INTRODUCTION

The Journey Begins

It is the summer of 1879, and twenty-eight-year-old Robert Louis Stevenson stands shivering on a train platform in a Jersey City railway station. Exhausted, the lanky and shabbily dressed Scottish author awaits the next leg of his six-thousand-mile journey from Glasgow to San Francisco. Having spent ten days on the SS *Devonia* crossing the Atlantic, he stands among a "babel of bewildered men, women, and children," all waiting for the immigrant train to arrive so they can continue their journey west.[1] Like his fellow passengers, he has come to America hopeful that the life he establishes there will be a prosperous one. Stevenson, a shrewd observer of humankind, documented his journey to the United States in a series of memoirs, published in full in 1895, a year after his death.[2]

These writings provide a rare account of the long and arduous journey through what I call "spaces of immigration." This network of physical spaces—ships, ports, railway stations, train cars, boardinghouses, quarantine stations, and detention buildings—encountered during a migrant's journey has largely been overlooked in scholarship. This is the first book to explore the built environment of the immigration landscape in the United States. During the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the vast majority of immigrants entered the United States by steamship, passed through some form of customs inspection, and journeyed via rail to their intended destinations. These physical spaces form a microcosm for many ongoing conflicts in American society, conflicts driven by politics, capitalism, race, and class. Stevenson, who serves as a kind of avatar in this text, was keenly aware of this, and his writings indicate the spatial sorting of travelers, which was often reinforced within the built environment, as architects and designers intentionally established societal divisions at the

behest of their public or private employers. How immigrants, including Stevenson, navigated or *were* navigated through these transitory spaces is equally important, and this book examines both the physical and experiential environments from entry into the country through settlement. The fundamental inquiry of this book is how the immigration landscape reveals certain truths about American culture, politics, and capitalism. To answer this question, we must explore not only the design of these spaces, including the interiors, furnishings, finishes, and signage, but also look broadly at archival sources from corporate and government records to oral history, poetry, and memoir in order to recreate these often-lost and transitory spaces of immigration. In so doing, we can begin to understand how the built environment promoted an exclusively white definition of American character, one that pervades our society even today.

This approach to architectural history adds materiality to immigration studies as well as nuance to our understanding of the spatial implications of racial prejudice in the construction of modern, capitalist American culture. Weaving together an analysis of physical structures with a range of archival sources allows a deeper understanding of how people actually experienced their surroundings. This interdisciplinary methodology draws on a variety of fields, including social history, human geography, and especially cultural landscape studies, wherein *landscape* refers not only to open space but also to the spatial and cultural relationships between people and their surroundings.[3] Popularized in the 1950s by John Brinckerhoff Jackson, the field of cultural landscape studies posits everyday built spaces as "significant evidence of social groups, power relations, and culture."[4] Historians such as Paul Groth, Jessica Ellen Sewell, and John Michael Vlach, among others, have skillfully employed a cultural landscape approach to their subjects (residential hotels, women in public space, and plantation landscapes, respectively).[5] *Spaces of Immigration* is unique, however, in that it considers a range of buildings, from award-winning monumental works such as the Ellis Island immigration station to temporary lodging houses built by railroad and immigrant laborers in the Midwestern United States. These structures have their own inherent value, yet studying them within the landscape of immigration—a larger network of transitory spaces—reveals a deeper cultural meaning. More specifically, in placing transportation vessels such as ships and trains, and ancillary buildings like railway stations and government immigration facilities within this larger network, we can begin to understand how this particular built environment illustrates partitioning of and attitudes toward the racial, ethnic, and class hierarchies evident in turn-of-the-century American society. Thus, while high-style architecture (i.e., Architecture with a capital A)

is included in this book, different questions are asked of these buildings. The focus is not so much on aesthetics and designers but rather on how these spaces are experienced by occupants, as well as the powerful role of space in the construction of citizenship and identity.

Stevenson arrived in the United States with an exaggerated and romantic view of American democracy, believing he would find an ideal social and politic life. It is perhaps not surprising that the author who would one day pen *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* would penetrate the contradictory heart of social relations in turn-of-the-century America. The east–west transportation network through which Stevenson and millions of others traveled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries forms the basis of this study. Stevenson serves as our guide in navigating not only the literal immigrant journey through ports and the railways but also this complex cultural milieu. He was a man of complexity himself: this "amateur emigrant" could afford first-class passage but traveled in the lower-class compartments on both ship and train (figure I.1). He fancied himself an anonymous pauper and yet came from a wealthy and well-known engineering family. Stevenson's paternal ancestors designed most of the deep-sea lighthouses along the Scotland coast, and his maternal grandfather, Thomas Smith (1752–1815), designed improved street lighting for Edinburgh's New Town. Thus, from a family dedicated to wayfinding comes a young man seeking his own way. Stevenson can be described as a wanderer—traveling to find the right climate for his tubercular lungs, journeying across land and sea in order to escape the life his family had planned for him, and in the case of his journey to San Francisco, for love as he sought to reunite with the American magazine writer Fanny van de Grift Osbourne. This beguiling traveler is candid and sincere in his observations, and yet Stevenson is a gentleman in disguise, documenting the strivings of the masses who escaped their homelands due to poverty, war, or famine, while he himself is profoundly bourgeois and seeking adventure.

Despite the misgivings of family and friends, the quixotic author forged ahead with his travels. Just a year prior to his American voyage, in 1878, Stevenson embarked on a twelve-day, two-hundred-kilometer hiking journey through the Cévennes mountains in south-central France with his donkey, Modestine. At the time, he traveled as therapy—seeking to distance himself from the heartbreak of losing Fanny van de Grift Osbourne, an American woman who had returned to her husband in California. But he also wanted to get his literary career off the ground, and his memoir, *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879), became one of the first works of outdoor travel literature. When Stevenson learned that Fanny was ill,

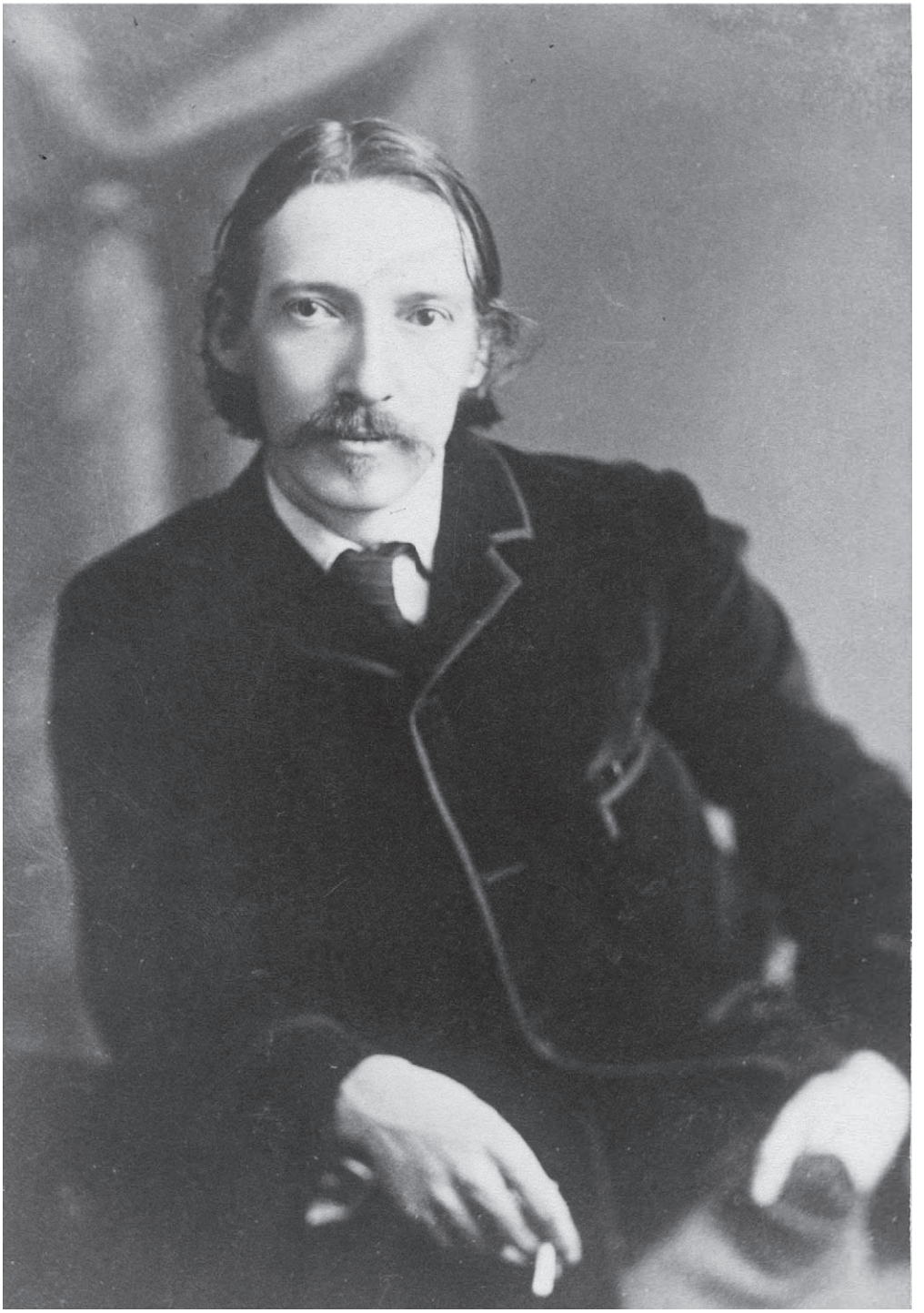

Figure I.1. Robert Louis Stevenson, 1890–1894. Photograph by James Notman. © National Portrait Gallery, London

and that her divorce was nearly finalized, he began his westward journey to San Francisco.

Stevenson's work was met with criticism among his literary circle, and his firsthand experience of an immigrant's journey into the United States so shocked his white middle-class family and friends that the publication was delayed. The first part of Stevenson's journey, by steamship from Europe to New York City, was ready for publication in 1880 under the title *The Amateur Emigrant from the Clyde to Sandy Hook*, but was ultimately withdrawn. Stevenson's family and friends were horrified that he traveled in steerage, and Stevenson's father, Thomas, felt the work was beneath his son's talents. Thomas even purchased all the copies the publisher had already printed to ensure the book would not be released. Yet Thomas's actions were fueled by more than concern for his son's reputation. Thomas maintained a business relationship with the Henderson brothers, who owned the Anchor Line Steamship Company on which Stevenson traveled. Surely a publication revealing the ineptitude of the staff and poor travel conditions would negatively impact the company and Thomas's relationship with its owners.[6] The second part of Stevenson's journey, a train ride from New York to San Francisco, is documented in *Across the Plains*, first published thirteen years later, in 1892. In the final portion of his American journey, published as *The Silverado Squatters* in 1883, Stevenson recounted his and Fanny's honeymoon in Napa Valley, California.

Stevenson is certainly not representative of the typical steerage traveler or immigrant train passenger, but in his narrative, he passed through many of the same physical spaces and endured similar hardships as his fellow travelers. And yet there are notable exceptions, particularly when Stevenson decided to shell out extra cash for a night at a grand hotel—respite from the uncomfortable journey on the immigrant train. While he indulged in a drink and a private room at the Union Pacific Hotel in Council Bluffs, Iowa, his fellow passengers bunked at an austere immigrant boardinghouse or caravanserai, as Stevenson calls it, exoticizing the spare lodgings that, to him, were optional. For the most part, the other immigrant travelers had disparate lifestyles and reasons for migrating. Some traveled for adventure, yes, but most were relocating because it was their only option to advance in life—whether financially or fleeing their home countries for their own safety.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the vast majority of migrants coming to the United States were from northern and western Europe. The arrival of more than a million poor and starving Irish during the Great Hunger of 1845–1852 and the high number of Germans who poured into the country following the 1848 revolution marked a turning

Figure I.2. "The Immigrant: Is he an acquisition or a detriment?," T. Frederich Victor Gillam, *Judge*, September 19, 1903. This cartoon illustrates the country's varying responses to immigration. Uncle Sam, a contractor, and a politician claim benefits while a citizen, health officer, and workman are threatened. The statesman in the top hat at right claims the immigrant remains a puzzle to him. The Ohio State University, Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum

point in American immigration. At the same time, and into the 1860s, a significant number of Asian immigrants also arrived, seeking fortune in the gold mines of the American West, and many found employment with the railroad companies.[7] This period of mass migration sparked much anti-immigrant prejudice and nativist propaganda, as revealed in the political cartoons of the day. By the time of Stevenson's journey in 1879, the tides of immigration had turned once again. Restrictive legislation against the Chinese and changing conditions in Europe led to growing numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe—people whose unfamiliar languages, different religions, and darker complexions alarmed an Anglo-Protestant citizenry (figure I.2). In nineteenth-century America, the credo of Manifest Destiny emerged in defense of an exclusively white Christian nation, which, as historian Charles L. Davis II notes, "pitted

white colonial settlers against Indigenous peoples, formerly enslaved Africans, and other migrant laborers of color."[8]

Indeed, race and ethnic identity as the basis for constructed societal divisions forms a crucial component of immigration studies, particularly in a nation built on colonization. The outmoded concept of the United States as a "melting pot," implying a loss of immigrant culture and assimilationist thinking, has shrewdly been dismantled by scholars.[9] Author and playwright Israel Zangwill coined the phrase in his 1908 play titled *The Melting Pot*. The play's main character, David Quixano, hoped for a world free from ethnic divisions, following the murder of his immediate family in a pogrom that forced him to emigrate from Russia to the United States. To him, America resembled a refuge from persecution: "America is God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming. Here you stand [. . .] Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American."[10] While Zangwill's play emphatically insisted that America was a place where hatred had no home, American novelist Toni Morrison noted that the melting pot metaphor denies inclusion of Black people, who were brought against their will to America and enslaved. She posited instead that Black people *were* the pot, "and everything else was melted together."[11] Scholars such as Grace Elizabeth Hale, Matthew Frye Jacobson, and David Roediger have explored the making of this segregationist culture and how the construction of whiteness, particularly its shifting definition over time and place, has helped shape the United States' immigration policy.[12]

The capitalist framework in which the transportation companies benefited from mass migration was also shaped by racism. Railroad companies, for example, developed settlements in the Midwestern United States during the nineteenth century, and they worked alongside state governments to publish brochures and pamphlets that advertised the benefits of a particular area or region. These advertisements were selectively circulated to only those foreign countries from which railroad and government officials wished to attract settlers—that is, mainly northern European countries. Railroad companies (themselves owned and operated by white men) popularized the notion that white immigrants were the best racial stock for American development. The prejudice evident in these publicity campaigns was also revealed in the physical spaces of the railways. One of the most explicit examples is the segregated immigrant waiting room found in railway stations across the United States—in cities like Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Kansas City. These rooms were in stations that received the most immigrant passenger traffic—that is, on the coasts at

ports of entry and in the large Midwestern cities where multiple rail lines converged, usually at the aptly named Union Station. These rooms served a dual purpose: on the one hand, immigrants were protected from those seeking to take advantage of them (there were many of these swindlers, unfortunately), and on the other hand, foreign travelers were kept separate from United States citizens who did not want to be exposed to them. Segregated spaces for immigrant travelers were not limited to the stations but also on locomotives themselves in individual railcars or sometimes entire trains. None of this segregation was accidental. These were specifically designed spaces to direct the movement of large groups of people.

Immigrant waiting rooms were a critical part of the entire network of spaces of immigration: not just in the railroad infrastructure—the miles after miles of track laid, the stations, the settlements—but also in the American cultural landscape, where the effects remain well over a century later. The railroads were both a product of an emerging capitalist society and a mechanism of cultural hegemony—a crossroads where commerce also forged culture. The railway system's rapid growth in the nineteenth century, in addition to drastically altering the United States' physical landscape, allowed waves of migrants from eastern states and newly arrived immigrants to travel along rail lines east to west, virtually repopulating the country's interior on lands that were forcibly taken or ceded from Indigenous peoples. To construct a transportation network, railroad companies relied on immigrants for cheap labor and also to purchase land along their completed lines. These people were both potential labor and future consumers. Immigrants were lured by affordable transportation and the chance at a new life advertised to them. For those seeking to escape the poverty, famine, and civil unrest in their home countries, America seemed to offer limitless possibilities. While in many ways the relationship was reciprocal, it was largely controlled by railroad officials, who advertised lands to specific nationalities, determined routes of travel, and denied access based on race and ethnicity. In train cars and station spaces, railway officials drew boundaries, segregating foreign travelers, thus revealing and reinforcing contemporary American prejudices in which immigrants were stereotyped as poor, dangerous, and diseased. Historians Alan Kraut and Amy Fairchild have skillfully revealed how foreigners have continuously been equated with disease and genetic inferiority throughout history.[13]

The physical spaces through which foreigners traveled were also part and parcel of this experience, however—both highly charged and yet largely overlooked in history. It is this gap that this book begins to fill. At the turn of the twentieth century, most European immigrants arrived in New York Harbor, where they gazed at the awe-inspiring sight of the

Statue of Liberty, followed quickly by the stress-inducing inspection procedures of Ellis Island. In early-twentieth-century San Francisco, Angel Island Immigration Station's dreadful conditions were infamous to Asian immigrants, who endured exhaustive interrogation sessions and extended detention periods as a result of the government's racially charged and prohibitive immigration practices during this period. Once immigrants gained entry into the country, a difficult railway journey often bridged their passage from the port of entry to their intended home. In train cars and railway stations, those newly arrived from Italy, Poland, or Russia were segregated from American passengers by virtue of their lower class and national origin. Racial segregation pervaded railway spaces as well, not only for African American travelers in southern and eastern states but also for Asian immigrants and Native Americans in the West. Railway officials carefully monitored immigrant movement through the railway system, both for the travelers' protection—they were often the target of fraud—but perhaps, more significantly, for the comfort and safety of white American citizens. First- and second-generation Americans, as well as those who had immigrated only decades earlier, dissociated themselves from newcomers by virtue of language, skin color, custom, religion, political inclination, and behavior, and projected xenophobic fears of disease and disorder onto them. This is all revealed in the built environment. In Kansas City's Union Station, for example, an isolation room for criminal or diseased passengers is adjacent to the immigrant waiting room, both located at the farthest end of the concourse, removed from the main waiting area. An analysis of the architectural plan reveals a hierarchy of travelers imposed by the railroad companies that owned the station. Railroad officials deemed the criminal and diseased unfit to be grouped, architecturally or socially, with American passengers and are instead put in proximity to immigrant passengers, who were also kept at a distance from other passengers.

Railway companies negotiated the fine balance between addressing the public's concerns and catering to their immigrant customers in the design of their built environment. The railroad served the varied roles of being a business subject to market demands, an intimate space in which passengers came in close contact, and, as historian Amy Richter notes, a "socially diverse and fluid space capable of blurring lines of class and caste."[14] From the railroad officials' point of view, both the American public and immigrants contributed to the companies' profits. Within the spaces of the railways, passengers could potentially converge—upper class and lower class, American citizen and foreigner, white and Black, men and women, Jewish and Christian. They could also be separated from one another.[15]

Cultural historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch wrote that the railways annihilated traditional notions of space and time by establishing standardized time and increasing travel speeds. Increased speeds resulted in a traveler's perception that the distance between places was lessened even though the physical distances remained the same. Schivelbusch terms this travel space the "space in-between."[16] It is within this space that passengers encountered one another, societal divisions were confronted, and the railroad companies attempted to limit those confrontations. The space in-between was far from neutral; it was, in fact, fraught with social meaning. This book expands the notion of the space in-between, which Schivelbusch limits to the railway car, to include the entire network of spaces an immigrant encounters on the journey from one's home country to settlement in the United States. In studying the physical places through which immigrants travel, we can begin to uncover the cultural meaning of the space in-between: while it encompasses the time in passage between stations of arrival and destination, it is also the gap between one national identity and another, and can even be applied to the idea of America itself as a democratic society, one in which the ideals of democracy are often at contradiction with the actions of its government.

The railroads were representative of technological and cultural changes rapidly occurring in Victorian America—an observation that has been well studied in scholarship.[17] Within the space of the railroad, notes Alan Trachtenberg in the foreword to Schivelbusch's *The Railway Journey*, "nineteenth-century people encountered the new conditions of their lives; they encountered themselves as moderns, as dwellers within new structures of regulation and need."[18] Part of these new structures included racial hierarchies, where one group could identify themselves by being placed in opposition to another. Segregation, as historian Grace Elizabeth Hale so aptly describes in her groundbreaking book *Making Whiteness*, "is the product of human choice and decision, of power and fear, of longing, even on love and hate."[19] The space in-between, though technologically modern, relied on historic narratives of race-based subjugation and oppression. Beginning in the post–Civil War era, this opposition revealed itself through the emergence of Jim Crow laws, which legalized racial segregation. American transportation and immigration are both inextricably bound in issues of race and class, and transit was frequently where these racial lines were visibly delineated.

The difference between the segregation of African American and immigrant passengers, however, is significant. In terms of immigrant passengers, the railroads were more often profit-seeking than ideological. Superficially, segregation of Black travelers resembled the segregation

of immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries only insofar as both groups were physically isolated from other passengers.[20] Yet immigrant segregation depended largely on class, at least for European immigrants. Cultural historian Matthew Frye Jacobson has demonstrated how, by the mid-nineteenth century, Americans used race as a social construct to establish hierarchies of power and privilege for those of European descent.[21] If Europeans had enough money to purchase passage in the first-class compartments (unlike Stevenson, the majority did not), railroad officials allowed them to ride with other first-class passengers. Black passengers, Native Americans, and Chinese immigrants, on the other hand, were prohibited from riding in first-class cars even if they had the financial means to do so—restricted mobility was thus not only limited to travel space but also within American society. Historian Amy Richter asserts that, as Americans came to terms with the new experiences of public life, "the renegotiation and imposition of racial identities comprised [. . .] one effort to stabilize social and cultural change on the trains."[22] The railways served as a location where white American citizens seized the opportunity to define themselves as moral, healthy, and educated in opposition to people of color and foreigners, who were screened from their spaces and sight by various means. Historian Robert Weyeneth's conceptual framework of racial segregation as a spatial system, notably his concept of architectural partitioning versus architectural isolation, is especially relevant when examining spaces of immigration.[23] Immigrant trains and waiting rooms, in particular, were sites where segregation of foreign passengers was most prevalent.

Travel space, however, was more complex than either accommodating or reinforcing binaries of east versus west, American versus foreigner, rich versus poor; for white populations this complicated cultural landscape could also render identity fluid, making it capable of shifting over time and place.[24] Of particular importance to this study are the nuances of racial identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Schivelbusch's space in-between thus also serves as a metaphor for the transient nature of migrants—not only in terms of their geographic location but also in terms of their citizenship and their perceived racial identity. While a clear legal line separated citizens from noncitizens, there were significant inequalities among the noncitizens. European immigrants were on a path to citizenship, if they so desired; Chinese immigrants, on the other hand, and later other Asian immigrants, were denied the promise of citizenship. On the West Coast, segregation of Asians was strictly enforced on trains. Euro-American passengers refused to travel with Asian passengers, conforming to anti-Asian biases then prevalent in American society and

immigration policy. As Stevenson notes, in the space of the railways, "hungry Europe and hungry China [. . .] had here come face to face."[25] Although the southern and eastern European immigrants arriving on the East Coast experienced discrimination from American citizens and were segregated on the railways, as they traveled further west, where they encountered Asian, Mexican, and Native American populations, railway officials viewed the Europeans as potential citizens and treated them accordingly. Identity, in this case "whiteness," shifted within the context of physical space. The politics of class are also entwined in this discussion of racial identity, since it was often the lower- and working-class white Euro-Americans who most frequently patrolled these boundaries of whiteness.[26] It was these groups who most often felt threatened by the incoming foreigners, who presented fierce competition in the job market.

This racial discrimination also manifested in American politics. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is frequently described as the first law to bar immigrants on the basis of their race and class, revealing the xenophobia and racism prevalent in American politics and society at the turn of the century. Yet the lesser-known Page Act of 1875, which prohibited entry of East Asian women (assumed to be coming to the United States for prostitution or polygamy), was actually the first restrictive immigration legislation.[27] Both of these laws targeted East Asian immigrants, and historian Erika Lee describes the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act as marking the shift from the country's relatively open-door immigration policy to a new era as a "gatekeeping nation."[28] In addition to economic concerns, particularly immigration's effect on the American workforce, the pseudoscience of eugenics (then part of the emerging field of modern social science and now recognized as unscientific racism and justification for white supremacy) was a guiding force behind much of this legislation, a contemptible effort to justify restrictive legislation.

In 1907, the formation of the US Immigration Commission, more commonly known as the Dillingham Commission after its chair, Senator William P. Dillingham, resulted in a forty-one-volume study published in 1911, wherein the recommendations on immigration restrictions were, in fact, more restrictive than its own evidence.[29] Between 1880 and 1924, when the Johnson-Reed Act imposed national origins quotas, approximately twenty-four million immigrants arrived on American shores, and by the time the joint commission was established, many Americans viewed immigration as a national crisis. By the late nineteenth century, for European Americans whose families had already been citizens for a generation or more, foreigners arriving from southern and eastern Europe (as opposed to earlier arrivals from northwestern Europe) were perceived

as a public threat to the moral and economic health of the nation. Within a decade of the commission's establishment, the government had imposed a literacy test, a quota system based on national origin (which would not be repealed until 1965), and expanded federal oversight of immigration policy. The Dillingham Commission, which also published *A Dictionary of Races or Peoples*, reinforced the use of eugenics to control immigration by creating a hierarchical scale that equated physical attributes (skin color, facial features, etc.) with moral and intellectual qualities.[30] At immigration stations beginning in 1903, officials briefly used the Bertillon system of identification, an anthropometric system of physical measurements of body parts that was first employed in criminology. The time-consuming (and therefore costly) process was eradicated five years later due to objections from immigrant advocates, particularly from Chinese community leaders in San Francisco, who petitioned against the discriminatory procedures at Angel Island Immigration Station.[31] However, the damage could not be undone. The commission's recommendations continue to have a lasting effect on immigration policy, control, and enforcement.

At the turn of the century, the most lucrative years of the railway age, rates of immigration soared. Most of these foreign travelers had crossed the ocean as steerage passengers and endured cramped and poorly equipped steamship quarters for at least a week. Stevenson paid an extra two guineas to travel in the second-class cabin, "a modified oasis in the very heart of the steerages."[32] Although he was "anxious to see the worst of emigrant life," previous travelers had advised Stevenson to take passage in the second-class cabin, where bedding, dishes, and food were provided. For a single man (of financial means) traveling alone, the difference in price between steerage and second class was nominal, as Stevenson himself notes, yet for families traveling together, first by sea and then rail, the price quickly added up.

The steerage and second-class cabins were, however, close in proximity, separated only by a thin partition through which Stevenson could "hear the steerage passengers being sick, the rattle of tin dishes as they sit at meals, the varied accents in which they converse, the crying of their children terrified by this new experience, or the clean flat smack of the parental hand in chastisement."[33] Just as Stevenson would never fully experience the trials of his fellow migrants, he also did not fully experience their discomfort—he was physically adjacent to them, observing from a short distance. This physical barrier divided social classes on the journey, but the distinction was superficial: "In steerage there are males and females; in the second cabin ladies and gentleman. For some time after I came aboard I thought I was only a male; but in the course of a voyage of

discovery between decks, I came on a brass plate, and learned that I was still a gentleman."[34] Stevenson himself remarks on the superficiality of this separation of classes yet indicates that its existence was certainly meaningful. In the second-class cabin, Stevenson was also afforded a table on which he could write his observations. Throughout his ten-day sea voyage, Stevenson often wandered into the steerage compartment to socialize with the passengers and was often taken for a steerage passenger himself, "and there was nothing but the brass plate between decks to remind me that I had once been a gentleman."[35]

It is notable that Stevenson frequently relies on his physical surroundings to assure himself of his identity. One of his biographers, Ian Bell, argues that Stevenson typifies a personality that gravitated toward mutual antagonisms—he lived as a constant exile, belonging to no camp.[36] He was emigrating like the others, certainly, and yet could be separated from his fellow travelers when he wished, spending money to achieve a more comfortable experience. He often spoke of the other passengers from what he believed was his higher station, observing how they "had been unable to prevail against circumstances in the one land, [and] were now fleeing pitifully to another."[37] And yet at other times, Stevenson counted himself among these "broken men of England."[38] In many cases, it seems Stevenson was projecting his own feelings of inadequacy and failure onto his fellow travelers (he had yet to achieve much literary success at this point in his life and relied on his parents for income), and so we must take his musings with a grain of salt. Where Stevenson's text is most useful to this study, however, are his descriptions of travel space. Using these descriptions, we can explore what their design revealed about the society in which they were built.

A discussion of Stevenson's identity is necessary if he is to serve as our guide through this immigration landscape. It is important to emphasize that Stevenson was not one of the foreigners discriminated against by the government and the transportation companies at the time of his travels. A British white male raised in the Protestant faith (although he declared himself an atheist, much to his parents' chagrin), Stevenson was not liable to become a public charge due to his family's wealth, nor was he competition for employment: this sickly man of letters was not in the market for manual labor. And, despite Stevenson's own health troubles, he was not considered a threat to public health. On the contrary, here was a man with the funds to travel to a posh sanatorium in the Alps to regain his strength during the winter months.[39] The passengers with whom he traveled, on the other hand, had drastically different life experiences. Stevenson himself declared the *idea* of immigration—the hope of beginning

anew elsewhere—as distinct from the reality of relocation: "Emigration, from a word of the most cheerful import, came to sound most dismally in my ear. There is nothing more agreeable to picture and nothing more pathetic to behold."[40] There was a disconnect between Stevenson's fantasies of what his fellow travelers would be (young and adventurous single men like himself) and what they actually were: "Comparatively few of the men were below thirty; many were married, and encumbered with families; not a few were already up in years; and this itself was out of tune with my imaginations, for the ideal emigrant should certainly be young."[41] Then, like now, most of those relocating were families seeking better opportunities and safer lives than could be found in their homelands. Despite the fact that Stevenson was an anomaly among his fellow travelers, the journey from homeland to the United States was, for the most part, similar for all of those traveling together in the same compartments, which Stevenson largely did.

Dispensing with some of the biographical factors of Stevenson's life—there are many wonderful volumes dedicated to his life and writings—and taking him at face value for what he says he is—an amateur emigrant, a gentleman in old rags, a scribbler—this book aims to strike a balance between the immigrant's individual experience and the larger cultural and societal factors at play during this time period, which, indeed, remain present today. As Stevenson wrote in his travel memoir, "The individual is more affecting than the mass."[42] Following so famous a character, one who is white, male, and privileged, may seem misleading to a study of immigration, race, and class in turn-of-the-century America, yet Stevenson's travel memoir is one of the most complete texts we have that incorporates discussion of the physical spaces through which immigrants travel. His work thus enables us to follow the journey of an immigrant from one country to another, across both the geographic and cultural space of the United States.

At the heart of this study are the coastal ports of entry, where the majority of immigrants arrived in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the transportation networks and settlement patterns that developed to facilitate immigration into and throughout the country. Because the focus is on the transoceanic transportation networks that developed during this period, north–south migration routes through Canada and Mexico are omitted from this book.[43] Government border stations were first erected at the land borders of Canada and Mexico after the establishment of the US Border Patrol in 1924. This book is not meant to be a comprehensive look at the built environment of immigration throughout American history but is rather meant to serve as a model

for other architectural studies of historical and contemporary landscapes of immigration. Ports and railways, though seemingly only serving as functional way stations for immigrant travelers, were carefully planned and executed spaces regulated by a combination of profit-seeking private enterprise and national racist and xenophobic practices deeply embedded in the American cultural fabric. Even settlement patterns were frequently directed by both public and private interests. The chapters that follow consider not only buildings but also town planning and discriminatory land-use policies, particularly in the western United States, where federal and state land grants allowed railroad companies to plat towns and sell lands along their lines, altering the natural landscape at an alarming rate. As geographer Deryck Holdsworth suggests, we would do well to examine the broader spatial frame surrounding a particular building, which allows architectural historians to form a more thorough understanding of the building, its owners, and its occupants.[44] Examining this larger transportation network, as opposed to studying isolated structures individually, sheds light on the cultural undercurrents informing the design of the built environment and the spatial experiences of those traveling through it.

This book's structure mirrors an immigrant's journey: from ports of arrival, into waiting rooms and segregated trains, and ultimately to settlements. Like Stevenson, whose quotes from *The Amateur Emigrant* form each chapter's subheadings, we move east from New York to west, ultimately ending up in San Francisco, where we expand our discussion to the treatment of Asian immigrants arriving on the West Coast (figure I.3). The physical journey on the rails thus serves as a metaphor for the immigrant's path to citizenship—a journey made easier for some than others. In New York, the first chapter, the government controlled the immigration facilities, first at the state-owned Castle Garden (1855) and then at the federally owned Ellis Island (1892). In both facilities, multiple railroad companies operated within a pool to form an extensive transportation network that enabled passengers to quickly pass through inspection and onto waiting trains out of the city. This important shift from state to federal control is revealed in the architectural design of the buildings. The crowded and chaotic atmosphere of Castle Garden, a circular fortress turned entertainment venue turned immigration facility, was replaced by the purpose-built, rectilinear design of the station on Ellis Island, wherein passengers were moved through the space in a carefully controlled and efficient manner.

In New York Harbor, the surrounding rail terminals worked in conjunction with the government to shuttle immigrants onto waiting trains. With the high numbers of passengers concentrated at these train stations, the railroad companies erected immigrant waiting areas on the shoreline,

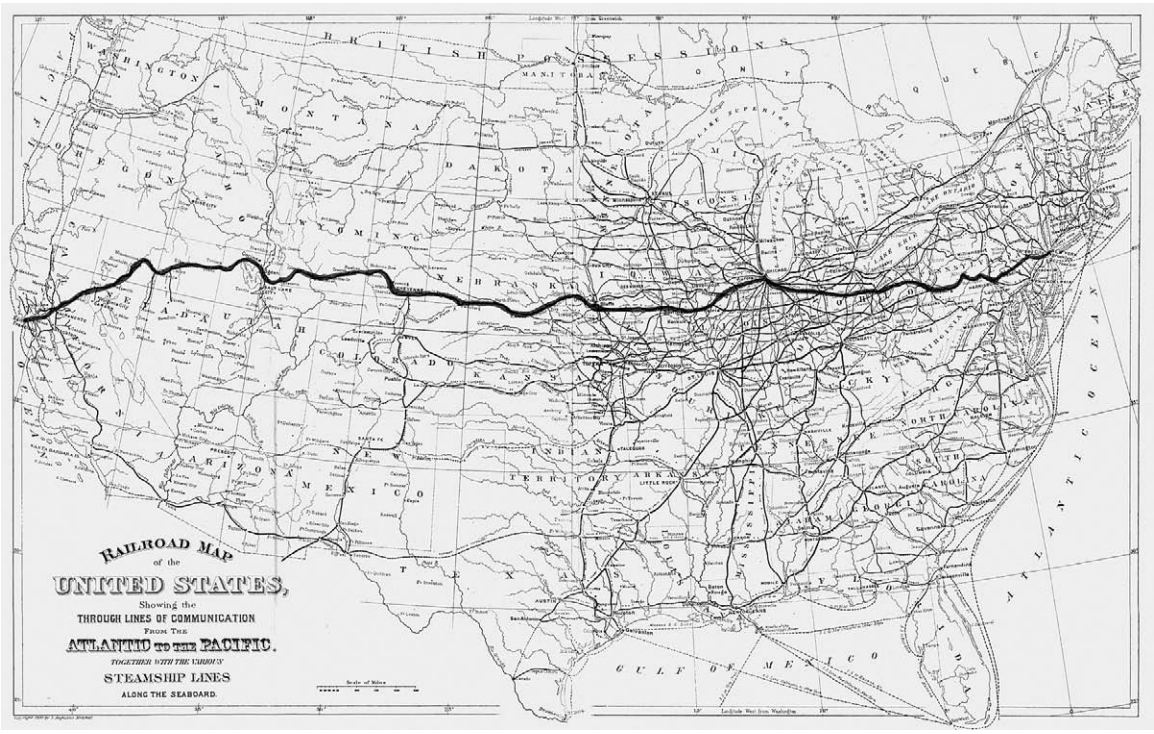

Figure I.3. This 1880 map depicts the country's railroad and steamship network around the time of Stevenson's journey, the route of which is in bold. Today's Interstate 80 follows roughly the same path, except around the Great Salt Lake. Map by S. Augustus Mitchell

separate from the main building. Similarly, in Baltimore, the transportation network between ship and train was a streamlined operation in which immigrants did not come in contact with the local population. These port stations, the subject of chapter two, represent the role of immigration within the railroad's capitalist framework, in which immigrants were shuttled into the country at the same speed and efficiency with which the railways moved freight. While the government and railroad companies worked in tandem in New York, in Baltimore, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company held an exclusive contract with the North German Lloyd Steamship Company for both passenger and freight traffic, and the railroad company owned and operated Baltimore's main port of entry from 1868 until the start of World War I. The economic holdings of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad enabled the company not only to shape the land, with its transformation of Locust Point, but also to form a significant connection between the American hinterland and European markets.

Railroad officials used the built environment—piers, stations, and train cars—to regulate immigrants' movement and segregate one group

from another during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The third chapter explores immigrant trains and the Midwestern stations where passengers made travel connections. Largely deprived of creature comforts on the steamships, passengers were arguably conditioned to austere travel arrangements by the time they reached American shores. Upon their arrival on the East Coast, European immigrants started their railroad journey by lining up on separate piers, where retrofitted boxcars awaited to carry them from crowded cities to the country's heartland. The physical isolation on the railways would not have been unfamiliar to the immigrants in that it resembled the spatial order of the steamship, in which travelers were sorted by social class; they had merely exchanged one harsh, segregated space for another. The low fares that afforded immigrants the opportunity to relocate resulted in segregated trains, which often ran on a slower freight schedule, were sparsely furnished, and offered little to no amenities. In train stations, segregated waiting rooms were far removed from the main waiting areas, although not banished from the station altogether, as was the case in the port cities (an example of architectural partitioning as opposed to the architectural isolation of the latter). Railroad officials upheld the cleanliness of these white-tiled, sparsely furnished rooms to quell fears of foreign-borne illness.

Some of these passengers were heading to destinations throughout the Midwest, where railroad companies sold them parcels of land on which they could settle. Railroad efforts to establish ethnic enclaves form the subject of the fourth chapter. In the eyes of railroad and government officials, immigration was a profitable enterprise to build the country's infrastructure as well as to spur the nation's industrial and agricultural development. The dispossession and redistributions of Native lands was key to this aspect of wealth-building in the United States, and both the railways and the government wished to control *who* repopulated the American West. Railroad companies advertised and sold their land to targeted white ethnic groups whom they believed to be industrious and skilled, with the goal that the agriculture and goods produced by them would be shipped along the rail lines to domestic and foreign markets, thus perpetuating business for the railroads even after they sold their lands. Along the railways, these flows of capital and commerce moved continuously from region to region, connecting markets in ways that had not been previously possible. William Cronon's concept of Second Nature, in which city and country are linked by the railways and flows of capital, illustrates the profound ecological and economic changes that transpired in nineteenth-century America to modernize a nation mesmerized by its belief in its own manifest destiny.[45] Immigration played a major role

in those changes, whereby foreigners settled on the lands that railroad companies had utterly transformed by platting towns onto the sweeping prairie, opening up lands for agriculture, and conquering the land by laying tracks, excavating tunnels, and building bridges, physically shaping the country as it reciprocally shaped American culture, a nation of individuals bound by economic principles of private ownership and industry. The American frontier was declared by Frederick Jackson Turner to be "the line of most rapid and effective Americanization."[46] Railroad companies used rhetorical strategies to invoke the transformative powers of white settlers and farming techniques that could convert the West into a civilized land. Civilization, for nineteenth-century Americans, was defined in terms of opposition to Native populations. The far-reaching hand of American capitalism displaced (or in many cases annihilated) Indigenous peoples and opened up their lands to white settlers. The "blank slate" of the nation was ripe for redevelopment. As millions sat in waiting rooms to repopulate the nation—both as cheap labor and future consumers—the promise of America became obtainable at speeds not yet recorded in history.

In San Francisco, the subject of the final chapter, Stevenson arrives at his destination, yet for the immigrants arriving in the city from Asia, their journey was far from over. Frequently, Asians were detained for much longer periods than their European counterparts, first in pier buildings and later in the federally built Angel Island Immigration Station (1910). Restrictive legislation against Asians, particularly the Chinese, guided the prisonlike design of Angel Island, which was located in proximity to Alcatraz Island. Scholarship on Angel Island tends to focus on interrogation methods, detainment periods, and individual immigrant stories, and while historians have often referred to Angel Island as the physical manifestation of Chinese exclusionary legislation, they have yet to fully examine *how* the architecture of Angel Island Immigration Station communicated exclusion.[47] The extent to which the Chinese were discriminated against pervades every aspect of the station's design, from its island location to its bed furnishings. While often called the "Ellis Island of the West," Angel Island Immigration Station was quite different than its East Coast counterpart. Both immigrant depots were constructed in response to the growing numbers of foreigners arriving on American shores, but these buildings manifested a series of tensions between inclusion and exclusion, between protection of immigrants and protection of Americans, and between veneration of America's immigrant past and rejection of the immigrant present.

The space in-between serves myriad functions and can be interpreted in a variety of ways, from the physical spaces along the immigration

landscape to the metaphorical space between cultures, where perception of identity can shift based on surroundings. In the span of a journey, depending on social, cultural, and economic factors, an immigrant could experience the space as purgatorial or a metamorphic transformation as they made their way into the country and progressed by degrees toward acceptance and citizenship (or not). The space in-between was highly regulated and yet as alluring as a dream—hard to define and yet seemingly all-encompassing; full of contradictions and, at the same time, ripe with meaning. A man of contradictions himself, Stevenson is our guide through this liminal space. He was both a product of the Victorian era and, at the same time, thoroughly modern. One aspect many of Stevenson's biographers have in common is that no one can make a statement about him without quickly amending it. He is, at once, a privileged white man and an "amateur emigrant," a constant exile. He referred to himself as the Double Dammed Emigrant, adversely criticized by his peers for his travelogue and not quite part of the group of immigrants with whom he sympathized.[48] And so it is that Stevenson is in many ways a fitting guide through the spaces of immigration, through the space in-between.