

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**DRAFT**

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Killefer, Lydia D., School

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Latinos in Twentieth Century California

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 541 North Lemon Street

City or town: Orange State: California County: Orange

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <p>_____<br/> <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>             | <p>_____<br/> <b>Date</b></p> |
| <p>_____<br/> <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p> |                               |

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>                                 |                               |
| <p>_____<br/> <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>   | <p>_____<br/> <b>Date</b></p> |
| <p>_____<br/> <b>Title :</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></span></p> |                               |

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stucco

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Lydia D. Killefer School is located in Orange, California, approximately 31 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles, and 22 miles northeast of Long Beach. The property is on the east side of North Lemon Street, north of the intersection of North Lemon Street and West Walnut Avenue. The lot is bounded on the north and south by single- and multi-family residences. It is a former elementary school in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Construction began in December 1930, and was completed by April 1931.<sup>1</sup> The Killefer School stands on the eastern portion of its 1.7-acre parcel. The site is sparsely landscaped, with only a few trees and shrubs. The Killefer School has been vacant for approximately fifteen years, and is in poor condition.<sup>2</sup> It is currently threatened with demolition. It retains significant character defining features of its original design, and has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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<sup>1</sup> There are no building permits for the school; the construction date is based on contemporary news articles, including "Killefer School Program Features Schools' Week," *Orange County Register*, April 20, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> In 1980, the Lydia D. Killefer School left the schoolhouse at 541 North Lemon Street in favor of another building at 615 North Lemon Street. It operated there until 1989, when the school officially ceased operations. The Santiago Canyon College Adult Learning Center operated out of the Killefer School at 541 North Lemon Street in the 1980s and 1990s, leaving the building before 2000.

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## Narrative Description

### *Exterior*

The Lydia D. Killefer School building is a one-story-over-basement schoolhouse constructed in 1931. It is set back from the street behind an expansive parking lot and sparse landscaping, and is situated on the eastern portion of the lot. The building is in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. It is of wood frame construction, with a mostly U-shaped plan surrounding a small courtyard. There is a front-gabled portico projecting from the center of the west façade. It has a cross gable roof with shallow open eaves, exposed rafter tails, copper gutters, and composition shingle roofing. The exterior walls are finished in heavily textured cement plaster. The primary entrance is asymmetrically located on the east (secondary) façade. It consists of a pair of paneled wood doors recessed under a parabolic arch, and is accessed by terra cotta tile steps with wrought iron handrails. The west façade features a partially arcaded exterior walkway that extends through both wings. Square wood posts with chamfered corners and bull nosed brackets support the roof over the covered walkway that has a ceiling of plaster and exposed rafters.

There is an octagonal bell tower projecting from the roof at the center of the east façade, topped by a low-pitched hipped roof and a bronze weathervane. A flat roof with copper-clad, latticed wooden railings surrounds the tower. The tower has terra cotta tile decorative vents on alternating façades. There is a large chimney projecting from the southeastern portion of the roof. Fenestration consists primarily of wood sash three-light awning windows with three-light transom windows above. There are three-light clerestory windows on the west façade. On the west façade, there are two pairs of partially glazed, divided light wood doors, each with segmental-arched, divided light transoms. There is a bay window consisting of wood sash three-light awning windows with three-light transom windows above on the north façade. Glass panes in many of the windows are broken, and many windows are boarded up from either the interior or the exterior of the building. There are two identical carved wood doors, one located on the southern portion of the west façade, and the other on the eastern portion of the north façade. There is a secondary entrance asymmetrically located on the east façade. It consists of a pair of paneled wood doors recessed under a rectangular opening, and is accessed by terra cotta tiled steps with wrought iron handrails. There is a decorative wrought iron fence surrounding the exterior basement stair on the south façade.

The Killefer School retains significant character defining features on the exterior, including:

- Low-pitched roof
- Eaves with little overhang
- Arches above doors
- Terra cotta tile decorative vents
- Octagonal tower
- Stucco-clad exterior walls
- Asymmetrical façade

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- Partially arcaded exterior walkway

### *Interior*

The north wing held the administrative offices, while the main building housed kindergarten through third grade classrooms, and the south wing held the fourth and fifth grade classrooms. The auditorium in the northeast corner has a small stage with the bay window behind. All of the classrooms and administrative offices are accessible through single doorways. The basement is located beneath the south wing, and is accessed either by an interior stairway or a small exterior staircase on the south façade, surrounded by decorative wrought iron railings. There are two rooms in the basement, each with a fire door, and one with a full-size kiln. Ceilings are 12 feet in height in all rooms except for the restrooms, basement rooms, closets, and utility rooms located in the north wing. The carved wooden door on the southern portion of the west façade provides rear access to the south classroom. Hallways feature wide archways and built-in cabinetry. The Killefer School retains significant character defining interior features, including arched openings and other original features.

### *Alterations*

There have been some alterations to the Killefer School over time, some due to neglect and vandalism. The original decorative tile at the main entrance has been replaced with textured stucco. Some exterior copper has been removed, including one panel of the copper-clad, latticed wooden railing around the tower, and several copper downspouts. Many of the glass panes in the windows have been boarded up, and several windows were removed to accommodate air conditioning units. Some glass panes have been replaced with textured or security glass. The roof, originally clad in tile shingles, was redone in composition shingles sometime between 1980 and 2011.<sup>3</sup>

The original outdoor auditorium on the north façade was enclosed with a bay window on the eastern portion of the north façade.<sup>4</sup> There are two rectangular scars on the building's west façade, one on the north wing, and one on the south wing. It appears that windows on these façades were removed. Several clerestory windows along the exterior of the building were removed or covered with plywood.

At some time, the interior was remodeled within the existing footprint. The ceilings and parts of the walls were covered with acoustic tiles, most of the original light fixtures were replaced with fluorescent light fixtures, and portions of the building's original wooden flooring were concealed by or replaced with low-pile carpet.

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<sup>3</sup> There are no building permits for the school; alteration dates are based on "Killefer Grade School, 500 block of Olive St in Orange, California," courtesy of Chapman University, and Google maps.

<sup>4</sup> It is unclear when this alteration was completed. There are no building permits on file for this change, and Sanborn maps are inconclusive. The fenestration in the window is consistent with the original windows, so it appears as though the auditorium was enclosed early in the school's history.

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The interior of the school has been heavily vandalized. There is extensive graffiti in the basement, and several of the classrooms and hallways on the main floor. Most, if not all, of the building's copper pipes and wiring have been removed, and doors have been removed from their hinges. A partial-height wall in the northeastern classroom has been almost entirely demolished by vandals.

### ***Noncontributing Resources***

Between 1980 and 1991, two classroom buildings were added to the site, one located to the north and one to the south of the main schoolhouse. They feature side-gabled roofs with exposed eaves, exterior walls clad in stucco, and wood frame eight-pane windows. Many of the glass panes on these windows are broken, and several of the windows are boarded up. There is a small storage shed located close to the western end of the northern classroom building, also added to the site between 1980 and 1991.<sup>5</sup> These ancillary buildings and structure were constructed outside of the period of significance for the Killefer School, and therefore are noncontributing resources.

### **Integrity**

Although there have been alterations to the property over time, the Killefer School retains significant character defining features, and continues to convey its significance as an early 1930s schoolhouse. It retains all seven aspects of integrity.

*Location:* The building is in its original location.

*Design:* The Killefer School retains significant character defining features of its original Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.

*Setting:* Features of the original setting are intact, including the relationship of the school with the surrounding single- and multi-family residences, and with North Lemon and North Olive Streets.

*Materials and Workmanship:* Although there have been some alterations over time, some windows and partially glazed doors have broken or missing glass panes, and some wooden doors have broken or missing panels, the Killefer School retains the majority of its historic materials, and reflects the physical evidence of period construction techniques.

*Feeling:* The Killefer School retains the significant physical features that convey the building's character as a 1930s Spanish Colonial Revival schoolhouse.

*Association:* The property continues to convey its historic association with the Orange Unified School District, and retains significant character defining features of its original Spanish Colonial Revival design.

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<sup>5</sup> There are no building permits for the school; dates are based on aerial photographs of the area found on [historicaerials.com](http://historicaerials.com) and the City of Orange's Historic Aerial Viewer.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

A: 1931-1944

C: 1931

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1931

1944

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Markel, Jules W. and Sons (builder)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Lydia D. Killefer School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History as an example of institutional development associated with the early twentieth century growth of the Cypress Street Barrio in Orange. The period of significance is 1931, the year the school opened, through 1944, the year Killefer School desegregated. For its voluntary desegregation three years before the landmark *Méndez v. Westminster* ruling required schools in California to end segregation, the Killefer School meets the registration requirements for the context “Making a Democracy: Latino Struggles for Inclusion” of the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission.<sup>6</sup> The Killefer School is also eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of a Spanish Colonial Revival schoolhouse in Southern California. It is a rare extant example of a schoolhouse that pre-dates the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. The period of significance under Criterion C is 1931, the date the school was constructed.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### *Criterion A*

The Killefer School, built by Santa Ana-based contractors Jules W. Markel and Sons, was named for Lydia D. Killefer.<sup>7</sup> Killefer was a schoolteacher in Orange from 1895 to 1931, and principal of the Killefer School from 1931 to 1938. The Killefer School is located in the City of Orange, in a neighborhood primarily populated by Mexican Americans and historically known as the Cypress Street Barrio. The Killefer School is significant as an institutional property associated with the early twentieth century growth of the Cypress Street Barrio. The Killefer School was originally constructed to serve the area’s Anglo population until it voluntarily desegregated in 1944, before schools in California were legally obligated to do so. The desegregation of the Killefer School pre-dated the landmark *Méndez v. Westminster* court ruling by three years and inspired the desegregation of the Orange Unified School District.

### Institutional Development in the Cypress Street Barrio

Ranchers in Orange began planting orange trees commercially in 1873, and the first marketable crop was produced around 1876. Citrus production was firmly established in Orange by the 1880s, and the first packing house in Orange was constructed around 1881. Though it was originally located on Maple Avenue, the packing house moved closer to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad tracks in 1889. Several other private packing houses quickly followed.<sup>8</sup> To

<sup>6</sup> Teresa Grimes, Laura O’Neill, Elysha Paluszek, and Becky Nicolaides, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Documentation Form, November 2014.

<sup>7</sup> “Contractors Issued Permit for School,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 20, 1930.

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from Phil Brigandi, “Citrus: A Cooperative Endeavor.”

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facilitate marketing their fruit, citrus farmers developed cooperative marketing organizations. The first local cooperative association, the Santiago Orange Growers Association, was founded in 1893, followed by numerous others. Most growers belonged to one of the local packing house associations, which provided picking crews on a rotating basis.<sup>9</sup> Though the Great Freeze in 1913 and the flood in 1916 threatened citrus production in the area, oranges were Orange's top crop by 1920.<sup>10</sup>

The Cypress Street Barrio in Orange was established on the 400 block of North Cypress Street (between Sycamore and Walnut Avenues) as a *colonia* in the late 1910s and early 1920s.<sup>11</sup> During this time, many immigrants moved to Southern California from central Mexico as a result of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), taking advantage of the "burgeoning citrus industry's desperate need for laborers."<sup>12</sup> The Barrio eventually extended north and south along the rail lines, close to the packing houses where its inhabitants found employment, and came to be bounded by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railway tracks on the west, Maple Avenue on the south, Olive Street on the east, and Rose Avenue on the north. Residents of the Barrio were primarily employed in the area's citrus industry, with the men working in the fields as citrus pickers, and the women working in the packing houses. Pickers received up to 35 cents per hour, and the packers received 45 cents per hour. Work was seasonal, and thus many of the workers rented homes in the Barrio while they had work in the area. Many families traveled north to the San Joaquin Valley during the winter to find additional work. Two distinct populations evolved in the Barrio: migrants who rented local homes and traveled throughout the western United States for work, and residents who obtained jobs locally and remained throughout the year.

The Killefer School is significant as an extant example of early institutional development in the Cypress Street Barrio, which "served as one of the first immigrant communities in Orange County."<sup>13</sup> The Killefer School represents the significant growth of the area in the early twentieth century; by the early 1930s, the Cypress Street Barrio had three schools and two churches, reflecting the area's growing population. The Killefer School operated at its original location until 1980, when the school relocated to 615 North Lemon Street. It remained there until 1989, when the school officially ceased operations. The closure of the Killefer School coincided with an overall population decline in the Barrio, with most of the area's residents leaving to look for jobs elsewhere.<sup>14</sup>

There are over two hundred historic homes in the Cypress Street Barrio, over eighty of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as contributors to the Old Towne Orange Historic District designated in 1997. The district also includes ten commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings associated with the Barrio.

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<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Phil Brigandi, "On to the Packing House," City of Orange Public Library Local History Collection, <http://www.cityoforange.org/localhistory/citrus/citrus-06.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from EDAW, Inc., "A History of Key Structures in the Cypress Street Neighborhood," May 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Background information about the Cypress Street Barrio adapted from "Killefer Grade School, 500 block of Olive St in Orange, California," courtesy of Chapman University.

<sup>12</sup> Fermin Leal, "Historic Orange barrio still vibrant after 100 years," *Orange County Register*, May 8, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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### School Desegregation

For its role in the desegregation of the Orange Unified School District in the early 1940s the Killefer School meets the registration requirements for the context “Making a Democracy: Latino Struggles for Inclusion” of the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission. As outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form:

During the first half of the twentieth century, the majority of California’s school districts with large Mexican populations practiced segregation. Mexican children were not only physically separated from their Anglo peers, they were generally taught in more crowded classrooms, by less experienced teachers, using outdated books and materials. The greatest difference between schools, however, was the curricula. Mexican schools focused on teaching boys industrial skills and domestic skills to girls, as opposed to writing, math, or science. By the end of the 1920s, Mexican children were by far the most segregated ethnic group in California’s public school system.<sup>15</sup>

Anglo city planners justified segregation by arguing that Mexicans took away important jobs from Anglo workers, and by promulgating the racial beliefs that Mexicans did not share the same cultural values of “regular Americans.”<sup>16</sup> School boards validated the creation of separate educational facilities by stating that the students’ inability to speak English made it impossible for them to survive in an Anglo classroom. This distinction later influenced studies that suggested that Mexican and Mexican American students were mentally inferior to Anglos, and thus could not compete in Anglo schools, no matter which language they spoke.<sup>17</sup> School districts rarely if ever tested these hypotheses with any tests of students’ aptitudes. Some districts did not segregate Mexican American students whose families had been in California for several generations and thus had accumulated wealth.

By 1927, Mexican American children made up over ten percent of California’s total school enrollment.<sup>18</sup> As a result, numerous schools were established for Mexican and Mexican American schoolchildren. Most schools constructed specifically for Mexican and Mexican American school children only accommodated elementary and some intermediate schooling. High schools were not commonly constructed, as many children of Mexican heritage were expected to drop out of school prior to high school in order to start working in the citrus industry to help support their families. The equality of the educational environment for Mexican Americans was not the same as their Anglo neighbors: a 1928 study by two University of California professors found that the Mexican schools were fire hazards, with little ventilation,

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<sup>15</sup> *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, 134.

<sup>16</sup> Wallace, “*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's Impact.*”

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

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light, and sanitation.<sup>19</sup> The lack of equal education and appropriate facilities prompted Mexican American families to fight against segregation in Southern California as early as the 1930s.<sup>20</sup>

There were two schools constructed in the Cypress Street Barrio in 1931: the Killefer School and the Cypress Street School. Beginning in the 1920s, Orange was one of several Orange County school districts that segregated most Mexican and Mexican American children. The Killefer School originally served the Anglo population, while the Cypress Street School served the Mexican and Mexican American populations. The Cypress Street School “for Mexican children”<sup>21</sup> was specifically designated for the Spanish-speaking children of citrus workers residing in the Cypress Street Barrio.<sup>22</sup> It replaced an earlier schoolhouse constructed circa 1920 called *La Cabertizia*. The Cypress Street School operated as a Mexican school until 1944, when it ceased operations.

The Killefer School was built as the school for the English-speaking children in the Cypress Street Barrio.<sup>23</sup> With the closing of the Cypress Street School in 1944, the Orange Unified School District decided to voluntarily desegregate its entire district. This was three years before the landmark 1947 *Méndez v. Westminster* verdict required California schools to end the practice of segregation. School superintendent Stewart White pushed for the change, arguing that “mixing of the children would further the Americanization program and promote friendly Latin-American relations.”<sup>24</sup> The Killefer School was among the first schools in the state of California to desegregate, making it a pioneer in the movement to end segregation of California’s schools.

#### Additional Context: Méndez v. Westminster

Gonzalo Méndez discovered the inequality in California’s school system in 1943, when he attempted to enroll his children in a local Westminster school.<sup>25</sup> The children were denied enrollment because of their Spanish last name, and were instead sent to the Mexican school several miles away. Furious that his children were expected to attend an inferior school, Méndez took his case to the district office, and later the county, with no success. Finally, Méndez hired attorney David Marcus, who had recently won a segregation suit against a public pool in Riverside, California. Marcus discovered that the school districts were breaking state policy, and

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<sup>19</sup> Adapted from Wallace, “*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's Impact.*”

<sup>20</sup> In 1931, a state court judge ruled that the Lemon Grove School for Mexican American children in San Diego, called “The Stable” by its students, was not educationally justified or supported by state law. The judge therefore ordered the Mexican American children to attend school on an equal basis with the others in the community. This was the first successful school desegregation court ruling in the nation. However, it only applied to Lemon Grove School, and thus had no documented impact on the desegregation of other schools in Southern California. History of the Lemon Grove School from “Paving the Way to School Desegregation.”

<sup>21</sup> “City School Calendar is Announced for Next Year,” *Orange County Register*, May 1, 1931; “Call Vote on School Bond: \$75,000 Issue to Be Voted May 22,” *Orange County Register*, May 1, 1930.

<sup>22</sup> Cypress Street School is a Mexican School as defined in the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* MPDF.

<sup>23</sup> At that time, most, if not all, English-speaking children in Orange were white.

<sup>24</sup> Phil Brigandi, *A Brief History of Orange, California: The Plaza City* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011), 96.

<sup>25</sup> History of *Mendez et. al v. Westminster* largely adapted from Wallace, “*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's Impact.*” and Robbie, *Mendez v. Westminster*.

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proposed that they find plaintiffs from other school districts to prove that this was a wide-scale act of discrimination based on surnames and unproven pedagogical studies.

When the *Méndez v. Westminster* case began in July 1945, the highly organized Mexican American community faced seemingly unbeatable odds. Parents from nearby districts signed onto the petition, representing over 5,000 students. Other parents signed on as plaintiffs, namely William Guzmán of Santa Ana, Frank Palomino of Garden Grove, Thomas Estrada of Westminster, and Lorenzo Ramirez of El Modena (a neighborhood since annexed by Orange, California). During the case, Marcus argued that school districts segregated students on the basis of national origin, thus breaking the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Witnesses explained that their children were segregated based on their surnames and appearances. Representatives from the school districts argued that the Mexican American students were separated primarily due to a lack of language abilities that rendered them unfit to attend Anglo schools.

On February 18, 1946, United States Judge Paul J. McCormick handed down a landmark court decision, ruling in favor the Mexican American plaintiffs. Three days later, County Counsel Joel Ogel filed an appeal in response to McCormick's ruling. However, despite the efforts of the Orange County school districts to avoid desegregation, their appeal of Judge McCormick's ruling was unsuccessful. On April 14, 1947, the Ninth Federal District Court of Appeals upheld McCormick's ruling. The school districts were given the choice to appeal further to the United States Supreme Court, but none followed this course. Regardless, many school districts in Southern California waited for years after the ruling to desegregate, prolonging segregation in their school districts for as long as possible.<sup>26</sup>

### *Criterion C*

The Killefer School is an excellent local example of Spanish Colonial Revival institutional architecture. It is a rare, intact example of a schoolhouse in Southern California constructed prior to the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. Many Southern California schools were either destroyed or damaged beyond repair in the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, or were subsequently replaced to comply with new building codes adopted in the aftermath of the earthquake.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style is the most decorative of the Spanish architectural styles. Its ornamentation covers a wide range of source materials, and the elaborate and intricate ornamental forms of *Churrigueresque* (Spanish baroque) buildings were a hallmark of high style buildings. The Spanish Colonial Revival style gradually replaced the earlier Mission Revival style in popularity, as it was considered to be more authentic than its predecessor. While the Mission Revival took inspiration from local Spanish and Mexican buildings, Spanish Colonial

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<sup>26</sup> For example, the Pasadena Unified School District waited until the late 1960s and early 1970s to officially desegregate, ignoring both the *Méndez v. Westminster* ruling and the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling until three families protested their de facto segregation policies. For more information, see Rebecca L. Smith, Elaine Zorbas, Abby Delman, and Charlotte Krontiris, *Advocates for Change: oral history interviews on the desegregation of the Pasadena Unified School District*, (Pasadena, CA: Pasadena Heritage, 2007).

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Revival looked overseas to Spain to borrow architectural elements, and perpetuated the fiction that California was the “New Spain of North America.”<sup>27</sup>

The 1915 Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego heavily influenced California’s widespread adoption of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, as did the success of Helen Hunt Jackson’s novel, *Ramona*. The exposition, designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, introduced the elaborate Spanish architectural prototypes found in other countries, and emphasized the richness of Spanish Colonial architectural precedents seen in other countries’ major buildings. The exhibition was well received, and encouraged American architects to look to Spanish architecture for inspiration.

Spanish Colonial Revival architecture was popularized during the 1920s, when “just as everything grew in the Southern California garden, so too did every architectural tradition take hold as well.”<sup>28</sup> As the focus on regional expression through architecture evolved, Spanish Colonial Revival and its contemporary Mediterranean Revival “were two styles supported by the regional myth of California as the Mediterranean shores of America and even, in the case of Spanish Revival, supported by a slight degree of historical justification.”<sup>29</sup> Spanish Colonial Revival style was easily adapted to accommodate a wide variety of building types, and its popularity was due in part to the fact that historical examples could easily be adopted for any need.

Traveling through Andalusia, aspiring architects...noted with delight the rich courtyard types and structures – the urban patio house, the fortified urban palace or *alcazar* (many of them later recycled as apartment dwellings), the snug courtyard inns... the open marketplaces and monastery cloisters, the farmhouses combining living quarters and workspaces around a central courtyard...As Santa Barbara and San Clemente showed, many of these forms were directly applicable to Southern California, albeit the courtyard format was now being used for city halls and courthouses, public high schools, hotels, restaurants, and...bungalow courts.<sup>30</sup>

The Spanish Colonial Revival style had a close relationship to the several Secessionist movements which manifested themselves in California from the late 1890s through the 1930s. The initial association of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture with the Secessionists is best represented in the work of Irving Gill, and it can also be seen the work of Francis T. Underhill of Santa Barbara, and in some of the work of the San Diego firm of Mead and Requa. Their intention was to remove specific historic details, and to think in terms of elemental shapes and forms.<sup>31</sup> Two of the most influential architects of the Spanish Colonial Revival style in Southern

<sup>27</sup> Adapted from “Spanish Colonial Revival,” Fullerton Heritage.

<sup>28</sup> Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 187.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>31</sup> Adapted from David Gebhard, “The Spanish Colonial Revival Style in Southern California (1895-1930),” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 26, no. 2 (May 1967), 131-147.

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California were Bertram Goodhue (1869-1924) and George Washington Smith (1876-1930). The style reached its zenith in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and quickly passed from favor during the 1940s.

Spanish Colonial Revival architecture is typically characterized by rectangular floor plans; asymmetrical façades; low-pitched roofs with parapets or hipped roofs clad in terra cotta tile; exterior walls clad in smooth or textured stucco; arcaded entrances or porches; arched doors and windows; recessed windows; ornately carved details around windows, entrances, and cornices; wrought iron grillwork on windows, doors, and balconies; low, round or octagonal towers with low-pitched roofs; casement or double-hung windows; glazed tile used for interior and exterior decoration; and wall extensions that enclose garden spaces.

The Killefer School is an excellent local example of the style, and retains significant character defining features of the original design. Its octagonal bell tower with terra cotta tile vents, open balcony with copper-clad railings, asymmetrical facade, exterior walls clad in textured stucco, terra cotta stairways, and arcaded exterior and interior walkways are significant features of its Spanish Colonial Revival design. The arcaded exterior walkway is both functional and indicative of the building's design, as it makes use of a feature common to Spanish Colonial Revival buildings to create a wide passageway that takes advantage of Southern California's climate and allows students, teachers, and administrators to easily reach their classrooms and offices.

## Conclusion

The Lydia D. Killefer School, built in 1931, represents early institutional development in the Cypress Street Barrio and reflects a significant period of growth in the area in the early twentieth century. The school was originally constructed to serve the Anglo population, with the nearby Cypress Street School designated as the Mexican school. The Killefer School meets the eligibility standards identified in the "Making a Democracy: Latino Struggles for Inclusion" context of the *Latinos in Twentieth Century California* Multiple Property Submission. The Killefer School desegregated in 1944, becoming the only elementary school in the Cypress Street Barrio. The desegregation of Killefer stimulated the desegregation process in the community at large, ultimately leading to the end of segregation throughout the Orange Unified School District. The Killefer School desegregated before the landmark *Méndez v. Westminster* trial began, making it a pioneer of desegregation before California became a national leader in fostering this nascent civil rights movement. The Killefer School's voluntary desegregation in the early 1940s is particularly noteworthy given the reticence of other school boards in the state to desegregate their schools even after the *Méndez v. Westminster* ruling. It is an excellent example of a Spanish Colonial Revival schoolhouse in Southern California, and a rare remaining example of a schoolhouse pre-dating the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake. It retains significant character defining features of the style, and exhibits quality of design and workmanship.



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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Chapman University, Orange, California; Local History Collection, City of Orange Public Library, Orange, California

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.7 acres

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.796234                      Longitude: -117.854752

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is located at 541 North Lemon Street. The parcel is bound by North Olive Street on the east, North Lemon Street on the west, and single- and multi-family homes on the north and south.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries represent the historic and current boundaries of the Killefer School property.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Molly Iker, Intern; Christine Lazzaretto, Principal  
organization: Historic Resources Group  
street & number: 12 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, Suite 200  
city or town: Pasadena state: CA zip code: 91105-1915  
e-mail: [christine@historicrosourcesgroup.com](mailto:christine@historicrosourcesgroup.com)  
telephone: (626) 793-2400 x112  
date: July 31, 2014; Revised January 2015

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Lydia D. Killefer School  
City or Vicinity: Orange  
County: Orange  
State: CA  
Photographer: Molly Iker  
Date Photographed: July 11, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

| <b>PHOTO #</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION/VIEW</b>  |
|----------------|--|
| 0001           | Exterior view of east façade, facing west. Detail of primary entrance.                 |
| 0002           | Exterior overview of west façade, facing east.   |
| 0003           | Exterior view of west façade and tower, facing northeast.                              |
| 0004           | Exterior facing southwest. Detail of south wing.                                       |
| 0005           | Exterior facing north. Detail of exterior corridor and exposed rafters on west façade. |
| 0006           | Exterior facing east. Detail of patch on north wing.                                   |
| 0007           | Exterior facing northeast. View of structure and portion of north classroom building.  |
| 0008           | Exterior overview of north façade and tower, facing southeast.                         |
| 0009           | Exterior facing northeast. View of portion of north classroom building.                |
| 0010           | Exterior view of north façade, facing southeast. Detail of bay window.                 |
| 0011           | Exterior overview of east façade, facing southwest.                                    |
| 0012           | Exterior facing northwest. Detail of tower, copper railings, and weathervane.          |

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- 0013 Exterior overview of east façade, facing northwest.
- 0014 Exterior view of east façade, facing west. Detail of secondary entrance.
- 0015 Exterior view of south façade, facing northeast. Detail of wrought iron fence around staircase to basement.
- 0016 Exterior view of west façade, facing east. Detail of carved wooden door.
- 0017 Interior of northeast classroom, facing northwest. Detail of auditorium ceiling.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





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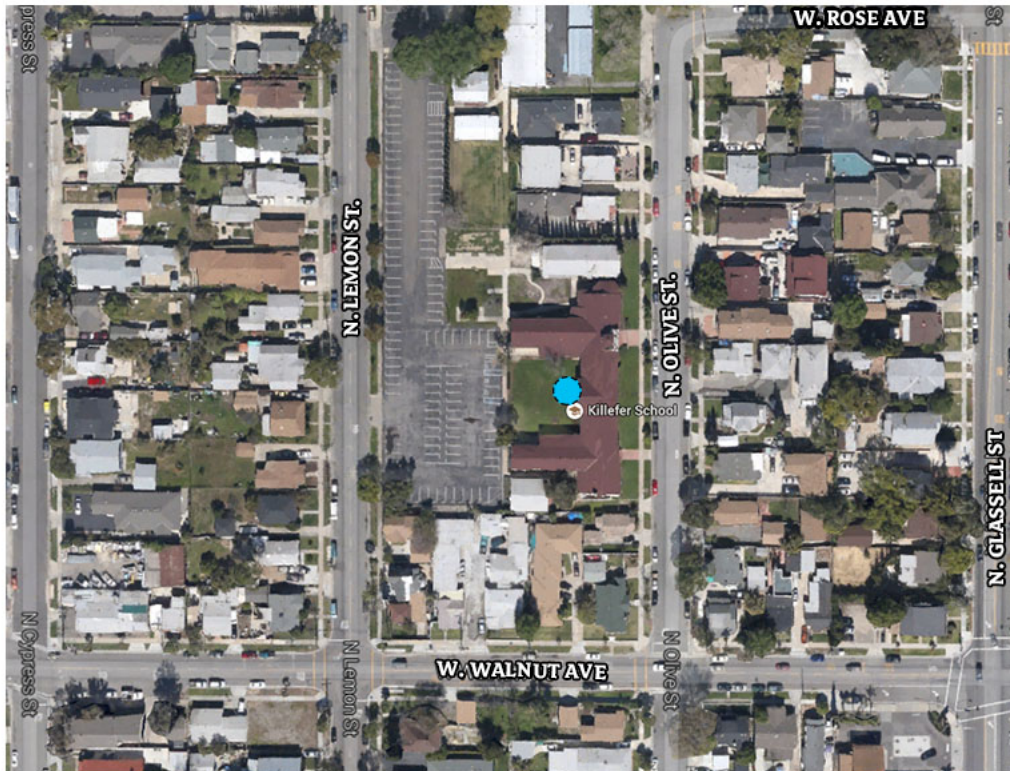
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### Figure 3. Location Map

Latitude: 33.796234

Longitude: -117.854752

**LYDIA D. KILLEFER SCHOOL**  
541 N. LEMON ST., ORANGE, CA 92867  
LOCATION COORDINATES: 33.796234, -117.854752



 PROPERTY LOCATION

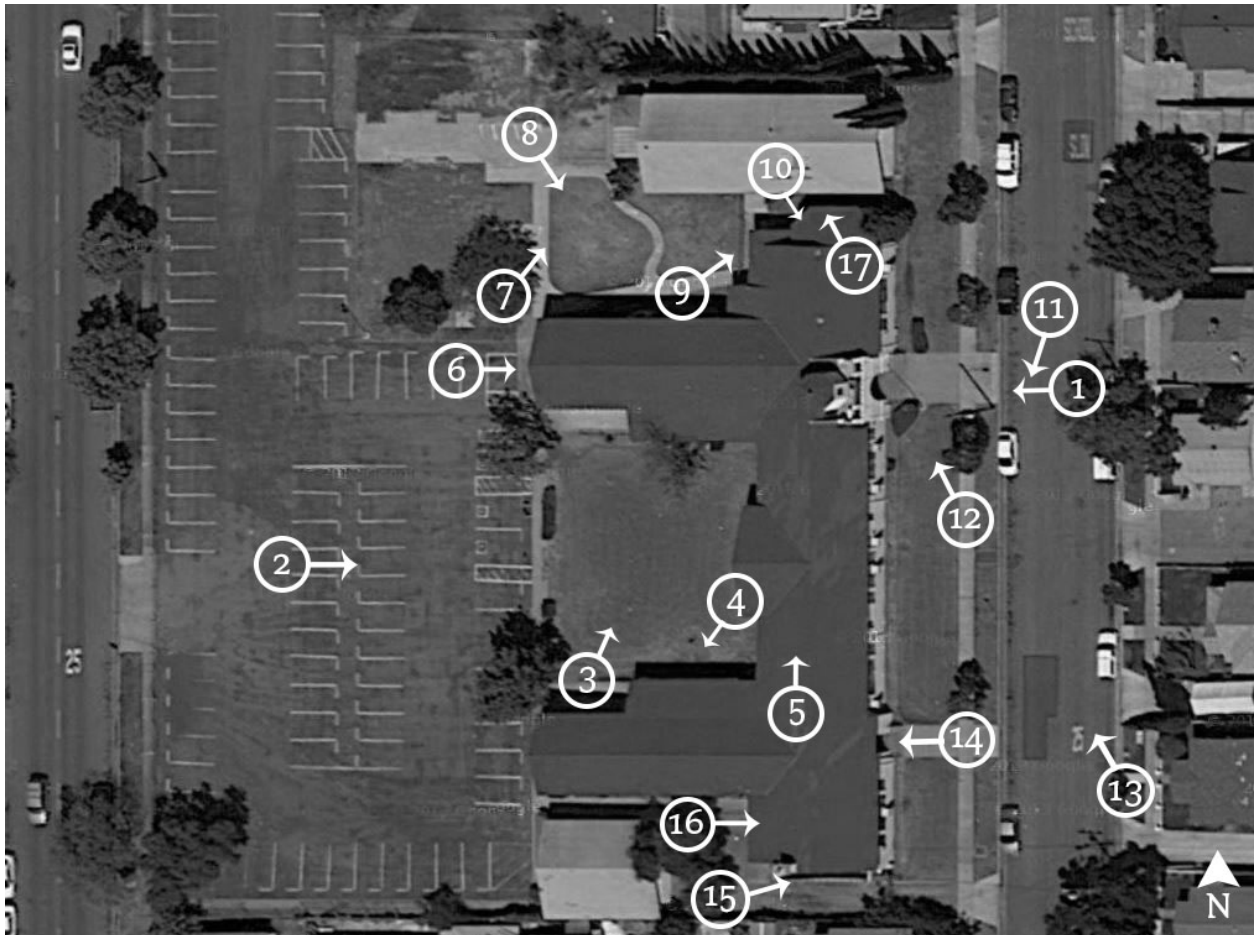
 100 feet 50 m



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**Figure 4. Photo Key**





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Figure 5. 1938 aerial view, Killefer School, City of Orange Historic Aerial Viewer.



Figure 6. 1947 aerial view, Killefer School, City of Orange Historic Aerial Viewer.





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**Figure 7.** 1955 aerial view, Killefer School, City of Orange Historic Aerial Viewer.



**Figure 8.** 1939, Killefer School third grade class photo (wrought iron fence in left background).



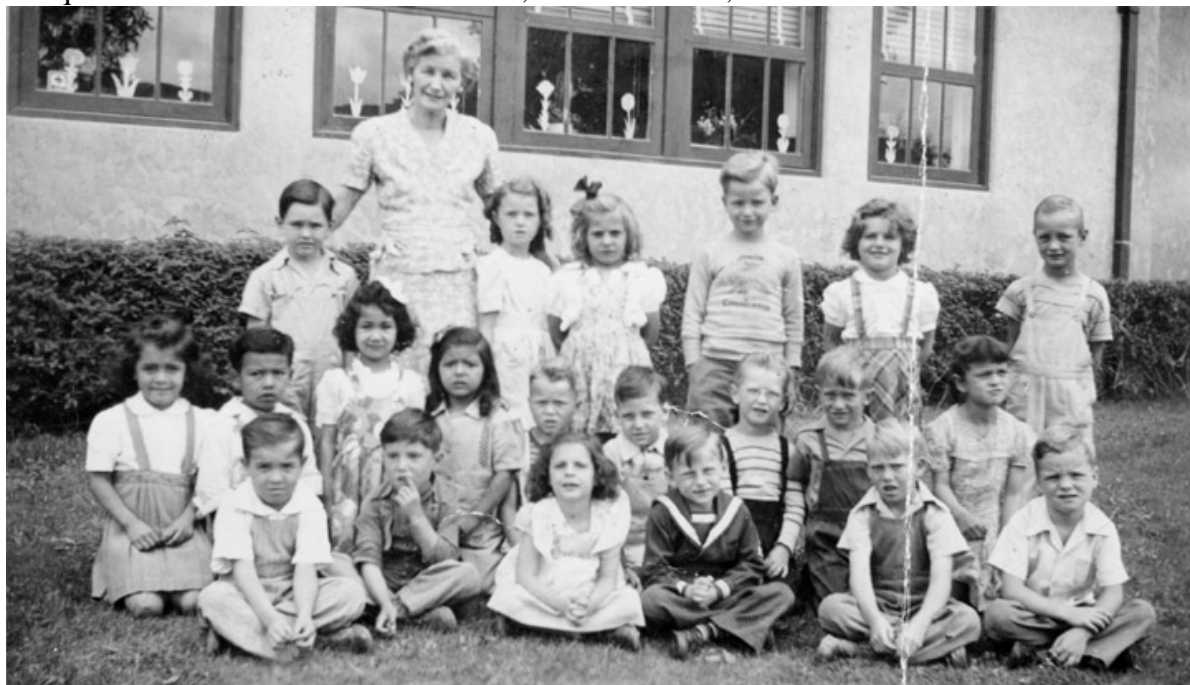
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**Figure 9.** 1945, Killefer School first grade class photo (three-over-three light windows visible in background on left). Evidence of pre-Méndez v. Westminster integration at Killefer: Norman Chavez eighth from left.



**Figure 10.** 1945, Killefer School kindergarten class photo (three-over-three light windows visible in background). Evidence of pre-Méndez v. Westminster integration at Killefer: Emigdio Vasquez second from left in second row, and Sal Garcia, second from left in first row.



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**Figure 11.** 1946, Killefer School first grade class photo (decorative tiles and partially glazed entry doors visible in background). Evidence of pre-Méndez v. Westminster integration at Killefer: Emigdio Vasquez at far left in first row.

