

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Cypress Street Schoolhouse **DRAFT**

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

Latinos in 20th Century California MPS

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

2. Location

Street & number: 544 North Cypress 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Not For Publication: Vicinity: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>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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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Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood
Stucco
Terra Cotta

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Cypress Street Schoolhouse is a single-story schoolhouse located in Orange, California, approximately 31 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles, and 22 miles northeast of Long Beach. It was built in 1931 in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. It has a stucco exterior with terra cotta shingle details. It has a hipped-roof tower with a quatrefoil decoration, which was added after the Villa Park Orchard Association acquired the building in the 1972. The Schoolhouse was built on a one-acre lot in 1931, as a replacement for an earlier, wooden, two-room, segregated schoolhouse called *La Cabertizia* (The Barn). It was constructed out of materials from the demolished Lemon Street School down the road. It faces south, and is set close to the north end of the lot. It is comprised of five classrooms, each with cloakrooms just outside, a principal's office, a nurse's office, a custodial closet, a tower, women's and men's restrooms, and a shower. These rooms were placed around a long, wide corridor with double doors at each end, a loading dock on the rear (north) façade, and a large archway from the principal's and nurse's office to the classroom area. The building has lost some historic integrity due to subsequent building modifications but many of its original features were restored by Chapman University between 2004 and 2012. The Cypress Street Schoolhouse now functions as offices for Chapman University's Early Human and Lifespan Development Research Program.

Narrative Description

The Cypress Street School House "for Mexican children" was built primarily of materials salvaged from the wrecking of the Lemon Street School, razed to provide more playground space for a nearby Intermediate school.¹ It is a wood frame building on a raised flooring foundation with a crawl space beneath, built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. It has a flat roof in the rear and a hipped roof on the front façade, covered with terra cotta roof tiles. Walls are clad in

¹ "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.

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stucco, and, close to the roof, were adorned with triangular terra cotta tile details that remain intact today.

The Cypress Street Schoolhouse's front (south) façade, features a concrete staircase with simple iron railings leading to a large archway in which the double entry doors are situated. The south façade is one and a half stories tall, covered with white stucco, and features a hipped-roofed tower above the entry and steel frame windows that are a modern interpretation of the original 1931 windows. A new, ADA-compliant ramp is located on the southeast side of the façade. The concrete vault built by the Villa Park Orchard Association during their tenure in the building exists at the southeast corner of the building. The west elevation faces the Santa Fe Railroad train tracks, and features a large aluminum storage shed at the northwest end, as well as terra cotta tile detailing and steel frame windows. The rear façade, the north elevation, features a loading dock with a concrete staircase, and terra cotta tile details. The east façade faces Cypress Street, and features steel frame windows.

Originally, the building featured steel frame windows, a concrete staircase with a cast iron scrollwork railing, and an arched entryway. It was comprised of five "large, well-ventilated" classrooms, each with long, narrow cloakrooms just outside the classroom doors, a principal's office, a nurse's office, a custodial closet, a tower, women's and men's restrooms, and a shower.² These rooms were placed around a long, wide corridor with double doors at each end, a loading dock on the rear (north) façade, and a large archway from the principal's and nurse's office to the classroom area. Each of the classrooms had transom windows set close to the ceiling that allowed light in from the central hallway. The restrooms had clerestory windows set close to the ceiling to allow light in from the outside, and the shower was convenient for students who did not have that amenity at their houses in the surrounding Cypress Street Barrio.

In the 1970s, the Villa Park Orchard Association turned the Cypress Street School House into an office building, and, because they managed payroll from these offices, added a concrete vault for money storage onto the east corner of the south (front) façade. They changed the tower's roofline from a flat roof to a hipped roof, removed a south-facing plate glass window from the tower, and added a quatrefoil in its place. They added lettering around the south arched entryway, and decals of oranges, denoting their place in the citrus industry in Orange. The Villa Park Orchard Association also added walls, dropped ceilings, wood paneling, shag carpeting, and other interior details common to the 1970s to the School House. The steel frame windows were ripped out and replaced with side-sash windows with slatted aluminum awnings. Additionally, the Villa Park Orchard Association added on a large, aluminum storage shed to the northwest corner of the building in the mid-1970s.

When Chapman acquired the Cypress Street School House building in 2004, it was in disrepair. The Villa Park Orchard Association had been using the space primarily as a storage area for years, and the roof leaked extensively. Kris Olsen and his team restored the ceilings to their original height, removed the wood paneling from the walls, removed the shag carpeting and

² "\$90,000 School Expansion Program Here Completed for Fall Term," *Orange County Register*, September 3, 1931.

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restored the original hardwood floors they found underneath, tore out most walls added by the Villa Park Orchard Association, and generally restored the building to its original footprint. They kept the concrete vault and the aluminum storage unit, and both are now utilized for storage. Chapman's wall additions in the main corridor and in the classrooms are constructed of materials compatible with the original construction materials, and are potentially removable if necessary for a future adaptive reuse of the space.

Chapman University made modern alterations to the historic site to allow for more heavy traffic of the site, as well as to provide easy entry for handicapped visitors to the building. In search of LEED certification for the site, Kris Olsen and his team implemented several sustainable measures during the rehabilitation process. These included an erosion and sedimentation plan for all construction activities, maximizing on-site open space by the creation of a landscaped front area in place of what was previously pavement, utilizing low flow toilets and faucets with sensing devices, reducing potable water use for landscaping by half, including areas for recycling of paper, corrugated cardboard, glass, plastics, and metals, and providing parking for low emissions fuel vehicles as well as bicycle parking.³ These efforts among others, including the efforts to retain the original fabric of the structure to maintain the Cypress Street School House's historic integrity, earned Chapman's adaptive reuse of the Cypress Street Schoolhouse LEED Gold Certification in late 2013.

In its present use as the Psychology department's Early Human and Lifespan Development Research Program, each of the five classrooms have been divided up into group work areas and individual interview or office spaces. The interview rooms and offices are on the perimeter of the classrooms, and have simple partition walls between them and the group work spaces, which retain the transom windows to the central corridors even in their modern configuration, filled with full-height cubicles. The cloakrooms outside of three of the classrooms now function as storage rooms with mechanical service room tucked away inside of them. One of the other cloakrooms has become a data room and an ADA-accessible restroom, while the last cloakroom was repurposed as part of a laboratory, and also as an office kitchen. The principal's office and the nurse's office are both used as conference rooms. The tower space, once used for storage, now houses the building's HVAC system, which effectively keeps it out of sight and allows the building to retain its historic integrity.

Integrity

Location: The building is in its original location. *Design:* The Cypress Street Schoolhouse retains many significant character-defining features of its original Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, but has lost some integrity of design. *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 Cypress Street and the railroad tracks. *Materials and Workmanship:* Although there have been some alterations over time, the Cypress Street Schoolhouse retains the majority of its historic materials, and reflects the physical evidence of period construction

³ Mary Platt, "Chapman University's Cypress Street Schoolhouse Honored With LEED Gold Certification," *Chapman University Press Room*, September 23, 2013.

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techniques. *Feeling:* The Cypress Street Schoolhouse 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 education, and retains significant character-defining features of its original Spanish Colonial Revival design. Limited loss of integrity of design on the primary façade does not preclude eligibility for listing under Criterion A, thus the property retains sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register. See Figure Log for comparative aerial photos showing building footprint is essentially unchanged over time.

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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.)

Ethnic Heritage: Hispanic

Social History

Period of Significance

1931-1944

Significant Dates

1931

1944

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/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 Cypress Street Schoolhouse is significant under criterion A at the local level of significance for its role in Hispanic ethnic heritage and social history in Orange, California. Its cultural and historic significance is derived from its physical part in the earliest civil rights and anti-segregation movements in the greater Los Angeles area. The building's period of significance is 1931-1944, from the opening of the school until its closure when the school district was integrated. This property is nominated under the cover of the Latinos in 20th Century California MPS, under the associated context *Latino Struggles for Inclusion*, as an example of the property type Mexican Schools. This property is mentioned specifically as an example of significant Mexican schools in the MPS text.

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

Criterion A

The Cypress Street School "for Mexican children"⁴ was built in 1931 as a segregated elementary school for the Spanish-speaking children of Mexican and Mexican-American citrus workers in the city of Orange, California. It replaced the c. 1920 wooden, two-room, segregated schoolhouse, called *La Cabertizia* (The Barn), which existed behind the old Lemon Street School House. The Cypress Street Schoolhouse served children in kindergarten through fifth grade. The Cypress Street School remains the only extant formerly segregated school building in Orange County, California, and may be the only formerly segregated school building still in existence in the state, as most were demolished in the decades following the 1947 *Méndez v. Westminster* verdict, which outlawed segregated schools throughout the state of California.⁵

Cypress Street Barrio⁶

The Cypress Street Barrio in Orange, California, was formed as a *colonia* in the late 1910s and early 1920s. During this time, many immigrants moved to Southern California from central Mexico as a result of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). The Barrio is 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. Originally, the Barrio's inhabitants were employed in area's citrus industry, with the men working in the fields as citrus pickers, and the women working in the packinghouses as citrus packers. Pickers received up to thirty-five cents

⁴ "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.

⁵ Jared Wallace, "*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's* Impact on Social Policy and Mexican-American Community Organization in Mid-Century Orange County," *Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (2013).

⁶ Adapted from "Killefer Grade School, 500 block of Olive St in Orange, California," courtesy of Chapman University.

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per hour, and the packers received forty-five 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.

The Barrio was founded on the 400 block of Cypress Street (between Sycamore and Walnut Avenues) and eventually extended north and south along the rail lines, close to the packinghouses where the Barrio's inhabitants found employment. "Anglos" originally owned the Barrio's small homes, and rented them to the Mexican-American citrus workers. Over time, the Barrio inhabitants built their own homes or bought existing houses. Today, there are over two hundred historic homes in the Cypress Street Barrio, over eighty of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributors to the Old Towne Orange Historic District (listed 1997). There are approximately two dozen historic commercial, industrial and public structures located in the Barrio, nearly half of which are listed as contributors to the Old Towne Orange Historic District.

Two distinct Hispanic 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. By the 1930s, the Cypress Street Barrio had three schools and two churches, reflecting the area's growing population.

*Segregation in California Schools*⁷

The earliest school segregation in California targeted the African-American population beginning in 1854. In the early 1860s, California state laws specifically authorized school districts to provide separate schools for African-American, Native American, and Asian-American children. However, a segregated school could only be established if the parents of at least ten students of a racial minority petitioned a district to build one. If parents failed to do this, their children could be denied a public education altogether. In districts with fewer than ten schoolchildren of a racial minority, students could attend "Anglo" schools, but "Anglo" parents tended to demand a segregated school for non-white students when their numbers increased in the community.⁸ These practices were protested following the passage of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The 1874 court case that followed, *Ward v. Flood*, affirmed that education was a right for every California citizen, but that using separate facilities for ethnic groups was legal. The California courts upheld this stance in *Mamie v. Tape* (1884), when a second-generation Chinese student protested that she had fully Americanized and had a right to attend a public school. Japanese immigrants met similar injustices when they arrived in the late 19th century. Their struggle became international news when Japanese diplomats pleaded with President Theodore Roosevelt about the deplorable conditions of the schools in which the immigrants were placed. In the following decades, some integration of Japanese students was

⁷ Adapted from Jared Wallace, "Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's Impact on Social Policy and Mexican-American Community Organization in Mid-Century Orange County," *Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (2013) and Sandra Robbie, *Mendez v. Westminster: Desegregating California's Schools*, KOCE-TV Foundation, 2002.

⁸ Adapted from "Mendez v. Westminster: Paving the Way to School Desegregation," *Bill of Rights in Action*, Vol. 23 No. 2, Summer 2007.

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allowed, but this progress was derailed during World War II. In the late 1800s, the California legislature established an educational code that legalized the practice of segregating Chinese, Japanese, and Native American students. This educational code did not include Mexican-Americans, as state law never authorized school districts to segregate children of Mexican ancestry.⁹ Regardless, school districts segregated them from other students beginning in the early 1910s.

Segregation of Mexicans-Americans in Southern California and especially in Orange County was widespread by the 1920s, as the population of people from Mexico grew along with the local citrus industry. "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." 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. 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.¹⁰ As a result, numerous schools were established for the 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 descent 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, light, and sanitation.¹¹

The lack of equal education and facilities prompted Mexican-American families to fight against segregation in Southern California. 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 other school districts in Southern California continued their segregated practices unhindered.¹²

⁹ Adapted from "Paving the Way to School Desegregation."

¹⁰ Adapted from Wallace, "*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's Impact.*"

¹¹ Adapted from Wallace, "*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's Impact.*"

¹² Adapted from "Paving the Way to School Desegregation."

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*Méndez v. Westminster*¹³

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Gonzalo Méndez discovered the inequality in California's school system when, upon moving to Westminster in 1943, he attempted to enroll his children in a local school. He asked his wife's sister to register his children at the school, but the children were denied enrollment because of their Spanish last name. They were instead sent to the "Mexican" school several miles away. Their cousins, however, gained enrollment in the "Anglo" school, because their father, though of mostly Mexican descent, had a French last name. As a child, Méndez attended the "Anglo" school, Westminster Main. He was furious at the injustice done to his children – they were expected to attend a far inferior school located several blocks from his farm. He took his case to the district office, and later the county, with no success.

Within weeks, Méndez hired attorney David Marcus, who had recently won a segregation suit against a public pool in Riverside, California. In his research, Marcus found that the school districts were breaking state policy, and 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. Méndez and Marcus drove around neighboring districts, interviewing families about their experiences with the school districts.

Finding support initially was difficult. Many parents did not want to risk the repercussions of angering the districts, or were content that their children were able to attend schools close to home. Some were worried that if they spoke out, they would lose their jobs. Other parents, however, began organizing meetings to discuss the topic of litigation. Méndez and Marcus invited Fred Ross, a fieldworker for the American Council on Race Relations, and Hector Tarango, secretary of the Latin American Council and editor of a local Mexican newspaper, to assist them in organizing the local neighborhoods around the petition to end segregation in Orange County. This form of community organization was not a new concept for the Mexican-American neighborhoods, as they had been protesting working conditions for several decades. However, these new community meetings between concerned parents provided an even greater level of political engagement, and became the basis for the national attention received by the *Méndez v. Westminster* case. The improved Mexican-American activity and interest in the political process proved an asset after the case as well, when the parents challenged the districts to follow through with the court's decision.

When the *Méndez v. Westminster* case began in July 1945, the highly organized Mexican-American community faced seemingly unbeatable odds. Parents from the other districts signed on to 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 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution. His

¹³ Largely adapted from Wallace, "*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's Impact.*" and Robbie, *Mendez v. Westminster*.

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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 “regular” schools.

On February 18, 1946, United States Judge Paul J. McCormick handed down a landmark court decision, ruling in favor the Mexican-American plaintiffs on the basis that “Spanish-speaking children are retarded in learning English by lack of exposure to its use because of segregation” and that “the methods of segregation prevalent in the defendant school districts [fostered] antagonisms in the children and [suggested] inferiority among them where none exists.”¹⁴ Three days later, on February 21, 1946, County Counsel Joel Ogel filed an appeal in response to McCormick’s ruling. Correspondence between Ogel and the school districts showed that they planned to go to the United States Supreme Court if necessary. This allowed the districts more time to organize their legal team in order to avoid another loss. The fight against desegregation was far from over, as the districts either refused to desegregate, or found means to prolong desegregation during the months leading up to the appeal.

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. Joel Ogle corresponded with the Westminster School District, restating his position that the federal government had no jurisdiction on the issue of segregation in California, and that appealing to the Supreme Court would only further involve the federal government in the issue. Similarly, the Santa Ana School Board discussed the issue of jurisdiction, but decided appeal was not in their best interest. The school districts could wait no longer to comply with McCormick’s ruling.¹⁵ However, many school districts in Southern California waited for years after the to desegregate, prolonging segregation in their school districts for as long as possible.¹⁶

Schools and Segregation in Orange, California

In February 1872, A.B. Chapman, one of the founders of Orange, California, set aside 2.5 acres of land for the creation of a school. The parcel was on the southeast corner of North Lemon Street and West Sycamore Avenue. The original school, called the Lemon Street School, was a single-story, two room schoolhouse measuring 24’ x 26’. By June 1872, the school had seventy students. In 1874, due to an increase in the school’s population, another school building was

¹⁴ “Ruling Gives Mexican Children Equal Rights,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1946.

¹⁵ According to Sandra Robbie’s short documentary *Mendez v. Westminster: Desegregating California’s Schools* (KOCE-TV Foundation, 2002), in 1948, California Governor Earl Warren signed a bill desegregating Mexican-Americans, and repealing statutes that segregated Asian-American and Native American students in California.

¹⁶ 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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constructed on North Cypress Street. Other schools were built south of the Orange Plaza (located at Chapman Avenue and Glassell Street) in 1875 and 1886, and two more school buildings were built east of the Plaza in 1880 and 1887. A high school was opened in 1903 at the northeast corner of the intersection of West Palm Avenue and North Glassell Street (where Chapman University is today), and an intermediate school was constructed at the southwest corner of the intersection of West Sycamore Avenue and North Glassell Street in 1914. The Lemon Street School building continued to expand until it was a two-story, multi-room school with a bell tower. In the early 1920s, a two-room schoolhouse for Mexican-American elementary school students, called *La Cabertizia* (“The Barn”), was built behind the Lemon Street School, marking the beginning of school segregation in Orange.¹⁷

The Lydia D. Killefer School was built at 541 N. Lemon Street as a school for the English-speaking¹⁸ children in the Cypress Street Barrio area. Mexican children able to speak fluent English were allowed to transfer to the Killefer School from the Cypress Street School beginning in 1931, when both schools opened.¹⁹ In 1942, however, the school was officially desegregated.²⁰ With the closing of the Cypress Street School in 1944, three years before the 1947 *Méndez v. Westminster* verdict, Orange Unified School District voluntarily desegregated its entire district. It was among the first in the state of California to do so. The closing of the Cypress Street Schoolhouse in the early 1940s is particularly significant, as it took place several years prior to the *Méndez v. Westminster* ruling in 1947 that required schools in Southern California to desegregate.

Cypress Street Schoolhouse

The Cypress Street Schoolhouse “for Mexican children” was built primarily of materials salvaged from the wrecking of the Lemon Street School, razed to provide more playground space for a nearby Intermediate school.²¹ Its Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style is both a product of its period of construction, as well as the intended inhabitants of the building. Despite the fact that the school was a segregated school “for Mexican Children,” it was well-equipped with its five “large, well-ventilated” classrooms, each with long, narrow cloakrooms just outside the classroom doors, a principal’s office, a nurse’s office, a custodial closet, a tower, women’s and men’s restrooms, and a shower.²² These rooms were placed around a long, wide corridor

¹⁷ After finishing elementary school, all sixth- through ninth-grade students, regardless of race, matriculated to the intermediate school at the southwest corner of West Sycamore Avenue and North Glassell Street. Though most Hispanic students quit school to work in the fields, some matriculated with their fellow students. However, after intermediate school, very few Hispanic students attended high school.

¹⁸ At that time, most, if not all, English-speaking children in Orange were white.

¹⁹ The Vice President of Campus Planning at Chapman University, Kris Olsen, noted that if students learned to speak fluent English while attending the Cypress Street School, they were allowed to transfer to the Killefer School. In this regard, Orange was ahead of its time, as many school systems in the area were segregated along racial lines, regardless of language mastery.

²⁰ Kendra Ablaza, “Once-segregated school now high-tech facility,” *Orange County Register*, April 2, 2013.

²¹ “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.

²² “\$90,000 School Expansion Program Here Completed for Fall Term,” *Orange County Register*, September 3, 1931.

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with double doors at each end, a loading dock on the rear (north) façade, and a large archway from the principal's and nurse's office to the classroom area. Each of the classrooms had transom windows set close to the ceiling that allowed light in from the central hallway. The restrooms had clerestory windows set close to the ceiling to allow light in from the outside, and the shower was convenient for students who did not have that amenity at their houses in the surrounding Cypress Street Barrio.

The Cypress Street Schoolhouse remains the only extant segregated school building in Orange County, California. In fact, it may be the only segregated school building still in existence in the state, since most were torn down in the decades following the 1947 *Méndez v. Westminster* verdict, in which a California judge outlawed segregated schools throughout the state. The fact that the Schoolhouse was well-constructed and well-ventilated was unusual for segregated schoolhouses in Southern California. In fact, "a 1928 study by two University of California professors found that [segregated] schools were fire hazards with little ventilation, light, and sanitation. In the years following *Mendez [v. Westminster]*, many of these schools had to be torn down because they did not meet the proper state requirements for building safety."²³ The Cypress Street Schoolhouse quality construction and good natural lighting and ventilation may be the reason why it is still standing – and in use – today.

During its restoration of the Cypress Street School House, Chapman placed plaques above each classroom and office door, inscribed with the names of the teachers who taught or worked in the school while the building operated as the Cypress Street School. The Orange Barrio Historic Society, integral in the rehabilitation process, now has a conference room and small exhibit space in the school building, located in the former principal's office. They replaced the 1970s windows installed by the Villa Park Orchard Association with historically compatible yet modern steel-frame windows, removed non-original doorways, repaired water damage in the ceilings and walls, replaced the broken panes of the roof window in the central hallway, removed wallpaper added in the 1970s, and repainted the walls three shades of historically compatible colors. Additionally, they installed salvaged or architecturally compatible schoolhouse light fixtures inside the building, and installed a stylistically compatible pendant light in the entryway.

²³ Jared Wallace, "*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's* Impact on Social Policy and Mexican-American Community Organization in Mid-Century Orange County," *Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (2013).

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“\$90,000 School Expansion Program Here Completed for Fall Term.” *Orange County Register*, September 3, 1931.

“Call Vote on School Bond: \$75,000 Issue to Be Voted May 22.” *Orange County Register*, May 1, 1930.

“City School Calendar is Announced for Next Year.” *Orange County Register*, May 1, 1931.

“Killefer Grade School, 500 block of Olive St in Orange, California.” Courtesy of Chapman University.

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“Ruling Gives Mexican Children Equal Rights.” *Los Angeles Times*. February 19, 1946.

Ablaza, Kendra. “Once-segregated school now high-tech facility.” *Orange County Register*. April 2, 2013.

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Platt, Mary. “Chapman University’s Cypress Street Schoolhouse Honored With LEED Gold Certification.” *Chapman University Press Room*, September 23, 2013.

Robbie, Sandra. *Mendez v. Westminster: Desegregating California's Schools*. KOCE-TV Foundation. 2002.

Smith, Rebecca L., 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.

Wallace, Jared. “*Mendez et. al v. Westminster et. al's* Impact on Social Policy and Mexican-American Community Organization in Mid-Century Orange County.” *Voces Novae: Chapman University Historical Review* 5, no. 1 (2013).

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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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.0 _____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 33.79605 N | Longitude: -117.85637 E |
| 2. Latitude: 33.79605 N | Longitude: -117.85736 E |
| 3. Latitude: 33.79665 N | Longitude: -117.85736 E |
| 4. Latitude: 33.79666 N | Longitude: -117.85637 E |

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

The Cypress Street Schoolhouse is located on lot 2 of Tract 134 (A.B. Chapman's Tract) in Orange, California. Please see attached Assessor's map, Tracts 131 – 134, Orange, CA (March, 1949).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes all of the historic property and land historically associated with the Cypress Street Schoolhouse attended by the Mexican children in the Cypress Street Barrio between 1931 and 1944.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Molly Iker, Graduate Research Assistant
organization: Center for Historic Architecture and Design
street & number: 331 Alison Hall, Academy Street
city or town: Newark state: Delaware zip code: 19716
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date: August 2014

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.

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.)

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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: Cypress Street Schoolhouse

City or Vicinity: Orange

County: Orange County

State: CA

Photographer: Molly Iker

Date Photographed: April 3, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0001)

View of east façade, facing west.

2 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0002)

View of south and east facades, facing northwest.

3 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0003)

View of south façade, facing north.

4 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0004)

View of south and west facades, facing northeast.

5 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0005)

View of terra cotta roof/wall detail on north façade, facing southeast.

6 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0006)

View of loading dock and doors on north façade, facing south.

7 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0007)

View of built-in bench on west wall of entryway, facing west.

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- 8 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0008)
View of window and general layout of office to the east of the entryway, facing southeast.
- 9 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0009)
View of entryway and archway, facing southeast.
- 10 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0010)
View of partition walls, restroom, and part of the main corridor, facing south.
- 11 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0011)
View of interior of cloakroom outside classroom, facing north.
- 12 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0012)
View of cloakrooms and corridor out to loading dock, facing north.
- 13 of 13 (CA_Orange_CypressStreetSchoolhouse_0013)
View of original transom window to main corridor and compatible light fixture, facing west.

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Additional Documentation: Photo Keys and Historic Maps

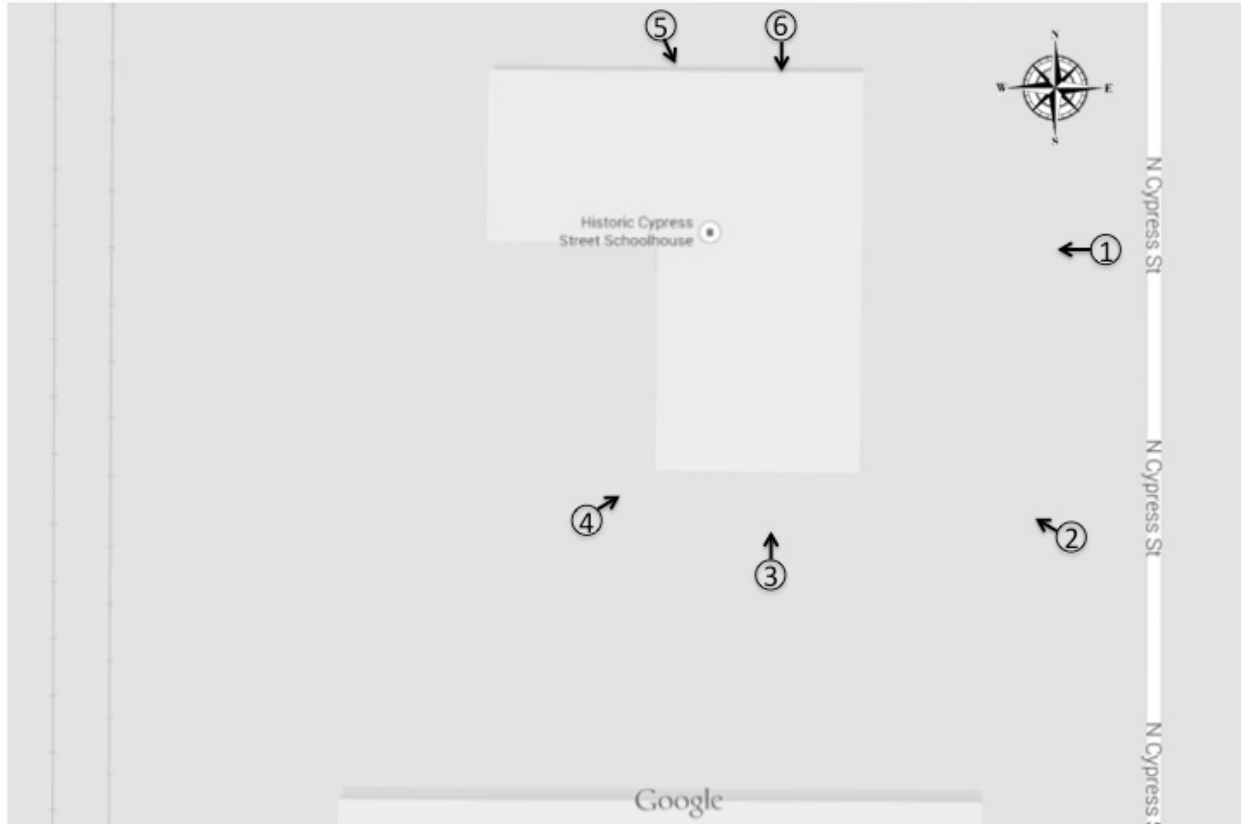
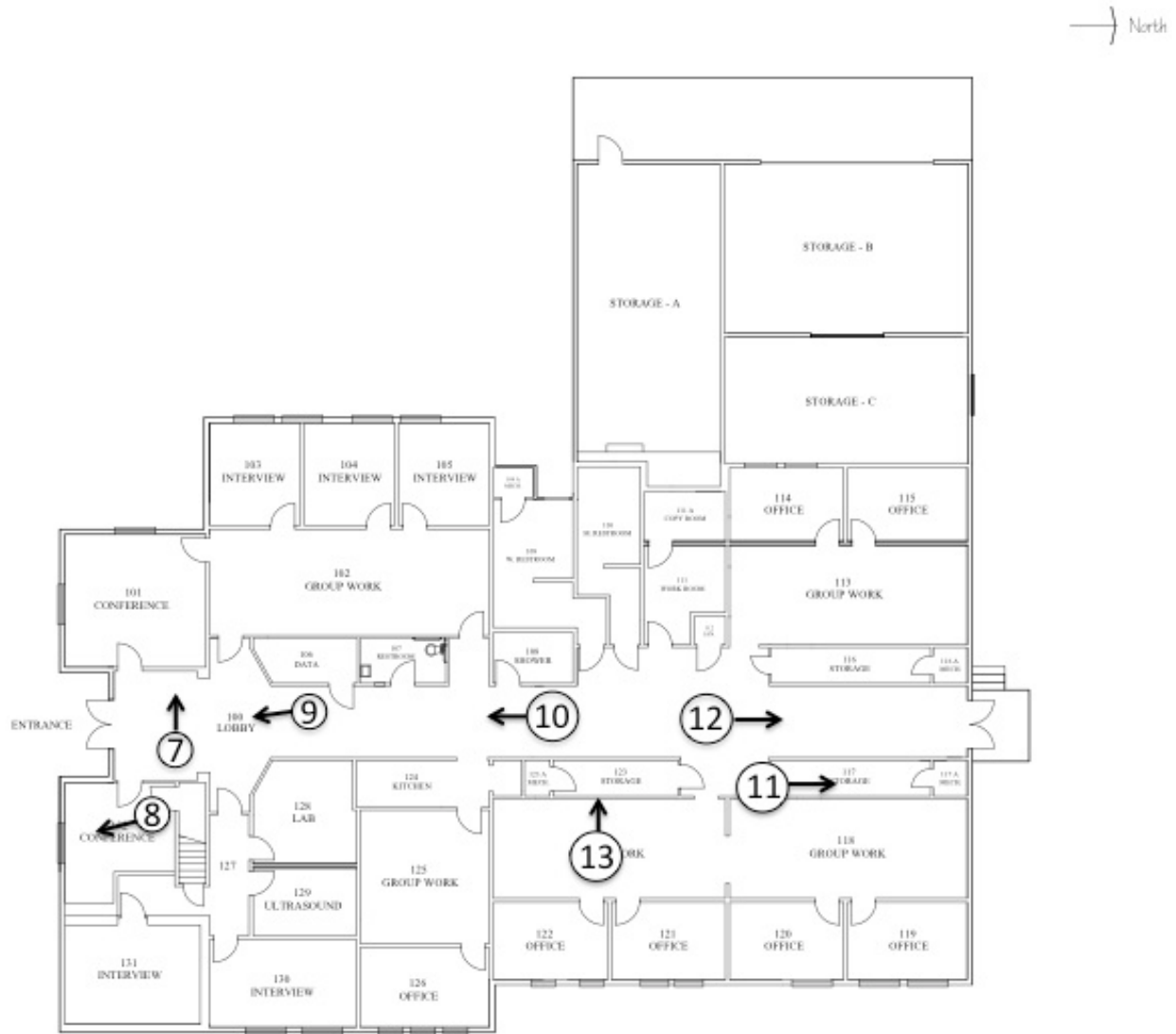


Figure 1.
Exterior site plan, Cypress Street Schoolhouse.

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Figure 2.

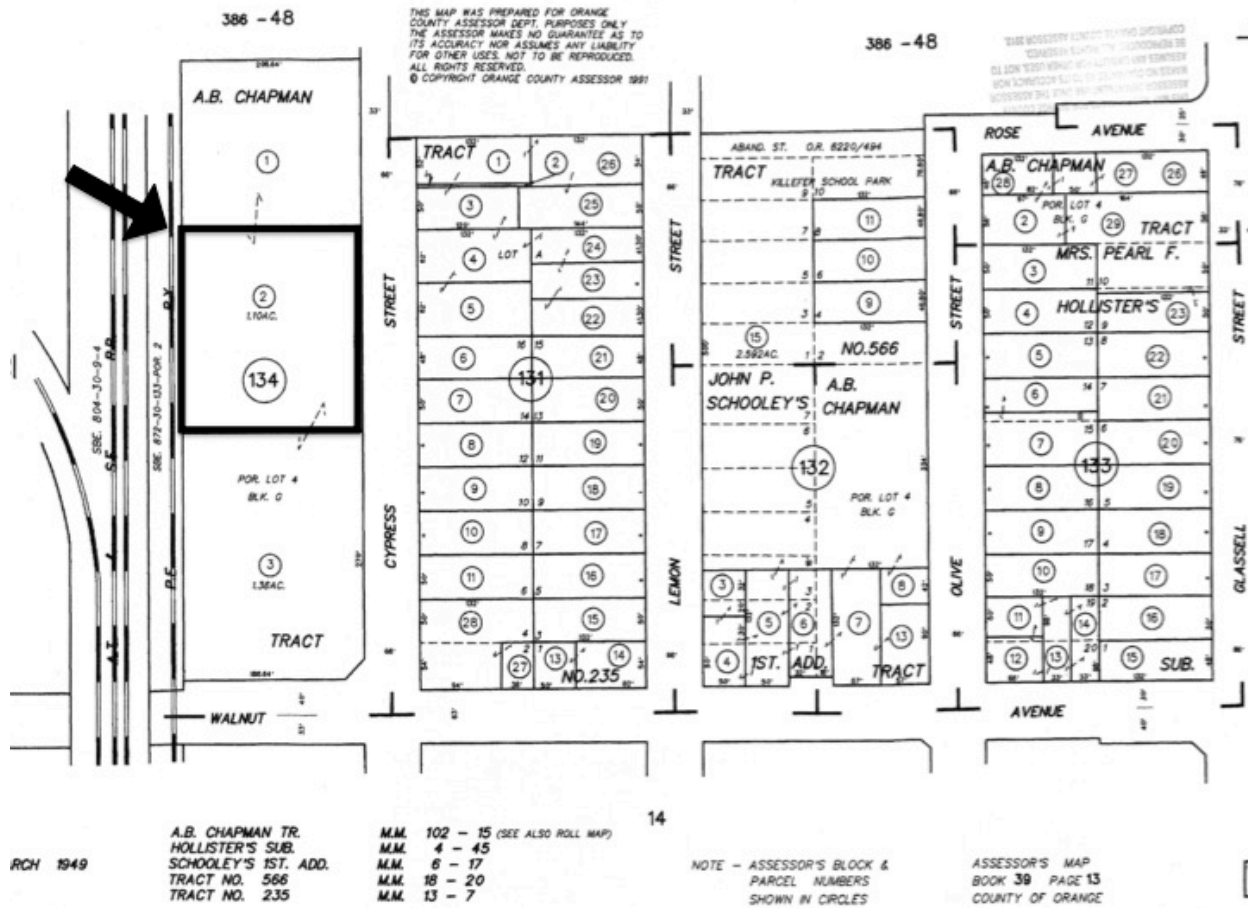


2014 floor plan, Cypress Street Schoolhouse, Courtesy of Chapman University.

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Figure 3.



Assessor's map, Tracts 131 - 134, Orange, CA (March, 1949), courtesy of Chapman University.

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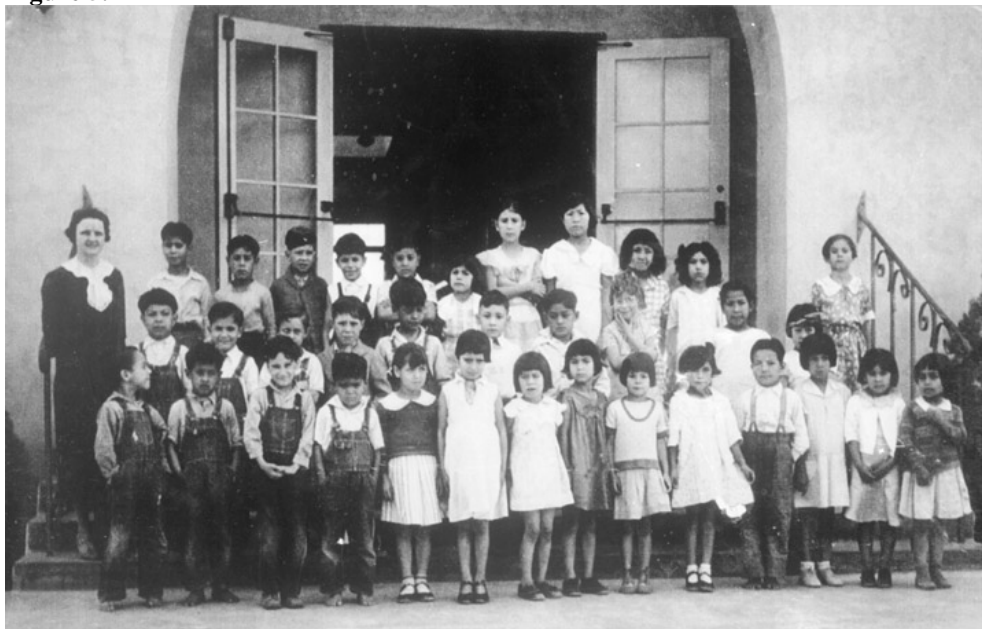
Additional Documentation: Historic Photographs

Figure 4.



(1931) Alejandra Guzman seated on steps on south façade, original steel frame windows and wrought-iron railing visible in background. Local History Collection, Orange History Center, Orange, CA.

Figure 5.



(1939) Students in front of the Cypress Street Schoolhouse, wrought iron railings and glazed doors visible in background. Local History Collection, Orange History Center, Orange, CA.

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Figure 5.



(1945) Students and citizens of the Cypress Street Barrio on steps in front of the Cypress Street Schoolhouse, wrought iron railing and glazed doors visible in background. Local History Collection, Orange History Center, Orange, CA.

Figure 6.



(1955) Photo of car in front of Cypress Street Schoolhouse. Local History Collection, Orange History Center, Orange, CA.

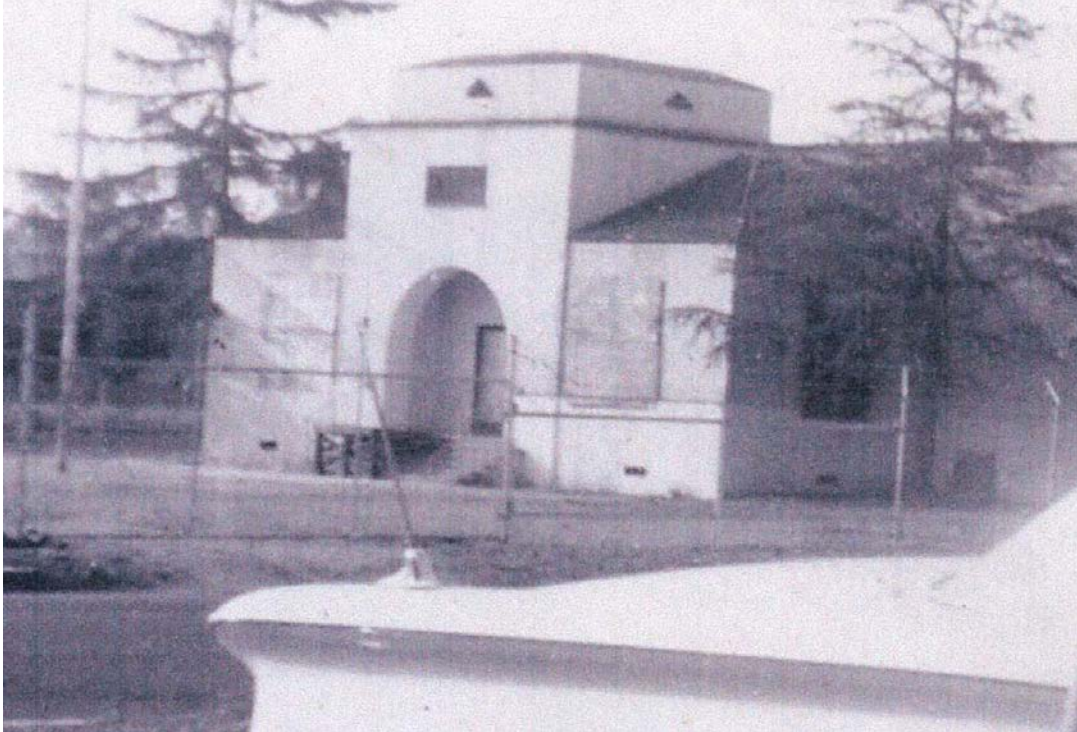
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Figure 7.



(1944) View of the east and south facades after the school was shut down. Courtesy of Chapman University, Orange, CA.

Figure 8.

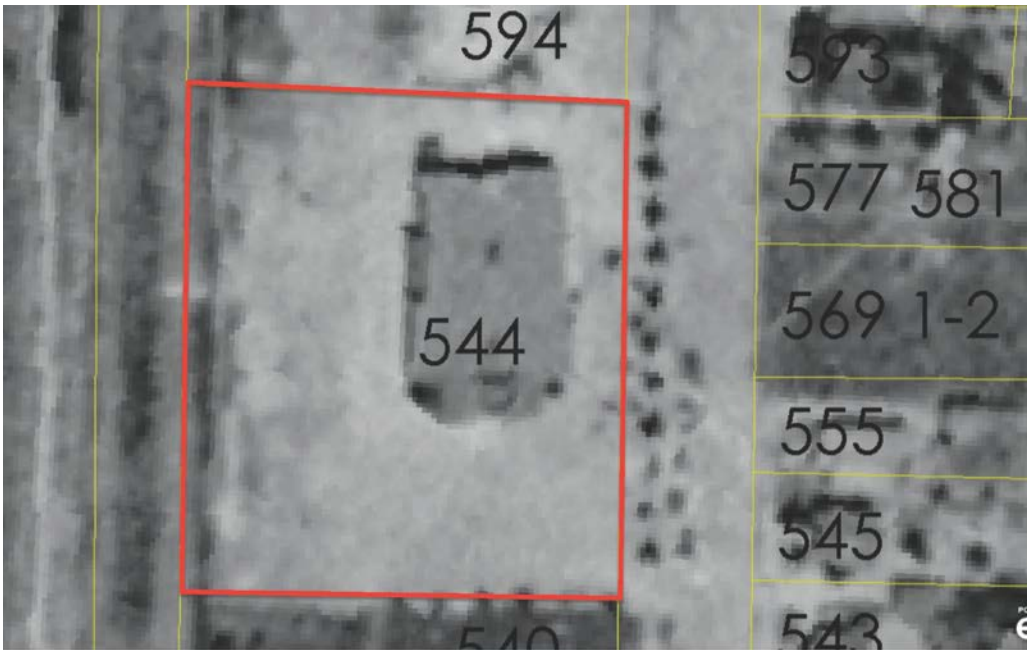


(2004) View of east and south facades after Chapman acquired the building from the Villa Park Orchard Association. Courtesy of Chapman University, Orange, CA.

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Figure 9.



Aerial view of Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1938. City of Orange Historic Aerial Viewer

Figure 10.



Aerial view of Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1946. HistoricAerials.com

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Aerial view of Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1947. HistoricAerials.com

Figure 12.

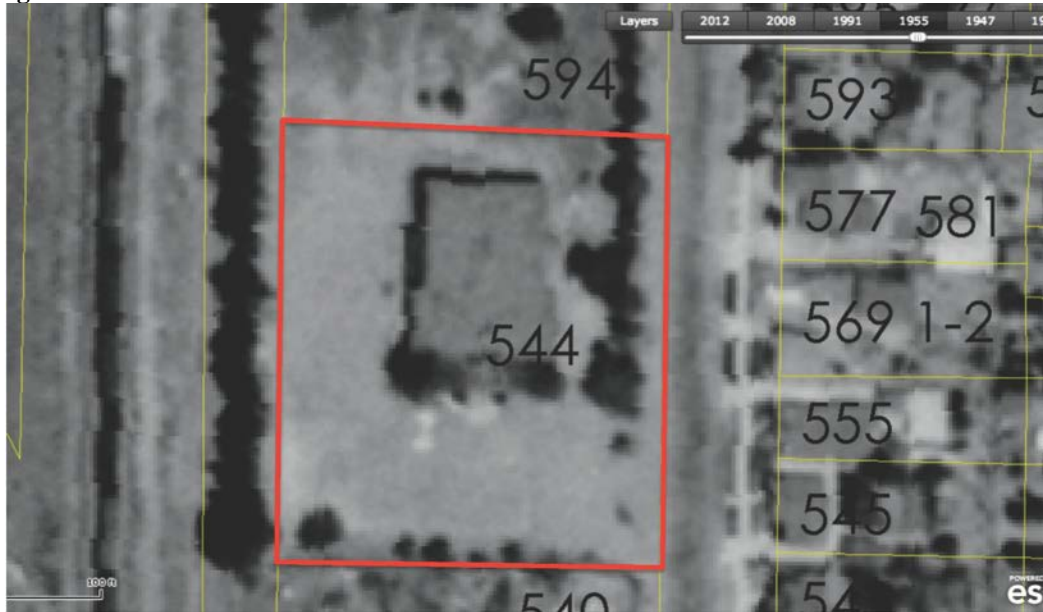


Aerial view of Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1947. HistoricAerials.com

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Figure 13.



Aerial view of Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1955. HistoricAerials.com

Figure 14.



Aerial view of Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1972. HistoricAerials.com

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Figure 15.



Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1980, HistoricAerials.com

Figure 16.



Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 1991, City of Orange Historic Aerial viewer

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Figure 17.



Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 2003, HistoricAerials.com

Figure 18.



Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 2005, HistoricAerials.com

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Figure 19.



Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 2008, City of Orange Historic Aerial viewer

Figure 20.



Cypress Street Schoolhouse, 2012, City of Orange Historic Aerial viewer