

ELVIS ABODE HONORED WITH NATIONAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION

It is no small task to quantify Elvis Presley's impact on music and popular culture. But Graceland, designated a national historic landmark in March, is ground zero of the Elvis phenomenon, a symbol not only of the rock and roll legend but of the cult that has grown around him.

Presley bought the white-columned, classical-style house in 1957, with royalties from his first hit, "Heartbreak Hotel." It stands in a grove of oak trees, surrounded by rolling pastures, though the place is now surrounded by sprawl. But the house and its 14-acre property—located south of Memphis—still maintain much of their original character.

Every year, 600,000 people come to Graceland. Jack Soden, CEO of Elvis Presley Enterprises, calls it the second most famous home in America, after the White House. "You go to the far corners of the Earth and they don't really know what Mount Vernon or Monticello or Hearst Castle are, but they know what Graceland is," he says.

While the place is sometimes seen as a monument to kitsch, the landmark nomination prepared by Jody Cook—NHL program manager for the southeast region of the National Park Service—takes pains to cut through the clutter, identifying Graceland's, and Presley's, extraordinary significance to America's music and culture. From his spare recordings at Sun Records in downtown Memphis, to his jumpsuited Vegas days, the Presley leg-

Gold," Presley's collection of gold and silver records. Today, Graceland also has a meditation garden, where Presley is buried along with his parents and grandmother. On the anniversary of his death, thousands file in the gates, past the gravesite, and out again.

Last year, Presley's daughter Lisa Marie

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end was continuously evolving. "Along the way," writes Cook, the image "completely overwhelmed any true or common understanding of the man himself."

The nomination acknowledges the Presley gospel while pointing out the Presley myth. Cook focuses on his underappreciated natural talent—as a musician and performer—offering evidence of his vocal prowess and why he was a true musical prodigy. She also makes the case for Presley as a catalyst for the changes that gripped mid-century America, reformulating its values and constraints while breaching barriers of race, class, and gender.

However, Graceland is about much more than music. Like Presley himself, the place has expanded in the national firmament of myth. A visit takes on aspects of a religious pilgrimage. While the reverent wait in line to view the eternal flame—in an octagonal glass case that marks the King's grave—others come to gawk at the Jungle Room, devout and skeptics side by side.

Academics have been grappling with the subject. *Graceland: Going Home With Elvis* fleshes out the man via the places he knew, from the shotgun shack to the pillared house, a point of departure for a rumination on consumer excess and notions of home. Another scholarly offering, *Elvis After Elvis: The Posthumous Career of a Living Legend*, dissects Presley's cultural omnipresence. Graceland is telling us something, scholars say, but what is it?

Presley started changing the place soon after its purchase from a prominent Memphis family. In the early days, his father—also his business manager—set up an office in a small one-story building that likely housed servants. Presley used an old smokehouse for target practice. In the mid-'60s, he built a big wing as a slot-car track. Eventually that was converted to a trophy room—for memorabilia, stage costumes, and "The Hall of

sold 85 percent of the estate to CKX, Inc., an entertainment company. She retains ownership of the house and its furnishings as well the original acreage purchased by her father.

For more information, email Jody Cook at jody_cook@nps.gov. The nomination is at www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/designations/samples/tn/graceland.pdf.

Right: Elvis Presley in Graceland's driveway.



ELVIS PRESLEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

GAUGE OF ALLEGIANCE

JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT CAMP TESTED THE LIMITS OF LOYALTY

As a relic of the fear and prejudice that prevailed in the wake of Pearl Harbor, the internment camp at Tule Lake has no equal. Of the 10 camps built during WWII, the sprawling northern California complex was the focal point of dissent and a stage where the consequences of internment played out. For that reason—and because of its exceptional state of preservation—Tule Lake was recently designated a national historic landmark, placing it among the most revered places in America.



DEMONSTRATIONS AND STRIKES BECAME ROUTINE. FIGHTS BROKE OUT BETWEEN INTERNEES AND GUARDS. THE CAMP'S AUTHORITIES DECLARED MARTIAL LAW, AND THE STOCKADE WAS BUILT—A 250- BY 350-FOOT ENCLOSURE WITH ITS OWN GUARD TOWERS.

LITTLE HAS CHANGED SINCE THE END OF THE WAR. BARBED WIRE FENCES still trail through the open fields. The foundations of the guard towers are visible in the tall grass, and many structures remain, including the most potent symbol of the camp's history, the stockade. This "jail within a jail," as described in the NHL nomination, was where authorities kept detainees deemed troublesome. Tule Lake was the only camp to have one.

Like the other camps, Tule Lake was designed as a self-contained community with its own schools, hospital, and post office. The first detainees arrived in 1942, when 120,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly moved inland from the West Coast in the interests of national security. The internment was overseen by the newly formed War Relocation Authority.

The Bureau of Reclamation had drained the lake during the Depression, hoping to convert the acreage to agriculture, but the project stalled. With the sudden surplus of labor, many of the internees were put to work in the fields, soon to become a focal point of strife.

AS IN ALL THE CAMPS, THE TRANSITION FROM FREEDOM TO LIFE BEHIND barbed wire was a shock. Communal bathrooms, crowded mess halls, and barracks with little privacy disrupted traditional family life. Parents felt that they were losing control of their children. Many of the people working in the fields were unaccustomed to the work, having been trained in different professions.

Within five months of the camp's opening, there was a strike to protest the food. This was followed by other strikes over work arrangements and living conditions. Trouble escalated when the overseers produced a questionnaire intended to gauge the loyalty of detainees and their suitability for the draft. Two questions had an unintended impact. One asked if respondents were willing to serve in combat. The other asked for "unqualified allegiance" to the United States and a repudiation of Japan. Those who answered no to both questions—or didn't answer at all—were deemed disloyal.

Above, left to right: Internee at Tule Lake; checking IDs at the camp gate; young detainees. Right: Mass-produced Army shelters in a sea of mud.



LEFT AND BELOW UNIVERSITY OF UTAH/J. WILLARD MARRIOTT LIBRARY; RIGHT NATIONAL ARCHIVES



FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANTS COULD NOT BECOME CITIZENS AT THE TIME, and they feared that a “yes” answer to the allegiance question would leave them without a country. All the internees saw it as a trick, since forswearing allegiance to Japan implied loyalty to the emperor.

Many answered no about military service to keep their families together. Some said no to both questions simply to protest the treatment. Internees could not understand why years of law-abiding residence weren’t enough to prove loyalty. As authorities began arresting “disloyals,” some requested to be repatriated to Japan or deported elsewhere.

With the questionnaire as a measure, Tule Lake had the highest percentage of disloyal internees—42 percent compared to an average of 10 percent at the other camps. In 1943, disloyals from all the camps were sent to Tule Lake, which was transformed into a maximum-security prison. Its population grew to over 18,000. Army troops arrived, accompanied by eight tanks. Higher fences went up, along with more barbed wire and guard towers.

In late 1943, an underage driver bringing workers back from the fields flipped his truck over, killing an internee. The prisoners held a large funeral—without permission—and when they found that the man’s widow was only going to receive about two-thirds of his \$16 monthly wage, the agricultural workers went on strike. Authorities brought in strike breakers to work the fields—detainees from other camps who didn’t know they were being used as scabs. They were paid about ten times what the Tule Lake workers got. The prisoners sent a delegation to camp headquarters to negotiate, while a crowd of

Above: Japanese-American internees harvest spinach at Tule Lake. Their labor was used to realize an agricultural project that had never gotten off the ground, begun when the Bureau of Reclamation drained the lake during the Depression. **Opposite:** Young detainees, far right, take in the prize-winning float in Tule Lake’s Labor Day parade.

5,000 gathered in a peaceful demonstration. But a series of violent incidents followed. Demonstrations and strikes became routine. Fights broke out between internees and guards. The camp’s authorities declared martial law, and the stockade was built—a 250- by 350-foot enclosure with its own guard towers. The side of the stockade facing the main camp was covered with boards to prevent communication. The structure’s existence created more strife, triggering demonstrations and work stoppages to express solidarity with the imprisoned.

IN 1944, PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT SIGNED THE “DENATIONALIZATION BILL,” which allowed internees to renounce their U.S. citizenship. Many did, seeing it as the only way to avoid the draft and the breakup of their families. They also believed that, as Japanese citizens, they would be protected under the Geneva Convention and that this would get the prisoners in the stockade released.

In time, a nationalist subculture took root at Tule Lake. Those who wished to repatriate to Japan banded together, requesting to be moved to their own part of the camp, away from the other internees. Known as the Saikakuri Seigan, the group taught Japanese language, history, religion, and songs. On short-wave radios smuggled into camp, they listened to propaganda about Japanese victories in the Pacific while



preparing for a life in their homeland when the war was over. They also began wearing uniforms and performing military drills, which the Army tolerated at first. The Saikakuri Seigan bred tension and mistrust among the internees, using physical intimidation to force others to renounce their citizenship and join them.

Eventually, the authorities disbanded the group. In the interim, however, many became convinced that they could never live outside the barbed wire. Though they were assured of their safety at the camp, the prisoners feared going back into hostile American communities with no jobs and no money.

Though few wanted to give up their citizenship, says a report by a group working to commemorate Tule Lake, many who did wound up in detention camps at the end of the war, with the Department of Justice preparing to deport them. The irony was that those who had chosen America as their home now faced the prospect of starting over in a devastated Japan.

A CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY, WAYNE MORTIMER COLLINS, TOOK UP THE CAUSE, ENGAGING THE DEPARTMENT in a long fight to restore the internees' citizenship. He argued that the prisoners had renounced under duress, and that they had been given false information in an environment of fear. After a 20-year battle, his argument finally won out.

Today, the California Department of Transportation shares responsibility for the site with the Bureau of Reclamation. The National Park Service is working with the two agencies to protect the remaining buildings. The camp is a unique example of a WWII-era police encampment, standing on the arid landscape as though frozen in time. While there are no plans for exhibits or visitation, Craig Dorman, a National Park Service historian who worked on the landmark nomination, says, "There's a lot of local interest to see something happen there."

Former internees and community activists began organizing pilgrimages in 1974, partly as a way to educate a public that seemed to have forgotten. The pilgrimages continue today.

For more information, contact Craig Dorman, email craig_dorman@nps.gov.

INTERNEES COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY YEARS OF LAW-ABIDING RESIDENCE WEREN'T ENOUGH TO PROVE LOYALTY. AS AUTHORITIES BEGAN ARRESTING "DISLOYALS," SOME REQUESTED TO BE REPATRIATED TO JAPAN OR DEPORTED ELSEWHERE.

A Legacy Left Behind

Rehab of Signature Warehouse Keys Revitalization in Former Tobacco Town

NOT FAR FROM NORTH CAROLINA'S BORDER, SOUTH BOSTON, VIRGINIA WAS A quiet stop on the railway to Richmond. The location—in one of the nation's most prolific tobacco regions—transformed the little town into a major commercial hub. With the railroad and the Dan River, the area was an attractive place for tobacco barons, whose brick warehouses, factories, and auction houses began going up around 1870.

The town's warehouse district is the legacy left behind. Its vacant red brick structures were, for many years, a reminder of better times. Now, as part of the Virginia Main Street Program—which aims to revitalize small towns—the place has undergone a renaissance. The most prominent of the buildings, known as the Prizery, recently underwent a complete rehab, taking full advantage of the tax incentives program administered by the National Park Service and state preservation offices, with federal tax credits up to 20 percent of cost. Buildings must be income-producing (apartments, retail, etc.) and the work must conform to Department of the Interior standards.

THE PRIZERY—ERECTED AROUND THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY AND operated by the R. J. Reynolds Company—is notable for its four-

to the town. It sat empty for the better part of three decades. "You could actually stand in the basement and see all the way through the roof at one point," says Chris Jones, executive director of the Community Arts Center Foundation, now the building's occupant.

THE REHAB COST \$6 MILLION, MOST FROM THE STATE'S DEPARTMENT OF transportation by way of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, which encourages preservation and environmental improvement around roads and railways. Located on the defunct Norfolk & Southern, the district qualified for the funds.

The Prizery, now in the National Register of Historic Places, was donated to the foundation in 1996. Today, it's an art gallery, meeting place, and performance center. The foundation worked with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts to design the spaces, lighting, and environmental controls. The first floor houses a welcome center, along with an exhibit on the regional role of tobacco. Many original details remain, including windows, arched doors, ceramic electrical resistors, and a freight elevator that once hauled 1,000-pound barrels of tobacco. Jones says the project keyed the revital-



Left to right: Before renovation; exterior view; performance hall. Right: The dance studio.

ALL PHOTOS MATT WARGO

WITH THE RAILROAD AND THE DAN RIVER, THE AREA WAS AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR TOBACCO BARONS, WHOSE BRICK WAREHOUSES, FACTORIES, AND AUCTION HOUSES BEGAN GOING UP AROUND 1870.

story tower and Italianate detail, the most ornate of the 15 tobacco buildings. The name derives from the practice of pressing—or "prizing," in the language of the time—layer on layer of leaves into large barrels, to be taken to the river or railroad for shipment.

By the 1960s, tobacco was being produced around the world, and American growers were struggling. The company sold the Prizery

ization of the entire district: "You talk to anybody and they'll tell you this project is a huge benefit for the community." Plans include linking with an 1840s plantation via trails along the old rail bed.

For more information, contact Chris Jones, (434) 572-8339, email prizery@pure.net, or go to www.prizery.com.

