

Kathleen Bitetti
HERE
October 18th - October 31st 2014

HERE is a project that examines the complex and interrelated issues of immigration, migration, family trees, and family legacy. The tracing of one's ancestors is one of the oldest forms of mapping known to humankind.

Immigrants, those who came on their own and those who were forced to come to this country, have been and are still key to the United States' economic growth and expansion. This is an important fact that has been lost in the current U.S. debate on immigration reform. This project also investigates "*history with a small h*" or personal history and its relationship to what is considered "*History with a capital H.*" It is often said that "*History*" is an agreed upon set of fabrications, while "*history*" is comprised of the stories shared among the generations.

This work is about and is dedicated to my late grandfather, John Adam Michal, who never met his grandchildren. He was born John Adam Michalski on October 18, 1906 somewhere in Poland. He came to the U.S. via Ellis Island in 1911 with his mother, stepfather and his brother. His family ended up in the Boston area. By all accounts he had a rough childhood. He lied about his age to enroll in the Marines and finished high school while in the service. He also changed his name from Michalski to Michal due to the discrimination against immigrants and Catholics. He left the Marines to care for his sick mother and after she passed, he took care of his half sisters. He was a longshoreman and pretty good carpenter. He married my grandmother - Mary Solar- the girl next store- who he had "his eye on" for quite sometime. They married much later than the norm at that time (in their 30's) due to my grandmother's father forbidding her to marry (and to also cut her hair). She was the youngest daughter in her family and was "needed" to live at home to care for her *babcia* (grandmother). John believed in reading and made sure there were dictionaries, encyclopedias, and books in the house for his one daughter. He also forbade hitting as a means of discipline. He was a gentle giant and a man of few words. He died in Boston on October 31st, 1963.

I am visiting some of the places he was connected to and leaving something behind for someone else to find. These performative actions will take place from October 18th through October 31st, 2014.

HERE-List of places in order of visitation (all in Boston, MA unless denoted):

Downtown/Back Bay

1. Omni Parker House 10.18.14
2. Boston Public Library 10.19.14
3. Old City Hall 10.20.14
4. Filenes 10.20.14
5. Jordan Marsh (Now Macy's) 10.20.14
6. Boston Common 10.20.14
7. Public Gardens 10.20.14
8. Boston City Hospital 10.21.14
9. Faneuil Hall/Market 10.22.14
10. Haymarket 10.22.14

Charlestown

11. Route of Bunker Hill Parade/Bunker Hill Monument/Historic Park 10.25.14

Jamaica Plain

12. 8 Aleveston Street /Terrace - Corner 10.25.14
13. 43 Borough Street 10.25.14
14. 80 Pond Street 10.25.14
15. 56 Lockstead Avenue 10.25.14

Mission Hill

16. Mission Hill High School (now Mission Hill Middle School) 10.25.14

Allston/Brighton

17. St. Columbkille Church 10.26.14
18. Sparhawk Street 10.26.14
19. Elko Street 10.26.14

Polish Triangle (South Boston/Dorchester)

20. Polish American Citizen's Club 10.26.15
21. Bellflower Street 10.26.15
22. Massachusetts General Hospital 10.27.14
23. Beacon Hill 10.27.14
24. Boston Garden 10.27.14

NYC, NY

25. Ellis Island 10.31.14

For more information about my work and projects: www.kathleenbitetti.com