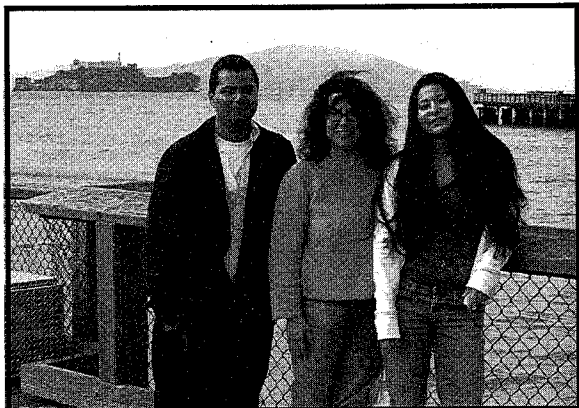


The 497ers: Studying Urban History in San Francisco



San Francisco harbor: Jesse Sosa, Karen Drohan, Alyssa Takatori.

By Marcus Colwin and Adam Gleicher

On April 27th, 2006, twelve students from Dr. Josh Sides' senior seminar on San Francisco traveled to the fabled city to explore and research our chosen neighborhoods. Throughout the semester we as a class had begun to visualize and research different aspects of San Francisco's diverse neighborhoods, focusing particularly on demographic and cultural change over the last one hundred years. Conducting research in the field was critical to our understanding of the essence of our chosen communities. And it paid off. "Seeing the physical place you are studying, where it fits into the urban landscape, triggers new questions that shape and guide your research," said Jorge Leal, who studied the Mission district and will begin the MA Program in History this fall.

The research began bright and early Thursday morning, with all of the students meeting up with each other and heading over to the San Francisco Pub-

lic Library in order to view historical records, government documents, rare books and various other sources of information that are not made available to people outside of the library. In many cases, students from our class had contacted local historians ahead of time and they provided an invaluable source of information.

The archival research was invaluable. Alyssa Takatori found numerous primary documents pertaining to the redevelopment of her district, the Western Addition, during the 1960s and 1970s. Karen Drohan, who will begin her MA in History in Fall found dozens of articles from the historic *San Francisco Bulletin* that illuminated her study of the Mission district. "The Bulletin articles," Drohan said, "gave me a snippet of San Francisco history I wouldn't have found anywhere else."

In other cases, we found knowledge in unexpected places. For example, while walking through the Castro district looking for historical cues, students Adam Gleicher and Jose Garcia stumbled upon Tim Oviatt, the long-time owner of All American Boy, a clothing store thought to be one of the first openly gay businesses in the once Irish-Catholic Castro district. "Tim's recollections of the 1970s really helped us imagine the changing neighborhood," Garcia and Gleicher agreed.

We would like to thank Dean Stella Theodoulou, the Associated Students of CSUN, and the Whitsett Endowment for their generous support of our travel and research. We also would like to thank Dr. Sides for his tireless efforts in putting together the trip and all the information that he has provided to us

that made our semester so successful, and again we must conclude that the learning experience that we all enjoyed would not have been fulfilled had we not been able to explore our neighborhoods.

Paper Topics

Bakari Altheimer, "Raw Fish, Chicken, and Jazz: A Study of the Western Addition."

Evelyn Chavez, "Tolerance or Acceptance? Conflict in the Mission District."

Marcus Colwin, "San Francisco's Japantown."

Frank Diaz, "Immigration Isn't So Bad: The History of Immigration in the Mission District."

Karen Drohan, "Fighting for a City: Community and Cultural Changes in San Francisco's Mission District, 1776-2006."

Lynda Escalante, "From the Barbary Coast to the Beatniks: North Beach."

Jimmy Frias, "Enter the Dragon: Chinatown, San Francisco."

Jose Garcia, "From Irish to Gay: The Historical Transformation of the Castro District."

Adam Gleicher, "The Conscious Neighborhood: From Eureka Valley to the Castro."

Jorge Leal, "Creation of a Barrio: The Mission District, San Francisco Tourism, and the Latino Community."

Joanne Rainey, "The Changing District of the Barbary Coast."

Joel Smith, "Golden Gate Gift: The Haight Ashbury."

Jesse Sosa, "The Mission District's Cultural and Political Transition Throughout the 20th Century."

Anna Strasser, "The Western Addition: A Critical Look at Its Development Through the 20th Century."

Alyssa Takatori, "Carving a Place: A History of San Francisco's Japantown."

Dan Witt, "America's Paris: Examining the Rise and Fall of the Barbary Coast."

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