High Country News

THE ARCHIVES ISSUE

Vol. 54 / April 2022
No. 4 • hcn.org

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Every year, more than 100,000 visitors climb, crawl and stroll through the Manitou Cliff Dwellings Museum and Preserve in Manitou Springs, Colorado. The attraction is composed of sandstone masonry that was mined from an Ancestral Puebloan village and rebuilt into faux cliff dwellings. **Russel Albert Daniels / HCN**

Know the West.

High Country News is an independent, reader-supported nonprofit 501(c)(3) media organization that covers the important issues and stories that define the Western U.S. Our mission is to inform and inspire people to act on behalf of the West's diverse natural and human communities. High Country News (ISSN/0191/5657) publishes monthly, 12 issues per year, from 119 Grand Ave., Paonia, CO 81428. Periodicals, postage paid at Paonia, CO, and other post offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to High Country News, Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428. All rights to publication of articles in this issue are reserved. See hcn.org for submission guidelines. Subscriptions to HCN are $37 a year, $47 for institutions: 800-905-1155, hcn.org. For editorial comments or questions, write High Country News, P.O. Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428 or editor@hcn.org, or call 970-527-4898. For correspondence addressed to High Country News, HCN or to the editors, permission to publish will be considered implicit unless specifically stated otherwise.

EDITOR'S NOTE

A window into the past

I RECENTLY HAD TO MOVE HOUSE. It was not a voluntary move; my family — like many in the West and elsewhere — was dislocated by the COVID-19 real estate boom. Packing up all of one's possessions invites reflection on how the sediment of stuff accrues year after year, adding up to a life. I'm happy to say that we lightened our load. I even undertook the ridiculous task of editing my rock, shell, driftwood and sea glass collection. Two small boxes made the move, filled with objects gathered during walks and hikes that I deemed too special to leave behind. I refer to them as my treasures, but they are also an archive of explorations made during the six or so years we lived in that house. And the contents of that archive — the former homes of sea creatures, former limbs of trees, former bottles long lost at sea and originally containing who knows what — are archives as well, with their own stories to tell.

An archive is a repository of information, a window into the past. They are all around us. In libraries and institutions. In notebook pages and in the trees from which those pages were made. At the bottoms of lakes and buried beneath parking lots. For the Archives Issue of *High Country News*, we offer you stories about the past, told through the lens of the present. The past has a lot to teach us. We can marvel at newly discovered knowledge of long-ago eras. With the benefit of hindsight, we can identify where we went astray and attempt to make reparations. We can learn from the past, search for answers, or just ponder the trappings of an earlier time.

This moment, the ever-present now that rules our days, is what it is only because of what came before. Thankfully, we can turn to archives, both natural ones and those curated by human hands, to understand what the West was like before the internal combustion engine, before colonization, before agriculture. It's a good thing that this information has been collected and preserved, giving us reference points for the vast changes that have been made to the land, the waters, the atmosphere. As the way forward through drought, scarcity and inequity becomes more complicated and menacing, we may need this data to protect and defend natural and human communities and outfit them for continued longevity. The past informs the future. I hope you enjoy this backward-looking, forward-thinking issue of *HCN*.

Jennifer Sahn, editor-in-chief

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WHEREAS, Ong Ngoh, a merchant and a member of the firm of Kim Lun Chong & Co., doing business at No. 831 Dupont Street, in the City and County of San Francisco, State of California, is about to depart for China,

NOW THEREFORE, we, the undersigned, upon each being duly sworn depose and say:

That we are well acquainted with Ong Ngoh; that he is a merchant, and a member of the firm of Kim Lun Chong & Co., doing business at No. 831 Dupont Street, in the City and County of San Francisco, State of California; that his occupation therein is that of salesman; that he has been such merchant for over one year next preceding his intended departure, and has done no manual labor in and about said business excepting such as was absolutely necessary in the conduct thereof.

Wm. A Beseman
276 McAllister St S.F.

[Subs]cribed and sworn to before me

6th day of November 1909.

Notary Public,
[i]n for the City and County of
[San] Francisco, State of California.

DEPARTED FROM SAN FRANCISCO
PER STEAMER
SIBERIA.
NOV 9 1909
INSP[ECTOR]

An affidavit supporting Ong Shew Ngoh's merchant status before he returned to China in 1909 to marry his fiancee, in an arranged marriage. When he came back to San Francisco the following year, he was detained on Angel Island for almost a month. See story on page 34.
National Archives at San Bruno, California

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For years, historian Lydia Otero has carried and protected their personal archive — a box of documents and memorabilia chronicling life in Los Angeles in the 1980s and '90s. Photographed at Otero's home in Tucson, Arizona, in February.
Roberto (Bear) Guerra / HCN

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CORRECTIONS
There were a few errors in our March issue. In "I pray, you pray," we stated that ammocoetes and adult lamprey were classified as different species during the mid-19th century; it was actually a few decades ago. In "Climate justice comes home," we misidentified what Build/Shift Collective stands for; it is "Building Community, Shifting Power." Finally, our feature story, "How to Clone a Black-Footed Ferret," said that SB2 tested positive for plague and canine distemper, but he only tested positive for canine distemper. We regret the errors.

Nature's File Cabinets

By Jonathan Thompson
Illustrations by Kate Samworth

When researchers want to understand the history of the environment, they extrapolate data from oral histories or peruse digitized weather observations, aging diaries and farmers' journals. But these records are spotty, subjective and only go back a few centuries. So scientists also look to the Earth itself and the vast timeline hidden therein — the natural archive.

These storehouses of earthly data — ice cores, seafloor sediments, oyster shells, even road cuts through layers of rock — offer a far deeper look back in time than human records. A researcher can extrapolate water-quality data by examining river sediment, or determine forest fire frequency and magnitude through the rings of a tree.

As with any archive, scientists must learn to read the natural archive's language in order to understand what it is saying. Translations constantly evolve, meaning that interpretations do as well. And like other archives, the natural archive is fragile: Just as a library can be destroyed by fire, so, too, can the massive museum of arboreal memories that essentially comprises a forest.

Arboreal memories

In 1922, when federal and state officials divvied up the Colorado River, they based their negotiations on a few decades' worth of streamflow gauge records. They estimated that 15 million acre-feet of water flowed each year past the "fulcrum point" of Lees Ferry, just below the current location of Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona.

But when drought gripped the region in the 1930s and streamflows dropped, some wondered whether the number was reliable. To find out, University of Arizona graduate student Edmund Schulman turned to the trees.

Scientists have long known that trees grow a new ring about every year, and that those rings provide a record of environmental conditions. The rings' width corresponds with precipitation levels and temperature, while blackened scars reveal past fires. By correlating recent years' growth with weather observations, researchers can "calibrate" tree rings, enabling them to reconstruct past climates.

Using conifer core samples taken throughout the Colorado River watershed, Schulman roughly reconstructed several centuries of climate, and found the first two decades of the 20th century — the baseline for the Colorado River Compact — were far wetter than the 600-year average. Water managers weren't too worried because the states were nowhere close to using up the existing supplies. Eventually, however, as the region's population and water consumption increased, the river no longer reliably delivered its 15 million acre-feet, and folks took notice. University of Arizona researchers again sampled tree cores to reconstruct past flows. Their findings were alarming: The average flow at Lee's Ferry for the past four centuries was as much as 3 million acre-feet — hundreds of billions of gallons — lower than the amount allotted to the seven Colorado River Basin states and Mexico.

Pack rat memorials

Anyone who has opened the hood of their car in the morning and found a massive pile of twigs and chunks of rubber, plastic and wire where, only hours ago, a functioning engine sat knows that pack rats are extremely efficient — and occasionally unwelcome — collectors of stuff. But the little cuties are also some of nature's most effective archivists, though instead of using climate-controlled vaults, they preserve the historical record with their pee.

If you found your car disabled and occupied by a pack rat and decided to just surrender, close the hood and wait a few thousand years, you might return to discover an engine-compartment-sized, lumpy, charcoal-brown chunk of dried pack rat urine and poop, studded with all the little hoarder's treasures. If you were to excavate the chunk of said urine — also known as a midden — you would find the parts of your car, along with bones, twigs and those candy bar wrappers you guiltily stashed under the seat, all of it remarkably well-preserved.

By carbon-dating preserved plant debris and fecal matter from pack rat middens, scientists have been able to determine, for example, that the flora in Joshua Tree National Park hasn't changed dramatically in the last 15,000 years. The University of New Mexico researchers who traced pollen dispersal in radiocarbon-dated pack rat middens found that ponderosa pine forest gave way to piñon in the Chaco Canyon region some 8,000 years ago, courtesy of a climatic shift. Middens even preserve DNA and provide a detailed window into communities of plants, animals, bacteria and fungi present millennia ago.

Ice core recall

Between 1950 and 2011, weather observations showed that a pattern known as the Aleutian Low had strengthened, causing precipitation at several Alaska coastal weather stations to rise significantly. Scientists thought it might indicate a changing climate. But the Aleutian Low has been known to shift for decades at a time, and the six decades of observations weren't enough to show whether the change was caused by natural variability or a long-term climatic shift.

So, in 2017, Dartmouth researchers headed to Denali National Park and the Mount Hunter summit plateau, where snow piles up at mind-blowing rates — an average of more than one meter of water per year — and doesn't melt. They drilled more than 200 meters into the ice and snow and extracted long cylindrical cores. By tracking seasonal chemical oscillations, they could delineate each annual layer in the core, creating a timeline, analogous to a tree's rings, from which they could estimate precipitation levels for each year.

The findings were striking: The precipitation increase that showed up on the observed records after 1950 actually began more than a century earlier, in 1840. And while there had been multi-decadal variations in precipitation over the previous 1,100 years, the ice core confirmed that the 1840-2011 increase marked a distinct and unprecedented shift in the climate.

Ice cores were first drilled for research purposes in 1955 in Greenland. Since then, hundreds of cores — including one nearly two miles long — have been drilled in Greenland and Antarctica. Some go back as far as 800,000 years and can be used to track atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations, dust or carbon and temperature shifts over time.

Silt remembrance

When Glen Canyon Dam began backing up the Colorado River in 1963, it also began compiling a massive storehouse of water-quality data for the 100,000 square-mile upper watershed. This archive is not the water in Lake Powell, but rather the silt, which is piling up at a rate of about 1.6 billion cubic feet — enough to fill nearly 19,000 Olympic-size swimming pools — per year.

Because silt accumulates at a fairly consistent rate, core samples of it provide a sort of timeline of upstream water chemistry. Some events, such as large tailings-pile breaches, are even visible to the naked eye, appearing as yellowish-gray strata.

In 2018, U.S. Geological Survey scientists set out to unearth Lake Powell's sedimentary memories, with a special focus on the San Juan River Delta, since that's where a portion of the 540 tons of metal spewed by the 2015 Gold King Mine spill residue would have settled after a nearly 300-mile river journey from southwestern Colorado. And, indeed, about 10 feet down, scientists conducting the chemical analysis found a spike in zinc and other metals. But some 35 feet deeper, they discovered an even bigger spike, likely correlating with tailings pond spills and other mining pollution from the 1970 and '80s. We may not remember, but the silt never forgets.

Dust developments

Every spring, when the winds kick up and the mercury climbs, the glittering white snow blanketing the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado takes on a reddish-brown hue. This is dust, snatched by spring winds from cattle-trampled pastures and public lands to the west, and carried to the steep slopes of the high country, where it's deposited with the snow, or, in the absence of snow, on the ground.

When dark-colored dust (or ash, or carbon or what have you) coats the snow, it reduces the albedo, causing the snow surface to absorb more solar energy and melt more quickly. That throws off the natural calendar that tells plants when to sprout and bloom and pushes spring runoff earlier into the year. Reduced albedo enhances evapotranspiration and snow sublimation — meaning the snow melts and vaporizes in one fell swoop — reducing the total volume of runoff and depleting rivers of their flow.

While anecdotal accounts of these aeolian dust events can be found throughout history, researchers only began systematically recording them a few decades ago. In order to get a better grasp on dust trends over time, University of Colorado researchers in 2008 examined the sediment that had built up over nearly six millennia at the bottom of lakes high in the San Juan Mountains. They concluded that most of the dust deposited there comes from the Colorado Plateau, that dust picked up at about the same time as white settler-colonists arrived in the mid-1800s, and that volumes and frequency peaked in the first few decades of the 20th century. This seems to leave little doubt about the cause: It's the result of the newcomers' land-disturbing ways — all that mining, development, tilling, logging, and, perhaps most dust-raising of all, cattle grazing.

A visitor to the Manitou Cliff Dwellings in Manitou Springs, Colorado, climbs out of a structure modeled after Mesa Verde National Park's Balcony House.

What's Wrong with the Manitou Cliff Dwellings Museum and Preserve?

Archival documents reveal the true origins of a popular Colorado tourist attraction.

By Miles W. Griffis
Photos by Russel Albert Daniels

THE SCHEME WAS SIMPLE: Dig up and dismantle the pueblo into piles of sandstone masonry, use oxen to haul it to the railroad in nearby Dolores, Colorado, and load it onto 40 or so narrow-gauge cars that would travel over 300 miles across the Rockies to Manitou Springs, a small resort town at the base of Pikes Peak. There, it would be reassembled into an entirely different style of Ancestral Puebloan architecture — cliff dwellings, rather than the freestanding pueblo that towered above the Montezuma Valley. The reimagined structure would make a terrific tourist attraction; people would pay about $1 a person to see it, a handsome sum in 1907.

William S. Crosby of Manitou Springs and Harold Ashenhurst of Texas may have come up with the idea, but it took the influence and political experience of Virginia McClurg — one of the original preservationists behind Mesa Verde National Park, which was less than a year old — to make it happen. Her involvement was scandalous; her life's work had been to stop the looting of archaeological sites, but here she was, endorsing a plan to relocate an entire pueblo in the name of preservation.

Workers were paid a respectable $2.50 a day to unearth the millennium-old village, using shovels, rakes and hoes. The pueblo — a community hub for hundreds — occupied over an acre of land. Its central structure was almost 20 feet high, surrounded by smaller structures. And, by the spring of 1907, it had been reduced to a million pounds of rock.

Once the railcars arrived, the stones were hauled by horse-drawn carts up to a dramatic red-rock canyon overlooking Manitou Springs. An overhang had been dynamited into the canyon wall, and workers used cement mortar to nestle the stones inside it. Soon, the sandstone masonry was arranged to imitate a cliff dwelling, piles of sandstone clustered alongside it to give it an air of antiquity.

That summer, the Manitou Cliff Dwellings Museum and Preserve opened to the public.

THEY WAITED IN A LONG LINE of cars and paid $12 each for tickets at the entrance booth. In the parking lot, loudspeakers pumped the lilting sounds of generic pan-Indian music, punctuated by the screech of a hawk. "Y'all hear that sacred flute?" Raven Payment asked in a video she posted to Twitter last July, her friend Monycka Snowbird laughing in the background. "What the fuck is this place?"

Payment, who is Kanien'kehá:ka and Anishinaabe, and her friend Monycka Snowbird, who is Anishinaabe, lead the Pikes Peak Indigenous Women's Alliance, a group of activists and advocates focused on issues impacting Indigenous people. At the attraction, they followed the self-guided tour. With every step, they got angrier. "Every effort to stereotype Natives as primitive, dirty, and diseased was taken," Payment tweeted. Adding insult to injury, she added, were continual references to offensive terms for the Ancestral Puebloans.

Every year, more than 100,000 tourists and local schoolkids walk, climb and crawl through the pseudo-cliff-style structure and into an even more incongruous tipi, then tour a small museum and a massive three-story gift shop in a building called the Pueblo, where Native workers reportedly lived on site until the 1980s. Visitors can grab a bite at the Kokopelli Café, and, for years, they could have received a kiss

from one of the wolves rescued by Colorado Wolf Adventures, which regularly visited.

In the attraction, they found a petroglyph panel, infant funerary artifacts and displays of human skulls and spines, which the attraction says are replicas. The gift shop sold "shaman wisdom cards," dreamcatcher necklaces, cowboys-and-Indians weapon sets and a children's booklet that sexualized Ancestral Puebloan women. "It's exploitative, it's stereotypical, it's racist, it's appropriation," Payment

told me. "Pick an 'ism,' you can find it there."

Over the course of the attraction's history, it has claimed that the structure is an authentic cliff dwelling from McElmo Canyon, part of the remnants of a long-lost culture. This is untrue. Archival materials prove that the structure is a replica of dwellings found in Mesa Verde National Park, built with the masonry sandstone of a free-standing pueblo. While the attraction's website and self-guided tour disclose that the structure was relocated, they continue to misrepresent its authenticity and origin. (The attraction removed select instances of the term "authentic" from its website while this article was being reported.)

Similarly, the website contradicts itself on the one hand by perpetuating the myth of "a great American society now long gone" while also informing visitors that the present-day Taos Pueblo Indians of New Mexico are "descendants of the Cliff Dwelling Indians belonging to the Ancestral Puebloans cultural line." In a 1907

Scenes at the Manitou Cliff Dwellings include, clockwise from upper left: A wood carving and bench near the gift shop's entrance; An oven constructed of adobe bricks and straw; Cowboys-and-Indians toy weapon sets that visitors can purchase; Assorted pottery on display in the attraction's museum.

informational pamphlet, the attraction falsely claimed that the builders of the cliff dwellings went extinct after a volcanic explosion and insisted that "Pueblo Indians are not descended from cliff dwellers." When asked for comment, Rob Hefner, the attraction's operations manager, responded that the Ancestral Puebloans "most likely" migrated into the Rio Grande Valley over the course of a hundred years.

According to the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, Ancestral Puebloans migrated from the Mesa Verde region southward to what is now Arizona and New Mexico beginning around the late 1200s A.D. Many settled in the Rio Grande Valley, and their descendants now live in 32 Pueblo communities in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas. In an email to Manitou's general manager, Payment and Snowbird demanded that the attraction close until it consulted with Pueblo leaders. Snowbird included Colorado state archaeologists, the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce and tribal governments in the email. "This sort of dehumanizing and objectifying behavior is at the basis of all other issues that our people currently face." They never received a response from the attraction.

Rob Hefner said Snowbird's email was "negative and attacking," adding that he would have met with her had she reached out individually with her concerns. He said they had removed offensive terms, though I found them on visitor handouts, children's educational materials, at least one information plaque, on gift shop items and the attraction's social media. Hefner declined to comment on Payment's accusations of racism and appropriation. "Our preserve and museum has continued to be praised by many professors, teachers, educators, and Indigenous Tribes over the years for our preservation, educational efforts, and school tours," Hefner said in an email.

IN 1896, Theophil Mitchell Prudden wrote, "A summer among cliff dwellings" for *Harper's Magazine,* observing a couple hiking to some southwestern cliff dwellings, carrying baskets and excavation tools. There, the man showed his affection by looting artifacts for his sweetheart. As he dug, she reclined under a parasol, "cosily seated amid piles of broken pottery, darting lizards, and dead men's bones."

Perhaps the picnickers were looking for pottery, or maybe centuries-old macaw feathers, turquoise or jewelry, relics of the vast network of Ancestral Puebloan trading routes. Looting was common in the Four Corners in the late 1800s and early 1900s as private collectors and institutions accumulated Indigenous artifacts at an alarming rate.

"This sort of dehumanizing and objectifying behavior is at the basis of all other issues that our people currently face."

Raven Payment poses in the Garden of the Gods Park, a national natural landmark near Manitou Springs *(facing, top).* Potsherds embedded in a mortar wall at the Manitou Cliff Dwellings *(facing, bottom).*

Appalled by this cultural destruction, Iowa Rep. John Lacey and archaeologist Edgar Lee Hewett drafted the Antiquities Act, which Theodore Roosevelt signed into law on June 8, 1906. The act provided legal protection for cultural, natural and scientific resources across the U.S. and gave the president the authority to create national monuments on federal land to protect these resources. But it also forced some Native people from their ancestral lands and reservations, in the name of preserving them for a wider public. At the time, Native Americans were still denied full citizenship and could not vote in national elections.

Women could not yet vote nationally either, but a few states, including Colorado, had passed women's suffrage. Women involved in historic preservation seized their opportunity. Virginia McClurg and Lucy Peabody founded the Colorado Cliff Dwellers Association in 1900, under the motto *Dux Femina Facti,* Latin for "A woman was the author of the achievement." Its mission was to preserve the thousands of Ancestral Puebloan sites in the Mesa Verde region of southwest Colorado, where famous dwellings like Cliff Palace, Spruce Tree House and Balcony House still survive, tucked beneath enormous overhangs in the mesa's juniper-dotted canyons, a landscape that was home to several thousand Pueblo people from around 1100 to 1285 A.D.

Determined to protect these sites from further looting and destruction, McClurg enlisted the support of over 250,000 women. As the association's leader, she corresponded with politicians, raised money and spoke with Ute leaders Chief Ignacio and Chief Acowitz, acquiring the lease that laid the foundation for a future park — but also significantly shrank the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation.

Peabody, a secretarial assistant at the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology, was McClurg's vice regent and one of the group's most passionate members. In 1901, the association invited prominent journalists and archaeologists, including the famed naturalist Jesse Walter Fewkes, on a tour of Mesa Verde, hoping to gain their support for a park's creation.

As time passed and various park bills died in Congress, McClurg and Peabody's joint vision diverged. McClurg wanted Mesa Verde to be a state park, where she might have influence over its management. Peabody, who believed the park would be better protected under federal control, resigned from the association. She went to Washington, D.C., with Hewett, co-author of the Antiquities Act, to advocate for a national park. On June 29, 1906, Mesa Verde National Park — sometimes known as "The Women's Park" because of the association's involvement

— was established. In the process, over 42,000 acres were taken from nearby reservations.

McClurg was bitterly disappointed that control went to the federal government. To the dismay of her colleagues and supporters, she seemed to pivot entirely. Within months, she became a stockholder in the Manitou Cliff Dwellings Museum and Preserve scheme. Many of McClurg's supporters resigned from the association when the plans were made public.

Hewett was disgusted by the idea. "The removal of any such structure from its original situation (is) a serious loss to science; so serious that it has been made an offense against the laws of the United States," he wrote in a letter to Atherton Noyes of the Colorado Archaeological Society. "The probability of error in reconstruction (of Manitou) is so great as to make the result valueless if not actually misleading and pernicious."

But Hewett and Noyes knew nothing about the greatest gimmick behind the Manitou Cliff Dwellings Museum. Documents from local Cortez historian Fred Blackburn's extensive historic library, newspaper and research archive of the Four Corners reveal that Crosby and Ashenhurst had no desire to relocate an actual cliff dwelling and reassemble it stone by stone. Instead, they planned to pillage a pueblo, despite it being a different style of architecture, and use its masonry to replicate one of Mesa Verde's most well-known structures — creating an archaeological Frankenstein's monster.

According to a 1906 article in the *Montezuma Journal*, Crosby planned to create a "blueprint" inspired by Mesa Verde's architecture and use it to construct a "facsimile" at the attraction. In February 1907, Noyes saw those drawings. "(They showed) parts of the Balcony House, the Cliff Palace, and the Spruce Tree House are to be made in replica," he wrote to Hewett. "The measurements, in height and depth, are the same as in the originals." One of the attraction's brochures from 1907 proudly highlighted the features copied from Mesa Verde, while another, in 1946, boasted that the dwellings at Mesa Verde couldn't hold a candle to theirs. Today, that language is gone, replaced with claims of authenticity and an endorsement from Hewett, who reversed course and attended the attraction's opening day.

"I DIDN'T KNOW about Manitou until I worked at Mesa Verde," TJ Atsye told me, sitting at a picnic table outside the national park's visitor center. Dark-eyed juncos darted across the chamisa; the San Juan Mountains were dusted with early snow. "Our visitors would mention that they were up seeing the pueblo in Manitou Springs,

TJ Atsye (Laguna Pueblo), a descendent of the people of Mesa Verde, has worked to educate visitors to Mesa Verde National Park about how her ancestors left southwestern Colorado in the late 1200s and moved into the Rio Grande Valley and elsewhere — though not to Colorado's Front Range *(above)*.

Jesse Walter Fewkes led the preservation of Mesa Verde National Park's Cliff Palace in the early 1900s, stabilizing and reconstructing a site that was weathered by centuries into a place suitable for visitation. Many structures at Manitou Cliff Dwellings are modeled after sections of the cliff dwelling, which once held 150 rooms and 23 kivas *(facing)*.

and I thought, 'What pueblo?' As a Pueblo person from Laguna, a descendant here from the people of Mesa Verde, the Pueblo people didn't live or migrate into that part of the state of Colorado."

Atsye, 67, wears her white hair in short bangs. She can trace her ancestry on both sides back to the great-grandparents of her great-great-grandparents. A former seasonal park ranger, she worked at Mesa Verde from 2015 to 2019, and her words and perspective are still displayed throughout the park. Her voice plays on a loop on the self-guided tour, where she interprets the park from the perspective of a Laguna Pueblo woman. Her quotes appear on plaques, explaining the importance of the archaeological sites and giving a glimpse into what daily life may have been like for her ancestors.

It wasn't always this way. For decades, Mesa Verde National Park misled visitors, repeating the myth of a "vanishing" civilization. Historian Joseph Weixelman documented in his book, *Hidden Heritage,* that the park's interpretation "vacillated" between the romantic mystery of disappearance and the truth that modern-day Puebloans were descendants of Ancestral Puebloans. Campfire talks, plays and other performances at Mesa Verde in the 1920s also warped the public's perception of Ancestral Puebloans, as many of the plays supposedly about the "cliff dwellers" featured Navajo performers and customs.

The park also suggested even darker interpretations. One early exhibit Weixelman described — removed in the 1920s — displayed human remains in Pipe Shrine House. There visitors could open a door "to see how Ancestral Puebloans buried their dead." According to Mesa Verde park ranger Spencer Burke, misinformation continued to be disseminated at the park until the early 2000s. But as the park began to work with more Pueblo tribes as a result of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, its interpretation slowly evolved. Today, it tries to prioritize Indigenous knowledge; for example, Zia and Zuni Pueblo elders teach rangers about the Pueblo people who regard the sites as their ancestral homes.

When Atsye told park visitors who had been to the attraction at Manitou that the Ancestral Puebloans never lived there, they looked at her as if she was crazy. "I'm sorry if there is a misconception," she would tell them. She explained that Ancestral Puebloans did not vanish. A combination of drought, politics and other factors forced her ancestors to leave Mesa Verde. "The land was played out," she said. "People could not be supported by what was here, game was getting scarce. So what are the leaders supposed to do when they can't provide this for their community? Do we take the adventure of going someplace else?" They walked south into the Rio Grande Valley, over time splitting into separate pueblos. Atsye's ancestors established the Laguna Pueblo. "We as Pueblo people are still here," Atsye said. "We just relocated and we migrated, and we found a new place to live."

It's impossible to spend any length of time with Atsye without noticing how generous she is with her judgments. "I've always been an idealist," she said. "I like to think I still am a Pollyanna. An optimist. But I've also learned to be real." According to Atsye, perpetuating contradicting information about Ancestral Puebloans does active harm to Pueblo people. "Not having the correct information damages us and has caused us to work harder to prove that we are still here,

that we're living, thriving, productive people," Atsye told me. But she believes there is a chance to make it better. "Pueblo people and Native peoples all over have continued to be vocal advocates for these issues," she said. "People are finally listening to us, and we are getting support from non-Native peoples because they see the indignities and the injustices and want to make it right."

She wants the attraction's inaccuracies to be resolved constructively. Pueblo consultation, she believes, is necessary for its transition into the 21st century. "Work together to make it right if (the attraction's owners) are going to exhibit and claim (authenticity) about this particular site that (was) ripped out of the ground," Atsye said.

ONE ROOM in the Manitou gift shop features a collection of historic photographs of the attraction's past Indigenous performers. One shows Pedro Cajete, or "Chief Manitou," as the photo caption reads, wearing a beaded vest and large feathered headdress and holding a six-shooter. The label claims the image is from "around 1920" and that Cajete is "Ute Indian."

Cajete wasn't Ute. "He was Pueblo through and through," his great-grandson Gregory Cajete told me over the phone from Rio Rancho, New Mexico, in March. "He was actually somewhat of a celebrity there in Manitou Springs." Cajete, an entrepreneur, also worked with other businesses in the resort town, including other nearby tourist attractions.

Cajete was one of the first in a long line of Santa Clara Pueblo people to perform at Manitou, dancing and taking photos with thousands of tourists. Rob Hefner wrote that the last time Indigenous performers danced at the attraction was around 2007 or 2008.

"His focus was making some money for the family," Gregory Cajete said. His great-grandfather was "creating opportunities for Pueblo people, which was, truthfully, almost nonexistent outside of the Pueblo economy itself. There wasn't very much that people could do except to sell aspects of their culture and tradition. But, you know, I think he did it with good intentions, so I don't hold that against him."

Gregory Cajete is the former director of Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico, and he has studied attractions similar to Manitou. He says that many others exist across the country, misrepresenting Indigenous cultures as a foundation of their business model. "It's one snapshot in a much larger complex that was going on at that time," he told me. "The deeper issue is, how do you represent another people's way of life, their traditions, their history, in an honest and respectful way? I think a lot of the museums are beginning to attempt to do that."

When I visited the attraction this winter — the first time since I went with my elementary school class in the early 2000s — it still had a ways to go. Christmas lights were coiled around the Kokopelli-themed street lamps when I met Katie, the employee assigned to give me a rare in-person tour, at the faux cliff dwellings. We wove in and out of them, ducking our heads under wooden beams as she spoke about the Ancestral Puebloans. They lived to be "25-30," she said, had "flat skulls," because of cradleboards, and "bad teeth." Before the pandemic, Katie told me she used to lead the school tours.

After Katie left, I sat at the north end of the Disneyfied structures as white tourists squeezed their bodies through the windows of a building modeled after Balcony House. I spoke with many of the visitors, including two small groups from out of state. Only one set of visitors questioned the attraction's authenticity; most thought Ancestral Puebloans had lived in the canyon.

In the fall of 2021, Manitou's longtime owner, Donna Rogers, passed away. The attraction's future is unclear, but Hefner expects it to stay in the family, which has owned it for three generations. Hefner could not provide any documentation about the origins of the masonry or most of the attraction's other items, which the website claimed at time of publication were from McElmo Canyon, a natural feature that is home to many Ancestral Puebloan archeological sites. "It is my personal belief that there may be some collection of truth to a lot of these theories," Hefner said over email. "It's unfortunate that with the change of ownership around WWII, the archives and history were lost other than to different theories and ideas in books, articles and stories over the years."

Hefner claimed that Rogers donated "thousands of dollars each year but to whom and how much or how often I do not know." Manitou Cliff Dwellings did not provide any proof of donations to Pueblo tribes or other organizations, although its Instagram account reveals that it was a platinum sponsor of the 2015 Manitou Springs Colorado Wine Festival.

Asked multiple times about the repatriation of human remains and funerary items, Hefner could not provide documentation. "I do not know," he wrote, "but I would once again assume that when artifacts were repatriated, there would have been some sort of a list to designate what items were to be repatriated and what items were acceptable to keep on display."

According to NAGPRA, any institution that receives federal funds and has possession of, or control over, Native American cultural items — including human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or items of cultural patrimony — is classified as a museum. *High Country News* located records that show that Dontom Inc., the S corporation that owns Manitou Cliff Dwellings, received a Paycheck Protection Program loan on May 1, 2020, for $153,032. An official from the National NAGPRA Program told me that whether a PPP loan qualifies as the receipt of federal funds for purposes of NAGPRA is determined on a case-by-case basis.

"If they've received federal funding, they're just like any other museum under NAGPRA," said Shannon Keller O'Loughlin, attorney and the executive director at the Association on American Indian Affairs. "Within six months of receiving federal funding, you're to provide a summary of the holdings or collection as required by section 10.8 (of the regulation.)"

"They are already out of compliance" if the attraction's loans are deemed federal assistance, O'Loughlin (Choctaw) told me by phone, explaining that tribes could take them to a NAGPRA review committee for alternative dispute resolution of the issue. Manitou could face civil penalties if a complaint was filed to the National NAGPRA Program. "They are grave robbers and looters," O'Loughlin said of those who removed the original pueblo, adding that the entire structure could be considered cultural patrimony. "That means all of that would need to be repatriated," she told me.

Hefner wrote that he did not believe the structure should be open to claims of repatriation and claimed that the entity that owns the "physical Dwellings" never received any federal funding or PPP loans. He also wrote that he did not know whether the attraction had ever composed a summary of its items, but said that, if so, he assumed it happened in the '80s. In response to claims of the parties responsible for moving the structure being named "grave

MORE ARCHIVES

Showcasing Idaho's Black history

Kate Samworth / HCN

It's fitting that the former St. Paul Baptist Church — Idaho's first Black church — is now home to the Idaho Black History Museum. The museum, which opened in 1999, features a permanent display called "The Invisible Idahoan: 200 Years of Blacks in Idaho," which tells the story of Black families in the state. "That's the history I want to tell of Black Idaho," said Executive Director Phillip Thompson. "It makes you aware of how long Blacks have been in Idaho, because it hasn't been told." Thompson knows this firsthand: His great-great-grandfather was the church's first pastor.

Thompson tries to keep the museum's footprint "small and nimble." There are new exhibits every few months, including the current one, which examines how, at various times, Black people in Idaho enjoyed opportunities in education, jobs and land ownership that they were denied in other states. "People have been shocked," Thompson said. One of the original copies of the Emancipation Proclamation is on permanent display.

The museum is also part of the larger Boise community, organizing blood drives and hosting special events. A recent talk focused on safety; in the last decade, almost a third of Idaho's hate crimes targeted Black people in the state. Other educational and outreach efforts help extend the museum's impact far beyond its four walls. One project has been particularly popular with younger visitors, Thompson said — a series of graphic novels that he and his daughter created for teaching kids (and their parents) about Black world history. *—Kylie Mohr*

robbers and looters," Hefner wrote over email, "On the contrary, MCD ultimate goal 120 years ago was to preserve and protect the Ancestral Puebloan culture and architecture from Pot Hunters and Grave Robbers."

Atsye thinks that the attraction's managers should "call some Native tribal elders in to discuss what the future of that site can mean to Native people without harming them," she told me. "Provide the facts that they did this, and why they did it." The All Pueblo Council of Governors declined to comment when I reached out in March.

THE HAYFIELD SPARKLED like water in the sun. "That's all artifacts," Fred Blackburn told me. I squatted in the dry grass; scattered everywhere were thousands of radiant pottery sherds, chert flakes and hammerstones.

This was the original location of the pueblo. I was visiting with Blackburn, a local historian, on an unseasonably warm December morning. The pueblo, which became known in the early 1900s as the Blanchard Ruin, were on flat land, proving to my own eyes that the structures at the Manitou attraction were never cliff dwellings. The expert masonry and close proximity to the Dolores railroad made it an excellent candidate for removal.

"I firmly believe that the 1906 Antiquities Act saved (the cliff dwellings of) Mesa Verde from what occurred at the Blanchard Ruin," Blackburn told me.

Various documents from Blackburn's archive, including a 1919 book by the Smithsonian archaeologist Fewkes, led Blackburn to the Blanchard Ruin. The book contained two black-and-white photos of the site and noted that the rock from it was taken by private parties and reassembled into a cliff dwelling in Manitou Springs.

Although the buildings have been relocated and their original location bulldozed and built over throughout the past century, the landscape still provides clues as to where the different structures stood.

We walked around the property with its new owner, a welder in his mid-30s, and found a depression the length of a pickup truck. Blackburn suspects that's where the great kiva stood. Nearby, a barn and three-bedroom ranch house hid the scars of the main structure's foundation. The owner said he plans to rent the property as an Airbnb.

To Atsye, all Ancestral Puebloan sites are sacred and alive. "'Ruin' just means something is dead," she told me, "But the spirit is there. ... That's why when you go to a site, you tread lightly. You be respectful of what was there before, because the spirit of what was there is still there. The term 'ruins' needs to evolve and change so that people know that it is still living, that it still is still alive."

Once, while she was at Mesa Verde, Atsye was invited to view the park's museum collection in the Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center of over 3 million objects from the Mesa Verde region. "There were drawers open with ladles and hammers and just all kinds of stuff that are whole," she recalled. "I just started crying.

"I can imagine, you know, what it was like for that woman to have made that pot or ladle for cooking or for decoration as things started to evolve. And the creativity of them making a mark on their own piece of pottery.

"But, you know, they had to leave them, they couldn't take everything except what was probably necessary and useful. The way that I look at it, what they left for us to study and appreciate and let us gain knowledge from who these people really were — they weren't just people that you read about in history books. They were living, breathing people, like Pueblo people today."

WEB EXTRA View a 1907 brochure from Manitou Cliff Dwellings with photos of the structure, early 20th century newspaper clippings from Montezuma County and other documents that were used to report this feature at **hcn.org**.

MORE ARCHIVES

A COVID-19 living archive

Kate Samworth / HCN

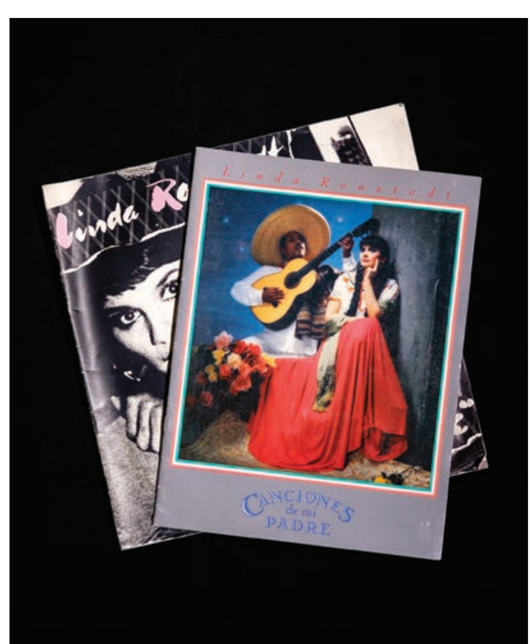
Shortly after COVID-19 started to spread, shuttering public spaces and forcing people to keep their distance, a group of archivists and public historians saw an opportunity: Document everyday life during the pandemic.

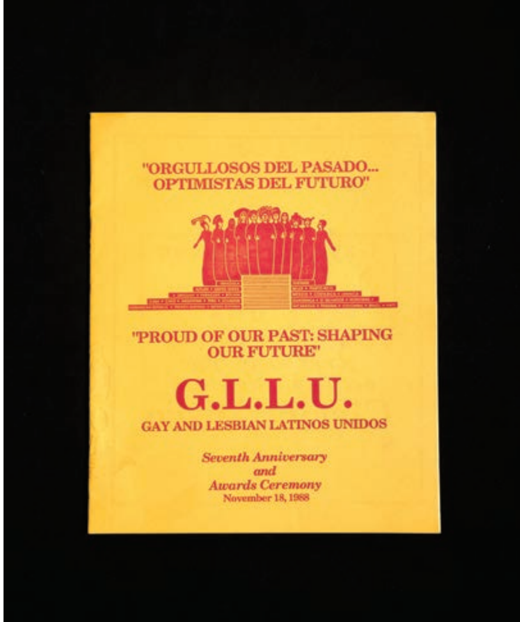
A Journal of the Plague Year: Covid-19 Digital Archive, organized by the Arizona Historical Society and School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University, asked people around the world to capture digital fragments of humanity during the global pandemic. They wanted to create a time capsule by collecting firsthand accounts of life, with the help of ubiquitous smartphones. The archive is designed to give future historians a snapshot of this moment in history, primarily through narrative and ephemera.

In 15,000 entries — from news clips and oral histories to memes — the texture of two years of crisis emerges: tweets about lockdown in prison from a contraband cellphone, the smoky ochre of a September Western sunset, the deadpan account of one quarantine-er's first venture outdoors in months.

The archive reflects the social media age, when digital refuges, however imperfect, allowed communities to form, safe from the dangers of in-person gatherings. The historians note the archive's limitations, acknowledging the impossibility of making an omniscient collection of human experiences. But through collective action, the images, journal entries and audio recordings might help fill in some gaps. "In public history, collaboration is our strength," historians Jordan Meyerl and Katy Kole de Peralta wrote in an essay on the archive. "By aggregating distinct perspectives in a larger project, we can build something bigger than ourselves." —*Theo Whitcomb*

MONDAY MAY 15
thru
SUNDAY MAY 21


Linda Ronstadt
Canciones de mi Padre


"ORGULLOSOS DEL PASADO... OPTIMISTAS DEL FUTURO"
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GAY AND LESBIAN LATINOS UNIDOS
Seventh Anniversary and Awards Ceremony
November 18, 1988

LESBIANAS UNIDAS
of GLLU

GLLU and MECLA Sponsor Molina Fundraiser
Future Mayor of SF?
Tasered in Arizona!
FRONTIERS 7

Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos
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GLLU's Eighth President :
LYDIA OTERO
an interview

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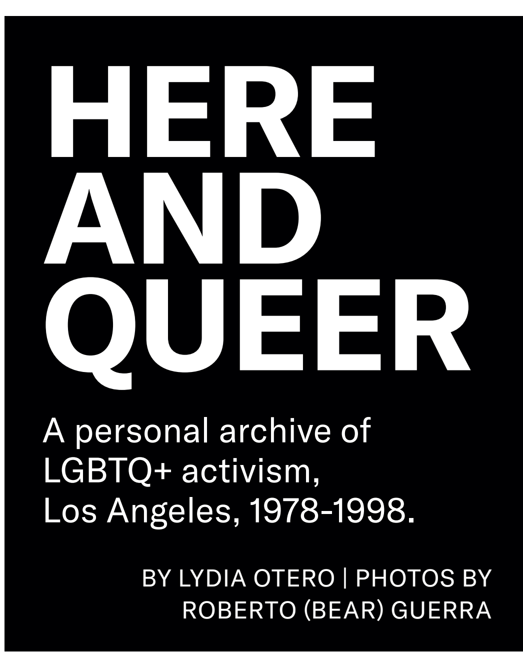
May 1989



HERE AND QUEER

A personal archive of LGBTQ+ activism, Los Angeles, 1978-1998.

BY LYDIA OTERO | PHOTOS BY ROBERTO (BEAR) GUERRA

IN THE 20 YEARS I lived in Los Angeles, I acquired 10 different addresses. This doesn't account for the weeks when I found myself in between apartments, sleeping on friends' floors or couches. Every time I moved, I protected the contents of a box filled with squirreled-away photographs and memorabilia, souvenirs of events I had attended and brown queer activists I worked alongside. In my gut, I knew that the datebooks, newsletters, documents and photographs in that box were important. They mattered to history and served as a reminder of the forces that shaped my life as a queer of color. Few of the people I remember ever made it into history books; some young men who died of AIDS never even made it into an obituary, or onto an AIDS quilt.

As it turned out, moving to LA not only saved my life but provided me with an opportunity to be a brown and queer activist on the grandest scale — and stage — then possible. I'd left Arizona in 1978, searching for other "out" queers of color like me, who were not only looking for places to belong but energized by the idea of creating new ones. In LA, I also began studying to become an electrician and a member of LA's Local 11 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

As I moved between neighborhoods in Alhambra, Venice, Silver Lake and Highland Park, I carried the gray metal file box with me. Its contents reflect my work as a member of Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos (GLLU) in the 1980s and early 1990s, an organization that has somehow escaped extensive historical inquiry. The box holds my personal collection, but it also tells a larger story of queer activism in a city where queer Latinxs celebrated themselves despite the mounting political hostility they faced in the Reagan years.

I always knew that even something like a photograph showing queers of color publicly dancing together deserved safekeeping: It represented what was then a transgressive act. Over the years, my collection grew and required more space. Today, a large white cardboard box that long ago lost its lid is nested inside an even larger sturdy plastic bin labeled "GLLU Stuff."

A red folder sits at the top of the box. It is hard to pick it up without photos of protests, PRIDE parades, house parties and fundraisers falling out. A few personal items also found their way into it. In the 1980s, I had a huge crush on singer Linda Ronstadt, who hailed from my hometown of Tucson. I attended a concert in 1980 with my then-girlfriend, Emma. We had a blast, and I was hoarse for days from yelling, "I love you, Linda!" This, and the fact that the program shows Linda wearing roller skates, which were cool back then, probably accounts for why I saved it.

My box is weighed down by all the engraved award plaques I received from GLLU and other groups. A turquoise-blue "Sisters Bonding" T-shirt from the first National Lesbians of Color Conference in Malibu on Sept. 8, 1983, is also tucked inside it. I was fortunate to meet Gloria Anzaldúa there. At the time, Anzaldúa was known for co-editing the pathbreaking anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women Color*. Her most celebrated book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, was years away from being released, and she looks youthful and vibrant in short blue shorts and a white tank top in the photographs I took. After facilitating a session for Latina Lesbians, she sat under a tree and held one-on-one conversations with attendees. The line was long, but it moved quickly, and when I sat down, I remember telling her, "I sometimes do not know how to feel OK with myself in the world." She replied, "You need to write. This is the most important thing we can do."

After meeting Anzaldúa, I became an active member of GLLU. Each year, the group's lavish anniversary celebration served as its main fundraising event. These dinners and the accompanying awards ceremony did not require formal attire, but attendees definitely dressed to impress. Many memorable photographs survive. The women in GLLU recognized how radical our sexual expressions and relationships were, given the larger society, and we formed Lesbianas Unidas in 1983. We also organized Latina Lesbian retreats. The first one took place in October of 1984. These gatherings became very popular, and I always tried to take my camera to them.

The bulk of the GLLU's fundraising went to cover the costs of printing its newsletter, UNIDAD. We recognized the importance of distributing unfiltered queer Latinx voices and news, and my box is a small repository for many of those back issues. We were committed to ensuring that UNIDAD was free and readily available. After each issue's publication, we placed stacks of copies in bookstores, bars and social service centers frequented by queer Latinxs.

The box holds mementos of the era's exuberance, but also carries a few somber forewarnings. A 1984 issue of UNIDAD featured an article pertaining to a new virus, HIV/AIDS. On Feb. 29, 1984, 315 cases were confirmed. That number would continue to surge upward and eventually force GLLU to act.

Initially, GLLU sought to confront HIV/AIDS by working in partnership with other groups to disseminate information on prevention and advocate for health services. Soon, however, we started our own HIV/AIDS agency. During our 1988 GLLU Board Election, Valentino Sandoval was voted to serve as my vice president and Michael Puente as secretary. A few years later, they both died from AIDS. In 1989, my second year as president, GLLU launched Bienestar: A Gay Latino AIDS Project. I saved the early grant proposals, handouts, business cards and the like associated with Bienestar's launch. Today, the organization operates seven community centers across LA County and continues to focus on emerging health issues faced by the Latinx and LGBTQ populations.

My box holds photos of protests, parades and our efforts to queer more mainstream causes, like Hands Across America, which took place on Sunday, May 25, 1986. If the goal was to form a continuous human chain across the country, it had to include brown queers. We staked out a block in East LA on Whittier Boulevard, linked hands and swayed to the theme song on makeshift loudspeakers, yelling, "We're here and queer!"

More than 20 years have passed since I lived in LA. I was proud to be a lesbian in those days; it was the identity that most closely mirrored my experiences. We lacked the language and the insight into gender that we have now. In the last few years, I have started to identify myself as gender nonbinary. Back then, gender categories were firmly fixed, either male or female. There was no category for gender nonconforming people. As I reflect on how times have changed, I have found a deeper purpose for the items I carry in my box. I intend to eventually donate them to an archive, but for now, this box holds my history. It is part of a larger story of brown queers as makers of history, and of people who believed that making the world better for queers meant making it better for everyone.

1983 NATIONAL L.O.C. CONFERENCE
Sisters Bonding
©1983

Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship

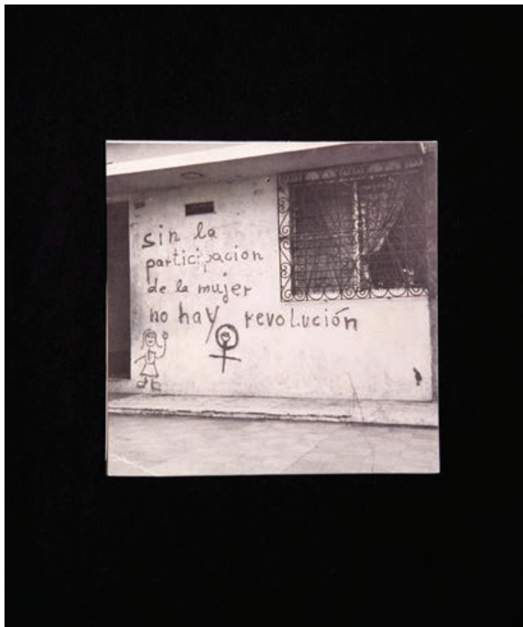
Lydia Otero

Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship

Lydia Otero

eighth November, 1986

Los Angeles



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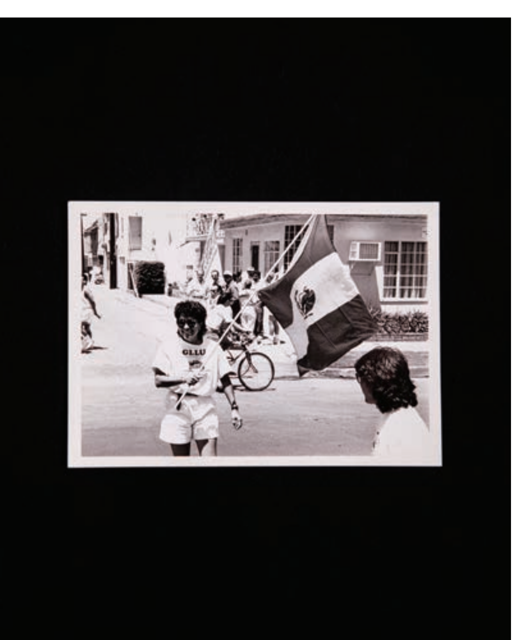
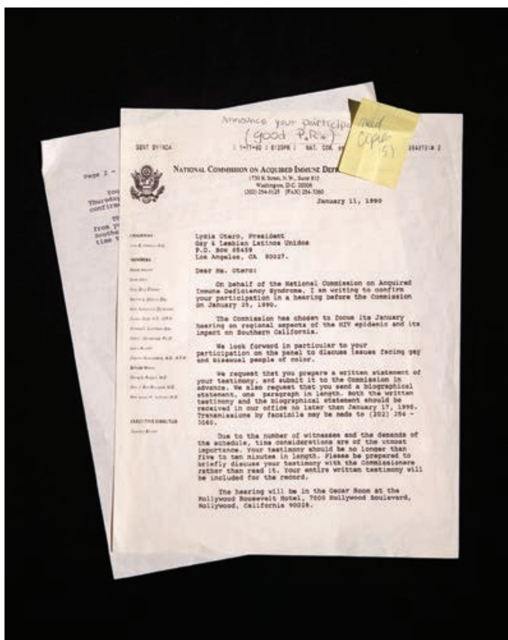


Page 18, clockwise from top left: Lydia Otero at work in Los Angeles, 1987; Calendar, 1989; Concert programs, 1980, 1988; Newspaper clipping, 1989. Photos of Long Beach Pride Parade in UNIDAD, 1989; Poster of Sandinista soldiers, c. 1986; Lydia on cover of UNIDAD, 1989; Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos awards ceremony program, 1988; Photo of Lesbianas Unidas, 1989.

This page, clockwise from top left: Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship, 1986; Graffiti on wall in Mexico, c. 1986; Crocheted memento, 1986; Photo of Lydia with Mexican flag, 1989; Photo of group hug at Lesbians of Color conference, 1983; Confirmation letter for participation in National Commission on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome hearing, 1990; Newspaper clipping, 1988; Contact sheet from 1988.

Facing page: T-shirt from National Lesbians of Color Conference, 1983.



Announce your participation (good P.R.)

National Commission on Acquired Immune Defi[ciency Syndrome]

January 11, 1990

Lydia Otero, President
Gay & Lesbian Latinos Unidos
P.O. Box 85459
Los Angeles, CA 90027.

Dear Ms. Otero:

On behalf of the National Commission on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, I am writing to confirm your participation in a hearing before the Commission on January 25, 1990.

The Commission has chosen to focus its January hearing on regional aspects of the HIV epidemic and its impact on Southern California.

We look forward in particular to your participation on the panel to discuss issues facing gay and bisexual people of color.

We request that you prepare a written statement of your testimony, and submit it to the Commission in advance. We also request that you send a biographical statement, one paragraph in length. Both the written testimony and the biographical statement should be received in our office no later than January 17, 1990. Transmissions by facsimile may be made to (202) 254-5560.

Due to the number of witnesses and the demands of the schedule, time considerations are of the utmost importance. Your testimony should be no longer than five to ten minutes in length. Please be prepared to briefly discuss your testimony with the Commissioners rather than read it. Your entire written testimony will be included for the record.

The hearing will be in the Cesar Room at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, 7000 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, California 90028.

Jalen Bazile and Rachel Olzer at Elevenmile Reservoir near Deckers, Colorado. **Adam Andres Pawlikiewicz Mesa**

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HCN COMMUNITY

What's in your HCN archives?

DEAR FRIENDS: This month, we have archives on the mind. But first, a *mea culpa*.

In February, we asked you for ideas on how to connect with our readers in this digital, dispersed era. We also gave you a new email: **dearfriends@hcn.org**. Unfortunately, we goofed up on our end, and a few emails may have bounced back to their senders. We apologize and thank everyone who followed up and let us know something was amiss. Rest assured, your emails are coming through now.

We continue to welcome your suggestions. The book club idea was popular, although those who liked it admitted belonging to several book clubs already. Lee Stephenson from Seattle suggested expertly narrated video tours of interesting or overlooked Western places. Keep sending your thoughts to dearfriends@hcn.org. Should we keep a running *HCN* reading list? What makes a good video tour?

We have another invitation for you this month: In conjunction with the publication of our Archives Issue, we are inviting our community to reach into your own archives and share a picture on social media of you with your favorite back issue of *HCN*, or a towering stack of back issues, or an article of *HCN* merchandise from over the years. Is there a faded *HCN* sticker slowly peeling off your car bumper? Do you have an old photo of yourself in a long-retired *HCN* hat, or a current photo of yourself in a well-loved and enviably faded one? Is an *HCN* shirt your favorite paint-covered work shirt? Pull it on and snap a selfie, then tag us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, using the hashtag **#myHCNarchive**.

We'll be back next month with more of your ideas for how *HCN* can connect with readers and some highlights from our latest survey.

—Greg Hanscom, executive director and publisher

David Havlick was an intern (*the* intern, back when it was a solo deal) in 1985. Here, he's pictured in western Montana in 1991. His *HCN* shirt was colorful — high visbility during hunting season.

Art Director Cindy Wehling's 25th anniversary T-shirt from 1995 (*above, left*). Lou Patterson's 40th anniversary vest (*above*). Former Associate Editor Jessica Kutz with an *HCN* patch sewn on her pack as she trekked the Colorado Trail in 2019 (*left*). Rebecca Clarren and Greg Hanscom with an *HCN* banner in 2000 (*below, left*). One of the stacks of back issues on Associate Photo Editor Luna Anna Archey's desk (*below*).

Friends walk along the Ozark and Cherokee Central train tracks under construction in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, 1902. Collection number 20661.17.

What Jennie Saw

The legacy and work of Jennie Ross Cobb, the first known female Native American photographer.

Photographs by Jennie Ross Cobb | Story by Will Chavez

JENNIE ROSS COBB, born Jennie Fields Ross —"Jen" to those who knew her best — most likely bought her first camera around 1902. The sixth of nine children born to Robert Bruce and Francis (Thornton) Ross, Jennie experimented with photography as early as 1895. But it wasn't until later, just ahead of her 21st birthday, that she cemented her place in both Cherokee and photographic history.

Cobb was born in Tahlequah, Indian Territory, on Dec. 26, 1881. Her Cherokee ancestors settled there, in a valley nestled between hills overlooking the Illinois River, following their forced removal from Georgia in 1838-1839 by the United States government. Her great-grandfather, Chief John Ross, united three Cherokee factions following the removal, and ultimately settled in the Park Hill community. About a mile west of his home, his niece, Minerva, and her husband, George Murrell, a prominent mercantile trader from a slave-owning Virginia family, built Hunter's Home, a two-story plantation home. According to historic documents, Murrell held 42 slaves; archaeological surveys of the area around the house revealed the remains of the nine log cabins designated for their use. After the Civil War, the Cherokee Nation signed a treaty in 1866 with the United States, agreeing to recognize Freedmen and their descendants as citizens.

Between 1902 and 1905, Cobb taught at Owen School, a one-room schoolhouse near Christie, Oklahoma, named after Cherokee politician Robert Latham Owen. Collection number 20661.20.

Cobb's time as a photographer was brief — the majority of her work comes from a three-year period between 1902 and 1905, after which she put down her box camera to focus on her work as a teacher at Cherokee Nation public schools. Her surviving photographs have secured her reputation as the first-known female Native American photographer in Indian Territory, according to Karen Shade, who works as an interpretative projects coordinator for Cherokee Nation Businesses and who researched Cobb's work for a 2020 exhibit. In her work, Cobb sought to capture her community as she saw and knew it.

"She may be considered an amateur photographer, but that shouldn't imply a lack of skill or quality," said Shade. "We see in the nearly two dozen images definitively attributed to her, Jennie had the eye of a true artist. The perspective, framing and lighting in several images demonstrate a real talent."

Cobb graduated from the Cherokee Female Seminary in Tahlequah in 1900, and some of her earliest subjects were her fellow seminarians, according to Shade. She would go on to capture images of her family and friends, as well as interior shots of Hunter's Home and landscapes of the surrounding river, streams and fields. Compared to much of the photography of the time, her work is fluid, her subjects vibrant.

"Jennie, to me, is fascinating as an individual who was able to capture people unguarded and even a little charmed by the camera," Shade said. "So much photography from that era is stiff, formal and posed, but in her known works, you see personalities. It's a step ahead of where photography would go in the decades following. Her unassuming and easy manner must have put people at ease, allowing her to get the kind of shots she has left for us."

Two young women in the backyard of Hunter's Home, c. 1896-1906. Cobb's family home is the oldest private residence in Oklahoma. Collection number 20661.6.

In 1905, Jennie Ross married a land surveyor named Jesse Clifton "J.C." Cobb. They later moved to Arlington, Texas, to raise their daughter. Jennie owned and operated a floral shop there for many years. But after J.C. died in 1940, followed shortly by their daughter, Jenevieve, in 1945, Jennie took in her two grandchildren, Jennifer and Cliff Biggers. In 1952, she took them back to Park Hill and Hunter's Home, where she served as caretaker for the house from 1952 until her death in 1959. It was during this time that she led the restoration and preservation of the home, relying on her own photos from a half-century earlier.

"Jennie found in the attic one of her old cameras and some of the glass plate negatives she processed in a downstairs bedroom closet so many years before," says Shade. "Her commitment to preservation can still be seen in the objects she found and restored to the site. They tell the story of her unique experience as a young woman from a highly influential and progressive Cherokee family in those golden days before statehood swept over Indian Territory."

Cobb's legacy is about more than just the preservation of her historic family home. It also speaks to the continued necessity to center and uplift photographers who document their own communities. In a period where Native people were widely defined through the lenses of outsiders, her work stands out, motioning to what always has been possible.

"Native photographers depicting their own community usually have a better understanding of the culture, traditions and history. That insight can dictate everything from subject matter to framing," Shade said. "Can outside photographers take compelling images? Yes, and they do, but there's something to be said for how a Cherokee photographer looks at a Cherokee subject and tells that story."

Cobb's friends, and presumably some family members, eating watermelons in Park Hill, Oklahoma, c. 1900 *(above)*. Collection number 20661.21.

The 1902 graduating class of the Cherokee Female Seminary. Cobb graduated from the school in 1900 *(right)*. Collection number 20661.14.

Cobb's nephew, Blake Ross, on the steps of Hunter's Home, c. 1901. Cobb and her family lived in Hunter's Home from 1894 to 1907 *(facing)*. Collection number 20661.4.

Helen Ross, Cobb's niece, on the front porch of Hunter's Home, c. 1896-1906 *(above).*

"Watt and Jim" and a third passenger ride in a horse-drawn carriage, c. 1896-1906 *(left)*.

Women swim in what is likely the Illinois River, which runs through Tahlequah, Oklahoma, c. 1896-1906 *(facing)*.

This piece was produced in partnership with The 400 Years Project, a photography collective that looks at the evolution of Native American identity, rights and representation. Founded by Brian Adams, Sheena Brings Plenty and Sarah Stacke, The 400 Years Project received the 2021 Howard Chapnick Grant to support its research into Native American photographers working in the first 100 years of photography. 400yearsproject.org; Instagram: @400yearsproject.

All photographs by Jennie Ross Cobb, courtesy of Oklahoma Historical Society, Jennie Ross Cobb Collection.

By Wufei Yu | Illustrations by Sally Deng

Origin Story

How a California archive reconnected a New Mexico family with its Chinese roots.

ON A BRIGHT AFTERNOON IN MARCH 2021, Aimee Towi Mae Tang was curled up on her couch in Irvine, California, reading a book she'd chosen for her then-13-year-old daughter Marisol's homeschool curriculum. Aimee had taken over Marisol's education, frustrated by the narrow view of the world taught in public school and what she called its "European American bias." Then a news alert lit up her phone: A gunman had shot and killed eight people at Atlanta-area spas. Six of them were Asian women.

For Aimee, a fourth-generation Chinese New Mexican and a citizen of Jemez Pueblo, the tragedy echoed the discrimination and violence her family has experienced. In the 1930s, state laws barred Edward Gaw, her great-grandfather, from buying land in Albuquerque, New Mexico. During the 1980s, when she was in high school, boys harassed her, shouting a gendered slur common in American films about the Vietnam War. When Aimee saw videos of Asian elders being attacked and beaten in late 2020 during a rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, she thought of her own father, who was then 76.

Three weeks after the Atlanta shootings, I found myself on the phone with Aimee, talking about the nation's shocked reaction. Aimee's usually tender voice hardened. "You've ignored your cancer for years, and now, at stage 4, you go to the doctors and ask, 'Oh, how is this happening?'" she said. "Well, come on! If that's how you've treated the Chinese, how is this not happening?"

Aimee's father and grandparents spoke fluent Cantonese, but her family raised her to fit in with white American society. "We never talk about China. We speak English in our household. We eat Chinese food with a fork and knife," she said.

The daughter of a Chinese father and a Jemez mother, she often felt disconnected from her Chinese side. Since childhood, she had visited Jemez Pueblo, 50 miles northwest of Albuquerque, helping in the vineyard, harvesting white corn and learning stories about the high mountain mesas that surround the pueblo. But when she asked about her Chinese relatives' past, she said, her grandfather refused to answer. If pressed, he simply said, "We are American" in a deep, commanding voice in which "American" clearly meant "European American." To this day, Aimee said, she "slaughters Mandarin Chinese" when she tries to speak it. When I met her, she still knew little about how her family got to Albuquerque.

At 49, in the wake of the Atlanta shootings, she realized

that, for her, the idea that "We're American, not Chinese" no longer resonated. She wanted a deeper understanding of her own identity, not just for herself: She wanted Marisol to learn about more than the Christian calendar and European history, and to understand the rise and fall of Chinese dynasties as well as the history of the pueblos. What did the land her great-grandfather came from in China look like, she wondered? Why did he leave, and how did he end up in New Mexico? And what would it take to give Marisol a stronger sense of connection with her Chinese ancestors than Aimee had ever had?

AIMEE IS THE FOURTH — and final — owner of Fremont's Fine Foods, the family-owned gourmet grocery store her great-grandfather opened in 1918. Until it closed in 2010, the store sold almost everything: liquors, snacks, teas and parasols from Europe and Asia; produce, seafood and meat from Hawai'i to the East Coast; dishes like chow mein and chop suey. Aimee has black hair and a warm manner, and when she talked about the business, her dimpled smile appeared frequently.

When I met Aimee on Zoom for the first time in February 2021, she showed me a wrinkled notebook full of anecdotes about her family history, the fruit of more than a decade of research. Thumbing through the pages, she noted that a Chinese neighborhood in Albuquerque lured her great-grandfather Edward to New Mexico in the early 20th century. "I'm sure they had a job waiting for him in this dusty Western town," she said. But she knew little else about his life. She wondered if I, a Chinese immigrant working as a journalist in Albuquerque, could help answer some of her questions. I was new to Albuquerque, a sprawling city of a half-million people, few of whom looked like me, and I often felt lonely and out-of-place. I agreed to help her; perhaps, I thought, I might find my own sense of connection in the history of this family and my city's long-vanished Chinatown.

"We never talk about China. We speak English in our household. We eat Chinese food with a fork and knife."

I began with the local chapter of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, the oldest Asian American civil rights nonprofit in the U.S. Members directed me to the local library and to the University of New Mexico, which held transcripts of oral history interviews about the community. But the records of Aimee's ancestors were kept at the National Archives in San Bruno, California, home to over 200,000 case files on people the immigration authorities interviewed from 1882 to the early 1950s. The archive was closed to the public due to COVID-19, and for over six months, I waited for it to reopen.

Finally, last December, in a lull between COVID spikes, I flew to San Francisco. On a gloomy morning, I drove south to the quiet, wooded grounds of the institution, far from the busy traffic of the Bay. The archivists led me to a spacious, bitterly cold room, where the files I sought waited on a cart. For two days, those 400-plus colorful pages became my world — passenger arrival lists, immigration records, business filings and legal case files, dotted with Chinese characters.

They told a story of struggle, discrimination and assimilation. Aimee's great-grandfather Edward, her first Chinese American ancestor, did not become Edward until he came to Albuquerque, I learned. Before that, he was Ong Shew Ngoh. The man she knew as Edward Gaw was a popular, well-respected businessman in Albuquerque. Shew Ngoh, however, was a determined young merchant who survived excruciating ordeals in his immigration journey — experiences he rarely shared with anyone.

SHEW NGOH WAS BORN and raised among the lush hills and croplands of China's humid Southern coast in the 1880s. His family, part of a clan now commonly known as Tang or Ong, farmed in Wing On Lee, which translates to the Village of Eternal Peace. It was a chaotic time: Droughts, famines, internal rebellions and foreign intrusions swept South China, and many people left, seeking safety and prosperity elsewhere. In 1905, Shew Ngoh did, too, venturing 100 miles east to the port city of Hong Kong. On the first day of December, he and around 30 other Chinese passengers boarded a steamship, S.S. Coptic, bound for San Francisco.

The journey lasted nearly a month, and no welcome awaited them at the end. Instead, they faced a system designed to keep them out. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 banned Chinese people from entering; only merchants, diplomats, students and laborers already living in the U.S. could stay. And yet Shew Ngoh, then around 17, managed to enter the country. He settled in San Francisco's Chinatown, the first in North America, where an estimated 15,000 people of Chinese descent lived in tall brick and wooden houses, and flimsy shacks lined the alleys. He studied Christianity at mission schools and learned English. He worked at Kim Lun Chong Co., a trading company where many of his clansmen worked. The shop, located in the heart of Chinatown, sold a kaleidoscope of goods from China — rice, tobacco, liquor, dried abalone, slippers and clothing. Shew Ngoh worked in bookkeeping and sales, often laboring 14 hours or more. Like many Chinese migrant workers, he slept at the back of the building to save money.

From the archives, I learned that Shew Ngoh's arrival in America had gone smoothly due to the fact that "his alleged father" Ong Kee Hung had "been a domiciled merchant here for more than twelve years" at Kim Lun Chung Co. This "alleged father" fascinated me. I spoke with more than a dozen family members, friends and members of the Chinese American community who knew Shew Ngoh, but none of them had ever heard of Kee Hung.

According to the limited records I could find, Kee Hung arrived in San Francisco in 1876,

a gangly 20-year-old from Wing On Lee with a pointy chin and no recorded immigration papers. He spent the better part of five years plowing, sowing and irrigating the fertile soil of the California Delta, working alongside Anglo and Hispanic farmers and hundreds of other Cantonese immigrants. In 1881, he went back to China. But by the time he tried to return to America, in 1888, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was fully in effect. He was denied entry and detained on a boat just a few yards away from shore.

He fought back. A lawyer filed a writ of habeas corpus on his behalf, arguing that he had been unlawfully incarcerated. This was a common legal pathway for Chinese immigrants. Kee Hung had lived in the U.S. before the law went into effect, his lawyer argued, and therefore he should be allowed back into the country. After four days, he posted bail and left detention. In 1889, after eight months of court battles, the court ruled in his favor. He settled in San Francisco and became a shareholder at Kim Lun Chong. Eventually, he brought Shew Ngoh over to join him.

Were Kee Hung and Shew Ngoh biologically related, or merely relatives of convenience? I could find no evidence either way. In one of the few exceptions to the Chinese Exclusion Act, people with a paternal link to a U.S. citizen or merchant could enter the country. Hopeful immigrants came to San Francisco's northern waterfront, carrying fake papers identifying them as the blood relatives, often the sons, of merchants or U.S. citizens of Chinese descent. These immigrants became known as "paper" sons and daughters. At least a quarter of Chinese Americans in the 1950s were descended from them.

Aimee, who was aware of this phenomenon, thought it was possible Kee Hung and Shew Ngoh made a secret deal. "Maybe we are a bunch of paper sons, but so what? I'm all for that because of the racism so integrated here," she told me. "It was the Chinese that built the West. It was their hard labor and creativity that really were the true 'pioneering spirit' of building a community."

But in spite of Kee Hung's efforts, Shew Ngoh got caught in America's anti-Chinese immigration crackdown. In 1909, now a shareholder in Kim Lun Chong, he went back to China for an arranged marriage. By the time he returned to the U.S. in 1910 as a merchant, everything had changed. Immigration authorities had built a new facility to tighten border control, a complex of overcrowded barracks on Angel Island, far from the mainland. There, they detained immigrants from China, Japan and other parts of Asia, as well as Europe, Oceania, Central and South America and Mexico. More than 175,000 Chinese were incarcerated there over the course of 30 years. Shew Ngoh was one of the first.

Previous spread: Portraits of Ong Shew Ngoh (Aimee's great-grandfather, her first Chinese American ancestor, also known as Edward Gaw) and Ong Kee Hung, his "alleged father." The pottery bowl in front of Shew Ngoh was made by Aimee's Jemez grandmother and is filled with cornmeal, which is sacred and used in prayer.

Aimee Towi Mae Tang and her daughter, Marisol, read together (below).

ON DEC. 4, 1910, A FERRY carrying about 160 Chinese travelers, who were forbidden to land at San Francisco, pulled into a sheltered bay on Angel Island known as "China Cove." One by one, they disembarked, carrying their luggage, and made their way to a three-story administrative building guarding a set of detention barracks on low-slung hills.

Old photographs show Shew Ngoh as a tall young man with high, rosy cheeks and a diamond-shaped face. Immigrant inspectors on Angel Island assigned him the number "6385" and told him that he'd be interviewed later. If he was lucky, he'd be allowed to leave the island.

They took him to a drafty, two-story wooden building. He would have climbed the stairs to the barrack's narrow foyer, and then walked down a dark hall to a 1,500 square-foot room, where close to 200 people were housed, sleeping in rows of three-tiered bunks. He found an unoccupied bed. At 5-foot-9, he was much taller than most of his countrymen and had to curl up to fit.

The air in the barracks was still and claustrophobic. Immigrants had access to a pair of bathrooms, both filthy. A recreation yard ringed with chicken wire offered the only escape to the outdoors. Immigrants were segregated by race and country of origin; European detainees had access to a grassy playground about three times the size of the yard for Chinese and Japanese detainees. Meals were scant in the early days, a measure officials justified by claiming that it was customary for Chinese people to eat only twice a day. During the routine medical examination, doctors stabbed a half-naked Shew Ngoh for blood samples and checked to see if he was infected with hookworm and other parasitic diseases — common excuses to deny people entry in the early 20th century, especially immigrants from Asia.

Shew Ngoh's first interrogation was on Dec. 11. He failed, misstating the date of his arrival in the

香山許生勉客題
說去花旗喜溢顏
千金羅掘不辭艱
親離有話喉先哽
妻別多情淚對潸

浪大如山頻駭客
政苛似虎備嘗蠻
毋忘此日君登岸
發奮前程莫懶閒

Translation:

Poem by One Named Huie

from Heungshan Encouraging the Traveler

*Just talk about going to the land of the Flowery Flag **

and my countenance fills with happiness.

Not without hard work were one thousand pieces of gold

dug up and gathered together.

There were words of farewell to the parents,

but the throat choked up first.

There were many feelings, many tears flowing face to face,

when parting with the wife.

Waves big as mountains often astonished this traveler.

*With laws harsh as tigers, ** I had a taste*

of all the barbarities.

Do not forget this day when you land ashore.

Push yourself ahead and do not be lazy or idle.

A Chinese poem that was etched on a wall of the Angel Island barracks.

* A colloquial Cantonese term for the U.S.

** From the *Book of Rites*. Confucius saw a woman weeping at a grave and asked why she was so sad. She said, "My father-in-law and my husband were killed by tigers. Now my son is also killed by a tiger." "Why don't you leave this dangerous place?" he asked. "Because there is no oppressive rule here." Confucius replied, "Oppressive rule is surely fiercer than any tiger."

U.S. by a single day. The inspector jumped on that small discrepancy. He reported that "it doesn't appear that this entry has been verified by our records," and ordered Shew Ngoh to remain in detention.

Shew Ngoh was cut off from the outside world, but he was not alone in his despair. On the dreary walls of the detention facility, the detainees inked and chiseled their experiences and thoughts in the form of classical Chinese poetry — pairs of rhyming lines with rich vocabularies and refined tonal harmonies.

Today, they survive only as modest dents on the crack-wrinkled walls. There could be hundreds more hidden away; the station staff, who dismissed the poems as graffiti, repeatedly covered them with putty and paint in pale yellow, russet and gray. Still, over 200 inscriptions remain. They invoke heroic figures in Chinese legend and history who confronted hardship and testify to the detainees' shared outrage, humiliation and trauma.

"Alas, yellow souls suffer under brute force of the white race / Like shouting at a dog which has lost its home, we are forced into jail / Like a pig chased into a basket, we are sternly locked in / Our souls languish in a snowy vault; we are really not even the equal of cattle and horses / Our tears shower the icy day; we are not even equal to bird and fowl," one poet wrote in 1910.

Two weeks after his unsuccessful interview, Shew Ngoh got another chance. This time, the inspector interrogated him about Kim Lun Chong, asking, "Does your firm cater to the white trade?" "What do you sell to white people?" "How many white people come (into) your store a day to buy goods?" Shew Ngoh answered some in fluent English despite the presence of an interpreter, hoping to prove that he could fit in in white America. The inspector praised his effort, the stenographer noted, and this time, he passed. In the shaky strokes of his signature on the records, I can see the panic and pressure of that day.

He was released on the third day of 1911, aged 22.

ON A FEBRUARY AFTERNOON earlier this year, I met with Aimee and her father at her house in the foothills of the Sandia Mountains. Surrounded by a vermillion Chinese storage cabinet, a Chinese Buddhist mural and cornmeal-filled bowls that her Jemez grandmother had made, they took notes as I told them of their ancestor's incarceration on Angel Island. I watched as her father wrote down "175,000" — the number of Chinese immigrants who were confined there — and thumbed through a book I'd brought about history and poetry from Angel Island. I watched as this almost 80-year-old man learned things he'd never known about his family. "I wish I knew sooner," he said. "Maybe I'd bring it up in a roundabout way and start with something like how many times you went back to China."

Aimee believed that her great-grandfather left Angel Island feeling traumatized; he had been treated disrespectfully, his dignity denied, and he lived in constant fear of deportation. "He had to fight it all on his own," Aimee said. "It must have been hell, because he never brought it up. It was nowhere in our family history."

They served Cantonese chop suey, Kansas beef, Hawaiian taro and other foods that reminded the diverse community's residents of their own hometowns.

Although Chinese residents weren't allowed to own the land their businesses operated on, the names of Chinese businesses appeared on maps of Albuquerque in the 1920s.

AFTER HE LEFT ANGEL ISLAND, Shew Ngoh distanced himself from Kim Lun Chong, perhaps because of the pressure he felt to assimilate. He came up with an Anglicized moniker — Edward Gaw, the name his great-granddaughter knew him by — and became obsessed with getting to New Mexico. On a hot summer day in 1913, he reached Albuquerque. He found work in a restaurant and opened a grocery store, part of a cluster of Chinese-owned businesses. The small Chinatown was a tangle of unpaved streets shared by cars and carts, near the Mission Revival-style train depot.

In 1918, Shew Ngoh, now Edward Gaw, and two clansmen rented a humble 15-foot-wide storefront at 217 West Central Avenue, two blocks from the rough gray stucco depot, on the northern edge of the Chinese enclave. They named their business after John C. Frémont, a colonial Western explorer who, in 1856, became the first Republican nominee for president. They served Cantonese chop suey, Kansas beef, Hawaiian taro and other foods that reminded the diverse community's residents of their own hometowns. Soon, locals lauded it as one of the best grocery stores in town.

Albuquerque's Chinatown was one of more than 200 Chinese settlements in the West, according to William Wei, a history professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder and the author of *Asians in Colorado*. Chinese-owned businesses, mostly grocery stores, laundries and restaurants, found their way to towns like Rock Springs, Wyoming; Jacksonville, Oregon; and Silver City, New Mexico.

The influx of Chinese immigrants was closely tied to the exploitation of the West. In an 1848 report to Congress, geographer Aaron Palmer called the Chinese "well adapted for clearing wild land and raising every species of agricultural product" and suggested that Chinese laborers could help develop the West's natural resources. At the turn of the century, the West was home to the overwhelming majority of the nation's 100,000 Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants.

But anti-Chinese propaganda was growing. Thousands of Chinese laborers helped build the Western leg of the 2,000-mile Transcontinental Railroad, and then became the scapegoat for the economic depression that followed, blamed for widespread unemployment and low wages. The federal government passed severe immigration restrictions, including the Exclusion Act, and Chinese immigrants lived under near-constant threat of violence. Over 150 anti-Chinese incidents of mob violence and lynching events occurred between 1852 and 1908, killing 143 people and displacing over 10,500.

By the time Fremont's Fine Foods opened, Albuquerque's Chinese community, like many in the West, was in decline. Under state and local laws, the residents faced eviction orders, punitive taxation and redlining, and few new immigrants joined them. Many Chinese immigrants left for the coasts, and even for China: Close to half of the Chinese Americans born in the U.S. relocated to China in the early 20th century. By 1920, only about 61,000 remained in the U.S., and most Western Chinatowns had vanished.

"It is in the Interior West that all these communities were driven out," said Wei. "They are the least known about." In New Mexico, Anglo landowners argued that the state should be recognizably white, minimizing Hispanic and Indigenous contributions and seeking to push out Asian landowners. In 1921, with voters' approval, the Alien Land Law amended the New Mexico Constitution, effectively banning Asians from owning land.

Edward had saved more than enough money to buy the land his store stood on. But state law prevented him, meaning he could do little to help preserve the neighborhood. Gradually, the Chinese-owned stores closed, and Albuquerque's Chinatown dwindled. By World War II, it was gone. Few traces of the neighborhood remain in newspaper clippings and records. "If my great-grandpa were allowed to have land, the Tang family and Chinese Americans could have owned downtown Albuquerque," Aimee told me. By the 1950s, people of Asian descent were allowed to own land, but until the Fair Housing Act of 1968, racially restrictive covenants prevented Asian, Black and Latino residents from buying property in certain white-dominated areas. The Alien Land Act was not officially repealed until 2006.

Today, salons, nightclubs, cannabis dispensaries and empty parking spots have replaced the Chinese-owned laundries, restaurants and mom-and-pop shops. Only a small black plaque titled "Chinese Pioneers in Albuquerque" commemorates their existence. Decorated with Chinese characters meaning opportunity and hope, the plaque is dedicated to "the memory of the Chinese Americans who came to Albuquerque to help build and settle this frontier town."

LAST AUGUST, AIMEE, who'd recently moved back to Albuquerque from California, and I set out to find any remaining traces of her family's past in the city. Clutching a beige manila folder under her right arm, she met me by a half-empty parking lot downtown, its pay machines coated in scrawls and stickers.

In the early 20th century, an upscale Meso-American-style hotel stood there. Her great-grandfather used to visit the hotel's post office to send his earnings back to his home village of Wing On Lee, where he intended to retire. The Communist Revolution in the late 1940s ended that dream, though it seems that he never gave up the fantasy of returning, even in the last years of his life. When Aimee was born in 1971, Edward, then in his 80s, named her "Towi Mae," which meant "lush hills and hidden serenity" in ancient Chinese and evoked the quiet farming village where he was born. He died six years later.

In the heavy quiet of a hot day, Aimee and I walked down Central Avenue, past kitschy souvenir booths and shuttered taprooms and taverns, seeking the site of the grocery store. When we reached the address, Aimee stopped and flipped open her folder. From a pile of newspaper clippings and black-and-white images, she pulled out a photo of Fremont's Fine Foods, taken in the early 1920s. It showed a humble storefront draped by a wrinkled portiere. Today, there was no sign of it; the original structure had been demolished and replaced with high-end lofts. In the city she grew up in, my guide seemed lost.

Aimee's hometown embodies the distance she feels from her Chinese identity. Albuquerque is 7,500 miles away from her family's ancestral homeland in Guangdong. Today, only about one out of every 230 Albuquerque residents is of Chinese ancestry, according to city government; almost half are Hispanic, and nearly one in 20 is Native American. The Chinese American community is loosely held together by a few multigenerational families, including the Tangs. Many years, Aimee gathers with other Chinese Americans, mostly seniors, at an annual film festival in a church auditorium. The daylong event features movies and documentaries about the Chinese American experience. Sometimes, she is invited to a birthday celebration, or more likely these days, a funeral of an octogenarian or nonagenarian.

The researchers at the National Archives have yet to find any evidence to disprove the "alleged" father-son relationship between Kee Hung and Edward. Aimee proudly calls Kee Hung her great-great-grandfather. Once, in the research room of the National Archives, I took a photo of Edward and Kee Hung's black-and-white portraits and sent it to Aimee. "We are going to frame it!" she told me. The next day, I followed up with an even older photo of Kee Hung and details of his legal battle. She responded: "Wow! My family is fantastic!"

Aimee is also trying to break the pattern of keeping the family stories quiet, sharing everything she has learned with her daughter, Marisol.

"She's wanting to portray to me that 'I'm going to raise you differently than how I was raised and have you know your heritage very, very clearly,'" Marisol told me.

Last year, Marisol posted "Stop Asian Hate" in "big, big letters" on her social media. When her friends asked her about her Chinese heritage, she realized how little she knew. Now, all that has changed — she knows where her family came from, and how they settled in the U.S. "Knowing that my family has fought for their rights is very cool," she said. "If that never happened, I don't think I'd ever be who I am, or what I am."

Once the pandemic ends, mother and daughter hope to visit Wing On Lee, walk the fields and meet their Chinese relatives. "If my besties say that 'You're not really that connected to your Chinese side,' I can say, 'Oh, yes, I am.'"

Marisol giggled. "And I have proof."

WEB EXTRA Find documents from the archives used to report this story, including court filings, family photos and maps of Albuquerque from the early 20th century at **hcn.org**.

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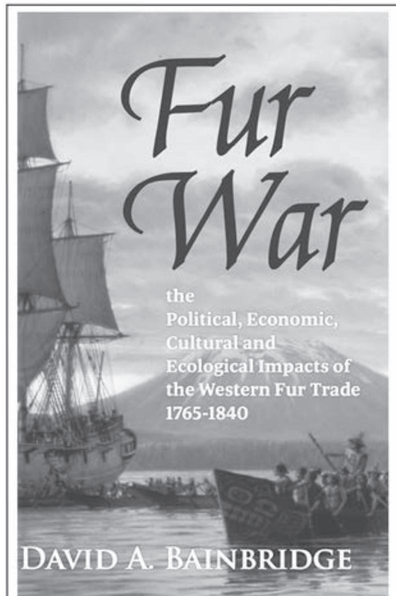

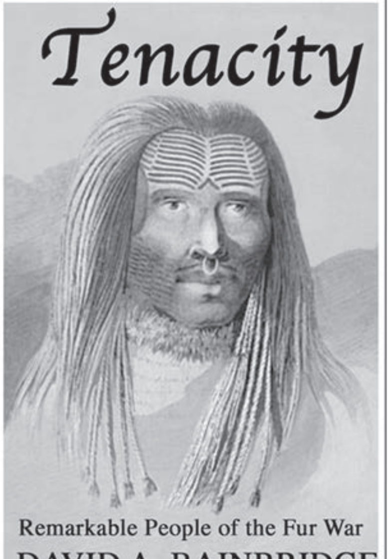

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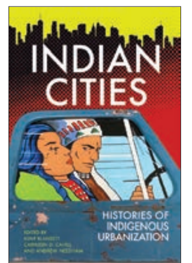

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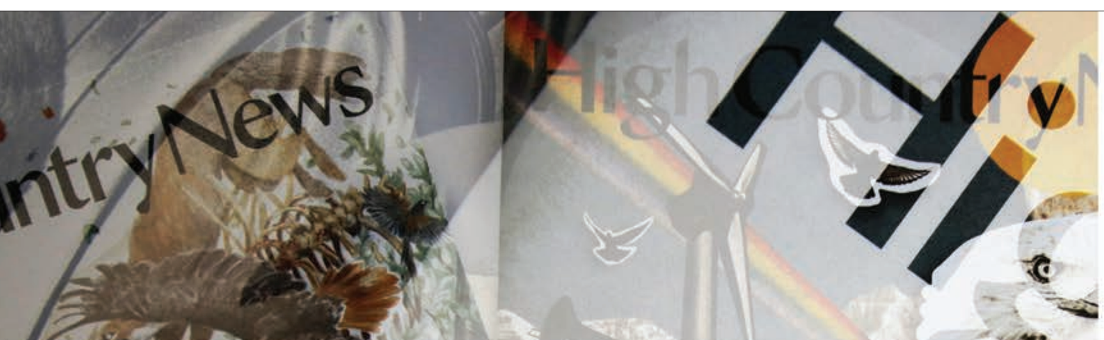

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Shell Game

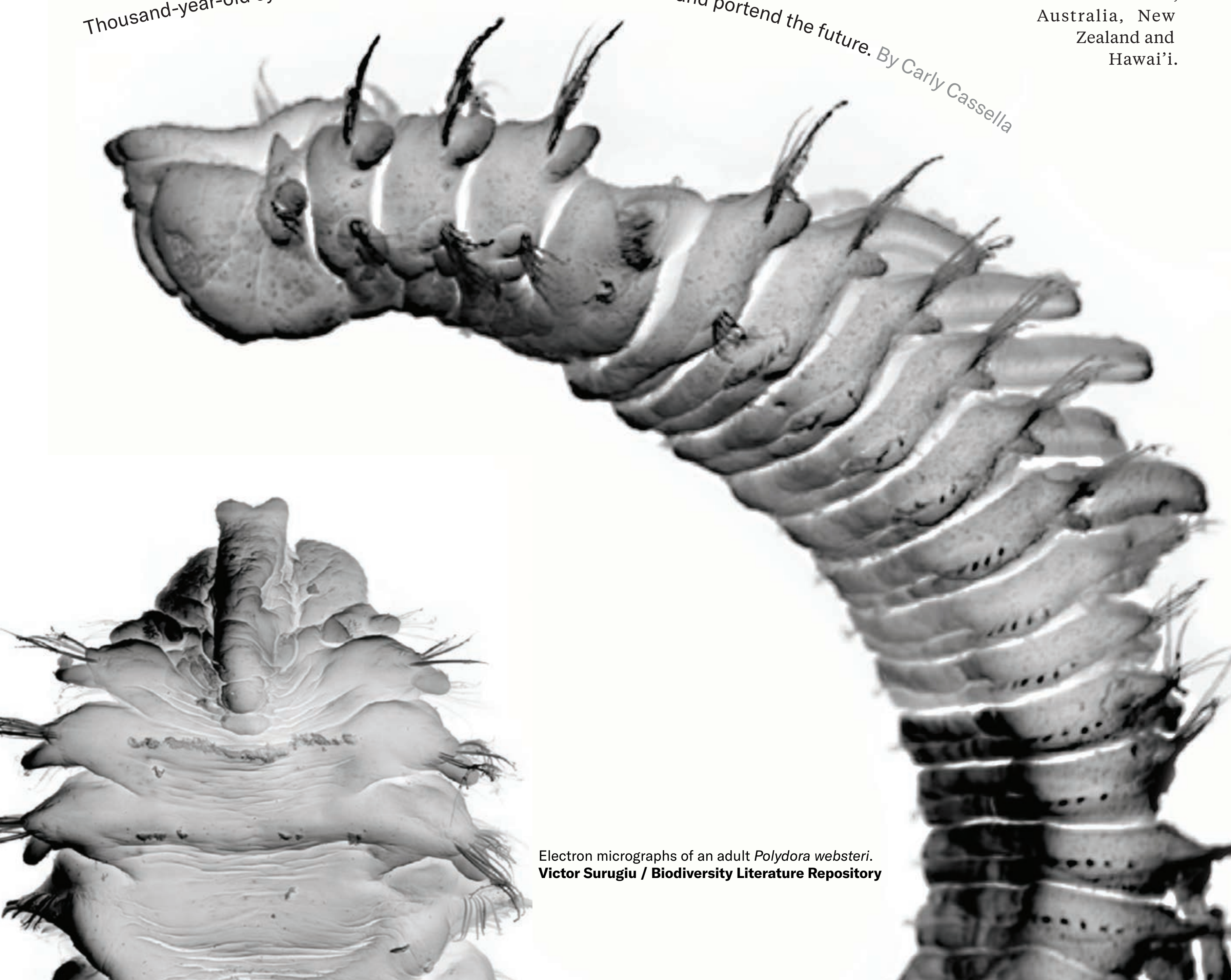
Thousand-year-old oysters could reveal a mystery parasite's past — and portend the future. By Carly Cassella

A DOZEN TWISTS OF A KNIFE were all it took to tarnish the unblemished reputation of Washington's oysters. It was 2017, and Teri King, an aquaculture specialist for Washington Sea Grant, a marine research institute, had been invited to shuck shellfish at a seafood event in Shelton, Washington. She was there to teach people about the local oyster industry, which is prized for producing delicious half-shells with perfect, pearly white interiors. But her lesson soon took a dark turn. As she wedged her knife under the lip of an oyster, it split a hidden blister inside the shell.

King watched in disbelief as black ooze bled into raw meat. "I don't know what's happening here," she remembers telling her audience. "But let's find you some better oysters." To her embarrassment, it kept happening. It took 13 or 14 oysters before she finally produced a presentable half-shell. King had occasionally noticed these blisters during her 30-year career, but she'd never before seen so many at once.

From Massachusetts to the Gulf of Mexico, it's common to find oyster shells in the United States marred by dark blisters and burrows — the scars of shell-boring mud worms. The most commonly recorded is *Polydora websteri*. Measuring roughly three-quarters of an inch, *P. websteri* makes its home by burrowing into oyster shells and sticking its palps out into the ocean to feed. In response, the oyster secretes a brittle layer of shell between itself and the invader, like an older sibling dividing a shared room. Behind this barrier, the worm continues digging out more space, creating a bubble that gradually fills with its own waste and seafloor sludge. Mud worms don't typically kill oysters or poison the meat for humans. But they can curb oyster growth — and tank market value.

No one knows where *P. websteri* originated, but over centuries, it has hitched a ride around the world with the global oyster trade, triggering major infestations that have collapsed half-shell companies in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Hawai'i.



Electron micrographs of an adult *Polydora websteri*.
Victor Surugiu / Biodiversity Literature Repository

More recently, the parasite has been reported in Oregon, California and British Columbia. Washington, however, seemed unaffected, a half-shell haven. Today, the majority of the state's oysters are sold raw, and King knew an invasion of mud worms could upend the market. With no prior scientific reports of the parasites in Washington, however, she couldn't tell if this was a recent invasion, or if small numbers had been here for centuries and were only now proliferating because of some change in the environment. King decided to call Chelsea Wood, a University of Washington parasite ecologist.

In 2018, King, Wood and Julieta Martinelli, a postdoctoral researcher in Wood's lab, began a project to evaluate *P. websteri's* past in Washington, using the structure and chemistry of oyster shells as an archive of marine conditions over time. They started by mapping the distribution of modern mud worms along the U.S. West Coast. From California to Alaska, more than 30 oyster growers and tribes offered up shells. With careful tweezer work, the researchers pulled mud worms from 25% of the samples. The Washington oysters were no exception: In parts of south Puget Sound, the infestation rate was as high as 53%.

But there was one difference. Almost all the worms from the West Coast had DNA that matched *P. websteri*, which suggests species invasion. In Puget Sound, Hood Canal, Samish Bay and Willapa Bay, however, about three-quarters of the blisters derived from a mystery parasite, one that didn't align with any other mud worm species on record. At least, not records kept by humans.

IN THE FALL, MARTINELLI invited me to Wood's lab to see the blisters for myself. Pulling open the top drawer of a cupboard, she flicked through bags of shells like folders in a file cabinet, squinting through the transparent plastic. "Here, I don't know if you can see those," she said, opening a bag and shaking out a shell. "It's crazy how your eye gets trained." On the inside rim, I could just make out a black pinprick that Martinelli identified as a mud worm burrow. Grabbing another shell, she showed me the next and more obvious stage of infection, which resembled a small charred blister on a pizza crust. Martinelli couldn't tell by sight if it was caused by *P. websteri* or the mystery parasite. But, in some ways, it didn't matter: Either can cause extensive damage.

To track the infestation, Martinelli and her colleagues have made "wanted" signs showing mud worms and their markings, so that oyster growers can contact them if they see any. The posters will hang in shucking rooms up and down the West Coast. Chris Burns, a natural resource technician for the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, told me he had no knowledge of the parasites until Martinelli showed him the blemishes. "They're present, but they aren't really a problem at this time," he said. "Not that they couldn't become one." While the tribe's beach in Sequim Bay has relatively low rates of infestation, in other areas, the blisters are a bigger problem.

Martinelli suspects these hotspots feature environmental conditions that suit the parasite best. She is now comparing shorelines to see whether factors like farm density, ocean temperature, or tidal heights can explain the recent uptick. But it's hard to draw conclusions without a historical reference point. Martinelli needed to compare modern conditions to those of the past.

Fortunately, ancient oyster shells are unrivaled archives. Not only can they preserve traces of shell-boring parasites for more than half a billion years, they also faithfully record changes in the marine environment. When an oyster grows, it pulls dissolved calcium and bicarbonate from the water to create a calcite shell. This process forms periodic growth lines from the inside out that retain chronological

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Schussing through time

Kate Samworth / HCN

Feeling nostalgic about neon ski-suit onesies? Intrigued by ski bindings from the 1930s and curious how their users made it downhill alive? Ever wonder who was the first to ski Big Cottonwood Canyon in Utah's Wasatch Range, a once-quiet area now chock-full of resorts?

The Utah Ski and Snowboard Archive holds the answers. In 1989, Gregory Thompson, former associate dean for special collections at the University of Utah's Marriott Library, and the late Sue Raemer, a ski instructor and the library's development director, started the collection to preserve a slice of the Intermountain West's ski history. This comprehensive archive takes us from the 1870s to the mid-2000s, documenting the region's ski competitions, the founding of its major resorts, the growing understanding of snow safety and avalanche control and the evolution of equipment and style. The 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympic Games are covered, as are cross-country skiing, backcountry skiing, freestyle skiing and even the relative newcomer on the scene — snowboarding. The archive, which centers on Utah but also has materials from other Western states, features 300 oral histories from ski industry pioneers, 500 video and audio tapes, more than 300,000 photos, resort lift and layout maps, even old competition rosters and lift tickets.

Incredible stories are woven into the collection. Norwegian immigrant Alf Engen, for instance, came to the U.S. as a young man, his only English words "coffee" and "donut." Engen went on to set numerous ski-jumping world records, helped coach the U.S. Olympic ski team — his two younger brothers were members — and taught thousands to love skiing as a ski school director at Alta Ski Area. *—Kylie Mohr*

records of water temperature, acidity, salinity and turbidity, much the way tree rings register weather history. By grinding down and chemically analyzing oyster shells from different times, it's possible to track an ecosystem's changing conditions, revealing rising pollution, warming waters, escalating acidification or species invasion — all of which could help explain when mud worms arrived in Washington and why they are suddenly thriving.

But in a tsunami-prone region like coastal Washington, oyster shells are easily washed away. For months in 2019, Martinelli searched the shore for ancient samples to no avail. After hearing of her struggles, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe offered her a collection of thousand-year-old shells from a cooking pit near their shore.

Today, most of the oysters on Washington's beaches are invasive, introduced from Japan a little more than a century ago. Populations of the sole native oyster, the Olympia, have plummeted by more than 95%, due to overharvesting and pollution. Now, however, several tribes are trying to revive Olympia oysters to restore the foundation of their shorelines. Burns, who leads the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's restoration project, hopes Martinelli's research can provide restoration targets for the tribe. The ancient shells, for instance, could reveal what Sequim Bay's water quality was like before a 19th century mill yard smothered its native oysters with floating logs and sinking bark.

Martinelli found only one other collection of ancient oysters. One day, a local geologist tipped her off about a slice of uplifted shore near Hood Canal. Guided by a map and GPS coordinates, Martinelli lugged 10 buckets into Theler Wetlands Belfair Nature Preserve. After winding along a series of floating boardwalks, she jumped down into a small stream. Trudging through the shallows, she noticed something shiny in the muddy banks. With the tip of her boot, she uncovered a layer of oyster shells, polished by a thousand years of erosion. Back in the lab, Martinelli began preparing the shells for chemical analysis to determine what Olympia habitat once looked like. That's when she noticed some dark marks around the shell's rims. To the naked eye, they looked exactly like the burrows on modern oysters.

HISTORICALLY, PARASITES have been considered a drain on ecosystems. But recent research suggests they are in fact important managers of natural communities, keeping food webs, biodiversity and keystone species, including oysters, in balance. Parasitism is arguably the most common lifestyle on Earth. Yet scientists estimate that up to 95% of parasitic worms remain undescribed.

Calling the new mud worm in Washington a mystery is, therefore, a bit misleading: All mud worms are mysteries. "We have almost no information about what happened with wildlife disease in the past," Wood told me. "Almost none." Martinelli and Wood don't yet know whether the mystery worm is responsible for the burrows on ancient Olympias. To figure that out, they intend to scan ancient and modern oyster burrows and compare their features. If the mystery worm really has been in the region for millennia, then the next question is: Why have we only just noticed?

It's unclear how Washington's oysters will fare if mud worms continue to proliferate. Even if the mystery worm turns out to be native, the habitat in which it evolved has been altered by centuries of human influence. Clumps of invasive oysters are now concentrated on Washington's shores, where ocean acidification might be weakening their shells. The archive they create in the coming decades may chronicle an entirely new chapter for Washington's shorelines — and its oysters.

WEB EXTRA photos of the 1,000-year-old oysters and a video of the mystery parasite at **hcn.org**.

MORE ARCHIVES

A bright and hoppy Oregon history

Kate Samworth / HCN

A hundred years ago, Polk County, Oregon, called itself the "Hop Center of the World." A little self-aggrandizing, sure, but accurate: By producing the key ingredient for brewing beer, Oregon's hop industry powered American beer making throughout the 20th century. And since 2013, Tiah Edmunson-Morton, an archivist at Oregon State University, has been collecting the industry's ephemera and records for the Oregon Hops & Brewing Archives.

Edmunson-Morton sifts through retirees' garages and scans Facebook pages, collecting oral histories and cataloguing documents from Oregon breweries. The result is a trove of technical research, beer koozies, trade magazines, photographs and historical writing about the lives of pickers, brewers and farmers, illustrating the contours and culture of 150 years of Oregon history — from Chinese immigrant farmers, who were integral to the economy but excluded from landownership, to the Native American migrant workers who traveled from newly created reservations to pick hops. Edmonson-Morton also chronicles the role of women in the industry and teaches classes and writes about hop history.

The archive records the past, but it is by no means stuck there: Edmunson-Morton continues to collect material from contemporary breweries, creating a record of Oregon's lively present-day beer scene. She tables at festivals, finds donors to help the cause, and joins every beer or hop-related organization she can find. "This was not something I wanted to do for my love of the beverage," she said, "but more out of a love for place and good stories." *—Theo Whitcomb*

The Children at Rest in 4-H Park

The city of Albuquerque is finally working to address the legacy of its boarding school cemetery.

BY KALEN GOODLUCK | ILLUSTRATION BY J.D. REEVES

Sources *(clockwise from top left):* Campus map, Albuquerque Indian School Yearbook, courtesy of Lester Brown; Aerial image of 4-H Park, Kalen Goodluck; Memorial in 4-H Park, Kalen Goodluck.

THE ALBUQUERQUE INDIAN SCHOOL has been a constant in Lester Brown's life. In 1946, at the age of 4, Brown, originally from Ganado, Arizona, in the Navajo Nation, began attending it. His parents worked there, his father as an engineer and football coach, and his mother at the cafeteria and girl's dormitory. The family lived in a house on school grounds, where the land seemed open, filled with apple orchards and vineyards that his father cared for. The school screened movies and held church services in the auditorium. By Brown's account, it was a community pillar — but the pillar's foundation was troubled.

"My mother knew some of those who were buried there," Brown said on the phone in February. She never told Lester their names. "She just said (they were) her friends."

Originally established by the Presbyterian Church, the school soon became part of the U.S. campaign to separate Native children from their families and communities and assimilate them more thoroughly into the dominant white Christian culture. From 1881 until 1981, it took children, mainly from the nearby Pueblo nations and Diné communities. Like most such boarding schools, it had the trappings of an educational institution — a cafeteria, dormitories and a hospital. But it also had a cemetery for the children who did not survive.

Today, that cemetery lies beneath the eastern corner of what is now the 4-H Park, just two miles north of downtown Albuquerque. Nobody knows for sure how many children are buried there, though in a 1973 interview with the *Albuquerque Journal*, former caretaker Ed Tsyitee, who oversaw the cemetery from 1932 until 1964, estimated that there were roughly 25 to 30 student burials. Tsyitee's comments came after city workers discovered children's bones while digging trenches for the 4-H Park. Albuquerque's park planners, it seemed, had completely forgotten about the cemetery.

Five decades later, the cemetery still lacks tombstones, a fence, or a caretaker. It seemed doomed to remain in a kind of limbo, cut off from the affected communities. But during the summer of 2021, in the wake of the discovery of mass graves at the Kamloops Residential School in Canada, the city of Albuquerque finally began to shake off its colonial apathy. As part of an effort to work with Pueblo and tribal nations in addressing the cruelties of the past, the city is trying to identify the buried children and track down their families. Time, fire and flooding have devoured many of the documents that could help identify burials. But there is hope that healing can begin if the city tends to the wounds that were neglected for so long.

"This is an issue that has been sitting around simmering for over a hundred years," said Terry Sloan, Albuquerque's intergovernmental tribal liaison and a leading member of the city's 4-H cemetery working group.

In August 2021, the city began engaging with leaders from the Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, the Apache, Ute Mountain Ute, Southern Ute, Hopi, Salt River Pima tribes and the Maricopa Indian Community, as well as other communities across the region. The outreach effort began after a plaque acknowledging the Native students buried at the site was stolen. The outreach meetings evolved into a community-wide effort, seeking out stories and oral histories and searching for documents and information about anyone who attended the boarding school.

The working group has been busy. In January, it held a series of virtual community listening sessions, in which people shared what they knew of the school. At least two participants, including Sloan, had relatives who attended it. The group also consulted with Heidi Todacheene (Diné), a senior advisor in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and head of its Boarding School Initiative. More recently, the city enlisted experts to use ground-penetrating radar, a non-destructive tool that doesn't disturb the burials, to analyze the site. Their findings have not been released to the public.

Officials like Sloan have been adamant about consulting with Pueblo and other tribal nations throughout the process, informing them of their findings before making any public disclosure to honor their ancestors and the privacy of everyone involved. Uncovering a sacred burial site is a delicate matter. Some tribes have not responded to the working group, said Sloan, noting that there are cultural reasons why some people are unwilling to engage in the process or disturb the site. Burial rites are sensitive, and respect for the dead is paramount.

Documentation of the school's history is patchy and spread across a gamut of archives. Theodore "Ted" Jojola (Pueblo of Isleta), a professor at the Community and Regional Planning Program at the University of New Mexico, has exhibited a photographic history at the Albuquerque Museum. The old black-and-white images show the school's growth and decline, marking disease epidemics as well as changes in the surrounding community when new housing and streets were built and development occurred.

The new group has collected information from the First Presbyterian Church and UNM's oral history collection, as well as photographs from the National Archives and old yearbooks collected by the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. John Graham's extensively researched book, *Education at the Edge of Empire*, describes the health care students received at the school's hospital and notes that a dozen deaths, mainly from influenza and measles outbreaks, were recorded at the school between 1921-1926. Stories of abuse at Indian schools are widespread in the U.S. and Canada, but it is unclear whether faculty treatment factored into any student deaths at the Albuquerque School. Conditions there were primarily recorded by government officials and school staff.

As far as health care goes, "they did the best they could," said Joe Sabatini, a retired Bernalillo County librarian who wrote a report on the school while doing research for the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center's archive and library in 2012.

Sabatini hopes that the group will continue to find new information. But he is also realistic; by now, most of those who remembered the school have probably passed away. The group has left few stones unturned. "There's this so-called mythical notebook out there that contains information on plot locations and the names of those individuals who are buried," Sloan said, but the group believes that the notebook, if it existed, has likely been lost to flood or fire. Even so, he is quick to add, the work still has value. It is not just about digging up new information; it's about acknowledging the tarnished relationship between the city and the Indigenous communities and providing a sense of closure to everyone involved. "We may not have those answers ever," Sloan said. "But we want to arrive at a process that provides healing and reconciliation to the issue itself."

In mid-February, Lester Brown toured the former grounds, communing with the ghosts of the past. The football field is now a vacant lot, and the hospital is now a Holiday Inn. A sprawling parking lot and several businesses occupy the old school's grounds. And Brown's childhood home next to the former hospital is now the site of a road separating the hotel from a nearby Starbucks. The house itself, like the past Brown remembers, lives on, but only in his memory.

"They never put any headstones or anything up," said Brown. All these years, tribal citizens were left to wonder about the lost children — who they were, where their families were, and why they never made it home again.

WEB EXTRA See documents used to report this story, including historic photos and a timeline of the 4-H Park site, at **hcn.org**.

Heard Around the West

Tips about Western oddities are appreciated and often shared in this column. Write heard@hcn.org.

BY TIFFANY MIDGE

CALIFORNIA

For the longest time, I thought a local restaurant was called "The Hungry Bear." It was actually "The Angry Bear," and its name gave me pause, or should I say "paws?" Because why on earth would diners elect to eat somewhere "angry?" "Hungry bear" seems more accurate, especially now that we've met "Hank the Tank," the famous black bear who's been beary, beary busy the last few months pillaging a Lake Tahoe neighborhood. Peter Tira, a spokesperson for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, told *SFGATE* that the big bear is "severely food habituated," meaning that he's "lost all fear of people" and associates humans with dinner. Neither the authorities nor the animal advocacy groups had reached a consensus on exactly what to do with the destructive bear, but his fate looked grim — until DNA evidence taken from the scenes of the crimes, showed that Hank was not the only culprit; he had accomplices. According to the wildlife agency, at least two other bears were also responsible for the break-ins at South Lake Tahoe homes. This is a major break for Hank the Tank: Officials say they have withdrawn plans to capture and euthanize him, and instead will "trap tag and work to relocate habituated bears." "All of these efforts are focused on keeping residents safe, and enabling safe and healthy conditions for these bears," the agency said.

Armando Veve / HCN

WASHINGTON

Blink, and you might miss the lede: "Pirate bar faces mutiny over 'catch the virus' show." Wait — there are pirate-themed bars? Well, shiver me timbers. When Vessel Taphouse in Lynnwood, Washington — which proudly proclaims itself "western Washington's only true pirate bar" — advertised discounted drinks for patrons sick with COVID-19, all hell and the Kraken broke loose. Bands canceled their gigs, employees quit, regulars stopped coming ashore. "Come and see the show, maybe catch the virus or just stay home and whine," Vessel Taphouse posted to Facebook. "Tickets 10 bucks or 6 with proof of positive Omicron test!!!" Owner Steve Hartley told *The Daily Herald* that the post was "an ill-advised attempt at humor." Perhaps next time, instead of hoisting the "*Yikes!*" flag, Hartley will think better of it and shove any similar ideas all the way to the bottom of Davy Jones' locker.

OREGON

After a one-year pandemic pause, the Joriad North American Truffle Dog Championship was back in full swing this February in Eugene, Oregon, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported. Oregon is a major producer in the U.S. truffle market, and the Joriad Championship is North America's only truffle dog competition. For those new to the truffle game, the little delicacy is a strong-smelling fungus that grows underground. Specially trained animals are used to dig them up; if you're Nicolas Cage, it's probably a pig, but sometimes it's a dog. Truffles have long been a treat; the ancient Romans believed that they were the result of lightning striking damp earth, while modern-day Italians refer to them as "fairy apples," hinting at their magical qualities. Chefs around the globe agree that truffles are among the most sought-after gastronomic "gems," making the Joriad Championship, in the culinary sense, an unusually tasty gold rush. In just one hour, six dogs snuffled up roughly $1,000-worth of the fabulous fungus. "Our mechanism to lift Oregon truffles into the pantheon of delicacies was to introduce truffle dogs," said Charles Lefevre, of the Oregon Truffle Festival. This year, Mia, a Lagotto Romagnolo from McMinnville, Oregon, took the championship after rooting out 35 truffles in 60 minutes. When Mia was asked how winning the Joriad feels, she replied, "Truffle hunting is ruff-ruff." Or at least that's what we think she said.

CALIFORNIA

What has 2,000 quills, a prehensile-tail, and an almost-40-foot circumference? Why, it's an extraordinary porcupine puppet named Percy, of course. Percy is said to stand nearly two stories tall and rejoice in a nose the size of a Volkswagen. *ABC News* reported that a joint project of the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance and Jim Henson's Creature Shop will help celebrate the opening of the zoo's new Wildlife Explorers Basecamp. If you're wondering, "Do you mean *the* Jim Henson, of *Sesame Street*, *The Muppet Show*, and *The Dark Crystal*?" you would be correct: Yes, that Jim Henson, pioneer and award-winning innovator of puppetry and animation. "We've done some fantasy creatures a little bit bigger, but in terms of duplicating an animal, it's the biggest we've ever done," said Peter Brooke, creative supervisor for Jim Henson's Creature Shop. Don't worry about getting too close; those quills might look sharp, but they're only foam rubber.

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#IAM THE WEST

MARCUS HARRISON GREEN
Writer and Publisher
Seattle, Washington

I say I dream for a living, because that's what writing really is. Just trying to, in some way, capture the feeling and the emotion of life. When you write, how can you make sure that what you're expressing resonates with a person? How do they feel it? How do they see it in their mind's eye? We need to keep that sense of awe.

Society tries to beat that out of us, because so many times society tries to teach us how to conform to a sense of success, or "this is the right way or the right path." I think we stop envisioning and dreaming and using our imagination as we get older. So I say that I dream for a living, and I try to create dreams for other people.

Do you know a Westerner with a great story?
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Chloe Collyer / HCN