

Entry 06

Subject: China Point Lookout, Napa

I am a street kid. That's what my brother always called me. Being a street kid in downtown Napa has made me get quite familiar with the terrain. I notice things about downtown Napa that tourists just brush off. One thing I have noticed is the China Point Lookout that overlooks the Riverfront of Napa. For others it is a place to take pictures, or see the scenic views of Napa. For me it means something entirely different. Besides being a beautiful landmark that I have visited numerous times, it represents a darker history to Napa. A part of Napa's history I feel is buried because it doesn't shine a positive light on the valley. But that is exactly why I love it. It tells a story of history. A metal hoop that's slightly rusted, a Moon Gate, looking over the napa river and the riverfront's beautiful buildings. To myself and many others it looks almost like a gate welcoming you to downtown Napa, but what it really represents were those who were never welcomed here.

Napa was built by Chinese immigrants in the 1850's-1900's, just like how Napa is still being built by immigrants today. The Chinese immigrants were laborers during the beginning of Napa's wine industry. The Chinese built railroads, worked in mines, wineries, and farms. They were a large contributor to Napa's economy. However, my least favorite and favorite part of history is that nothing changes. Similar to what I see in Napa currently, the Chinese immigrants were not welcomed by the white population. Napa's white population believed that Chinese immigrants were taking jobs from the white people in the valley. The Chinese were hated, and faced threats of violence from the white locals. Eventually because of discriminatory immigration laws towards the Chinese and the harassment they faced, the Chinese diaspora in Napa were pushed out. This monument is so important and relevant in today's world of hatred towards migrant workers. This monument shows the forgotten history of Chinese people in Napa. If we don't learn from history we will be destined to repeat it. Unfortunately, Napa has a long deep history of racism and it is completely ignored, but Napa's community has to address it in order to fix it. This monument directly addresses the historic problem of racism in the valley rather than just pretending it doesn't exist. I have long dreamed of having a more diverse Napa, and I slowly see that happening. That's why this monument is so important for the future communities in Napa, that Napa owns its past and promises to change.

Napa is changing and I believe it. Every Friday there is a protest by China Point Lookout, where people fight for the rights of immigrants in the valley today. That is why it is so important to preserve this landmark, because it reminds us that we owe the success of this valley to immigrants. If I could I would teach everyone the history of this landmark and ask them to relate it to today's political climate. I know many others in the community would resonate with this story of discrimination. This landmark connects our modern problems to the past. I have hope in Napa to know that we will not repeat the offenses made against the Chinese Immigrants of Napa.