

CHINA CAMP STATE PARK
Route 1
San Rafael
Marin County
California

HALS CA-13
CA-13

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

CHINA CAMP STATE PARK

HALS NO. CA-13

Location: Route 1, Box 244, San Rafael, Marin County, CA
Lat: 38.00430 Long: -122.51933

Significance: China Camp is a significant cultural landscape created by Chinese immigrants who established a self sufficient fishing village and introduced shrimp fishing to the San Francisco Bay and new fishing techniques and equipment. China Camp was a thriving community from the 1860s to the 1900s.

History: China Camp is located on Point San Pedro in Marin County on the San Francisco Bay. It is a 1512-acre State Park. During the California gold rush Chinese immigrants came to California from Canton on the delta of the Pearl River where their families had been shrimp fisherman. After the gold rush some of these men became laborers at the McNear family brick plant in San Rafael in 1868. From there they started shrimp fishing and ultimately created a community. The workers developed special 1 bag nets and emptied their catch onto junks and sampans - traditional 1 flat bottomed fishing boats. They sold the shrimp to local restaurants for food and flavoring and made the tails and exoskeletons into chicken feed.

During the 1880s nearly 500 people lived at China Camp. Several buildings and structures remain today including the 1895 general store originally owned by Quan Hung Quock and now operated by his grandson Frank Quan. The shrimp drying shed, a 305 foot pier, a shrimp drying platform, two floating houses, a shrimp grinding shed and several residences also remain. Ultimately the Chinese were driven out by a combination of discriminatory legislation that forbade traditional Chinese fishing techniques, limited the fishing season, prohibited the export of dried shrimp and restricted the size of the catch, and deterioration of the bay waters.

Sources: *China Camp, A History of Chinese Americans In California Historic Sites*,
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Bay Nature article,
http://www.baynature.com/2002janmarch/shrimp_2002janmarch.html

China Camp History, Get Outside, by Alison Hill,
www.sfgate.com/getoutside/1997/may/c.-history.html

China Camp State Park brochure,
www.parks.ca.gov/pages/466/files/ChinaCampsBrochure.pdf

Site visit by Chris Pattillo, December 15, 2008

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Figure 1. Buildings at the pier originally used to process shrimp harvested from the San Francisco Bay and currently used to house interpretive exhibits (Chris Pattillo, December 15,2008).

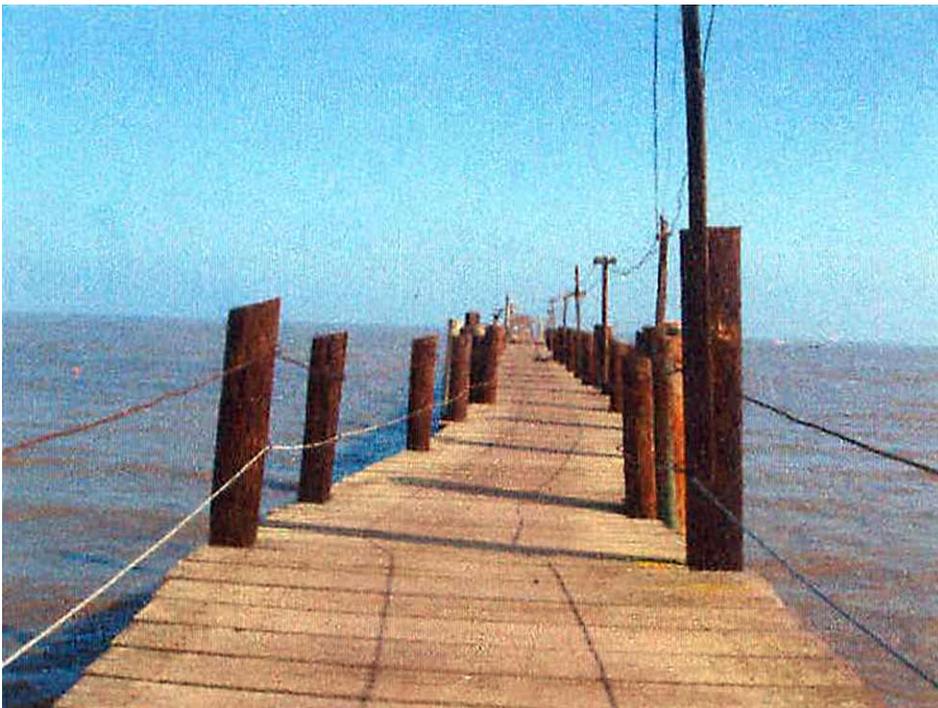


Figure 2. Pier used to access fishing boats (Chris Pattillo, December 15,2008).

ADDENDUM TO:
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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