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By

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

One Mixed Margolin:

By

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Master of Arts in Asian American Studies
University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Valerie Matsumoto, Committee Co-Chair
Professor Renee Tajima-Peña, Committee Co-Chair

ABSTRACT:

One Mixed Margolin: Mixed Discipline. Mixed Media. Mixed Race. is a web project that examines how foodways and the internet can be used to explore mixed race identity formation.

The project will take the form of a multi-media website that focuses on the creator as she examines the history of her mixed heritage family through the customs and practices of food. Content will include family recipes, oral histories, demo and interview videos, as well as pictures and old home movies.
The thesis of Alexandra Elyse Margolin is approved.

Victor Bascara

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University of California, Los Angeles

2013
Dedication

This dedicated to my family, without whom this project could not exist. Thank you Mom, Dad, Harmony, Papa, Nick, Rox, and Jared for opening up your stories to me and allowing me to constantly follow all of you around with my camera.
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I have been looking for a way to tell my family’s history for a long time. What started as an undergraduate admissions essay for UCLA class of 2009, has come full circle as the focus of my thesis project as a graduate student in Asian American Studies at UCLA. I hope to use my work here as a foundation to keep exploring and documenting family histories.

I am extremely indebted to the wonderful faculty that have supported and challenged me along the way. Without the guidance and support of the UCLA Asian American Studies faculty, this project would have remained nothing more than a glimmer of an idea. First I would like to thank Professor Lane Hirabayashi who guided me since my acceptance in the UCLA Asian American Studies Graduate Program. Upon entering the program, I had very little idea of what to expect. It was thanks to constant guidance and support from Professor Hirabayashi that I was able to navigate my way through the program so quickly. I will sorely miss teaching with him after I graduate. I would also like to thank Professor Victor Bascara, a wonderful graduate student advisor and committee member whose constant affirmation and support pushed my project to a higher level than I could have imagined.

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I. Proposal Narrative

Project title and description

One Mixed Margolin: Mixed Discipline. Mixed Media. Mixed Race. is a web project that examines how foodways and the internet can be used to explore mixed race identity formation. The project will take the form of a multi-media website that focuses on the creator as she examines the history of her mixed heritage family through the customs and practices of food. Content will include family recipes, oral histories, demo and interview videos, as well as pictures and old home movies.

Introduction (Summary)

On December 8, 2012 my family celebrated the first night of Chanukah at the home of one of my paternal cousins. Present at the celebration were three generations of the Margolin-Sawyer clan ranging from the ages of three to eighty.¹ Usually at these family gatherings I am occupied by a few tasks: ensuring that my grandmother Harriett has enough to eat and drink, moving things around for her sister (and my great aunt) Zinita who is wheelchair bound, and helping with last minute kitchen prep. However, this year all three of those roles disappeared. For one, this was the first Chanukah celebration I attended since my grandmother passed away last November. Also, as her sister was diagnosed with cancer this year she no longer hosts the major family holidays. As a result I am no longer needed to help her with final preparations. Instead I spent the evening being questioned (and pressured) about when my partner and I are going to get

¹ The families of my paternal grandmother and her sister.
married.² It was at this moment that I realized how central food and gender are to my understanding of myself in relation to my Jewish family. If my gendered tasks are taken away, I do not know what to do with myself and spend more time thinking about things like the fact that if an outsider peeked into our gathering, I look more like a guest than a family member due to the fact that I am of mixed Korean and European heritage.

According to the 2012 census, in the past ten years the number of mixed race children has increased by 50% hitting 4.2 million individuals in the United States.³ Concurrently, there has been a dramatic rise in scholarly, literary, and creative works that explore the experience of mixed race Americans personally, socially, creatively, historically, and academically with varying degrees of success. In this project I propose that the consumption and performance of food can be used as a lens through which to examine mixed families’ histories and dynamics. In my M.A. thesis project as an Asian American Studies graduate student at UCLA, I hope to blur disciplinary, racial, gender, and cultural borders by creating an interactive website that explores the history of my own multicultural family through the customs and preparation of food. As a secondary goal, I hope to examine how cyberspace can be used as both a discussion and teaching space for mixed race issues.

My desire to pursue this project is grounded in my personal family history. In the 1970s, a young American named Robert J. Smith was stationed in South Korea. While there he met a

² Recently, Zinata’s husband Cliff who has been like a grandfather to me, told me that he cannot wait to dance at my wedding to my partner Jared. He told me this soon after he had a stroke which has made it more difficult for him to speak. So it took him a few tries to be able to complete the full thought while tightly clinging to my hand. While he was completely sincere, I am now the recipient of constant (and effective) Jewish guilt. When added to the fact that I liken the thought of a traditional wedding ceremony to torture I cannot seem to escape the gendered expectations of my family (as I am the eldest granddaughter).

Korean woman, my great aunt, Ui Chin. They eloped, and she came back to America with him. A few years later the couple adopted Ui Chin’s niece Songmi, my mother, and brought her to America. “It’s like sing-me-a-song” is probably the phrase I remember my mother saying most frequently. As a Korean native who was adopted and brought to the United States at the age of twelve, “sing-me-a-song” was the tool she employed to help Americans pronounce her name: Songmi. My mother is no stranger to personal transformation. While her first name has never been changed, shortened (how can you create a nickname for Songmi?), or abandoned, her collection of last names reflect a constant negotiation of ethnic identity from Yoo Songmi, to her adoptive name Songmi Smith, to the married name of Songmi Margolin after she married a third-generation Jewish Russian American named Scott Margolin. As the eldest daughter of a Korean-born adoptee and a fourth-generation Jewish Russian American, I am a physical embodiment of the hybridity of my parents’ family histories. As such, I have struggled to understand my identity as a Jewish Korean Russian American. However, throughout the process it has often felt as though I was exploring mutually exclusive categories.

When I entered Pitzer College in the fall of 2005 I became involved in the campus Asian American community. During my sophomore year a friend of mine, who was also of mixed Asian descent, asked if I would “mind playing a white girl” in a film he was making for a class. Years later this question still bothers me. It implied that “whiteness” was a foreign identity for me as my true essence must be Asian American. In my mind, my European background is not something that I have left behind because I became involved with the Asian American community. I refuse to accept the notion that I can only exist as one of my ethnic heritages at a time, but have found very few examples where individuals manage to transcend the sense of racial binary.
I turn to foodways as a way to explore my experience as a mixed race Jewish Korean American. When you walk into a restaurant and order a fusion dish like a kimchi pizza, there is not a distinct line through the middle of the plate to separate the distinct ethnic backgrounds of the food. It is accepted that somehow two traditions are being combined together to create something entirely new even as it is linked to its origins. Why then is it so difficult to do this with people? Food can provide a concrete language for discussing notions of identity that often feel extremely abstract. My project examines my family history using a foodways lens, focusing specifically on my Korean mother’s Jewish recipes to create a website that will combine family recipes with oral history and mixed media.

I have been asked if I see foodways and mixed media as a way to skirt mixed race questions. Is my project no more than a way to avoid the “real issues?” While some may feel so, I strongly disagree. By using a foodways lens I am concretely analyzing some of the everyday negotiations within multicultural families. The repetition of customs like food preparation practices are the daily reminders that help an individual internalize and understand their place in the world. I do not aim to provide an overarching narrative of the mixed race experience in the United States. Rather, I am embarking on a personal journey to document and analyze my personal experience growing up as a mixed race Margolin. In putting this information online I am hoping that others will join in with their own explorations and that a new dialogue can emerge that focuses on discussion rather than authoritative narrative.

II. Synopsis/Annotated Bibliography

Recently in a critical pedagogy graduate course a heterosexual white male student stated: “I don’t see why it is important to talk about identity in education. When people look at me they see
a white heterosexual male so that’s what I am. You are what people perceive you to be.” His statement instantly reminded me of my childhood best friend who was often mistaken as my twin when were together. We were of similar height, coloring (right down to hazel eyes), stature, and temperament. The only major difference was that I was half Korean American and she was European American and Jewish. I was very confused about this: could I really call myself Korean American if she and I looked the same? Was my Korean identity something secret and hidden that nobody could see? I became jealous of my younger brother whose features reflected his ethnic origins.

In the seminar, I turned to my classmate and asked: “Then what am I? The most common perception of my ethnic background is uncertainty with questions like ‘What are you?’ I have been called white, Hawaiian, half Filipina, Greek, and hapa. If I am what people perceive me to be then it seems that I cease to exist as a person in my own right.” He believed it just did not matter, saying that racism is not that big a deal since people “eventually just get over it.” His response suggests that his conceptual framework of race could not accommodate the complexities of mixed heritage identity and so he fell back on the rejoinder that "racism" did not matter. If that were really the case, then why did I remember my childhood confusion?

Responding orally was a transformative moment for me. This was the first time that I had the language to articulate the tension that I felt as a child but did not have the words for. This was not something that I just “got over,” and it took about fifteen years for me to be able to articulate my feelings.

Other students could have constructively responded to his statements; however, I was probably the only individual in the class who would have used a mixed race example. When discussing the racialization of ethnic minorities in the United States there is often an assumption
that it is the experience of monoracial individuals that is analyzed as there are many more monoracial individuals than multiracial. In *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue that race is a social construct that individuals constantly negotiate on an individual and societal level. Further, when dealing with racial policy ignoring race or pursuing a colorblind United States is not the opposite of racially discriminatory policy. In the case of the Asian American community, the idea of having a community that could be labeled as “Asian American” reflects the political aim of having a stronger voice as a racialized collective than as individual ethnicities.4

The struggles of mixed race individuals are reflected in the history that Omi and Winant tell; however, there is little room in their narrative for a mixed race perspective.5 In “Whose Culture Has Capital: A Critical Race Theory Study of Community Cultural Wealth,” education scholar and critical race theorist Tara Yosso discusses how critical race theory often seems to take the forms of racial binaries.6 As a mixed race individual engaged in interdisciplinary work within Ethnic Studies, a critical race theory perspective problematically implies that I am a physical embodiment of one such binary. Some mixed race scholars have responded by creating a new framework, a kind of critical mixed race theory. I find this equally problematic, because it creates a new binary between monoracial and mixed race.

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5 Being published in the 1980’s, the work is also a reflection of its time. As the second wave of Asian immigration began post-1965, the Asian American population in the United States in the 1970’s-1980’s consisted of primarily first and second generation families. It would still be about another ten years before mixed race Asian Americans would begin to make their voice heard. At the 2012 Association for Asian American Studies Conference in Washington D.C., I asked a group of Korean adoptee scholars why there have not been many works exploring the stories of the children of Korean adoptees. The response was that I was actually the oldest child of an adoptee they had ever met by far so nobody had really been demanding the story to be heard yet.
In her speech “Hapa: The Word of Power,” Asian American Studies scholar Wei Ming Dariotis highlights the struggle to find language to represent ideas for which previously no words existed. In this case, it is the discovery of the word “hapa” as a way to identify as a mixed race Asian Americans. Dariotis captures the power that such a word can give an individual of mixed heritage. If a mixed race individual is asked the question “What are you?,” rather than going into a lengthy explanation about being mixed race, “hapa” can answer the question in just one word. With the popularization of “hapa,” mixed race Asian Americans have language to articulate their identity with a sense of wholeness rather than as a compilation of fractured parts. However, while an empowering word for many mixed race Asian Americans, the use of hapa is felt by many native Hawaiians to be a violent appropriation akin to rape. As a result, a bitter debate has arisen over whether or not mixed race mainlanders have the right to use the term. This is truly unfortunate. These two groups share a sense of trauma and pain, yet rather than seeking to work together, accusations are thrown by both sides. As literary scholar and cultural theorist Habiba Ibrahim notes in Troubling the Family: The Promise of Personhood and the Rise of Multiracialism, an opportunity becomes “lost when we dream our antagonisms to both public and personal logics away, rather than attending to what exactly produced them.” Rather than exploring together why both groups feel such affinity for the term, we have gotten caught in a cyclical debate about whose pain is more legitimate.

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7 Hapa is the Native Hawaiian term for half and refers to individuals of mixed Hawaiian heritage. It recent years in the Asian American community it has begun to be used as a way to describe mixed race Asian Americans on the mainland.
In the past ten years there has been a rise in sociological studies exploring the Asian American mixed race community. Marc Johnston and Kevin Nadal’s article “Multiracial Microaggressions: Exploring Monoracism in Everyday Life and Clinical Practice” and Kerry Ann Rockquemore, David Bunsma and Daniel Delgado’s “Racing to Theory or Retheorizing Race?: Understanding the Struggle to Build a Multiracial Identity theory” are both works written by young mixed race scholars who explore how race has traditionally been constructed, and what happens when a mixed race narrative is added. In “Multiracial Microaggressions,” Johnston and Nadal explore the everyday racial microaggressions that mixed individuals face. They argue that microaggressions can spark feelings that are often difficult to articulate, but still very damaging. Unlike previous readings, neither of these articles rely on personal narrative, oral history, or ethnography. Rather than using a qualitative research methodology, these scholars use quantitative methods. They have similar goals in seeking to establish a language and theoretical framework to research and discuss mixed race experiences beyond questions of mixed race identity formation.

Not only scholars, but artists are also increasingly focusing on mixed race identity politics. In *Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience* editor Chandra Prasad compiled an anthology of literature by mixed race individuals from a variety of racial backgrounds. A writer herself, Prasad is very clear about her intentions:

> Ultimately, I hope Mixed will help readers to explore a new hybridized word; to ask sticky questions; to refuse easy answers. My quietest, grandest dream, though, is that this book will blur boundaries—or better yet, expose how illusory most boundaries are in the first place.11

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10 In this paper I am defining microaggressions as subtle insults and implications of otherness towards a particular individual, oftentimes unconsciously stated and internalized.

Where much academic work appears to revolve around the drawing of boundaries, creative works provide more space to blur these lines. Many mixed race writings focus on proving that mixed race individuals exist and that with the identity comes struggle and alienation.¹² Often it seems that both in creative expression and academic work, the predominant stories about mixed race identities fall into two categories: young individuals in crisis over how to reconcile their sense of dual identity or colorblind narratives that present mixed race individuals as the face of the future. Further, there seems to be constant tension and conflict surrounding the question of the best way to define mixed race in twenty-first century America. *Mixed* transcends that tendency and instead focuses on how different individuals explore identity through writing. There are no easy answers, there is no singular message, and by the end of the work, even though it is an anthology of fiction, it feels much more honest than many mixed race non-fiction anthologies.

I have struggled to find a way to blur the boundaries between cultural production and scholarly writing, and Prasad’s *Mixed* presents one way that this can be done. Rather than exploring the potential binary within mixed race individuals, or between monoracial and mixed race individuals, I am focusing on the complexity that comes with intersectionality. Within ethnic studies, every individual or group has a different stake in mixed race debate, whether it is a Native Hawaiian who is hurt by the co-opting of the term “hapa,” Tiger Woods’ personal category “Cablinasian,” or proponents of critical race theory who see mixed race studies as a

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¹² For example, in Kip Fulbeck’s short documentary piece *Lilo & Me* the director explores his childhood journey to find Disney characters that look like him. Finding none, he draws attention to how unique his existence as a mixed race individual is; Kip Fulbeck, *Lilo And Me* (2003, United States).
move toward a colorblind mentality and therefore a threat to their work. This conflict has become so complicated that, as Ibrahim notes, it closes off any room for open, constructive, and critical discussion. I turn to the exciting and growing interdisciplinary field of Foodways to do so.

Foodways has established a new method to examine both macro and micro tensions in the United States. As demonstrated by Donna Gabaccia’s *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Makings of Americans* and Harvey Levenstein’s *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America*, seminal Foodways texts, the history of food and food consumption offer a lens to look at larger societal structures (gender, class, race, ethnicity). Gabaccia focuses on what she calls American foodways and the consumption and fusion of ethnic foods in the United States, juxtaposing the reception of multi-ethnic foods with the acceptance of an increasingly multi-ethnic America. Citing Newsweek writer Regina Schrambling who likens the emergence of changes in traditional ethnic foods to “mongrelization” in dog breeding, Gabaccia shows how food can serve as a very rich site of intersection and conflict for scholars to explore. In *Paradox of Plenty*, Levenstein takes a different approach, examining the role that socio-economic class plays in food consumption and notions of beauty, nutrition and health. Published in 1998 and 2003 respectively, the two historians establish the study of ideas and practices relating to food as an academic pursuit to be taken seriously. Both of these works serve as a theoretical foundation for my own study of mixed race family dynamics and negotiations. While not national in scale, I

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13 “Cablinasian” is a acronym coined by Woods to explain how he understands his own ethnic identity: Caucasian, Black, American-Indian, and Asian; Ibrahim, *Troubling the Family*, xxii.
15 Gabaccia, *We Are what We Eat*, 225.
16 Gabaccia, *We Are what We Eat*, 224.
draw from Gabaccia's and Levenstein’s works to understand the dynamics of my own mixed heritage family. In using foodways, I am able to dissect gender, racial, ethnic, and religious expectations, negotiations, and tensions within one project.

Study of foodways is also powerful because of the deep ties between foodways and identity. In "Ethnic Foodways in America: Symbol and the Performance of Identity," Foodways scholar Susan Kalcik discusses the deep significance that foodways have to ethnic identity, focusing particularly on Vietnamese refugees and other new immigrants to the United States. She argues that "traditional food and ways of eating form a link with the past and help ease the shock of entering a new culture." Food becomes a link to the past as well as a gauge of connection to one's ethnic roots. One example that comes to mind is my desire to master the art of chopsticks as a child. As I was rarely visibly recognized as Asian American, when I was around 7 years old I became determined to learn how to use chopsticks. In my mind, chopsticks were something that Asians had some innate ability to use and if I wanted to prove that I was Asian then I would have to use chopsticks. My example reflects how foodways become deeply integrated with our sense of self as well as our sense of connection to different communities. Further, it is important to remember that foodways are not static.

The shifts in ethnic foodways in the United States reflect not only the pressures of adapting to a new country, but also the increasing diversity within ethnic communities. Writer and organic peach farmer David Mas Masumoto asserts:

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19 Although for some reason I felt that my adoptive white grandfather was the right person to teach me this. I guess chopsticks trumped race when it came to what makes a person Asian.
Changing customs can signify that a culture is alive and well. Traditions that don't evolve gradually become acts without meaning; they are like fossils from dead civilizations, relics of a past that only remind us of where we were, not where we are going.  

Masumoto's is constantly negotiating within his family as a Japanese American married to a German American. Foodways become a site of intersection that can be used to understand the hybridity of his family. I use a framework similar to Masumoto's in my own work. Foodways allow me to explore the complexity of my family history as a site of growth and negotiation, rather than of loss and bastardization. My project combines oral history with a collection of recipes, essentially creating an interactive historical online cookbook at www.onemixedmargolin.com.

III. Foodways and Mixed Race: Consuming Passover

_The Haggadah is the book of prayer we use for the Passover Seder, isn’t it? That is its definition. But sometimes definitions are not enough._

- Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, Ph.D.

_One year my mother put kimchee, a spicy, pickled cabbage condiment, on our seder plate. My Korean mother thought it was a reasonable substitution since both kimchee and horseradish elicit a similar sting in the mouth, the same clearing of the nostrils. She also liked kimchee on gefilte fish and matzah. "Kimchee just like maror, but better," she said. I resigned myself to the fact that we were never going to be a "normal" Jewish family._

- Rabbi Angela W. Buchdahl

Prior to the past year, whenever I told someone that I am both Korean American and Jewish the usual response was “But...how?” This has changed with the growing national recognition of Rabbi Angela Buchdahl, the first Korean American/Asian American rabbi. Now instead I am usually asked “Oh! Do you know about the Korean woman in New York?” 

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Buchdahl may be the first Asian American Rabbi, but by no means will she be the last. How will the American Jewish diaspora adjust to a growing ethnically diverse population? While I hope to keep expanding this project after completing my degree, at this time I want to show how foodways can be used as a lens to explore mixed heritage families by focusing specifically on my mother’s preparation of Jewish Passover desserts.

Passover is the most significant holiday for my father’s family. Over the years, it has become tradition that my mom (and I) are responsible for the dessert, which has very specific religious requirements. A Jewish cookbook described Passover in the following terms:

Every year, on the eve of the 15th day of Nissan, we begin the 8 day festival of Passover. It is a holiday of joy and renewal, celebrating the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. Surrounded by family and friends, we recall the story of our ancestors’ exodus from bondage; an escape so rapid it did not allow time for their bread dough to rise. In commemoration, no foods with leavening agents (chametz) are allowed during Passover.  

As the wife of an eldest Jewish son, my mother’s position as his wife is more important than the fact that she is Korean American. When asked how her responsibility for baking Passover desserts began, she never mentioned her race or a sense of exclusion when interviewed in February 2013:

The first year I think I made dessert [your Dad’s aunt] had extra . . . [because] she didn’t know [but] . . . I brought a whole ton, so [starting the] next year . . . I just made dessert and they . . . might have a few things here and there, but they expect me to bring enough for everybody.

By making Passover desserts, my mother has asserted herself as one of the female members of the family to the degree that at the 2013 family Passover one male family member remarked

\[\text{Passover begins on the 15th day of the month of Nisan according to the Jewish lunar-based calendar, which roughly translates to April. The holiday is a celebration of the exodus from Egypt thousands of years ago, where according to the story, God enacted ten plagues to convince the Pharaoh to free the enslaved Jewish people; Minneapolis Talmud Torah family, Passover Treasures: A Collection of Recipes}\]
“Songmi, you should really think about opening your own Jewish bakery.” The family's response shows how culture and tradition have shifted in my family. My Korean American mother has become part of the annual Passover tradition, and in becoming part of it has dynamically (if unintentionally) changed it. My mother is the first Asian American to be part of the Margolin family; however, she is by no means the last as my brother's and my presence shows. The family's foodways customs are changing as a reflection of the increasing cultural diversity within.

When I recently asked my mom where our Passover dessert recipes were, I expected the usual answer: “I have it somewhere” or “I don’t really use a recipe.” Instead, she pulled out a cookbook titled Passover Treasures: A Collection of Recipes from the Minneapolis Talmud Torah Family. This is the first time in my life that, when I asked for a recipe, I found out that not only is there a recipe but actually a collection of them all kept in one place. The cookbook itself was a gift from my maternal grandmother to her daughter-in-law after visiting Minnesota in the mid-1990s. Rather than buying my mom a formal Jewish cookbook with strongly religious overtones, my grandmother chose a community-based compilation that reminds the reader:

Passover is a time for the gathering of loved ones . . . for remembering our roots . . . and for contemplating our future . . . The Minneapolis Talmud Torah family has come forward with an amazing number of treasured recipes . . . Enjoy them, experiment with them, be creative.

My grandmother gave this to my mom about ten years, and two children, into my parents’ marriage. For a second-generation Jewish American woman who would have loved nothing more than to see her eldest son settle down with a nice Jewish wife, this gift was the equivalent of a declaration of love and acceptance. Through this gift, my grandmother was conveying

from the Minneapolis Talmud Torah Family, ed.Rivel Greenberg (Minneapolis: Talmud Torah
acceptance that there is room to innovate Jewish customs (i.e. Korean grandchildren). Further, in presenting a compilation of recipes from a community of Jewish women, my grandmother gave my mom a community of Jewish women to guide her on her way to becoming a true Jewish wife. On the flip side, she was placing responsibility on her daughter-in-law, communicating that it was time for her to accept her role as a woman of the family and do her part to maintain Jewish culture in the lives of her two children. This message clearly hit home: the cookbook is the only one in our family collection that houses all of the recipes for a family holiday, and even when new Passover recipes are found, my mother glues them into the book. Further, it was after the gift that my mom became, and has maintained the position of, dessert master.

This is no easy feat, as Passover has many rules in regard to what can be eaten. One of the major restrictions, is the banning of *chametz* which is defined as:

> . . . any food product made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt, or their derivatives, which has leavened . . . As we are commanded by the Torah, if a food contains even a trace of *chametz*, we don’t eat it, we don’t derive benefit from it, and we make sure not to have any of it in our possession for all the days of Passover . . . Unless a product is certified Kosher for Passover, we consider it *chametz*.22

Many of the ingredients often used in baking desserts are banned during Passover, so my mother faced the challenge of not only baking traditional (and tasty!) desserts for a Jewish holiday, she had to do so while following the stringent dietary confines of the Passover holiday. In becoming the family authority on the most complicated Jewish desserts, my mom has elevated her status to that of a knowledgeable Jewish woman. This is one skill that many of the Jewish women in my father’s family are unable to replicate.

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As a member of the next generation, while my mom learned about Passover through dessert, I learned the Passover Story from the Maxwell House Haggadah. What began as a marketing tool in 1932 has become tradition with the Maxwell House Haggadah being the most widely used haggadah in the world.\(^23\) The 2012 edition reflects an increasingly diverse American Jewish community.\(^24\) I did attend Hebrew school where traditions and customs were discussed, but it was sitting down with my family to read the Passover Story together that truly drove the message home. In the American diaspora, Passover is celebrated in the home with an interactive service called the Seder where the entire family takes turns reading the Passover Story aloud from a haggadah. Since my family always used the Maxwell Haggadah, the book became the basis for my personal understanding of Passover. For example, I learned about matzoh from lines like: “This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt; let all those who are hungry, enter and eat.”\(^25\) On an even larger scale I learned and internalized the significance of the holiday from statements like:

In every generation each human must hold the awareness of having personally exited Egypt, as it is said ‘And you will relate to your child on that day that this is on account of what the Eternal did for me, for me when I went out of Egypt.’\(^26\)


\(^{24}\) How did a coffee company become the publisher of the most popular haggadah in the United States? The Maxwell House Haggadah started as a marketing tool in 1932 in an effort to tap into the Jewish market. It was the brainchild of Joseph Jacobs, the founder of Joseph Jacobs Advertising, who sought to publicize the fact that Maxwell House coffee was certified Kosher for Passover. So whenever a Jewish individual purchased the kosher coffee, they received a complimentary Haggadah. Now over seventy years later, the practice continues. Except now, it is even easier to get your annual Haggadah. If your local grocery store does not carry it, just visit [www.maxwellhousehaggadah.com](http://www.maxwellhousehaggadah.com) and you can order as many complimentary haggadahs as you like. All you have to do is pay $1.50 for shipping & handling (per Haggadah). The publication is strategically directed at a national middle-class Jewish community (who else will or can afford to buy Kosher coffee?). With over fifty million copies distributed, the haggadah has shifted from a cool freebie to a staple of the Jewish holiday; Balin, “Good to the Last Drop,” 86.


Through the annual performance of Passover, I internalized Jewish customs.

Looking at the changes over the years in the haggadah, it becomes apparent rather quickly that the American Jewish Diaspora is changing. The first noticeable feature of the 1932 first edition Maxwell House Haggadah is that the binding of the book is on the right side rather than the left. This is done in the Hebrew fashion where both books and writing go in the opposite direction from English. Before even opening the book, the publishers are making a statement about the authenticity of the haggadah. What is being presented is not a watered-down service, but a traditional prayer book made for observant Jews. Opening the book to the second and third page, it becomes clear that the book is designed specifically for American Jews. Each page is split down the middle with English and Hebrew translations mirroring each other. The use of English translation shows how the publishers were trying to appeal to a mainstream audience who may not have been able to conduct a Seder in Hebrew. However, the Hebrew is there for those who can read it and as a reminder that this is an authentic Jewish haggadah. The result is a book that seems to balance between the traditional and accessible, instantly sending out the message that the Maxwell House Haggadah enables even the most casual Jew to partake in a traditional Passover Service.

Delving into the haggadah itself, the tone and presentation are very businesslike, leaving the reader with the sense of the traditional. Where images are included, they are very religious in nature with captions like “The Sages Relating the Story of Passover” beneath what appears to be

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27 The Hebrew is as much an indicator of the intended audience as the English. In Israel, Hebrew is written without any vowels. While there are vowel letters, individuals learn how to read and write the language without them. In the United States, Hebrew publications continue to include the vowels as is done in the Maxwell House Haggadah.
an old wood carving. Further, the haggadah is not a Passover guidebook explaining the different components with step-by-step directions. Instead, the book guides you on the journey with instructions like “on weekdays commence here:” The Jews being addressed here are already familiar with the Passover tradition. The 1932 haggadah leaves the impression that Maxwell House Coffee is seeking to prove its own legitimacy to the American Jewish community. If the company can get a Passover Seder right, then clearly the coffee must be right as well. At the end of the publication, the reader is reminded that Passover is about coffee, and not just any coffee but “the original Passover coffee . . . [which is] KOSHER FOR PASSOVER as certified by Rabbi Hersch Kohn of New York.”

The book essentially markets itself as a guide to getting through the Passover holiday; however, there is not a single word on who is allowed to sit at the Seder table. There is talk about how to pass down Passover tradition, but to whom it should be passed? In this case, the omission implies that this is because anyone who reads the haggadah is Jewish (who else would want Kosher coffee?), but the tone and intentionality seem to shift over the next 80 years.

The 2012 edition of the Maxwell House Haggadah is designed for a more diverse audience than its 1932 parent. Like the 1932 edition, the new haggadah also has the binding along the right side, but even before opening the pages one notices a few striking differences. The first is a reflection of changing technology. While the 1932 edition had a very simple cover, the current edition has a graphic background depicting an abstract view of a Seder table with many of the traditional items. But no people are depicted. In fact, looking through the entire Haggadah one notices graphics of Passover symbols like a Seder Plate, frogs, or a Kiddush cup, but no people

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29 Joseph Jaclobs Advertising,1932, back cover.
shown interacting with the items.\textsuperscript{30} This is a departure from the 1932 edition which had drawings representing scenes from the Old Testament reflecting a new consciousness of increasing diversity within the American Jewish diaspora.

As a mixed race Asian American reader who grew up with the Maxwell House Haggadah, there is nothing in the more recent editions reminding me that I do not belong. I am not forced to read the haggadah while being bombarded by images and photographs showing people who do not look like me.\textsuperscript{31} Further, the haggadah provides step-by-step instructions on how to put together the important Seder items. The first page provides a guide to setting up the table, from an explanation on matzoh: “place them separately in Matzoh covers or fold them separately in one or two napkins” to Elijah's Cup: “use a large goblet to be filled with wine and placed near the center of the table.”\textsuperscript{32} Maxwell House Coffee is no longer assuming that this information is being passed down. Instead, the book is welcoming the new or nontraditional Jew to become part of the Maxwell House tradition. All of these messages are being broadcast without even beginning the Seder itself. Maxwell House reassures its readers that “this Haggadah is complete, with no deletions from the traditional version” (although there have been some updates).\textsuperscript{33} The haggadah has become such a Passover staple that the company no longer has to assert its legitimacy, but instead its reliability. If the mass-marketed haggadah has changed over the years, how have Jewish families also changed? No longer is the Maxwell House Haggadah trying to create a space for itself in the traditional Jewish market. Now the publishers invite the non-

\textsuperscript{30} Joseph Jacobs Advertising, 2012, 2, 18, 44.
\textsuperscript{31} There is one interesting exception. In the section of the Ma Nishtana, or four questions that the youngest child at the Seder is expected to ask there is a picture of a young girl holding an open Haggadah. This may have a simple enough reasoning as the publishers did not know how to abstractly represent a child. But why a female child? And why only here?; Joseph Jacobs Advertising, 2012, 8.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 3.
traditional or novice Jew to become part of the Jewish tradition of Maxwell House Coffee which has been “At your Passover Seders for 80 Years.” What may have originated as a marketing tool directed at middle class Jewish Americans is increasingly being read by a multi-ethnic audience.

“Why is this night different from all other nights?” is the central question in the Ma Nishtana (なぜこれは子夜ですか), or “Four Questions” that the youngest child at a Passover Seder is supposed to ask. As the child in my family often responsible for reciting the “Four Questions” (in Hebrew), my perception growing up was that Passover was different from all other nights because there are a lot of rules. The rules that come to mind include: “What is chametz?,” “What foods may not be used during Passover” or “What foods require rabbinic supervision for Passover?” Being born in the month of April, I regarded the banning of birthday cakes important as flour and yeast were not permitted during Passover. This led me to check the calendar every January to check if my birthday was going to be one of those years. Perhaps it was during this time that my mother began to experiment with the creation of Passover friendly desserts.

There are three main desserts that have become Margolin family traditions: coconut macaroons, “those brownies with the marshmallows,” and “those chocolate matzo thingies.” It is interesting that three desserts that must follow very particular rules rarely have any kind of formal name within the family. While all three are housed in the same book, they actually come from three different sources. The first, a recipe for coconut macaroons, looks like it was cut off a

34 Ibid., back cover.
35 The haggadah has even made its way to the White House proving to be President Obama’s haggadah of choice as he asked: "Does this mean we can't use the Maxwell House Haggadah anymore?" when presented with an alternate publication.; Jeffrey Goldberg, "Barack Obama Is Such a Traditional Jew Sometimes," The Atlantic, http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/03/barack-obama-is-such-a-traditional-jew-sometimes/254292/ (accessed November 5, 2012).
36 Minneapolis Talmud Torah family, 3.
bag or box of coconut, since the only brand name mentioned in the ingredients is a package of Baker’s Angel Flake Coconut. In my mom’s own words in February of 2013:

I make . . . homemade macaroons . . . the coconut macaroon recipe is basically from [my adoptive father’s mother] who was Jewish. You know she’s the one that taught to bake . . . who got me the idea of baking during holiday time. . . Your dad’s family, they’ve been Jewish all their lives you know they say these are, they only ate the Manishevitz canned macaroons . . . they never [tasted] anything like it.

Further, while she may rely on the measurements of the Baker’s Angel Flake Coconut, her true pride comes from her secret ingredient: the use of pure almond abstract instead of imitation vanilla. Looking at the other desserts, it was news to me that the popular “chocolate covered matzo thingies” actually had the extensive title of “MY TRADEMARK, MOST REQUESTED, ABSOLUTELY MAGNIFICENT CARAMEL MATZO CRUNCH” which appears to have been cut out of a newspaper and placed under the recipe for “Matzo Toffee” in Passover Treasures. This is actually an accurate title. One year my mom decided to mix things up and not make the chocolate-covered matzo and my father’s extended family was extremely disappointed. It is actually this recipe that cemented my mom’s position as the head of Passover dessert, as it was after the year of no “matzo thingies” that it became verbalized not only that my mom was in charge of making Passover dessert, but she also had to bring specific items. The third recipe, “Magic Brownies,” is the only one used that actually comes from the Passover Treasures cookbook, and it was also the least popular of the three Passover staples until 2013 when my mom put her own twist on this recipe by creating a (kosher) chocolate and marshmallow topping which had her bouncing around the kitchen during baking, repeating “They’re so much prettier. I know it's weird but I like it!” The brownies are an example of my mom's culinary creativity, as
well as her skill at accommodating the strict rules of Passover cooking and baking. Her innovations paid off as the brownies were the dessert finished first at our 2013 Seder.

The examples above demonstrate how my mother negotiates her position as a first generation Korean American within a Jewish family. Further, it is important to add that while my mom has arguably been the most influential in teaching me about my Jewish identity, she never converted to Judaism. When I was born she began taking conversion classes; however, she was disturbed by the rules and regulations that would govern every aspect of her life (including having to go to a bathhouse once a month to cleanse herself). This raises the question of whether conversion would make her “more Jewish” than she already is. Further, what implications does that have for me as her daughter? Since Jewish religious inclusion is passed through the maternal line, my authenticity as a Jewish American is directly related to my Korean mother’s authenticity. Further, how does the narrative of food, gender, religion, race, and authenticity become further complicated by the fact that although not technically Jewish, my mom is a better Jewish cook of symbolic holiday foods than both my Jewish grandmother and my father’s oldest sister? This introduction to my family and food raises more questions than it answers.

Through the creative aspect of my thesis project, I plan to translate short histories like the one above into a visual presentation. With the heart of my project centered on recipes, I will include with them short poems, video demonstrations, written anecdotes, and stop motion sequences.

Current Status

Presently I am shifting gears from planning, research, and writing to the actual building of content. For the purposes of this MA project I have drafted a project proposal as well as a
wireframe that provides a blueprint of what my website will ultimately look like. For my thesis, my primary creative objective is to create the skeleton of the web project providing the infrastructure for the ultimate version of the site as designed in the wireframe. The next sections will demonstrate what this will look like.

IV. Detailed Creative Approach/Treatment (style, structure, voice, story, characters, locations)

In this section I will demonstrate how I take the analysis of the previous section to create a digital multimedia project. For the past ten years I have sought to understand and articulate my sense of identity and belonging as a mixed race Korean Russian American Jew in Southern California. The first time I sought to do so was when writing my undergraduate admissions essay for UCLA; however, after failing to find a language to sum up what it means to be mixed race in America, I let the topic go believing that since I could not write about the struggles of being mixed race that must mean that I do not have any struggles. During my undergraduate years at Pitzer, I sought a connection to my Korean heritage by studying Korean language, earning my B.A. In history with a focus on modern Korean history, and applying for a research Fulbright in Korea. I believed that if I could learn the history of my mother’s family I would understand my relationship to them. To clarify my focus, I applied to UCLA’s Asian American Studies M.A. Program in 2010 to study Asian American, and particularly Korean War, historiography.

When I think about growing up as a Korean Russian American Jew in the San Fernando Valley, there are memories of pain, confusion, and exclusion. However, there are also moments of happiness, connection, and fulfillment. I am a physical embodiment of the history of both

37 Please note that as the wireframe is a theoretical visual outline of the web component. The webpage
sides of my family, and with that I carry the trauma and loss but also the love, connection, and
negotiations of my parents. I want to step away from some of the pressures of creating a mixed
race narrative that blends into the current canon and create my own space for exploration with
the website One Mixed Margolin. I will ground my analysis in my family history in conjunction
with the ideas and practices of food.

My goal is not to provide a blanket narrative to challenge the work of other mixed race
individuals as it is through the work of others that I have managed to reach a point where I can
begin my own project. Rather, I hope to explore on my own terms and perhaps create a new
avenue of discussion within the mixed race community. If much of mixed race discourse has
focused on microaggressions, I want to explore their counterpoint as well in what Professor
Victor Bascara has labeled “an exploration of microaffections.”

**Character Sketches**

Below are the main characters who will appear in the project. They have been chosen because
they are the individuals I consider to be my immediate family.

**Alexandra Margolin/One Mixed Margolin (self):** As the identifiable author and webmaster the
page will be told from my own perspective. Videos, writings, and static content will all be in my
voice. Wherever it is not my own voice, the character will be identified.

**Songmi Margolin (mother):** My mother Songmi Margolin will be one of the central characters of
the piece. Adopted from Korea in her early teen years, Songmi went on to get a degree in fashion

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itself may have some departures from the preliminary proposed structure.
design and ran her own label. Now in her early fifties, she has returned to school in the past few years to complete her B.S. in nutrition. The vast majority of the web content will focus on Songmi Margolin. In the Margolin household, Songmi has the primary responsibility for food planning and preparation. Since she married a Jewish American, her responsibilities often entail the preparation of traditional Jewish dishes as well as teaching her two mixed race children about those traditions. As the project seeks to explore the hybridity of food customs in mixed race families, Songmi will be a central focus of the web project.

Scott Margolin (father): My father Scott Margolin will be a more peripheral character in the project, but still present. A fourth-generation Russian American Jew, Scott was the first individual in his family to marry an individual not of European descent. As the eldest son of both his family and generation, this action met varying responses. In the decades after, mixed race relationships have become more common than monoracial relationships in the Margolin family. Within the Margolin family, Scott has not been heavily involved in the preparation of food. Within this project, I will examine which food practices he is more actively engaged in as well as his and Songmi’s interactions surrounding food responsibilities.

Nick Margolin (brother/roommate): Nick Margolin is the younger sibling and will act as a foil to my own experience. A direct opposite to his sister, Nick is not as concerned about his identity as a mixed race Korean American Jew. His presence will serve as a reminder that one does not have to be deeply involved in the Asian American or mixed race community to have a story to tell and that there is power in self-acceptance. In this project, Nick will serve as a foil to the character of One Mixed Margolin. As the second born child and only son in the family unit, what are his roles
in the kitchen? How are his responsibilities similar to or different from mine? While neither us lives with the family unit, we share our own household in Culver City. How do we negotiate gender and space in our own home?

**Ui Chin “Lee” Smith (maternal grandmother):** Lee Smith was born on Cheju Island in what was then Korea. In her teen years she ran away to Seoul from her family with her older sister who was trying to escape an unwanted marriage. She later met and married a young G.I. named Robert Smith and relocated to the San Fernando Valley eventually adopting her sister’s illegitimate daughter Songmi. An amazing southern and Korean cook, Lee expresses affection most often through food, whether cooking southern food for her husband, or calling her daughter and grandchildren and asking “Did you eat dinner yet? What did you eat?” Lee’s presence will be strongly present in the project; however, not necessarily through being interviewed herself. Having faced much psychological trauma in Korea in the 1950s and 1960s, she has a strong aversion to speaking of the past. It would be unethical to push her to speak. Instead she will primarily be present through anecdotes by other family members, archival videos, as well as her presence at family celebrations.

**Robert J. Smith (paternal grandfather):** Robert J. Smith was born to a low income family in Virginia. After entering the air force looking for upward mobility, he met and married a young Korean woman who worked on the American military base in South Korea and brought her to Southern California. Lee and Robert adopted Lee’s niece Songmi and also raised Robert’s youngest brother Stevie. In this project, Robert will be a peripheral character. Ultimately, I would like to conduct a full interview and incorporate his character further into the website.
alongside Lee to explore the gender and racial dynamics of their generation. At the current moment, most of this exploration will be done through the memories of Songmi and myself with b-roll to provide a visual point of reference.

**Jared Novak (partner/roommate):** Jared Novak is my longtime (ten year) partner. If the above characters are part of my childhood and past, then Jared is a large part of the direction I imagine for my future. As I conduct this project, Jared and I are constantly forced to reflect on our own practices as a mixed race couple and really think about how we want to balance our food practices and responsibilities.

**Roxanne Plata (brother’s partner/roommate):** Roxanne Plata is the longtime girlfriend of Nick. A second-generation Filipina, Roxanne feels disconnected from her own family and has found refuge in the Margolin family. She is more alike in personality to Songmi than any family member and is more often assumed to be Songmi's daughter than I am. Much like myself and Jared, it is interesting to see how Roxanne and Nick negotiate food and home responsibilities within their partnership.

**Illustrate the creative approach or style possible structure, voice, and point of view**

The website will be informed by my own point of view as a mixed race Korean Russian American Jew. The character of One Mixed Margolin will be my persona within the world of the project.

The site will operate on two levels. The first is as a multimedia food blog where viewers can explore some of my family’s recipes and meet the central characters. The tone of this portion of
the project is more informal. Viewers who visit the site will be able to look at family recipes that I post, learn a little about me and my family, and read, watch and/or hear some of the stories and memories behind the recipes (For example, my grandmother’s recipe for kimchee chige will include the anecdote about how she once gave some tofu to a female Italian friend as a gift. Not knowing anything about tofu, her friend served it to her family as a dessert with whipped cream and strawberries, much to the chagrin of her family). This portion of the website is geared toward individuals who are interested in food or looking for particular recipes, and not necessarily seeking the mixed race focus. My hope is to spark interest in how foodways can be used to examine not only mixed race issues but also family history.

The second level of the site will be more analytical in nature, designed for visitors interested in learning more about the project. While still told from the perspective of One Mixed Margolin, the tone will be more formal than the food blog. While there will also be a blog for the second page, posts will focus more on the significance of practice and performance of food customs. For example, a post that comes close to the Passover holiday could include a discussion of the significance of my Korean mother cooking Jewish foods.

The two pages will link to each other with a link on the main menu bar for each. Further, there will be connections made between blog posts. A recipe for coconut macaroons on the first site could include a link to discussion of what Passover looks like in a mixed faith family on the second site. And the reverse is true as well. An analysis of Passover desserts on the second site can link to the first with a link like: “Want the recipe? Click here!”

While either component could be a standalone website, together they allow the reader to engage on multiple levels. Further, I am interested to see which website will operate as a more
frequent gateway. Will it be individuals looking for recipes who become curious to learn more? Or individuals interested in foodways who become interested in the recipes analyzed?

Describe the elements:

Both sites will be similar in layout and style; they will be differentiated by font and color choice in addition to content.

One Mixed Margolin

• Homepage and Header:

  □ Upon entering the site, the main page will show a full screen rotating picture menu bar highlighting recent updates to the site. Updates can include: new blog postings, new recipes, personal news, as well as updates on the partner site. At the top there will be a menu bar that allows the individual to explore the site further. Buttons will include: “Home,” “Blog,” “Recipe Index,” “Meet the Margolins,” and “Exploring Further: Foodways and Mixed Race.” This menu will remain at the top of the page no matter which subpage is being viewed. The right panel of the webpage will also have some static content. At the top there will be a brief “About Me” that introduces the visitor to One Mixed Margolin. Below will be a section called “Categories” that will list certain keywords (i.e. gluten free or Korean) that will link to recipes that fit that criteria), and third will be the webpage archive where visitors can explore postings by date. This page will
operate as both a sitemap and overview of the project. It is here that viewers can see all of the different components with brief descriptions and decide where they themselves would like to explore further.

- **Blog:**

  - The blog will be the way that new recipes are added to the site. With each posting I will introduce the food, provide picture or video, and the recipe, as well as any supplementary material relevant to the posting. Each food item will also be represented in the “Recipe Index.” This is the component of the website where my voice as One Mixed Margolin will most dynamically be represented as the blog will convey my perspective. Here I can include memories and video, filling in some of the gaps where viewers may have questions.

- **Recipe Index:**

  - The recipe index will include thumbnail pictures or video of different dishes with the name of the dish below. The food name will link to a page for the dish including a range of items including: the recipe itself, pictures of the steps of preparation, a video demonstration, a haiku or poem about this dish, or the recounting of a memory, whether written, voice recording, or video. This component of the website is central to the goal of being not just a critic of cultural production, but being a producer of knowledge as well. For example, I have been wanting to experiment with Jewish and Korean flavors to create a Matzo Ball
Kimchi soup. An entry in this portion of the website might include: recipe, video demonstration, pictures, written anecdotes and video of family members trying the dish (for better or for worse).

• **Meet the Margolins:**
  - “Meet the Margolins” is the section where the viewer is introduced to the major characters and is crucial for visitors to be able to understand the characters of the project and how they are connected to one another. The page will provide an interactive family tree with small bios on each character. This page is an important foundation as I will be constantly referring to all of the characters throughout the other components of the site. My family history can be incredibly difficult to follow, so whenever a visitor is confused they will always have this page to refer back to.

• **Foodways & Mixed Race:**
  - Why am I discussing foodways and mixed race together? This will be the section that explains why the story is being told through food. The section will include pictures and old home movies, as well as short interviews with family members. This section will include a link to “Explore Further,” which will take the visitor to the partner website that provides a more analytical lens to the recipes and creative aspects of the information presented.

**Exploring Further:**
• **Homepage and Header:**
  
  - Much like its counterpart, the main page will show a full screen rotating picture menu bar highlighting recent updates to the site. Updates can include: new job postings, new recipes, personal news, as well as updates on the partner site. At the top there will be a menu bar that allows the individual to explore the site further. Buttons will include: “Home,” “Blog,” “Foodways and Mixed Race,” “Discussion,” and “One Mixed Margolin.” This menu will remain at the top of the page no matter which subpage is being viewed.

  - The right panel of the webpage will also contain static content. At the top there will be a brief “About Me” that will provide a more professional introduction with my academic background. Below will be a section called “Categories” that will list certain keywords (i.e. Passover, Kosher) that will link to posts that fit that criteria, and third will be the webpage archive where visitors can explore postings by date.

• **Blog:**
  
  - Blog posts will be short analytical essays focusing on an aspect of foodways and mixed race, whether it be about a holiday or even just a memory.

• **Foodways & Mixed Race:**
  
  - This section will provide an introduction to why I am looking at mixed race with a foodways lens.
• **Discussion:**

  - This will be the interactive portion of the website. Within the website I plan to create a discussion forum section where individuals can comment or use available social media programs to upload their own creative project. My hope for this project is create a foundation that I can continue to expand with both content and technology.

  - Ultimately I hope to expand the scope of the website, particularly by allowing viewers to create their own video and recipe submissions. With the increasing accessibility of social media, this is becoming more viable. With applications like Instagram, individuals can take pictures, add captions, and create collages with their phones and upload them directly to the internet. I will moderate this portion of the website and will approve all posts before they go live. At this point, this is the portion of the site that is least developed.

5. **Permissions/access received**

   As this project involves human subjects who will not have the option of anonymity, I do need their permissions to portray them on the website. All of the characters outlined above have given their verbal and written permission.

   As a UCLA graduate student I have been approved by IRB for exemption status.

   In regard to content, I have to make sure that I avoid copyrighted material in music, images, and recipes unless permission is granted by the artist.
V. Intended Audience

By creating an online space I hope to connect with other mixed race Asian Americans, particularly those who are also American Jews. As a child, I did not know anyone besides my brother who was also Asian American and Jewish. As a result, the two of us grew up thinking that we were an anomaly. While the feeling of being special was often fun and exciting, it was also lonely. Fifteen to twenty years ago there were no vibrant diverse internet communities where an individual could look for community. Now in my twenties, I am curious to see if I can create an online community space for other mixed race Asian Americans. Currently if you type Asian American + Jewish American into YouTube, you will see a group of videos that talk about Asian Americans and American Jews as model minorities, but nothing really about Jewish Asian Americans. The discussion does not yet exist.

By grounding my work in identity, family, and food I hope to create a space that is accessible, so even individuals who may not come from an ethnic studies background and are unfamiliar with mixed race scholarship will feel that they can join the conversation. I hope my choosing something concrete like food and recipes will move others to post some of their family recipes online along with a story, poem, video, or picture that connects the recipe to a story. My last year at UCLA will be used to create the foundation for and skeleton of what we hope will become a future archive.
VI. Project Staff Biographies

The author and webmaster is myself, Alexandra Margolin. I am a San Fernando Valley native who is currently completing my MA in Asian American Studies at UCLA. I received my B.A. in history in 2009 from Pitzer College in Claremont, CA.

After graduating from Pitzer in 2009, I took a step away from academia to broaden my experience. During that first year, I worked at a start-up company in Van Nuys, California. However, my time away only solidified my desire to work with and mentor Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) students so I decided to take a programming position at the Japanese American Citizens League. It was there that I found my calling and decided to pursue a graduate degree in UCLA’s Asian American Studies Department with the goal of telling community stories.

Each of my student, teaching, professional, creative, programming, and community experiences has challenged me to look at the question of how to foster learning and student empowerment through a different lens and respond from a place of compassion, kindness, and humor.

As the eldest daughter of a Korean-born adoptee and a fourth-generation Jewish Russian American, I am a physical embodiment of the hybridity of my parents’ family histories. As a recent alumna of UCLA's EthnoCommunications program, I have turned to digital media as a way to preserve and celebrate individual and community stories.

In all of my creative and academic work, my passion has been exploring how individuals and communities tell their own stories and how to create space for those stories. While I initially began with creative writing and written oral histories, in the past year I have become enthralled by digital media which can have a much wider reach in the American public. Particularly when
working with widely unknown marginalized communities, the visual nature and accessibility of video is incredibly empowering.

**Film/Multimedia**

*Passing Down the Legacy* Co-Director/Co-Producer (December 2011)

“Queer, Undocumented, & Unafraid” Co-Director/Editor (March 2012)

“Musings and Ramblings of Nicolas Margolin” Director/Editor (July 2012)

“My Name Is Asiroh” Producer (April 2013)


**Awards & Honors**

JACL Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship 2011-2012

Fulbright Finalist (Research Fellowship in South Korea) 2009


Pomona-Pitzer Women’s Tennis Sportsmanship Award (Sagehen Spirit) 2007 & 2009

Pitzer College Gold Scholar 2007
### VII. Work Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>1. Decide on Project Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Complete independent study with Professor Bascara to complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Complete draft of written component with Valerie Matsumoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Outline next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>1. Continue working on draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Create wireframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Rework treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>1. Update Wireframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Draft treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Rework proposal with Professor Matsumoto’s comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Create website template/build foundation for static content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Begin building media content (2 videos minimum by end of quarter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| March 2013| 1. Integrate all current written work onto site  
          | 2. Complete 1 interview video and one home movie montage minimum  
          | 3. Schedule Defense? |
| April 2013| 1. Focus on Media Content  
          | 2. Finalize defense date. |
| May 2013  | 1. Complete Project  
          | 2. Defend/Mid-late May |
| June 2013 | 1. Complete Edits  
          | 2. File |
VIII. Wireframe

One Mixed Margolin
Exploring Family History Through Food
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Blog</th>
<th>Recipe Index</th>
<th>Meet the Margolins</th>
<th>Mixed Disciplines, Mixed Media, Mixed Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Each link will navigate you to a page dedicated to the topic linked to the left: recipes, design, and literature.

Randomly included are photos, videos, artwork, interviews, recipes, and personal anecdotes.

For those interested in exploring the blog's archives, they can be accessed by clicking on the related links in the "Mixed Disciplines, Mixed Media, Mixed Race" section.

---

**About Me**

Please fill in detailed information about the person behind the blog.

**Categories**

Each post will feature a category that is listed under the "Categories" section. This ensures that readers can access directly by clicking on the category.

**Archive**

Will be populated by month and year of posts.

---

**Footer**
One Mixed Margolin
Exploring Family History Through Food

Meet the Margolin Family

-a collection of narrative, photos, old home movies, and interviews

Footer

Explanation and background on why I am bringing these two topics together
-A simplified version of lit review
-My personal history/interests/whatever

Why Mixed Race?

Categories

Archives

45

- Undecided what it will look like currently but will be a way to engage with uacro
- Individuals will be able to submit recipes or stories to me that they would like to see posted
- Afterwards, individuals can post comments in response
- Administrator will oversee/approve all comments before they go live

Why Mixed Race?

Categories

Each post will be in one category that is linked under "Mixed Media" or "Mixed Race" that individuals access directly by clicking on the category title here.

Archive

Still working on putting monthly/yearly user of post
References


Goldberg, Jeffrey. "Barack Obama Is Such a Traditional Jew Sometimes." *The Atlantic*.


