The Art of Mythical Mining

Walter Scott learned chicanery during a 12-year stint as a rodeo rider for the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, touring America and Europe while studying at the feet of promoter Major "Arizona John" Burke. "Scotty absorbed the nuances of every ruse and stratagem employed by the wily publicist," says Hank Johnston in *Death Valley Scotty: The Fastest Con in the West*. "It was an education in the art of showmanship unavailable at any university."

Scott earned his spurs peddling mythical mines. After leaving Buffalo Bill's employ, he set about selling stakes to a roll call of the well-heeled. His was a sleight of hand with the way of the word. "The young farm boy from Kentucky [had] a self-confidence and assurance that belied his modest upbringing," says Johnston, polished by the trips abroad. "[He] could hold his own in nearly any company."

Between 1904 and 1905, Scott erected an edifice of himself worthy of the annals of Hollywood press agentry, husbanding his stakes for a series of southern California spending sprees. His goal: a bankable image.

"He took suites in the finest hotels, overtipped lavishly at every turn, and always paid his check with a large denomination bill," Johnston says. "To encourage easy recognition, he affected a blue flannel shirt, a flaming red necktie, a black Stetson hat, and an oversized ulster, the spacious pockets of which he said were 'filled with ore from his Death Valley mine.' A master of the 'Chicago roll,' Scotty could spend a hundred dollars and make it seem like several thousand during his brief forays."

The *Los Angeles Examiner* splashed his name across the front page in a series of flamboyant articles. "Since his stay in the city, Scott has been pulling big bills from every pocket whenever the idea of a fresh cigar or other investment strikes him," wrote Charlie Van Loan, a hustling young reporter who later pled no contest to bending a fact or two. "He seems to have a horror of small change. A bill for a hundred is the smallest piece of currency he can stand . . . The sight of 'chicken feed' seems to give him a pain."

Gold-minded L.A. devoured the mystery miner with the bonanza strike seemingly in his back pocket. Between promotional binges, Scott retreated to his Death Valley shack, enhancing his image by his

Timbered Ties **Spanish Colonial Revival**

IN THE 1920S, romance ran riot in the streets of southern California. Country clubs and gas stations, city halls and dance halls, mansions and bungalows put on the garb of the Spanish Colonial Revival. The crenelated rooflines, the gilded stucco cartouches, the bulbous domes, the creamy limestone door surrounds—all became the fashion. CALIFORNIA WAS the colonial stepchild of Spain, the myth went, which, except for a few cities, was "very nearly as medieval as when Columbus visited the court of Ferdinand and Isabella," says Elizabeth McMillian in *Casa California*. Shielded for centuries by the Pyrenees, Spain was the ideal substitute on the architectural grand tour as World War I ravaged the rest of Europe. In an instant, California had a European pedigree. "THIS PARTICULAR FORM of romanticism should not be looked upon as a form of escapism, but rather as an indication of the triumph of the child over the adult," says David Gebhard in his foreword to *Casa California*. "Many adults felt that they no longer had to put on the 'false' guise of adulthood; they could see and experience the world with the purity and delight of a child." THE STYLE SNUBBED American influence for the farmhouse of Andalusia, foremost among inspirations. Architects and clients mixed and matched elements from widely distributed picture books. When the mood struck, they looked to the Pyrenees hill towns or the island of Majorca, stirring in a dollop of Italy or France as taste desired. FROM THE MOORS came the severe, fortress-like face with a surprise inside. "Their castles, palaces, mosques, bazaars, hospitals, and caravansaries display sharp contrast between a plain exterior and an exquisitely ornate interior," McMillian says. "This characteristic continued, in permanent form, the tradition of the Moorish nomad's tent, which was richly decorated inside with handwoven textiles and brass lamps." THE VERNACULAR had gone uptown. Movie stars and sets spread the rage.

Below: ***Hall in the main house; circular stair in northeast tower.*** *Right:* ***Entrance.***

absence. A grab bag of dodges kept his backers at bay, among them staged gunfights eminently suited for headline treatment.

Then, for an entire month in the spring of 1905, he flashed his face in suites at two of the top hotels in Los Angeles. Calls about the "Desert Midas" swamped the switchboards, with one of the bar managers acting as his informal secretary. Scott seemed to be flinging more cash than ever, and getting more glory too.

He outsmoked this gambit with a hoopla-grabbing rail run, surreptitiously funded by the mysterious promoter E. Burdon Gaylord. The "Coyote Special" dashed over eight states and territories from the Pacific to the Great Lakes—changing engines nineteen times, traversing every terrain—on its way to a speed record that stood until the days of the diesel streamliner. Front pages across the nation shouted his name in bold type. His stock soared. "In view of his costly railroad trip," recalled one of his backers, "I now suspected that Scott really had some sort of mine in Death Valley."

Eventually the boom went bust. By 1912, his star fading, Scott conjured headlines once more, announcing the sale of his mythical mine for a million dollars. The honed image finally collapsed. A Los Angeles doctor—owed for treating Scott's brother, accidentally shot in a faux gunfight—pressed for payment in court. A grand jury got a whiff of Scotty's latest caper, which smelled like a swindle. He eluded jail time, but not disgrace, as a decade of the con unraveled under questioning. "So the Scotty bubble has burst," reported the *San Francisco Call*. "It was once reported that he was a highwayman and that he secured his fabulous returns by robbery. But even that dubious fame is to be denied him. He appears, from his testimony before the Los Angeles grand jury, to be a cheat and nothing more, the type of crook who packs a lodging house with transient guests and then sells the place on the pretext that they are all permanent." Scott faded into the desert, 40 years old and penniless. Soon enough, the salubrious sands re-seeded the legend.

AND YOU THINK YOU'RE IN THE ALHAMBRA. YOU THINK YOU'RE IN SEVILLE OR GRANADA. *—PAUL DOLINSKY, CHIEF, HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE*

Buying into an Icon

"Storybook come to life." That's what backer Albert Johnson bought into, more than the worthless wildcat mining stock. A multimillionaire, he got to like hanging at Scotty's mining shack—a few weeks' respite every winter from the Chicago climes and his cold marble mansion on the lake.

Johnson was born affluent, the son of a banker and industrialist. Equipped with a Cornell engineering degree, he went west in 1895, eager for mineral investments, then smitten with the allure of the place. In 1899, he severely wracked his back in a Colorado train wreck, a seemingly permanent disability. He gave up the rugged frontier for the Windy City, making a mint in the insurance business. Al was punctilious—every penny's expense recorded in a pocket notebook—and straight-ahead—no smoking or drinking, no swearing or carousing, no card playing or theater-going, no reading the paper on Sunday.

Yet he loved fast cars and fine furnishings, and was a sucker for tales of hidden treasure. "The hardest sort of bargainer in conventional business matters, he seemed to have a blind spot when it came to get-rich-quick promotions," Johnston says. Enter Walter Scott.

In October 1904, Scotty was in Chicago, trolling for a grubstake from a promoter, who, short on cash, put him on to Johnson and his investment partner. Eventually, when returns didn't show, Johnson went to the desert to investigate the mysterious mine. Scott took him to "a few dry holes." But the vigorous climate renewed his health; the stark beauty stirred his spirit. Hiking, camping—even riding and roping—got to be a habit. So did the return trips. The sham? Never mind.

"Johnson dearly loved mystery and mystifying," recalled Alfred MacArthur, an executive

Timbered Ties **Rancho Revival**

THE RANCHO recalls California's real roots—"those of the soldier of Spain, the Spanish Don, the Mexican politician, the deserter from a British brig-of-war, the merchant from Boston, the fur trader, the American soldier, the adventurer, the pioneer," said architect Cliff May, who later popularized the offshoot suburban ranch house. "But the greatest and most lasting influence on the blueprint brought into California was the way of living developed by the Spanish colonists." THE FRIARS brought their handtools, their hinges and nails, their recollections of 18th-century Spanish glory. Over time, the rancho style embraced the influence of the Southwest mission, the board-and-batten pioneer house, and the Indian abode. IN THE 1920S, Hollywood mirrored and amplified a Rancho Revival. Will Rogers and William S. Hart erected unassuming courtyard compounds with stables and riding areas. Onscreen, Zorro and his ilk swashbuckled through a world of stitched tablecloths, hand-painted spindleback chairs, rough-hewn vigas, and peeled-log columns. TINSELTOWN WAS never the same.

DEATH VALLEY

Left: ***Porch in the main house.*** *Below:* ***The Johnsons; details from the east gate.***

at Johnson's insurance company, National Life. "Apparently he harbored no resentment because Scott fooled him—probably admired him for it."

So every winter, Johnson shed the prosaic garb of the insurance game for a dime-store western getaway. He unlaced the puritan upbringing, duding up with pearl-handled six-guns and hand-tooled white-leather chaps. Or tricking out as a state trooper. Here he is in jodhpurs and jackboots, hand on holstered shooter, with badge and bullmoose hat, official duds courtesy the state of Nevada.

Scott made him a big shot, said MacArthur, "a man of mystery and quite a figure in certain circles."

Johnson was living large. The desert digs needed expansion.

Theater in the Desert

Part of the Chicago banker set, Johnson's wife, Bessie, wanted space to entertain if she was going to be out there. Her husband surreptitiously scooped up land, 1,500 acres by the early '20s.

He hired Frank Lloyd Wright to design a place, but the architect's sketches resembled not a luxurious home, but an abstraction of an adobe church. The couple, both extremely religious, may have nudged Wright in the ecclesiastical direction. Bessie hosted one of evangelist Paul Rader's radio shows, dispensing spiritual advice for young women. "She thought she was going to hold forth every Sunday from a Wright pulpit," Balachowski says. "Fortunately it was never built. It had this huge south-facing window, which would have made it an oven."

Architect Charles Moore once said that "to make a place is to make a domain that helps people know where they are and by extension who they are." Johnson had romance in mind for his place.

"Spanish Provincial," Bessie called the style. But what they built hailed from all over the Mediterranean, with stops in pueblo country and Hollywood (see sidebars). "Like East Coast anglo-colonial imagery, Hispanic-Mediterranean forms incorporated a wide variety of design references," says David Gebhard in his foreword to Elizabeth McMillian's *Casa California*. "They could be sentimentally romantic to the hilt or as opulent as one might desire; or, on the other hand, simple, primitive, and vernacular, closely akin to the emerging modern imagery of the time." Or all of the above. "We build as fancy leads," said Johnson.

The site was his greatest asset, at 3,000 feet sequestered between the desert scorch and the mountain snows. An abundant spring fed the wild grapevines that gave the canyon its name. It was a stark backdrop for drama, although Scott, the resident star, didn't spend a dime on it.

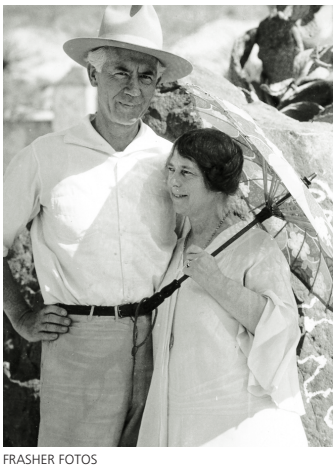
THE HARDEST SORT OF BARGAINER IN CONVENTIONAL BUSINESS MATTERS, [ALBERT JOHNSON] SEEMED TO HAVE A BLIND SPOT WHEN IT CAME TO GET-RICH-QUICK PROMOTIONS. *—HANK JOHNSTON*

Charles Alexander MacNeilledge, a Los Angeles architect simpatico with Johnson's ideas, oversaw the design. An imposing crew—100 at full strength—assembled for the task. Most, says Johnston, were "local Shoshone Indians, whose drudging manual labor at $2.50 a day served in lieu of mechanized equipment." Los Angeles employment offices supplied an array of craftsmen—cabinetmakers, carvers, and the like—for $5 to $11 a day. "Keeping these artisans on the job in the austere surroundings presented a continuing challenge," Johnston says. "Wholesale defections accompanied nearly every pay day. Scotty always said it took three crews to make any progress, one coming, one going, and one working!"

There were other disincentives. "Johnson's wife was a teetotaler; Scotty anything but," says Balachowski (though she adored his "10 gallon hat and 10 gallon heart"). "He'd get some money and go down to L.A. to spend it on booze and women. The work crews were out there in the middle of nowhere—they needed some respite from the heat and isolation. Naturally they wanted to drink and carry on too. This was verboten as far as Bessie was concerned. That made for some problems."

So did Sunday mornings. Religious service—a must-attend for all except Scott and the Shoshones—saw Bessie, robes flowing, preach for three hours. Skip it and lose your job.

Out of this pain came a pleasure pavilion. It was a symphony of shape and texture. Turrets and balconies. Minarets. Cupolas. Bell towers. Medieval ceilings. Islamic arches. Hand-painted sheepskin drapes. Heraldic emblems. Images of bobcats, roadrunners, and snakes tooled into weather vanes or cut out of wall sconces. Bronze-studded figures of myth. A sundial with the face of Janus.



FRASHER FOTOS

And tile. Plain tile, decorative tile, a dance of pattern and size, the compound itself a parade of tile bonnets. "This is a tradition that's probably from Spain and certainly came up from Mexico," says Balachowski. "And there were a lot of tile companies in southern California." MacNeilledge acquired tons shopping on the continent, some still stacked in a tunnel under the unfinished swimming pool, designed to show off the stuff.

Inside, "you get a sense of processional intrigue as you move from space to space to space," says Dolinsky. "It's meant to pull you in. You look through a space to an enticing view beyond it. It's like peeling an onion. It's never, boom, you're in a room. You're always in a vestibule or other area first, then you step in."

I'M SPENDING AROUND $3 MILLION FOR MY CASTLE. BUT IT'S JUST A SHACK TO LIVE IN. WHEN I FINISH IT I'M GONNA SHOW THE WORLD THE GREATEST SUPPLY OF GOLD IN CAPTIVITY. MILLIONS WILL BE ON DISPLAY IN A GLASS CASE.
—DEATH VALLEY SCOTTY TO A GROUP OF REPORTERS

Step in the front door. "Death Valley Ranch" is engraved on a lintel overhead, entry framed by sidelights with carved spindles and decorative metal bosses. Most doors are slabs of tongue-and-groove redwood, hinged with hand-forged metal straps featuring desert designs like grapevine and cacti, seared with a blowtorch to darken and show the grain. "Antiqueing," they called it.

Age was highly prized, real or no. Plaster was layered and scored and layered and scored some more, to yield seemingly weathered contrasts of color and texture.

Many ceilings are slightly tented, open to reveal rustically carved beams and trusses; a double-height living room gives way to a cozier upstairs. Dazzling chandeliers play off plain ceiling and wall lamps.

Scotty's bedroom is a story unto itself. A hand-carved headboard depicts sheep and a mountain lion against a desert sunset, with lizard-shaped wall lamps and shutters with animal cutouts. Two gun shields, built into the walls, protect against intruders.

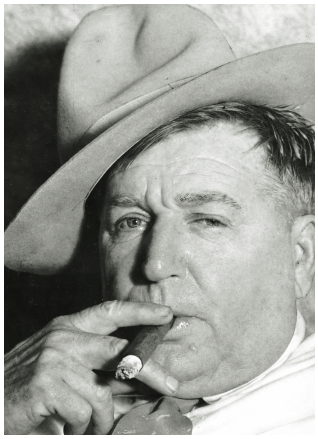
The Spanish suite shows off a bed that MacNeilledge acquired in Spain—believed over a century old—with its twin, duplicated by the craftsmen. In the Italian room, moonbeams dapple a Majorcan rug, thanks to custom lighting. The sea horse room features one of the premier materials in the place—wrought iron—with strap hinges depicting gulls, waves, and dolphins and a latch handle in the shape of a sea horse.

The music room, sumptuously arched, has an ecclesiastical flavor. A three-keyboard, fifteen-rank pipe organ sits amidst ornate beams alternating with acoustical paneling. In the corner, an octagon-shaped solarium boasts cross-ties carved with desert holly and pomegranate.

An observation deck is topped with a copper-capped cupola housing a beacon for the lost, crowned with a weather vane that shows a prospector leading his burro across the desert. "You go up the towers for the views," Dolinsky says. "They turn the house inside out."

Balachowski says, "This is inward-looking architecture, for the most part. You have thick walls and deep-set windows so the heat doesn't penetrate. Of course, it's all faux adobe, a wood frame structure with stucco on it. Made to look adobe." The walls were filled with Insulex, a powder expanded with water to 12 times its volume, shot through with tiny air cells like Styrofoam. Air conditioning is unnecessary even on 100-degree days.

Because of outer spaces like vestibules, the sun never quite heats up the inside. Yet, if you unshuttered the windows in mid-day, it would be very bright; there's little sense of claustrophobia. "A sense of coolness is one of the great successes of the site," Dolinsky says.



LOS ANGELES TIMES

Above: ***West facade; east side and dovecote, looking southwest; Death Valley Scotty.*** *Right:* ***Detail of loggia.***

Left: ***The view from the bushes.*** *Below:* ***Pinnacle on the northwest side.***

"You really feel it with the terra-cotta floors."

You feel it outside too. "It's a mirage of green, a green lawn with green palm trees," he says. "But as soon as you step beyond the perimeter, it's poof, you're in the middle of the desert."

Every nook and cranny is carefully crafted; anything that did not meet with approval was torn out and rebuilt—as many times as necessary. The furniture alone is a work of art.

"Overdone? Not at all," Dolinsky says. "It has absolutely the level of detail that it should have. It's exactly as you would expect. You want the muscular tie beams. You want the exquisite tile." Adds Balachowski, "It's opulent, but opulent in a polite way, not like, say, the Biltmore. There aren't any rooms so huge that you get lost in them. It's like a nice, big house. It's intimate."

Scotty called it a "castle"; soon enough it was "Scotty's Castle."

New Life in Death Valley

Scott retook the stage. In for a decade, out for a decade, back in again, revived like a rock star. Times were ripe—it was an overscale age of sports giants and giant-size gangsters. "The twin gods, Science and Prosperity, had made self-indulgence the rule," Johnston says. "The extravagant antics of Death Valley Scotty fit like the proverbial glove."

The era was noted for "the unparalleled rapidity and unanimity with which millions of men and women turned their attention, their talk, and their emotional interest upon a series of tremendous trifles," says Frederick Lewis Allen in *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s* (published a year after decade's end). Issues stirred little interest in the postwar mood for escape. "The national mind had become as never before an instrument upon which a few men could play," continues Allen. "And these men were learning . . . to concentrate upon *one tune at a time*."

Scotty stepped up to the mike. "I'm spending around $3 million for my castle," he told reporters. "But it's just a shack to live in. When I finish it I'm gonna show the world the greatest supply of gold in captivity. Millions will be on display in a glass case."

Johnson thought the masquerade splendid good fun, apparently. "I'm his banker," he said. Scott, a full-time resident, usually had the stage to himself. "His banker" was there only a few weeks a year.

Come summer, 1929, Scotty was firmly back in the saddle of public favor, a "standard page-one fixture" according to one account. In a lavish feature, the venerable *Saturday Evening Post* proclaimed: "All Death Valley is divided into three parts: Death Valley itself, the Death Valley mountains, and Death Valley Scotty. And the greatest of these is Death Valley Scotty."

The spotlight shifted soon enough as the Depression dashed the decade of euphoria. The castle, not quite finished, became a part-time tourist attraction, run by Bessie. Scotty remained a draw even beyond his death in 1954, his absence once again abetting the legend. The Johnsons, less well off but well off still, split their time between the desert and a home in Hollywood, Albert semi-retired. In 1943, Bessie died in a Death Valley car wreck, her husband at the wheel; he followed her in 1948. The National Park Service acquired the place in 1970. It quickly became a hot spot in the nation's hot spot, a diamond in a diamond-in-the-rough.

"Scotty's Castle is certainly one of the unique resources we have in the Park Service," Dolinsky says. "Having it in Death Valley is even more amazing." And that's not an understatement.

For more information, contact the National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey, 1849 C St., NW (2270), Washington, DC 20240, e-mail paul_dolinsky@nps.gov or jack_boucher@nps.gov. The HABS image archive is on the Library of Congress website at www.memory.loc.gov. Contact Scotty's Castle at Death Valley National Park, P.O. Box 579, Death Valley, CA 92328, (760) 786-3241, www.nps.gov/deva, e-mail marcia_stout @nps.gov.

Inside Guide **Methods of the Historic American Buildings Survey**

"I HAVEN'T SEEN A CAMERA like that in 40 years" is an oft-heard comment for lensman Jack Boucher, as he ducks under the focusing cloth of a rig that resembles something from Matthew Brady's day. It's not an antique, but a state-of-the-art Arca Swiss model that delivers razor-sharp 5" x 7" images to meet the Department of the Interior standards for documenting historic places. SUCH DOCUMENTATION is the subject of *Recording Historic Structures,* the latest edition of the HABS guide for producing measured drawings, compiling historical research, and taking large-format photographs. Put together by staff architects, historians, and photographers, it's an inside look at the methods for capturing the entirety of a site. THE GUIDE FEATURES an array of case studies on mechanical systems, historic ships and bridges, vernacular architecture, and more. Also included are sections on computer-aided drafting, photogrammetry, and digital photography, illustrated with images from the HABS collection. RECORDING HISTORIC STRUCTURES is published by John Wiley & Sons through an agreement between the National Park Service and the American Institute of Architects. To order, go to www.aia.org and click "AIA Store."

ARTIFACT ODE TO A SUPER STADIUM

FOR OVER 40 YEARS, Memorial Stadium was a presence in the hearts of Baltimoreans, a stage for its legendary sports dramas. **BUT WHEN THE WRECKING CREWS** arrived in 2001, the end had come for the 60,000 seater. The beloved Colts had left town. The Orioles had moved to a sensational new retro park off I-95. An emotional debate ended in the decision to replace Memorial with an affordable housing and assisted living complex. **BEFORE DEMOLITION,** James Rosenthal of the Historic American Buildings Survey photographed the vacant stadium. Rosenthal and HABS historian Martin Perschler wanted to capture this important example of modernism in America, whose architecture had gone largely unappreciated. "You have a combination of European ideas coming into this very American structure," Rosenthal says. For its time, the design was on the edge. The Bauhaus-inspired lettering seemed foreign to people, prompting articles in the papers. And yet the place became a revered shrine to Baltimore sports. **MEMORIAL OPENED** in 1949. Five years later, with an added upper deck, it became the first baseball stadium with an open-air second level, the forerunner of what historians call the "super stadiums" of the '60s and '70s. **TODAY, STADIUMS ARE BUILT** by national firms, but the labor and materials that went into this one were local. The use of the signature Baltimore brick for the facade marked it as a city institution. **IN ITS FINAL YEARS,** Memorial was a remarkable anomaly: a professional sports venue in a residential neighborhood, where people offered their driveways for game-day parking with makeshift vending stands in their front yards. Those days are gone. But a lasting impression has been preserved on film.

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Its visual anchors are a pair of 40-foot-tall pavilions representing the theaters of war. Arrayed in twin arcs are granite columns with bronze wreaths, one for each state and territory, sculpted by Ray Kaskey, whose work plays a focal role. The centerpiece is a 300-foot-wide sunken plaza with two fountains and a Kaskey sculpture, **Light of Freedom,** *in a pool at the center. —from "Tribute to a Generation," page 4*

NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL. DAVID ANDREWS/NPS

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