

FORT MASON CENTER

by Clifford Uyeda

The present site of Fort Mason Center was inhabited by the Costanoan Indians, who lived along the California coast from Monterey to the Golden Gate. They were the early converts of the Mission of St. Francis, which gave the city of San Francisco its name.

Mission Dolores, which still stands within the city, was the original chapel founded by Spanish missionaries in 1776. Fort Mason was then called Punta Medanos.

The Costanoan Indians produced no cloth. They were, however, excellent basket weavers. In keeping with the mild climate, clothing was simple. During cold weather, men wore deerskin wrapped around the hips. Women wore double aprons of fringed buckskin, shredded bark, grass or fiber. As footwear, they wore deerskin socks.

The Spanish fortified Punta Medanos with five cannons and renamed it La Bateria San Jose, in 1796. Twelve years after Mexico's independence from Spain, in 1832, the garrison officially became a Mexican territory. Then, in 1846, the U.S. took possession of all of California during the Mexican-American War. In 1850, President Fillmore declared the garrison U.S. military property.

During the early gold rush years (1849-52), in the absence of immediate military occupation, gold-hungry civilian squatters moved into the Punta San Jose, built houses, and changed its name to Black Point. A decade later (1863) the Army ousted the civilian squatters and turned the fort into a Civil War harbor defense post.

Fort Black Point was renamed Fort



Pier One, Fort Mason Center

Located a short distance from Fort Mason was the Presidio of San Francisco, headquarters of the U.S. Army Western Defense Command which implemented the Executive Order 9066 leading to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Mason (1882), after Colonel Richard Barnes Mason, military

governor of California from 1847 to 1849.

During the Spanish-American War (1898) supplies were shipped out of Fort Mason to the Philippines.

In the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, Fort Mason became the refugee center and the Army Relief Headquarters for the entire city. Japan contributed a relief fund greater than all other foreign nations combined; yet, six months later the San Francisco School Board removed all children of Japanese ancestry from regular schools and placed them in a segregated school. There were 93

such children, 25 of whom were American citizens.

Fort Mason was established as the San Francisco Port of Embarkation in 1932. During World War II (1941-45) over one and a half million troops and 20 million tons of cargo were shipped out to the Pacific Arena from Fort Mason. Located a short distance from Fort Mason was the Presidio of San Francisco, headquarters of the U.S. Army Western Defense Command which implemented the Executive Order 9066 leading to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. During the Korean War (1950-53) the logistical support of the United Nations forces was headquartered at Fort Mason.

During the period 1962-63, the Army troop transport operations were transferred to Oakland. The upper Fort was kept by the military for officers' clubs and residences. The lower Fort was turned over to civilian use.

In 1972, Congress turned Fort Mason and several thousand acres of California shoreline over to the National Park Service, and designated the site as the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA).

In January 1976, the Fort Mason Foundation was formed to administer a wide variety of programs at the Fort Mason Center.

The latest renovation is at Pier One, which is the future home of NJAHS. The new space at Fort Mason Center will feature the Nikkei Heritage Gallery where NJAHS will continue to explore Japanese American history and experience.

RENEWAL

Fort Mason Center has served as a national model for converting surplus government facilities into civilian use. The 13-acre site is home to 52 non-profit arts, educational and environmental groups. It has been the focal point of a major cultural center for residents and visitors in the Bay Area. In all, over 15,000 events are held here yearly, attracting over two million visitors.

The Fort Mason complex is financially self-sufficient. It provides home for community-based organizations. The Center has made vital and exciting contributions to the cultural diversity of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Looking west toward the Pacific Ocean is an unobstructed breathtaking view of the Golden Gate Bridge. Centrally located on the ground floor of Pier One at Fort Mason Center will be the NJAHS offices and Nikkei Heritage Gallery.

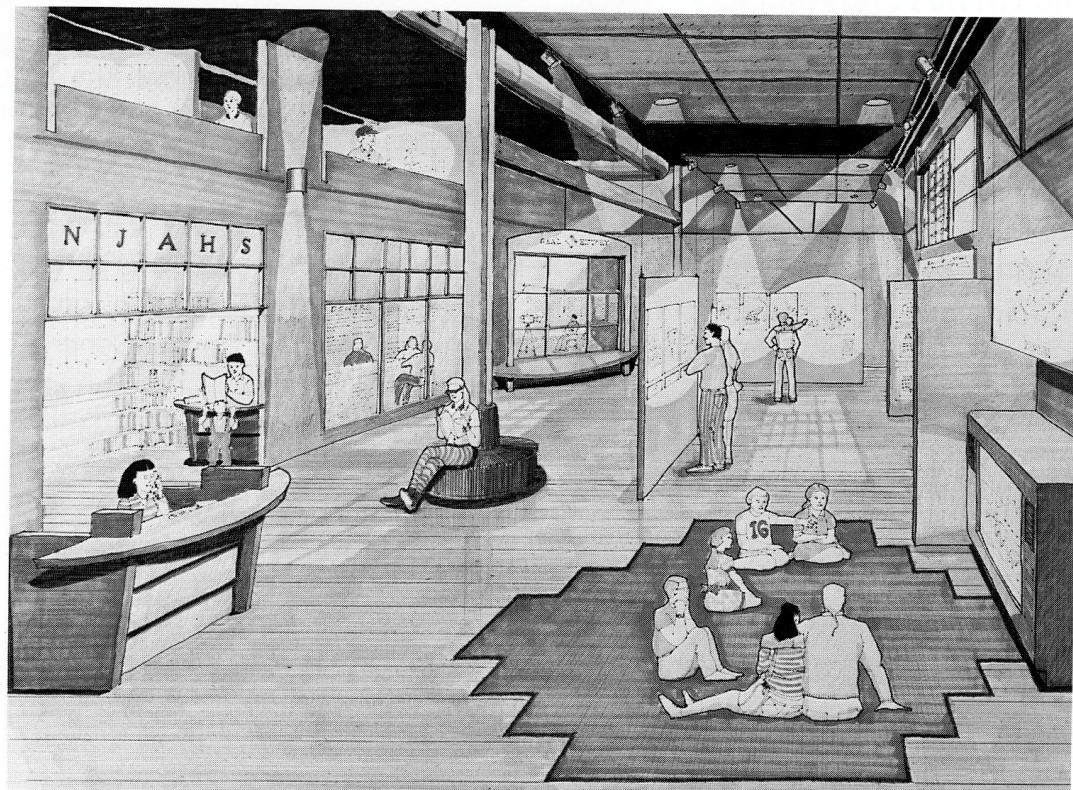
In the past decade, NJAHS has

Working with educators, curriculum specialists, and community advisers, NJAHS is forging a new concept in community education. Our new space will be experiential, engaging, and interactive.

grown from a group of volunteers to a highly esteemed educational and historical resource. Our mission is to research, interpret, preserve, and promote the total experience of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

NIKKEI HERITAGE GALLERY

The majority of the 4,000 square foot space allocated to NJAHS at Pier One will be taken up by the Nikkei Heritage Gallery. The 2,000 square foot gallery will be designed



Interior concept. Nikkei Heritage Gallery. Asian Neighborhood Design.

to present programs of interest to an entire cultural and ethnic spectrum.

Children and adults will be encouraged to interact with the photographs, videos, art, poetry, and sounds in their own way.

Working with educators, curriculum specialists, and community advisers, NJAHS is forging a new concept in community education. Our new space will be experiential, engaging, and interactive.

Moving to Fort Mason Center will enable us to share our experience with a broader audience. Our new home is not a museum. It is a special place for everyone to learn, to interact and to experience ethnic history in a new way.

The Asian Neighborhood Design of San Francisco has been selected

for full architectural services in the tenant improvement renovation of the NJAHS's facility at Pier One.

The NJAHS facility will also include a bookstore and gift shop, a conference room, an oral history room and library, photo archives, work room and storage space.

NJAHS PROGRAMS AT FORT MASON CENTER

Fort Mason Center is located in one of the most picturesque section of San Francisco, at the waterfront next to the Yacht Harbor and facing the Golden Gate Bridge to the West.

Among the over fifty organizations already located at Fort Mason are the San Francisco African American Historical and Cultural Society, The Mexican Museum, and The Museo

ItaloAmericano. The Russian/American Exchange Center, Paintbrush Diplomacy, The San Francisco History Association, and a marine ecology education program will also be moving in to Pier One. Our hope is to be able to co-sponsor exhibits and programs with these organizations to promote cross-cultural collaboration and provide a cultural context for historical interpretation.

Finally, the move to Fort Mason Center will enable NJAHS to continue to bring programs of multicultural awareness, historical events, and the arts to the public. *

NJAHS' CAPITAL FUND DRIVE

Your participation in the NJAHS Capital Fund Drive will make possible the realization of our dream. When our gallery and offices open we will cordially invite you to come and enjoy the new facility.

The name of each donor of \$1,000 or more will be acknowledged with a permanently etched name on a glass wall in the Nikkei Heritage Gallery. Special recognition will be made to donors at the Benefactors (\$5,000 - \$9,999) Patron (\$10,000 - \$19,999) and Commemorative (\$20,000 - above) gift levels.

CAPITAL FUND COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Clifford I. Uyeda and Yoshimi Shibata.

Capital Fund Drive Honorary Committee:

Hon. Atsushi Tokinoya, Consul General of Japan

Hon. Frank Jordan, Mayor of San Francisco

U.S. SENATORS:

Hon. Barbara Boxer, CA

Hon. Dianne Feinstein, CA

Hon. Daniel K. Inouye, HI

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Hon. Robert T. Matsui, Sacramento, CA

Hon. Norman Y. Mineta, San Jose, CA

Hon. Patsy T. Mink, HI

Capital Fund Drive brochure was designed by Janice Kawamoto.

We have already received over \$100,000 in contributions for the Building Fund toward the goal of \$300,000.