Snapshots of Orange County in the 1940s: Spaces, Places, Faces

UCI Libraries
WELCOME TO THE UCI LIBRARIES’ 2022 WINTER EXHIBIT!

Snapshots of Orange County in the 1940s: Spaces, Places, Faces explores the cultural, economic, and political landscape of Orange County from its inception through World War II. While multi-cultural groups were setting roots before the war, military installations brought soldiers from all over the country to Orange County, changing the demographics, cultural norms, and expectations. This exhibition shares the stories of the spaces, places, and faces that transformed rural Orange County to a thriving metropolis.

The exhibit would not be possible without the work of curators Nicole Arnold, Research Librarian for Student Success and Instruction; Cynthia Johnson, Head of Reference Department and Grunigen Medical Library; John Sisson, Research Librarian for Biological Sciences; Krystal Tribbett, Curator for Orange County Regional History and Research Librarian for Orange County; and the Libraries’ Exhibits Team.

Snapshots of Orange County in the 1940s is a complementary exhibition to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and the American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office’s traveling exhibition, Americans and the Holocaust. The traveling exhibition explores the motives, pressures, and fears that shaped Americans’ responses to Nazism, war, and genocide in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s highlighting themes in American history, including Americans’ responses to refugees. This exhibition challenges the commonly held assumptions that Americans knew little and did nothing about the Nazi persecution and murder of Jews as the Holocaust unfolded. Americans and the Holocaust will be on display from February 2, 2022 through March 9, 2022 during regular library hours.

As one of fifty sites selected to host Americans and the Holocaust, we are honored to share this groundbreaking exhibition with the UCI campus and community. In alignment with the traveling exhibition, we have gathered a variety of guest speakers and experts from UCI and across the nation to discuss antisemitism, extremism, and the power of human connection. We invite you to join us as we honor the past, challenge assumptions, and explore how history continues to shape our present.

Snapshots of Orange County in the 1940s: Spaces, Places, Faces will be on display through October 2022 during regular library hours. I invite you to explore the exhibition, and to view additional thought-provoking exhibitions at the UCI Libraries in the future.

Lorelei Tanji
University Librarian
ON AUGUST 1, 1889, the California legislature passed a bill authorizing a portion of rural agricultural Los Angeles County to form a new county named “Orange.” As the agricultural landscape shifted from grape growing and hog farming to citrus groves, the political landscape also shifted. During the first half of the 20th century, the Ku Klux Klan built a stronghold in the county, most notably in Huntington Beach and Anaheim. By the mid-1920s, racist and antisemitic sentiments increased with propaganda, and Klansmen were comprised of prominent members of the community. Klansmen often used the respect of their powerful positions to influence others to join their local Ku Klux Klan units, called Klaverns. In the 1930s, racial segregation and discrimination became visible in daily life activities including schools, public swimming pools, theaters, and restaurants. Multiracial tensions continued to heighten on the precipice of impending war to uphold racial hierarchies.


   August 1, 1889, Orange County officially seceded from Los Angeles County. By World War II, the following Orange County cities had been incorporated: Brea, Fullerton, Huntington Beach, La Habra, Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, Placentia, San Clemente, Seal Beach, and Tustin.


   Orange County is said to have been named after the citrus fruit in an attempt to promote immigration from the East Coast, suggesting a semi-tropical paradise. Before World War II, Orange County had millions of orange trees and California citrus was considered the “second gold rush,” though today only a few citrus trees remain.


   Orange County remained largely rural during the first half of the 20th century, with its economy rooted in agriculture, particularly citrus crops. The Hewes Ranch, for example, was located in the Foothill District of Orange County. Its crops included oranges, lemons, and avocados. The aerial view of Huntington Beach circa 1920 shows views of orange groves and oil fields.
According to the decennial census in 1920, Orange County was an overwhelmingly White and Protestant population and Blacks, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans each made up a fraction of the overall population of the county. Note that Hispanics are not a racial category in the 1920 census, but instead were considered White. However, in 1930, following a rise in immigration dating back to the 1910 Mexican Revolution, the Census Bureau added a new “Mexican” race category. This new category resulted in a smaller number of Whites reflected in the 1930 census for Orange County.

In the 1920s, groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) gained a foothold in Orange County cities, particularly in Anaheim. The Klan targeted not just Blacks, but also Jews, Catholics, and foreigners. They found a sympathetic audience as the United States shifted from a rural agricultural society to an urban industrial society.

In Anaheim, members of the Klan were elected to political office in 1924 and the Klan became more overt in announcing its presence and power in the city: “The Invisible Empire’s increasingly overt involvement in the community was dramatically demonstrated at a mammoth open air rally and initiation ceremony at Anaheim City Park on July 29, 1924.”

Anaheim was promoted as a model Klan city. 10,000 Klansmen from across Southern California attended the initiation ceremony for 1,000 new Klansmen at Anaheim City Park on July 29, 1924. Anaheimers, in reaction to this display, worked to destroy the Klan, leading to its political downfall in 1925.


6. KU KLUX KLAN MEMBERS IN AUTOMOBILE ADVERTISING LECTURE AT ANAHEIM CHRISTIAN TABERNACLE. Circa 1924-1925. Courtesy of the Anaheim Public Library.

Lectures hosted by the Ku Klux Klan were open to the public and anyone could attend. The intent was to encourage people to join the Anaheim Klavern.
ANTISEMITIC PROPAGANDA.


“The Williams Intelligence Summary” was an antisemitic newsletter published by Major Robert H. Williams from December 1948 to March 1958 in Santa Ana, California. While the Ku Klux Klan’s presence in Orange County had diminished since the 1920s, racist and antisemitic propaganda continued to find avenues for expression. In 1951, Congressman Samuel Yorty of California asked the House Un-American Activities Committee to investigate Williams’ antisemitic propaganda.

THOUGH OVERT KLAN ACTIVITIES WERE LESS PREVALENT in Orange County than in other parts of the country, displays of power and racist statements were common.

Allan Fainbarg, a founder of the Jewish Community Foundation of Orange County who grew up in Orange County, remembers seeing a Klansman in 1929.

“I remember one time around 1929, there was a Ku Klux Klansman on horseback that came to downtown Santa Ana, right down Fourth Street, and I remember the chief of police went and grabbed the leader of the Ku Klux Klan and unveiled him and it was a prominent businessman in town here. I do not want to mention his name, but I recall it very vividly. Another example of antisemitism was a fellow named Williams who put out newsletters and pamphlets and was very well-known during the late 40s and 50s.”

In “An Interview with Allan Fainbarg,” Jewish Pioneers of Orange County: The Jewish Community of Orange County, California from the 1850s-1970s. Edited by Dalia Taft. Western States Jewish History, 2012.

8. ALLAN FAINEBARG. Deepa Bharath. “Memorial on Thursday for Allan Fainbarg, ‘the most important Jewish citizen Orange County has ever had’” Orange County Register, March 4, 2015. Photo courtesy of the Fainbarg Family.


Allan is seated on his father’s lap.
Constance Farlice Duffy, who was born in Santa Ana in 1922 and whose father was the first African American to purchase a home in Santa Ana, comments on a general awareness of the Klan.

“Your dad was aware of the Klan because the Klan was very strong in the mid-1920s. Did he talk to you about the Klan?

Nothing. I just knew that it was something that hated us. The only people I might have known would be the fathers of some of my classmates, and naturally they’re not going to say anything to me. So I never knew anybody that was a member. My dad knew the members and knew who they were.”


DID YOU KNOW?

WINE MAKING WAS ANAHEIM’S ORIGINAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY with the formation of the Los Angeles Vineyard Society. Shares in the Society were sold to Germans living in the San Francisco area. By 1859 the land was ready for vineyards to thrive and the settlers arrived in Anaheim. In 1860 they produced 2,000 gallons of wine; four years later they were producing 300,000 gallons a year. In 1863 Anaheim became the location of the first large-scale production of kosher for Passover wine in the country. In 1884 they produced at least 1,250,000 gallons of wine, along with 100,000 gallons of brandy.

In 1883 a disease began rapidly killing the vineyards; by 1891 only 14 acres of vineyard remained in Anaheim. Originally called the “Anaheim disease” or the “California vine disease,” it was renamed “Pierce’s disease” in honor of Newton Pierce, who studied the mysterious ailment. Pierce had suspected an insect-carried bacteria caused the disease. Finally, in 1978, the bacterium causing the disease was identified as Xylella fastidiosa.


Benjamin Dreyfus & Co. Winery, built circa 1884-1885, located southwest of Anaheim near Ball and Manchester. By the time the winery was erected the Anaheim wine industry had been decimated by Pierce’s disease. The building was later used as an orange juice cannery and was torn down in 1973; image shows vineyard in foreground, with two-story brick winery building in background; figure seated atop wine vat visible in center background.


A plate from the report shows the effects of the disease on Berger grapes.

13. NEWTON B. PIERCE, SPECIAL AGENT, APPOINTED, 1890. Courtesy of Special Collections, USDA National Agricultural Library.

Newton B. Pierce was an agent with the U.S. Bureau of Agriculture. He researched and wrote about the disease which caused the crash of the grape industry in Orange County.
WHILE WINE WAS NO LONGER A MAJOR PRODUCT being produced in Anaheim, agriculture remained a vital industry throughout Orange County. In 1948, five million Valencia orange trees grew on 67,000 acres. Northern Orange County had dairy farms and cattle grazed on the Irvine Ranch and Rancho Mission Viejo. Other crops included celery, walnuts, lima beans, and sugar beets. Berries were also common. Knott’s Berry Farm amusement park began as a roadside fruit stand on the family’s farm. By 2018, however, the Orange County Agricultural Commissioner’s office logged only 40 commercial acres of oranges.

14. KNOTT’S “ORIGINAL BERRY STAND.” Circa 1920. Photo courtesy of the Orange County Archives.

Walter and Cordelia Knott stand in front of their “original berry stand” at Knott’s Berry Farm in Buena Park. In reality, several versions of the “original berry stand” were built over the decades. The license plates on the car in the foreground are from 1920, the year the Knott’s came to Buena Park to grow berries.

15. CAMP BONITA, IRVINE RANCH, 1937. Photo courtesy of the Orange County Archives.

Several buildings from this cattle camp still exist today.


The Bastanchury Ranch in the Sunny Hills area of Fullerton was once considered the world’s largest orange grove. The first Valencia oranges in the county were planted in 1875 on the Richard H. Gilman Ranch, now part of Cal State Fullerton. Soon, more farmers arrived. Valencia oranges quickly became a cash cow because they were available in the summer when Navel oranges were out of season. In 1893, the Fullerton Tribune reported that oranges from Fullerton and Placentia were commanding the highest prices in the county.

LIGHTER THAN AIR

WORLD WAR II TRANSFORMED THE RURAL FARMLAND area of Orange County with the development of three military installations: the Naval Air Station Santa Ana which housed the lighter-than-air airships to patrol the Pacific Ocean coastline; the Santa Ana Army Air Base which served as a cadet training center; and the Marine Corps Air Station El Toro which was designated a Master Jet Station in 1950.

In the weeks following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States was on high alert along both the East and West coasts. Defending the West coast was a Navy fleet of non-rigid lighter-than-air airships which patrolled the coastline 24 hours a day. The airships were capable of hovering and staying airborne for long periods of time, making them ideal for spotting enemy submarines along the U.S. coastline. The hangars built to house the large airships in the Naval Air Station Santa Ana were a major engineering achievement of World War II, impressive for both their timber structure and their speedy construction. The hangars built at the Naval Air Station Santa Ana are just two of seven hangars that remain as evidence of the defense of the home front.

A LIGHTER-THAN-AIR AIRSHIP is Navy terminology for a blimp. The non-rigid airships used during the war did not have an internal structural framework. Instead, the airship maintained its shape from the pressure of the helium used to lift it. Costing about $300,000 ($5,600,000 in 2021 dollars) each, the K-Class blimps of World War II carried a crew of eight, could reach speeds of more than 76 miles per hour and cover over 2,000 miles in a single flight. The United States airship fleet was used for scouting, escorting convoys, anti-submarine patrols, and search and rescue missions throughout World War II.

17. ANATOMY OF A BLIMP. Date unknown. Karsten Ivey and Belinda Long. South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

18. HANGAR NUMBER ONE UNDER CONSTRUCTION, LIGHTER-THAN-AIR (LTA) BASE, TUSTIN, 1943. Tustin Area Historical Society. Courtesy of the Orange County Public Library.

The War Department (renamed the Department of Defense in 1949) selected 1,600 acres of farmland in central Orange County as the site of one of the 10 airship facilities to be established around the country. The proposed Orange County site, which was being used to farm lima beans, bordered the City of Santa Ana on one side and the City of Tustin on the other.


On October 1, 1942, the United States military commissioned the Naval Air Station Santa Ana. This image shows the commissioning ceremony of the Lighter-Than-Air (LTA) base.
20. **HANGAR CONSTRUCTION, LIGHTER-TAN-AIR (LTA) BASE, DECEMBER 1942.** Tustin Area Historical Society. Courtesy of the Orange County Public Library.

On April 1, 1942, the Navy broke ground on two of the largest wooden structures in the world to house the airships needed to patrol the West coast. The accelerated construction time of just over six months was typical for wartime projects. This image depicts one of the two hangars built on the Naval Air Station Santa Ana.


Operations began with a simple airship on October 19, 1942, then a fleet of 12 airships by the end of the year, operating from circular concrete mats and mooring masts until the hangars were completed.


By the end of 1942, there were 12 K-Class blimps operating from Tustin as Airship Patrol Squadron ZP-31, for Zeppelin Patrol 31. Airship patrols along the California coast were conducted 24 hours a day from the airship bases in Santa Ana and Moffett Field in the bay area.


Given the size of the airships, no ordinary hangar could house them. Each hangar was capable of sheltering an entire squadron of six airships.


Each hangar measured 1,088 feet in length and 297 feet in width, with timber arches set on 20-foot centers. The hangars were 178 feet or over 17 stories tall. The all-wood design was a direct result of the realities of war. While 33 tons of structural steel was used in building the hangars, traditional construction would have required over 4,000 tons of steel.

The airship hangars remain among the largest wood-framed structures in the world. This image depicts the intricate work to build the hangars.


Suspended beneath the envelope, or gasbag, of an airship is the gondola (also referred to as a basket or capsule), which generally housed the military crew and engines or heat source to give enough lift to keep the balloon and passengers in the air.


An aerial view shows the Naval Air Station Santa Ana base as having the two 1,058’ x 297’ blimp hangars. The two hangars were separated by a large circular landing mat that was about 2,000 feet in diameter, with six smaller landing mats placed around the hangars in a cloverleaf pattern.


On October 19, 2013, the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) Executive Council recognized the “North Hangar” Building #28, at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) in Tustin, California, as a historic site under the AMA’s National Aeromodeling Heritage Program. The hanger is considered “hallowed ground” with the best flying conditions of any indoor flying site in the world.


The Naval Air Station Santa Ana was decommissioned in 1949. The facility was reactivated in 1951 and renamed the Marine Corps Air Facility Santa Ana to support the Korean War. It was the country’s first air facility developed solely for helicopter operations. It was renamed Marine Corps Air Station Tustin in 1979. About 4,500 residents once lived on the base, and the base employed nearly 5,000 military personnel and civilians. In addition to providing military support, Marine Corps Air Facility Tustin leased 530 acres to farmers for commercial crop development. The base finally closed on July 2, 1999 and is now in the process of being converted to residential housing. However, the north hangar is still used as a storage and repair center for commercial blimps.
**DID YOU KNOW?**

“IN 1928, CHIEF OF NAVAL AVIATION REAR ADMIRAL W.A. MOFFETT ARRIVED AT EDDIE MARTIN AIRFIELD, NOW JOHN WAYNE AIRPORT, to meet with James Irvine II, owner of the vast Irvine Ranch, to discuss the Tustin and the Canada del Toro (sic) sites.”

“James Irvine was reluctant to sell either site. Both were productive and profitable as farm fields for the Irvine Ranch itself, or as lease land for other farming interests. Irvine was especially reluctant to sell the Tustin site, which had a very high water table that made it ideal for farming. Locals jokingly called the area that would become the Tustin base “La Cienega de Las Ranas” – “The Frog Swamp” – because the ground water was so high that the soil was almost always moist. Ironically, the same high water table would become a major challenge for any future construction on the site, including the hangars. Fortunately for Irvine, Moffett chose an alternate location in Northern California. But thirteen years later, just after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the War Department returned to Orange County to find a site, this time, with even more determination.

They reopened negotiations with James Irvine for what would become the Tustin base, some 1,600 acres of farm fields that seemed ideal for a Lighter-Than-Air (LTA) facility, along with the larger site at Canyon del Toro, some 15 miles to the south, which would serve for fixed-wing aircraft.”


30. **JAMES IRVINE II.** Circa 1920. Tustin Area Historical Society.Courtesy of the Orange County Public Library.

31. **LAST BEAN CROP FROM THE SITE USED TO BUILD THE TUSTIN LIGHTER-TAN-AIR (LTA) BASE, 1942.** Tustin Area Historical Society. Courtesy of the Orange County Public Library.

“Under the extraordinary conditions that only war can produce, the Navy broke ground for the Tustin LTA facility on April 1, 1942, even though negotiations with James Irvine II were still underway. In August 1942, with negotiations still going on, the Navy began condemnation proceedings for the site. They took title to the land in January of 1943 – at which point negotiations were officially over. James Irvine was offered, and accepted, $100,000 for both the Tustin and the El Toro sites, the equivalent of about $20 per acre.”

LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORICAL PLACES and designated a National Historical Civil Engineering Landmark, the two hangars remain among the largest free-standing wooden structures in the world. The hangars have been featured in prominent television shows and films, including JAG (Episode 18, 1st Season), The X Files (Episode 12, 6th season), Austin Powers (1997), Pearl Harbor (2001), and Star Trek (2009). They were also featured in several major car commercials.

32. PEARL HARBOR.

Ben Affleck stars as pilot, Rafe McCawley, in the 2001 movie Pearl Harbor, which was shot partially at the north blimp hangar in Tustin.


33. STAR TREK.

The interior of the blimp hangar is featured in the 2009 movie Star Trek, where it served as the set for the shuttle bay sequence. “The entire Starfleet was built in the north blimp hangar in 2008. It was overwhelming to see endless rows of space vehicles lined up and stretching to the ends of the 300,000-square-foot hangar.”

ORANGE COUNTY AIR CORP TRAINING CENTER

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEVERAL MILITARY BASES during World War II transformed Orange County from a rural farming community of 131,000 people, in 1940, to a sprawling urban county. 115,000 soldiers from all over the country were stationed in Orange County during the war, many of which returned to live in the region after the war.

The Santa Ana Army Air Base (SAAAB) was the largest local base – in terms of personnel – during the war. Eight hundred structures were built on the base to support military life, including barracks, warehouses, supply offices, officer’s quarters, schoolhouses, cafeterias, a gas station, a hospital, a post office, a church, and fire station, along with many other buildings. When completed, the Santa Ana Army Air Base was almost a self-sufficient city spanning 1,300 acres.

IN 1939, AS GERMANY INVADED POLAND, President Roosevelt’s rearmament program included the expansion of the U.S. Air Corps to train more pilots. In February 1942, the Santa Ana Army Air Base opened as part of the West Coast Air Corp Training Centers. It was the largest of the three U.S. aviation training bases in World War II, and the only one offering three types of training: pilot, bombardier, and navigator.

34. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT CAMPAIGN BUTTON. 1944. Sleeper (Jim) Papers, UCI Libraries Special Collections and Archives.

35. CADET BARRACKS UNDER CONSTRUCTION, DECEMBER 31, 1941. Photo from the National Archives.


The Santa Ana Army Air Base was a facility without planes, hangars, or runways; instead, it served as a basic training camp for new soldiers earmarked for the Army Air Forces. New troops were given nine weeks of basic training and testing to determine if they were suited to become pilots, bombardiers, navigators, or mechanics. After training, soldiers went on to other bases for training in their specialties.

38. CADET ORDERS. Santa Ana Army Air Base, California. May 1942. Sleeper (Jim) Papers, UCI Libraries Special Collections and Archives.

Every Air Cadet attending SAAAB training received one of these basic training booklets about the rules of the camp. It outlined dress standards, sleeping schedules, leave schedules, and penalty demerits for inappropriate behaviors.
LETTER FROM CADET CLASSIFICATION.


The first class of 2,601 cadets graduated on July 1, 1942. By the end of 1942, the annual rate of pilot graduates from the 3-month classification and training program was over 45,000. To carry out this program, the Air Force had recruited a faculty of over 250 well-trained and experienced high school, college, and university teachers who later became officers in the Air Corps. The Santa Ana Army Air Base also trained soldiers as bombardiers, navigators, mechanics, radio operators, and other important jobs to support the war effort. The Base reached its maximum strength by the fall of 1943, with a population of some 26,000 service members.

“NO SINGLE EVENT HAS BEEN MORE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FANTASTIC GROWTH THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA SINCE WORLD WAR II THAN THE OPENING OF THE SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE.”


SOLDIERS OF THE 414TH AIR BASE SQUADRON DEPART THROUGH SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE’S GATE 3 ON A FIVE-MILE HIKE TO AN UNDISCLOSED BIVOUAC SITE. Santa Ana Army Air Base Gate, Santa Ana, California. April 23, 1944. Courtesy of the California Military Museum.


In November 1942, members of the Women’s Air Service Pilots (WASP) began training at the base, followed shortly by members of the Women’s Army Corp (WAC).


In 1942, SAAAB became a reception and recategorization post for 520 cadets from the Republic of China who were given lessons in the English language, military etiquette, and pre-flight training at the Santa Ana Army Air Base as part of the wartime Lend-Lease Act. Sign in photos reads: “Chinese detachment, Major K.Y. Lai, Commanding, Santa Ana Army Air Force.”
SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE WAS A SMALL CITY, including three theatres that hosted a steady stream of famous performers such as Duke Ellington. SAAAB also had its own Army Air Force Radio broadcasting studio, where the show “Uncle Sam Presents” was broadcast over the NBC network and featured celebrities Rita Hayworth, Groucho Marx, and Bing Crosby.

43. **DIMAGGIO PLAYING FOR SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE IN 1943.** Tustin, California. Circa 1943. Army Air Force Photograph.


Two of the more famous “alumni” of Santa Ana Army Air Base training were baseball player, Joe DiMaggio, and author of *Catch-22*, Joseph Heller.

45. **JOSEPH HELLER.** Still from Training During Combat. Circa 1941. War Department. Army Air Forces.

A young Joseph Heller was a bombardier with the 57th Bomb Wing, which inspired him to pen his novel, *Catch-22*.


Heller admitted he modeled the bomber training of protagonist Captain John Yossarian, a U.S. Army Air Forces B-25 bombardier, on basic training at Lowry Field in Colorado and Air Corps training at Santa Ana Army Air Base in California.


DID YOU KNOW?

CALIFORNIA’S VETERAN POPULATION SKYROCKETED AT THE END OF THE WAR.
The counties of Fresno, Los Angeles, Marin, Monterey, Napa, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Mateo, and Santa Clara made their largest absolute population gains during Dwight Eisenhower’s presidency.


In 1944, after training more than 115,000 pilots, bombardiers, and navigators, the Santa Ana Air Base became a Personnel Distribution Center, where men and women returning from overseas were processed for discharge or reassignment. At the end of the war, in 1945, it served as a separation center with hundreds of men and women being discharged every day. In March 1946, the base was closed and the buildings were sold and moved away.


In the span of 37 years, the population of Orange County multiplied tenfold, from roughly 200,000 in 1950 to more than 2,000,000 in 1987. These images compare the land used as the Santa Ana Army Air Base during World War II to the current urban city design.

52. SITE OF FORMER SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE IN COSTA MESA. Diagram. UCI Libraries Design Services.

In 1953, the City of Costa Mesa was incorporated into Orange County. In June 1955, the former Santa Ana Army Air Base property was annexed to the City of Costa Mesa. Today, the site includes the O.C. Fairgrounds to the west, John Wayne Airport to the east, along with Costa Mesa City Hall, Orange Coast College, Pacific Amphitheater, Vanguard University, Air National Guard Station, and several residential and retail tracts.
THE FIRST ORANGE COUNTY FAIR was held in 1890. Different cities hosted the O.C. Fair until 1949, when the State of California purchased the land once occupied by the Santa Ana Army Air Base. A portion of this land was earmarked for the fairground and was to be managed by the newly formed 32nd District Agricultural Association. The O.C. Fair was hosted in its new, permanent location later that year.

53. ORANGE COUNTY FAIR, 1949. Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

View overlooking the amusement rides at the Orange County Fair, August 18, 1949.

ON JANUARY 31, 1948, THE WAR ASSETS ADMINISTRATION in Washington, D.C. awarded Orange Coast College 243 acres of land located on the western perimeter of the former 1,336-acre Santa Ana Army Air Base. The land contained 68 wooden buildings, which included the barracks used to house and train military aviation cadets, an Army chapel, an auditorium, a motion picture theater, a mess hall and a service club.

54. ORANGE COAST COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. 1948. UCI Libraries Special Collections and Archives.
JEWISH COMMUNITY BLOSSOMS IN ORANGE COUNTY

JEWS ARRIVED IN ORANGE COUNTY IN THE 19TH CENTURY to produce wine and continued to live and work in Orange County even after the wine industry failed. While there were various attempts to organize Jewish cultural, educational, and religious institutions in the 20th century, it wasn’t until 1943 that the Temple Beth Sholom was established in Orange County. After World War II, many Jewish veterans moved to Orange County, bringing their families and friends with them.

MANY OF THE GERMAN IMMIGRANTS who came to the Anaheim area in the late 1850s to produce wine were Jewish. Benjamin Dreyfus, one of the first Jews to settle in Anaheim, California, became a successful businessman and vintner, eventually becoming Anaheim’s first Jewish mayor from 1881-1882. While many of the original Jewish immigrants resettled in the Orange County area to produce wine, many Jews also became merchants, either living and working in cities like Santa Ana, or living in Los Angeles with their businesses located in the Orange County area.

55. THE BENJAMIN DREYFUS & CO. WINERY. Anaheim, California. ca. 1884. Courtesy of the Anaheim Public Library.

The Benjamin Dreyfus & Co. Winery was built in the 1870s. Located on East Center Street (now Lincoln Avenue), the property included winery buildings, kegs, and wine vats. Twelve figures standing in background, two at far left identified as Richard Krebs Sr. and Herman Krebs.

LACKING NEARBY SYNAGOGUES, some people made the trip to cities like Long Beach or Los Angeles to be involved in their religious community. Since most freeways connecting Orange County to Los Angeles County were not built until the 1960s, this meant travelling by surface streets. The successful establishment of Temple Beth Sholom in 1943 was the beginning of a major change in how Jewish people in Orange County could practice their religion.

“When I was growing up in the thirties there were no temples, no shuls, no synagogues in all of Orange County. The closest temple was on the west end of Long Beach…..My mother said ‘I’m going to drive you every Sunday morning over to this temple in Long Beach.’ We did that for a short period of time…Then, nothing. No type of relationship with any Jewishness at all until Temple Beth Sholom was established in 1943…”

56. **Dick and Estelle Blake at Their Wedding.** Nov. 25, 1951. Courtesy of the Orange County Jewish Historical Society.

**As the Jewish Population Increased** in the Orange County area, the desire for an established synagogue for both religious observances and religious instruction also grew. In 1920 Rabbi Boucher (also spelled as Butcher) arrived as the first Rabbi of the planned-for Jewish congregation, B’nai Brith, with the plan to organize a Jewish religious school. However, this attempt at establishing a congregation did not last.

57. **“Rabbi Boucher Heads Jewish People Here”** Santa Ana Daily Register, January 8, 1920.

The first official Jewish religious service in Orange County was on “The Power of Vision,” and the article includes a schedule for ongoing religious services.

58. **“Santa Ana Jewish Community to Organize: Jacob H. Boucher Will Lead Congregation and Open Religious School.”** The B’nai B’rith Messenger. December 19, 1919. Courtesy of The National Library of Israel & Tel Aviv University.

Establishing a religious community included plans for a religious school for Jewish education.

**The Growth of the Congregation** in the 1940s reflects the growth of the county as a whole. The Santa Ana Army Air Base, as well as the El Toro Marine Base, established in World War II, played a role in the increase of Jewish population living and working in Orange County.

“...while I was serving as chaplain to the Santa Ana Army Air Base, which served some 15,000 troops, we had at our services the Jewish personnel. Also the personnel from the El Toro Marine Base.”


59. **“Jewish New Year Tradition to Be Observed Here,”** Orange County Register, September 7, 1945. Courtesy of the Orange County Jewish Historical Society.

“I moved to Orange County in 1946, right after the war. When I got out of the service, I came here to visit my older brother Morris, who was stationed at the Army Air Base (now the Fairgrounds in Costa Mesa) and I never went back.”

60. **BLUMA AND BERNIE GLASSER WEDDING PHOTO, SANTA ANA, MARCH 9, 1959.** Courtesy of the Orange County Jewish Historical Society.

61. **TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM ON 8TH AND BUSH.** Santa Ana, California. 1945. Courtesy of the Orange County Jewish Historical Society.

   In 1943, 25 Jewish families in Santa Ana met in their homes to hold Shabbat services. In 1945 they moved into a building located at the corner of Eighth and Bush Streets in Santa Ana, which had been a church. This is the original site of the Temple Beth Sholom, the first Synagogue in Orange County.

62. **TBS MORTGAGE BURNING.** Santa Ana, California. 1946. Courtesy of the Orange County Jewish Historical Society.

   In 1946 the congregation paid off the mortgage for the building. In the 20th century, a mortgage burning ceremony was a custom, a ritual incineration of the promissory note (mortgage) upon completion of the payment schedule. The ritual was performed to celebrate the release of the debtor from further payment obligations, and sometimes included friends and family to join the celebration. Pictured left to right: Harry Stein, Rabbi Joseph Levine, President Louis Weinberg.


   In 1962, Temple Beth Sholom’s congregation outgrew the space at its original site at 8th and Bush Streets, and moved to a newly erected building at 2625 N. Tustin, Santa Ana. The facility was upgraded in the 1990s. In 2016 a project to redesign and modernize the building and campus was completed.
JEWISH PIONEERS IN ORANGE COUNTY WERE AN INTEGRAL PART of building Orange County’s economic and civic landscape. Many Jews came to Southern California to take advantage of the agricultural and economic opportunities. They also became active in politics and charitable organizations.

64. BENJAMIN DREYFUS. Circa 1880. Courtesy of the Photography Collection on Anaheim Local History, Anaheim Public Library.

Benjamin Dreyfus was born in Bavaria in 1824 and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1851. In addition to being one of the original investors in the Los Angeles Vineyard Society, which produced the vineyards in Anaheim, Dreyfus was a multi-faceted businessman. As a vintner, he is considered the first to have mass-produced kosher wine for Passover for shipping in the United States. Dreyfus also partnered with August Lagenberger to open a store (Langenberger & Co.), and run a hotel and bar. In addition to being a businessman, Dreyfus was active in civic life. In 1872 he was named Water Commissioner of Anaheim, from 1880 to 1882, he was president of the Anaheim Water Company, and he was elected to the Anaheim City Council in 1880, and became mayor of Anaheim in 1881. Dreyfus died in 1886.


Sam Hurwitz arrived in Santa Ana in 1904 and began working in Morris Nasatir’s men’s clothing store. A few years later in 1915, he established his own store, Hurwitz Men’s Wear, on 4th Street in Santa Ana. The store stayed in business for 68 years until it closed in 1983.

Sam and his wife, Edith, were instrumental in forming Temple Beth Sholom in 1943. Sam also established the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Orange County and served as its Secretary.


Santa Ana. 4th St. looking West from Bush in 1952. Montgomery Ward, Kirby’s Shoes,
Rankins department store and Sam Hurwitz mens clothing shop (on 110 E. 4th St) are visible. Pacific Electric Trolley lines and automobiles are also visible.

67. **SAM HURWITZ, A TBS [TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM] FOUNDER, 1943.** Courtesy of the Orange County Jewish Historical Society.


Ivie Stein, born in New York in 1891, opened the Stein Photo Shop and was President of the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Orange County from 1939 through the early 1950s.

69. **IVIE STEIN. BUILDING LABELLED [SIC] “BROADWAY BUILDING AND APARTMENTS.”** Date unknown. Courtesy of Santa Ana Public Library.

This image shows the location of Ivie Stein’s camera shop, Stein’s Kodaks, in Santa Ana. The store was located on the west side of Broadway between 4th Street (to the right) and 3rd Street (to the left).
JAPANESE INTERNMENT CAMPS

IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY, JAPANESE IMMIGRANTS BEGAN TO ARRIVE in the United States, starting families, founding businesses and farms, and becoming citizens. However, the American dream for these first-generation Japanese Americans crumbled following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii on December 7, 1941. The surprise military air strike by the Japanese Navy resulted in the United States’ formal entry into World War II. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which authorized the removal of all persons deemed a threat to national security from the West Coast to relocation centers further inland. 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, most of whom lived on the Pacific Coast, were forcibly relocated, and incarcerated in camps in the western interior of the country. Approximately two-thirds of the internees were United States citizens. These artifacts show how local Japanese citizens and immigrants lived through this dark period of American history.


In February of 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Order 9066, legalizing the removal of individuals of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast of the United States to ten “relocation centers” run by the War Relocation Authority (WRA). This document is a set of instructions for those living in Orange County and San Diego County.


Before being relocated, Japanese Americans were vaccinated against smallpox and typhoid fever at temporary assembly centers like this one in Arcadia, California. Under the direction of Dr. Norman Kobayashi, Japanese American nurses vaccinated approximately 400 people an hour in Santa Anita Park. Evacuees were later transferred to War Relocation Authority Centers, or internment camps, for the duration of the war.
Enrollment at the University of California did not protect Japanese American students from forced relocation. This photo, taken at the University of California, Los Angeles campus, depicts members of faculty protesting the injustice of Executive Order 9066 alongside students. The affected students were not granted honorary degrees until almost 70 years later in 2021.

George Tanaka, a Nisei, or second-generation Japanese American farmer in La Habra, California, fled to Utah in 1942 to avoid imprisonment in an internment camp. Tanaka and his wife, Chris, eventually returned to Orange County, establishing a new farm in Fountain Valley. Their son, Glenn Tanaka, grew the farm, moving it to Irvine, where it is the only remaining family-run farm in the city.

While life in the War Relocation Authority camp barracks was small, cramped, and surrounded by barbed wire, Japanese Americans worked hard to improve their surroundings through the establishment of schools, gardens, and other recreational activities.

Shortly after being imprisoned in 1942, this image shows a baseball game on the grounds of Manzanar Internment Camp, located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains in California.
“IN MAY 1942 IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ALL JAPANESE to either enter an internment camp or go far enough east to be out of the so-called danger areas of retaliation, etc. She could have gone to Maryknoll, New York, and enjoyed all of the freedom which that indicated. However, she chose to go to Camp Manzanar, California, together with Sister Susanna Hayashi. Several hundred of ‘her people’ occupied her days for the next three years. Though the idea of internment is not a happy one, you got the idea that these were some of the happiest days of her life. Bernadette often boasted of ‘her converts’ but she more often loved to remember the happy friendships formed there.”


Photograph of Maryknoll Sisters Bernadette and Susanna standing in front of the Maryknoll building in the Japanese Relocation Camp in Manzanar, California. The building is covered with tar paper and strips of wood. A sign to the left of the doorway says “Maryknoll” and lists the Sisters’ names.


In this photo, 19 former UCLA students pose after receiving their honorary diplomas 70 years after they were forcibly relocated. None of the students were able to complete their education at University of California, Los Angeles due to Executive Order 9066.


Some prisoners were able to secure seasonal jobs outside of the camps. Pictured here is Isamu Tanaka, a resident of Orange County, using a pitchfork to place asparagus onto a conveyor belt at a canning plant located in Illinois. Tanaka was held at Poston Internment Camp, located in Yuma County in southwestern Arizona before he was transferred to work in Illinois in 1943.


When World War II ended in 1945 the War Relocation Authority camps were closed, and the prisoners were free to return home. Many had nothing to return home to, and those that did return to their hometowns in Orange County, were met with opposition. Among those leading this anti-Japanese American resistance were members of the Santa Ana Elks Lodge as noted in this newspaper article.
THE SLEEPY LAGOON AND ZOOT SUIT RIOTS

THE MURDER OF JOSÉ GALLARDO DÍAZ IN 1942, sensationalized by the press as ‘The Sleepy Lagoon Murder,’ fanned the flames of fear amongst white Angelenos. This fear, coupled with feverish patriotism, changing population demographics, and racism violently pitted Mexican Americans and African Americans against American service members and White civilians. On May 31, 1943, in Los Angeles, California, a clash between uniformed servicemen and Mexican American youths resulted in the beating of a U.S. sailor. In retaliation, on the evening of June 3, about 50 sailors from the local U.S. Naval Reserve Armory marched through downtown Los Angeles carrying clubs and other crude weapons, attacking anyone seen wearing a ‘zoot suit.’ The ten-day long riot that ensued took its name from the overly large suits worn by many minority youths during the era, but the violence was more about racial tension than fashion.

80. LETTER FROM REYES SALAZAR, INMATE AT SAN QUENTIN, TO ALICE GREENFIELD. Reyes Salazar. June 16, 1943. Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, UCLA Library.

The “Sleepy Lagoon Murder” in 1942 was the name Los Angeles newspapers used to describe the death of José Gallardo Díaz, who was discovered unconscious and dying on the ground near a swimming hole known as the Sleepy Lagoon. The cause of his death remains a mystery to this day. However, the Los Angeles Police Department arrested 17 Mexican American youths as suspects. Despite insufficient evidence, the young men were held in prison, without bail, on charges of murder. The trial ended in 1943, and 12 of the defendants were convicted of second-degree murder.

Manuel Reyes Salazar, one of 12 men imprisoned for in the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial in 1942, remarks on how the Zoot Suit Riots will affect his future and his case. Salazar was eventually convicted and sentenced to serve time in San Quentin Prison in 1943, but the conviction was reversed on appeal in 1944.

81. LUIS V. VERDUSCO, ZOOT SUIT RIOT SUSPECT. Los Angeles, California, 1943. Photographer unknown. Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library.

Seen here, with his head in bandages, Luis Verdusco fought off American servicemen who attempted to strip the zoot suiters of their clothing. The baggy and long fashion of the zoot suiters was seen as unpatriotic, a direct affront to the wartime rations on fabric.

82. ZOOT SUITERS LINED UP IN FRONT OF LOS ANGELES JAIL EN ROUTE TO COURT AFTER A FEUD WITH SAILORS. Los Angeles, California, 1943. Photo by Acme Newspictures, Inc. New York World-Telegram & Sun Newspaper.

“ON JUNE 9 AND 10, 1943, IN THE MIDST OF THE ZOOT SUIT RIOTS, Los Angeles newspapers announced the arrest of a ‘pachuco woman.’ According to the press, twenty-two-year-old Amelia Venegas (sic), mother of a toddler and wife of a sailor, had incited violence by urging a gang of pachucos to attack sheriff’s deputies in her East Los Angeles neighborhood. ‘I no like thees daputy sheriffs [sic.],’ the Herald-Express quoted her. Additionally, newspapers reported that she attempted to smuggle a pair of brass knuckles to ‘zoot suit hoodlums’ to assist them in their street brawls with sailors. Venegas was arrested and jailed for disturbing the peace.”


PACHUCO/PACHUCA is a term for the dominating style among Mexican American youth in the 1930 and 1940s, and is distinguished by zoot suit fashion, dialogue, and actions.


Photograph caption dated June 9, 1942, reads,”Mrs. Amelia Venigas (sic) - ‘pachuco woman.’ Cursed officers, charge against asserted Zoot-Suit shieder.”


The Citizen’s Committee for the Defense of Mexican American Youth formed in 1942 in reaction to the indictment of 22 young men for the infamous ‘Sleepy Lagoon Murder.’ 12 of the 22 defendants were convicted of the murder of José Gallardo Díaz. The Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee raised funds to appeal the case and roused public opinion through education and publicity programs. This statement, issued in response to the Zoot Suit Riots, by the committee calls for a united effort by law enforcement “to rid ourselves of the Hitler plague on the home front.”

“THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR DEFENSE OF MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTH DEPLORES attacks against the Mexican youth by organized civilian hoodlums and army and navy forces. We feel that incitement for such action comes directly from newspapers which in the last few days have run rampant in their headlines, stories and editorials. It is because of a similar hysteria that 17 Mexican-American boys were
convicted in a Los Angeles courtroom filled with prejudice and hatred, six months ago. Our Committee is now appealing this case in an effort to obtain justice for these boys. We feel that behind the confusion created by the obvious disruptive forces in the last few days, lied a well thought-out Axis plan, carried out most successfully by Axis agents in our midst. We believe that we owe it first of all to our Nation now locked in a death struggle against Hitlerism to get to the bottom of this outrage and to root out the rats gnawing at our vitals. In the name of our Good Neighbor Policy, we must get to the source of this outbreak. Our Latin-American neighbors [sic] will seriously question our integrity when they learn that we mistreat and terrorize our minorities. We believe it is imperative that all of our elected representatives, national, state and city, as well as our state law-enforcement agencies get on the job at once to make a thorough investigation and to punish the culprits for their acts of treason. If we are to win the war and the peace for democracy, we must unite now in a concerted effort to rid ourselves of the Hitler plague on the home front.”

Citizens Committee for Defense of Mexican-American Youth
(Signed) Chairman

86. **ZOOT SUITER MANUEL MINJAREZ.** Photographer Unknown. June 15, 1943. Courtesy of the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Many Mexican American youths were arrested by police throughout the riots – often for defending their homes, friends, and neighborhoods. Manuel Minjarez is seen here, donning his zoot suit, ready for his appearance before the Grand Jury as a result for his role in the riots in June 1943.


This newspaper article outlines the history of zoot suits and two solutions to correct the "problem": the preservation of law and order, and a social and economic plan “which is free from discrimination” and “guarantee and actually give to all youth the four freedoms for which we are fighting.”

88. **“ATTACKS BY ORANGE COUNTY ZOOT-SUITERS INJURE FIVE.”** *Los Angeles Times*. June 1, 1943.

Violence eventually spread to Orange County after the initial clashes began in Los Angeles. This newspaper article describes the types of attacks committed by young zoot suiters.
89. **JOSIE (LAST NAME UNKNOWN) WEARING A ZOOT SUIT.** Los Angeles, California, 1945. Unknown Photographer. Courtesy of the Shades of L.A. Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Although the city of Los Angeles adopted a resolution that banned the wearing of zoot suits in Los Angeles streets, punishable by a thirty-day jail term, Mexican Americans continued to wear zoot suits as an expression of cultural and racial identity. This image shows a woman named Josie in 1945, two years after the riots, posing with her zoot suit on.
GROWTH OF THE MEXICAN COMMUNITY IN ORANGE COUNTY

ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA WAS BUILT ON, AND CONTINUES TO BE KNOWN FOR, ITS CITRUS ROOTS. To this day, it’s not uncommon to see the region represented by images of lush, green, orange groves and colorful crate labels pretty enough to frame. During the early 20th century, Orange County became an agricultural powerhouse, distributing citrus fruit to the world. Tens of thousands of acres of citrus groves stretched across the county’s landscape by the 1930s. At the county’s agricultural height, approximately 75,000 acres of orange groves spanned from Brea to Anaheim and from Orange to Irvine. Notably absent from many images and stories of the prosperous citrus years are Mexican farm workers on whose backs the industry was built.

The growth of the citrus industry and subsequent need for cheap labor coincided with an influx of over 700,000 Mexican migrants who between 1900 and 1930 fled to the United States seeking solace from the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

90. VILLA PARK ORCHARDS ASSOCIATION LEDGERS. 1915-1951. Villa Park, California. UCI Libraries Special Collections and Archives.

Leading up to and during WWII, the citrus industry grew exponentially in Orange County. Companies like the Villa Park Orchards Association (VPOA) became global citrus powerhouses. VPOA was established in Villa Park in Orange County in 1912 by 48 local fruit growers who organized to harvest, pack, and market oranges. Today, Villa Park Orchards Association is an agricultural cooperative association organized for the purpose of packing and marketing oranges, grapefruit, tangerines and lemons for its members which are located primarily in Tulare, Kern, San Diego and Ventura county. It has over 375 growers, representing over 12,000 acres. VPOA has packinghouse facilities in Fillmore, Strathmore, and Riverside, California. All fruit is marketed through Sunkist Growers.

91. SANTIAGO ORANGE GROWERS PACKINGHOUSE INTERIOR. Circa 1928. Orange, California. Courtesy of Orange Public Library.

In 1929, the Santiago Orange Growers Association was the largest Valencia orange packinghouse in America, shipping over 800,000 crates (or 50 million pounds) a year. At the beginning of World War II, a packinghouse was built at 350 North Cyprus Street for the Association. The Villa Park Orchards Association purchased this packinghouse in 1967. It operated through 2005.

92. PORTRAIT OF SANTIAGO ORANGE GROWERS ASSOCIATION PACKINGHOUSE WORKERS OUTSIDE OF THE PACKINGHOUSE LOCATED AT 350 NORTH CYPRUS
Both Mexican men and women found jobs to support the citrus industry in Orange County. Men often worked as orange pickers, while women worked in packinghouses. In the United States, Mexican laborers earned more than they would in Mexico, but less than would be paid to American workers.


In 1875, Richard H. Gilman planted the first commercial grove of Valencia oranges on land that is now California State University Fullerton. By the early 1900s, Orange County farmers had planted tens of thousands of acres of orange groves. A packinghouse is a facility where fruit is processed for distribution, and by the early 1940s, 45 packinghouses operated in Orange County. Colorful crate labels helped to distinguish the different farms whose products were being processed.

94. **ORANGE PICKERS WITH LADDERS IN ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.** Circa 1942. Shades of Orange Cypress Street Barrio Collection. Courtesy of Orange Public Library.

Unlike crops which could be harvested by large machines, oranges had to be harvested by hand, which required an enormous number of workers. Pictured here, orange harvesters rest.
In June 1936, several thousand citrus workers went on strike to demand better working conditions and wages. The Citrus Strike, also referred to as the Citrus War of 1936, was a month-long battle between Mexican laborers and their employers. In mid-June, when employers refused to meet the workers’ demands, about 200 Mexican women gathered in citrus groves in Anaheim to urge pickers to stop working. About 3,000 pickers walked out during the height of the Valencia orange harvesting season.

Employers sought the assistance of local law enforcement, as well as members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion, to protect crops from strikers. In early July 1936, Orange County Sheriff Logan Jackson took a firm stance against strikers issuing a “Shoot to Kill” order and by the end of the strike on July 27, 1936, many Mexican strikers had served time behind bars. Negotiations to end the strike resulted in some wage increases and employers agreeing to stop the practice of withholding payment from pickers. In 1939, a congressional investigation found that Orange County employers had engaged in blacklisting laborers and other practices to stop the strike. Despite this, no employers were charged.
By 1893, the citrus industry dominated the county’s economy, and the Orange County Fruit Exchange was organized and incorporated. The Exchange’s headquarters were located at the corner of Glassell Street and Almond Avenue, in the City of Orange not far from the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe rail lines. The proximity of the Exchange headquarters, the railroad, and the Orange business district provided the impetus for both the construction of fruit packinghouses and the development of the Cypress Street Barrio. The Barrio spanned the 400 block of North Cypress Street between Sycamore and Walnut Avenues.

In Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in Southern California: 1900-1950, UCI Professor Gilbert Gonzalez wrote, “Mexicans in citrus towns were invariably the pickers and packers; and consequently, they were poor, segregated into colonies or villages, and socially ostracized, even though they were economically indispensable to the larger society.”

Despite deliberate discrimination by White people with political, economic, and social power in the region, Mexican workers established a vibrant and thriving community.


Gonzalez’s book shows how Mexican immigrants shaped a partially independent existence within a fiercely hierarchical framework of economic and political relationships.


Established in the 1890s, the Cypress Barrio spanned the 400 block of North Cypress Street between Sycamore and Walnut Avenues in the City of Orange. The Barrio community was close-knit, consisting of people from the Mexican states of Jalisco, Michoacan, Zacatecas, and elsewhere. Many of the families were related which contributed to the strength and resilience of the community. Due to segregation, the community was self-sufficient, consisting of a school, grocery stores, restaurants, pool halls, barbershops, and other small businesses, in addition to a mixture of small homes, bungalows, and a tenement. Some families have remained on Cypress Street for more than four generations.
WORLD WAR II COINCIDED WITH A DECLINE IN THE CITRUS INDUSTRY in Orange County. There was a shortage in the cheap labor employers wanted. Many residents of the barrio sought jobs outside of the agricultural industry like construction and manufacturing. Others enlisted in military service.

On August 4, 1942, the U.S. and Mexico signed the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement (today referred to as the Bracero Program). During the program’s 22 years, thousands of Mexican citizens joined the U.S. labor force as temporary agricultural workers. Orange County benefited from the contributions of around 70,000 braceros during this period, especially during the war when labor shortages taxed the county's economic base.

Two bracero camps were even built on North Cypress Street in the 1940s.


   This military diary belonging to Julian Gonzales of Orange, California offers a brief timeline of the service person’s military history during WWII.


   Arthur C. De Leon received the Bronze Star medal while serving in the United States Army, during World War II, in 1944 for a meritorious achievement with a tank destroyer battalion in Germany.

100. **400 BLOCK OF NORTH CYPRESS STREET SHOWING HOMES AND THE CRUZ GROCERY STORE, 1956.** Photo by William McPherson. Courtesy of the Orange Public Library.
IN ORANGE COUNTY, SEGREGATION THROUGH RESIDENTIAL ZONING REINFORCED a separation between Mexican farm workers and white residents, including segregation in the educational system. The Cypress Street School, located at 544 North Cypress Street, in the city of Orange, is the last standing formerly Mexican American segregated school in Southern California. Built in 1928 to house education and health care services for children and migrant workers in the area, it became a segregated school in 1931.

The Cypress Street School closed its doors in 1944, but in other parts of Orange County school segregation continued. By the war years, more than 80% of students of Mexican heritage were attending “Mexican schools.” In 1945, several Mexican American families challenged school segregation in the region by filing a lawsuit seeking to require the integration of schools in Westminster, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, and El Modena.

The case, *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District Orange County*, is among the lesser-known against school segregation in the United States. In 1946 Federal District Judge Paul McCormick sided with the fathers and declared separate schools for Mexican children unconstitutional. The school board appealed the ruling unsuccessfully. Backed by several groups including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), American Jewish Congress, American Civil Liberties Union, National Lawyers Guild, Japanese American Citizens League, and California Attorney General Robert W. Kenny, the Mendez ruling was upheld on April 14, 1947.

*Mendez v. Westminster* set the stage for the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which established in 1954 that state laws that uphold racial segregation in public schools violate the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.


Mexican American students pictured in front of a segregated school referred to as “The Barn” or “The Mexican School” in 1925. The Barn predated Cypress Street School and was located at West Sycamore Avenue and North Lemon Street, Orange, California. Pictured are: Ismael Nava, Connie (Consuelo) Olivos, Ysidra Balderrama, Juanita Villalobos, Frances Beltran, Juan Alcantar, Felicitas Alcantar, Hilario Olivos, Ysidoro Montoya, Rudy (unknown), Salvador Villalobos, Agapito Valdivia, Antonia Picasso, Marcelina Chavez, Antonia, Garcia, Placida Chavez, Rafaela Nava, Jack De Leon, unknown, Rene Paredez, Ernie Quin, unknown, Ricardo Martinez, Ted Aguirre.

Beatrice Vasquez, Johnny Atliano and Irene Cruz standing in front of the Cypress Street School. Johnny Atliano was a soldier in the Army during WWII.

103. **CLASS PHOTO OF STUDENTS IN SEGREGATED SCHOOL.** 1935. Cypress Street School, Orange, California. Courtesy of Orange Public Library.


2nd Row: Maria Macias, Amelia De Leon, Rebecca Escobedo, Lorenza Garcia, Nicolas Pacaso, Angelina Flores, Celia Cruz, Joe Martinez, Ermelinda Peralta, Arthur Munoz.

3rd Row: Ema Cornejo, Lupe Cornejo, Elvira Salcedo, Jose Luna, Esther Luna, Ramona Beltran, Carmen Escobedo.

4th Row: Mrs. Robinson, Teacher, Martha Martinez, Lola Macias, Eimabel Flores, Vivian Martines, Josie Chavez, Helen Diaz, Crecentia Peralta, Concha Poblano.


Cypress Street Schoolhouse, now renovated and houses Chapman University, in the City of Orange, Orange County, California. The Cypress Street School, located at 544 North Cypress Street, in the city of Orange is the last standing formerly Mexican American segregated school in Southern California. The school operated as a segregated school from 1931 to 1944.


Members of the Garcia family, including Luis Garcia with his daughters, Leonicia and Guadalupe “Lupe,” at their home located at 185 North Cypress Street, Orange. Relatives of the Garcia family continue to live in the home.

106. **CHAVEZ BROTHERS ON SANTA FE TRACKS.** Circa 1941. Orange, California. Shades of Orange Cypress Street Barrio Collection. Courtesy of Orange Public Library.

Cypress Street Barrio residents John Chavez (left), Rudy Chavez (middle), and Norman Chavez (right), sitting on the Santa Fe railroad tracks between North Cypress Street and North Lemon Street in 1941.

Angie Lopez, (middle with white shoes), is pictured with her friends on a Santa Fe Railroad boxcar ladder. The Santiago Orange Growers Association packinghouse was to the left of the boxcars in this image.


Located at 442 North Cypress Street, Orange, California, Lewis Court was a rental community for people of Mexican descent. Individual units lacked addresses. Instead, mail was delivered to a store located in front of the units.


Alfred Poblano in front of La Casita Restaurant circa 1948, located at 129 North Cypress Street, Orange, California. At the time, restaurant owners were not allowed to advertise using “Mexican” as a description. Instead, a sign reads, “Spanish Dishes.”