



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Fwd: Motion 12-1625 Tuna Canyon Detention Center Site

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 29, 2013 at 8:35 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Linda J. Hornick** <ljhornick2003@aol.com>
Date: Sun, Jan 27, 2013 at 7:22 PM
Subject: Motion 12-1625 Tuna Canyon Detention Center Site
To: Sharon.Gin@lacity.org
Cc: Amazgrey@aol.com

Regarding Motion 12-1625 by Richard Alarcon

Dear Ms. Gin:

As a resident of CD7 I support the Councilman's motion to designate the Verdugo Hills Golf Course property as a historical site within the City of Los Angeles. Although the structures for the Tuna Detention Center may be gone, remembering what occurred on that site is important.

Having a historical marker and City record of what happened at this site stands to prevent future injustice towards others. It would also serve as a reminder that our personal freedom is very precious.

Sincerely,

Linda Joyce Hornick
12175 Mercer Street
Lake View Terrace, CA 91342

818-899-4487
ljhornick2003@aol.com



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Fwd: Support of Motion 12-1625

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 29, 2013 at 8:33 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Benjamin Bowen** <bbowen37@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 8:29 PM
Subject: Re: Support of Motion 12-1625
To: Sharon.Gin@lacity.org
Cc: president@stnc.org, info@savethegolfcourse.org

Greetings,

It is my understanding that there is a Land Use Management meeting taking place on Tuesday, January 29th (tomorrow) and the discussion of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station being designated a Historic-Cultural Monument will be on the agenda. Being a resident living across the street from this site, I strongly support this notion. It was only recently brought to my attention the historical significance of this beloved family-oriented golf course. The well kept grounds provide healthy outdoor recreation, beautiful scenery, hosting for fund raisers supporting good causes, and to permanently establish this as a Historic-Cultural Monument would ensure that it will continue to function. With the risk of new residential development on this site, there are obvious environmental impacts accompanying the increase of population density to the area, reflected by the over-crowded Tujunga Canyon Boulevard on which I live. I hope these reasons are taken into consideration when deciding on the benefits of preserving the area for its historical significance.

Thank you for your time in reading my e-mail.

Regards,

Ben Bowen



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Fwd: Support for CFI 12-1625

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 29, 2013 at 8:32 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Krystee Clark** <krysteeclarkcitycouncil@earthlink.net>

Date: Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 9:23 PM

Subject: Support for CFI 12-1625

To: Sharon.Gin@lacity.org

Cc: president@stnc.org, info@savethegolfcourse.org, littlelanders@verizon.net, explodingsun <explodinggun@gmail.com>, councilmember.alarcon@lacity.org, Councilmember Jose Huizar <councilmember.huizar@lacity.org>, "Councilmember Ed P. Reyes" <councilmember.reyes@lacity.org>, Councilmember Mitchell Englander <councilmember.englander@lacity.org>

Dear Councilmembers,

As a candidate for Los Angeles City Council District 7 and a resident of Tujunga since 1999, I strongly support the motion to include the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Site in the City's list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

This space must be preserved, documented and protected. It is important for the stories and memories of the men who were detained here to be remembered and shared. Our future generations will learn and grow from this knowledge and the families of those who traveled through these camps deserve no less than a monument to their pain. The historical prominence and preservation of this location is important to the residents of Tujunga and has been expressed through standing room only crowds at numerous Neighborhood Council Meetings and public hearings.

The Verdugo Hills Golf Course site is also an important wild life corridor and filled with large Oak trees. This open space is a necessary recreational outlet for the Sunland-Tujunga community and the City of Los Angeles.

Thank you for your time and your consideration,

Krystee Clark
Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council Boardmember

818-566-0013
9615 Hillhaven Ave, Tujunga CA. 91042



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

File No. 12-1625 PLUM Hearing Tuesday, Jan. 29, 2013

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 29, 2013 at 8:31 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **abby diamond** <a.gemofagirl@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Jan 25, 2013 at 10:44 PM

Subject: Support for File No. 12-1625 PLUM Hearing Tuesday, Jan. 29, 2013

To: Sharon.Gin@lacity.org

Cc: richard.alarcon@lacity.org, gerald.gubatan@lacity.org, Karen Zimmerman <zimzip@ca.rr.com>, gcvoice@gcvoice.org, joe barrett <explodingsun@gmail.com>

PLUM Hearing
Motion by CM Alarcon and Garcetti
File No. 12-1625
CD7

I highly support the motion to include the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Site in the City's list of Historic Cultural Monuments.

It is a unique piece of our local history that has been neglected for too long. The Verdugo Hills Golf Course is a popular recreational asset and the perfect setting for a commemorative marker to inform the public of this chapter of our nation's past.

I sincerely thank Councilman Alarcon for this motion.

Abby Diamond
Tujunga resident



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

File No. 12-1625 CD7

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 29, 2013 at 8:29 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <yllwman@aol.com>
Date: Sat, Jan 26, 2013 at 11:06 AM ✓
Subject: PLUM Hearing Motion by CM Alarcon and Garcetti File No. 12-1625 CD7
To: Sharon.Gin@lacity.org

PLUM Hearing
Motion by CM Alarcon and Garcetti
File No. 12-1625
CD7

To whom it may concern,

I highly support the motion to include the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Site in the City's list of Historic Cultural Monuments. It is a unique piece of our local history that has been neglected for too long. The Verdugo Hills Golf Course is a popular recreational asset and the perfect setting for a commemorative marker to inform the public of this chapter of our nation's past.

I sincerely thank Councilman Alarcon for this motion.



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Fwd: PLUM Hearing, January 29, File No. 12-1625, CD7

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 29, 2013 at 8:27 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mary T Anderson** <tenpfennig@ca.rr.com>
Date: Sun, Jan 27, 2013 at 11:32 AM ✓
Subject: PLUM Hearing, January 29, File No. 12-1625, CD7
To: Sharon.Gin@lacity.org

Re: PLUM Hearing, January 29, 2013
Motion by CM Alarcon and Garcetti
File No. 12-1625
CD7

I strongly support the motion to include the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Site in the City's list of Historic Cultural Monuments.

It is a unique, if sad, piece of our local history that has been neglected for too long.

The Verdugo Hills Golf Course is a popular recreational asset and an ideal setting for a commemorative marker to inform the public of this chapter of our nation's past.

I sincerely thank Councilman Alarcon for this motion.

Mary T Anderson
9953 Amanita ave
Tujunga



Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Fwd: File No. 12-1625 - Tuna Canyon Detention Center being designated a Historic Cultural Monument.

1 message

Sharon Gin <sharon.gin@lacity.org>
To: Etta Armstrong <etta.armstrong@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 29, 2013 at 8:28 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sherri Risley** <insgirl99@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Sat, Jan 26, 2013 at 3:47 PM

Subject: File No. 12-1625 - Tuna Canyon Detention Center being designated a Historic Cultural Monument.

To: Sharon.Gin@lacity.org

I highly support the motion to include the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Site in the City's list of Historic Cultural Monuments.

It is a unique piece of our local history that has been neglected for too long. The Verdugo Hills Golf Course is a popular recreational asset and the perfect setting for a commemorative marker to inform the public of this chapter of our nation's past.

I sincerely thank Councilman Alarcon for this motion.

Sherri Risley

FRED GAINES
SHERMAN L. STACEY
LISA A. WEINBERG*
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January 28, 2013

ORIGINAL BY HAND DELIVERY

Via E-MAIL councilmember.reyes@lacity.org

The Honorable Ed Reyes, Chair
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street, Room 410
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Date: 1/29/13
Submitted in: PLUM Committee
Council File No: 12-1625
Item No.: 1
Deputy: Comm from Public

Re: Council File No. 12-1625
Motion to Designate 6435 La Tuna Canyon Road as Historic-Cultural Monument
PLUM Committee Hearing Date: January 29, 2013 (Agenda Item No. 1)

Dear Chair Reyes and Honorable PLUM Committee Members:

This law office represents property owner Snowball West Investments, Inc. ("Snowball") with respect to its pending entitlements for 224 single family homes at 6433 La Tuna Canyon Road (the "Property"), otherwise known as the Verdugo Hills Golf Course. We were surprised to learn that the City of Los Angeles's (the "City") Planning and Land Use Management ("PLUM") Committee intends to consider a motion to designate the property for inclusion in the City's list of historic-cultural monuments (the "Motion") at its January 29, 2013 meeting. The Motion is nothing more than a last ditch effort to derail our client's project and, for the reasons set forth in this letter, we urge the PLUM Committee to deny the Motion.

First, it is absolutely outrageous that neither Snowball, the property owner, or its representatives have been contacted or received notice from the City relative to the Motion or the January 29th PLUM Committee meeting. It was purely happenstance that our office was reviewing the PLUM agenda on-line and discovered that the Motion would be considered by PLUM on January 29th. It is nothing short of a outright denial of substantive and procedural due process for the City to take any action on the Motion without advance notice to the property owner, and the opportunity for the property owner to prepare and be fully heard.

Second, the PLUM Committee should be aware that the historic nature of the property, or lack thereof, has already been fully reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). (*Pub Res. Code Sec. 21084.1.*) In fact, the Department of City Planning is in the process of undertaking a full environmental review in connection with Snowball's pending project (Case Nos. VTTM No. 69976, CPC-2007-3082, and ENV-2007-3083-EIR) and, in 2007, circulated for public comment a Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR"). That Draft EIR includes a comprehensive cultural resources analysis and a specific review of the historic issues related to the Tuna Canyon Detention Station site. The Draft EIR's cultural resources analysis is based on a Cultural Resources Reconnaissance report prepared by SWCA Environmental Consultants, dated October 2005. **The Draft EIR concludes that the impacts of the project on historical resources will be mitigated to a less than significant level.**

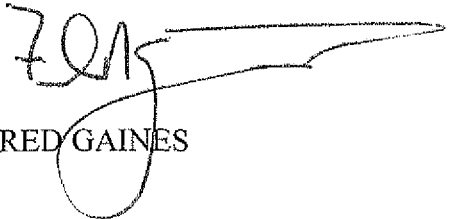
The City is currently in the process of revising certain components of the EIR to be recirculated for additional public review and comment in the near future. Once a Final EIR has been prepared, the City will schedule the project for public hearing. During the public hearing process there will be further opportunity to review and comment on the historic nature of the site in connection with project approval and certification of the Final EIR.

In sum, the Motion is a total waste of the City's time and resources and should be denied. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time with any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,

GAINES & STACEY LLP

By



FRED GAINES

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Jose Huizar (Via E-mail)
The Honorable Mitchell Englander (Via E-mail)
Sharon Gin, Legislative Assistant (Via E-mail)

JAP...

You're Next!



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Date: 1/29/13
Submitted in PLUM Committee
Council File No. 12-1625
Item No. 1
Deposited Comm from Public

We'll Finish the Job!

Lloyd Hitt, Past President
Little Landers Historical Society
10110 Commerce Ave
Tujunga, CA 91042
January 29, 2013

Planning and Land Use Management Committee
Edward R Roybal Hearing Room 350
200 North Spring St. Los Angeles, CA 90012

Councilmember Ed. P Reyes, Chair
Councilmember Jose Huizar
Councilmember Mitchel Englander

Sharon Gin - Legislative Assistant

RE: File No. 12-1625 (CD 7)

Verdugo Hills Golf Course - Former WWII Tuna Canyon Detention Station for Japanese, Germans, and Italians. The site is located at 6433 La Tuna Cyn. Tujunga, CA 91042.

Good Afternoon,

My name is Lloyd Hitt

This morning I am here on behalf of the Little Landers Historical Society to request that you consider the application for the former WWII INS Tuna Canyon Detention Station for recognition as a Historic & Cultural Monument as proposed by Council members Richard Alarcon and Eric Garcetti.

Before I start I would like to tell you what is in your folder.

1. The cover shows a typical government poster which tended to degrade not only the enemy (which is fair) but those who had been our neighbors.
2. Two short histories of the site beginning with the pre-mission period up through the Verdugo Hills Golf Course
3. 4 photographs of the CCC Camp.
4. A typical Japanese family with the government tags on their coats waiting for an immigration bus to take them to the Assembly center.

The site we are looking at today is an important intangible asset to Los Angeles. On the plus side, under President Franklin D Roosevelt, we created the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933 which helped 1000's of young men become educated and trained for jobs. On the dark side, on Dec. 7th 1941 the CCC camp became the Tuna Canyon Detention Station where Germans, Italians & 1000's of Japanese heads of households would be interrogated. The CCC Camp would have a 12' fence erected with guard towers & lights surrounding the camp. Most Italians and Germans would be released under curfew but all Japanese would be sent either to rejoin their families in concentration camps or spend the war alone in special camps.

On behalf of the many Japanese that I and Paul Tsuneishi have communicated with, all believe that the property should remain as open space of some kind and not a tract of houses. It is time that the story is told at the site for all to remember so that we never

imprison people again because of their race. There are few opportunities in life to go back and recognize our mistakes as a people and a nation. We have an opportunity to recognize what went wrong on Dec.7, 1941 when prejudice and fear completely blocked any reasonable action toward legal immigrants and their American children. We can not put the total blame on Washington. Unknown to the general public, there was a concerted letter writing campaign, usually form letters, by local white groups of fisherman, chambers of commerce, veteran organizations, farmers, and business groups to lock the Japanese up and keep them locked up. If a Quaker Minister by the name of Herbert Nicholson, in Pasadena, had not started a national letter campaign to free them in 1943, they would probably would have stayed in the concentration camps until 1945.

Natural heritage is defined as an inheritance of fauna and flora, geology, landscape and land forms, and other natural resources such as water

The Natural Heritage of the former Tuna Camp of Oaks, Sycamores, graded area (camp site/driving range) and the Verdugo Wash (now in concrete) are still there along with the Verdugo Mountains. The natural resources that still exist make this a prime Prop 0 candidate.

Cultural Heritage, the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society: man-made heritage

However, from the same period ending in 1960, the intangible attributes of our government's action, fueled by racism on a group of immigrants & citizens, is something that should never happen again. After reading all of the files from the National Archives from the Pacific Region and communicating with families affected by the Tuna Detention Station, I find a lack of good will on the balance sheet of life on this property which will remain unless we recognize that fact and deal with it and bring closure.

Intangible attributes can be hard to explain. After 56 years, I retired and closed my pharmacy 1995. Intangible assets or Good Will, were worth \$100,000 dollars to the buyer. How do you measure Goodwill or in this case a lack of Goodwill? It would seem that preserving this site and recognizing our errors with a monument would be the right thing to do.

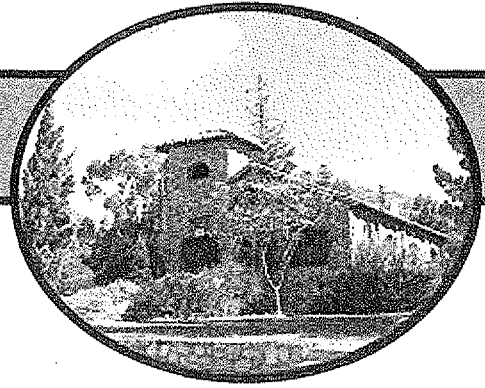
Thank You for your time, Lloyd Hitt

Little Landers Historical Society

Bolton Hall Museum

10110 Commerce Avenue • Tujunga, California 91042 • (818) 352-3420

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 203, Tujunga, CA 91043



January 29, 2013

Tuna Detention Station Before and After A Short History

The fifty-eight acres occupied by the Verdugo Hill Golf Course have seen far more reaching changes than any other area of S/T. The Tongva Village of Wiqanga was camped under the Oaks fed by springs and creeks at or near the South end of the golf course before and after the Mission period. Tiburcio Vasquez, who was probably one of the most notorious bandits in California, drove his stolen horses & cattle up through the canyon to hide in the San Gabriel Mountains. In the late 1800's farmers like Phillip Begue bought the land to farm and then later sold a Southern section to Charleston Dow, a farmer, (around 1906). Rows of vineyards covered the slopes to the base of Sister Elsie and Twin Peaks in the Sierra Madre Mountains as they were known at the time. The only break in the vineyards was Foothill Blvd., known as Michigan Blvd. During WWI much of the grape harvest was bought by the US government and used in a fermentation process to make cordite for bullets and artillery shells.

In 1933 Charleston Dow leased 58 acres on the South end of his land to the Army for \$30 a month for the construction of one of two Civilian Conservation Corps camps under President Franklin D Roosevelt to be built in the Tujunga area. Local carpenters built eleven WWI Army wooden buildings with seven barracks, mess hall, administration building, office building, and the infirmary on the East side along the Verdugo Wash, this was a creek draining Blanchard Canyon and followed the rutted Tujunga Canyon Road from Monte Vista. There were also garages, a blacksmith shop, and shelters for equipment. The CCC program proved to be very popular and enrollment by young men quickly filled the camps. Enrollees of Company 548 at Tuna Camp probably arrived before the buildings were finished and would have lived in military tents. They varied in age from 17-25, signed up for six up to twenty-four months and were paid \$30 a month of which \$25 was sent home to the parents. The Army ensured water supplies, transportation, and local availability of food supplies.

Early assignments were forest access roads, water retention tanks of two to five thousand gallons' capacities in the Angeles National Forrest above Sunland/Tujunga & La Crescenta. With the arrival of the new CCC Company 902 in April 1934 their assignments changed to include vast private holdings in the Verdugo Hills, San Gabriel Mountains, and the Crescenta Valley to restore hardwood groves and drainage after severe fires & flooding

throughout the region in 1933-1934. Company 902 cleared brush, cut numerous fire trails and culverts, and built steel forest fire towers. A road and picnic sites were built up to the Big Tujunga Dam. Above all else the local community developed a deep respect for their fire fighting abilities in protecting them from seasonal fires. Company 902 would stay until 1941 when the Depression ended with defense spending jobs & enlistment in the military services & the threat of war. For the young men who came through the Tuna Camp it was a positive experience for both them and the community. The fly in the ointment was the fact that the local communities refused twice to accept a Company of all Blacks in the Tuna Camp. Perhaps this was a sign of what was to come. At the same time the Crescenta Valley communities, including Sunland/Tujunga, were focused on creating an "all white" community, led by major local attorneys who collected funds to have all property deeds reflect "whites" only ownership.

The Army tried to close the Tuna CCC Camp in early 1940 because the young men were joining the military or finding jobs, but the community fought this action because the Company played an important part in fighting forest & brush fires.

Unlike other camps that had been dismantled, the Tuna Camp remained to serve as a gateway for incarceration of German, Italian, and most often (90+%) Japanese immigrants living on the West Coast. As of December 7, 1941, the CCC camp was closed and became the Tuna Detention Center operated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). By December 8th, the INS took charge of the camp and by December 16th the first prisoners were delivered by the FBI. The camp was no longer what it had been as the Army buildings were now fenced with a twelve-foot steel fence with barbed wire on the top. Guard towers stood at intervals with the fence area under lights. A small contingent of armed Army personnel and civilians stood guard. No one was to get closer than 10 feet of the fence and only English was to be spoken on visitors day. Unlike like Santa Anita Racetrack Assembly Center, only heads of households were brought in with few exceptions.

The FBI started investigations in the early 1940's especially those living near the coast or industrial sites and they were the prisoners brought in Dec.16, 1940. Immigrants from Germany, Italy and Japan were considered suspect because of their nationality and if they were educated, worked along the coast, active in their communities, involved in the martial arts, teachers, Buddhist, or community leaders they were even more suspect as to their loyalty. The hearings held at the Tuna Detention Center determined if you would be free with certain restrictions such as curfews, or sent on to concentration camps if you were German or Italian although a few Italian fishermen were forced to move away from the coast but were allowed back Oct. 12, 1942. If you were Japanese, the hearings decided if you were to join your family at one of the many concentration camps or be sent to special concentration camps to spend the war years separated from your family. There was no evidence submitted at the hearings, only conjecture. For instance, if you were Japanese and you were a fisherman working off the West Coast, you knew too much & were a risk to America's security. Of the ten people convicted of espionage for Japan, from 1940 to 1945, all ten were Caucasian. None were Japanese. Most of us if not all were not aware of the 1000's of German, Italian and Japanese we imprisoned in the U.S. from Mexico, Central America and South America. We brought them to America to trade for American civilians captured by the Axis powers. Some of the 2000 Peruvian Japanese were processed at the Tuna Detention Center and many were sent to Japan in exchanged for Americans.

The policy was ill conceived but there were many Americans who did their best at these camps to show understanding and kindness toward their prisoners. One was right here at the Tuna Camp. The INS director to open the Tuna Detention Center was Border Patrol Officer Merrill Scott. Scott was not happy with the policy he had to carry out but Scott did it with kindness and understanding. He told his friend Herbert Nicholson, a Quaker Minister, that if it were up to him, he would let a prisoner go home to take care of a family matter and he had no doubt that they would be back the next evening. He organized the camp allowing a self-government honor system among the prisoners, allowing them to select barrack captains and a mayor of the station. The leaders took care of the affairs of the prisoners including selecting the cooks, kitchen police, maintenance, and they ran their own PX where they sold personal items, candy, & other small items.

Herbert Nicholson, who spoke Japanese, was a frequent Tuna Camp visitor and often acted as a witness at the interviews. He also helped the families with the problems they faced with the federal government. He often drove hundreds if not thousand's miles hauling furniture & other items including the ashes of a loved one. He did this free with the support of Quaker friends. In 1943 Herbert and his friends in Pasadena and across America were mainly responsible for a letter writing campaign to Washington, D.C. to free the Japanese from the camps across America.

The camp would be closed in late 1943 and the old Army buildings would later find a new use as a LA County Probation school for boys and in 1960 the buildings would disappear and the current golf course would take their place. The golf course preserved much of the old Oaks and Sycamores and has provided twenty-five acres of recreation for young and old these past fifty-two years. Through these many years the canyon has meant many things to thousands of people. In a park-poor city we can only hope the site would remain a low impact open space and not a high density area with a large carbon footprint. We can help erase the dark shadows that the WWII years and our racism left on this canyon and recognize its history as a Los Angeles Historic Monument.

Lloyd Hitt, Past President of Little Landers Historical Society
Lanmhitt@cs.com
818 951 1041

Denso Encyclopedia



Category
Camps

Tuna Canyon (detention facility)

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The Tuna Canyon Detention Station was a prison camp that held Issei men from Southern California detained by the FBI shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The camp also held local German internees and Japanese Peruvians. Internees were held there before being transferred to permanent detention camps in other parts of the country. The capacity of the camp was approximately 300. The site—a former CCC camp that later became part of the Verdugo Hills golf course—is currently slated for residential development. Talks to locate a historical marker at the site—with the possibility of purchasing the property and building a park—are ongoing.

US Gov Name Tuna Canyon Detention Station

Facility Type Immigration Detention Station

Location Tujunga, California (34.2500 lat, -118.2833 lng)

Date Opened

Date Closed

Population Description Held Japanese Immigrants; also held German and Italian nationals.

General Description Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detention station located at a former Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp near Pasadena in Los Angeles County, California.

Peak Population

National Park Service Info

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- 2 Department of Justice Detention Camp
- 3 Aftermath
- 4 For More Information



CCC workers built roads and trails in the Verdugo Hills. View of Tuna Canyon, c. 1934. Courtesy of Little Landers Historical Society at Bolton Hall Museum [More info »](#)



The mess hall at Tuna Canyon, 1933. Courtesy of Little Landers Historical Society at Bolton Hall Museum [More info »](#)



View of Tuna Canyon, c. 1930s. Courtesy of Little Landers Historical Society at Bolton Hall Museum [More info »](#)

About the Incarceration
Do Words Matter?
Historical Timeline
Map

5 Footnotes

Site Background

For hundreds of years the Tongva-Gabrielinos inhabited the village of Tujunga, thriving in one of the oldest villages in Southern California. The first Europeans to explore this area were Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and Gaspar de Portola. Father Junipero Serra established two of the first nine missions near Tujunga with the help of the Portola expedition: the San Fernando and San Gabriel missions. A Mexican land grant was given to two brothers, Francisco and Pedro Lopez, and they called it Rancho Tujunga, engaging in agriculture and cattle ranching. When gold was first discovered in 1842 on the Rancho Tujunga, it brought a wave of prospectors, loggers, settlers, and outlaws to the area.^[1]

A Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp named La Tuna Camp opened in May of 1933 located at 6330 Tujunga Canyon Blvd. in Tujunga about fourteen miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles and six miles north of Glendale. The CCC camp was taken over by the U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service on December 8, 1941, for the purpose of detaining and identification of enemy aliens. The official government name of the camp was "Tuna Canyon Detention Station, Immigration and Naturalization Service"; M. H. Scott was assigned to be the officer-in-charge.^[2]

[Top](#)

Department of Justice Detention Camp

Tuna Canyon Detention Station received its first enemy aliens who had been taken into custody by the FBI on December 16, 1941, and thereafter operated as a clearing-house for the male Japanese enemy aliens arrested in Southern California. From that date until May 25, 1942, 1,490 Japanese males passed through the camp and were transferred to other camps in Fort Missoula, Montana, Fort Lincoln, North Dakota, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.^[3] According to a report submitted after a visit by the Spanish consul, there 76 Japanese males held at the camp on May 28, 1942.^[4] The population was diverse in Tuna Canyon Detention Station: there were Japanese, Germans, and Japanese Peruvians, with latter being sent to Kenedy INS detention camp in Texas. Tuna Canyon and Sharp Park detention stations held the largest number of Japanese internees.^[5] Herbert Nicholson, a frequent visitor to the camp, stated, "When they would get three hundred men they would ship them out a whole trainload of them up to some other place. Missoula had six hundred then they sent additional ones out to Bismarck, North

Dakota."^[6] According to Tetsuden Kashima some Issei stayed for various lengths of time from a few weeks to three months, before boarding a train with blackout shades for the long ride to Fort Missoula, Montana or Fort Lincoln, North Dakota.^[7] George Tsumori a resident of Tujunga owned three produce stands in the area. While working at his produce business he was helping the FBI as an interpreter at the Tuna Canyon Detention Station and had to be on call at all hours.^[8]

In a memorandum from Officer-in-Charge Scott, the camp included seven barracks, an infirmary, a mess hall, and office buildings and could hold 300 persons. There was medical care, a barbershop, and a canteen that sold sundries and other items at wholesale prices to the internees. Religious services were conducted by visiting religious leaders, but also there were several Christian ministers and two Buddhist priests interned at the station who also conducted services. Visitors were allowed, but because there were 1,837 visitors on one Sunday, visiting times for each member of the family were subsequently limited to two minutes each. Scott initiated a self-government honor system among the detainees, allowing them to elect barrack captains and a mayor of the station. The internee leaders would take over the affairs of the detainees such as designating the cooks, kitchen police, orderlies, and wood burning stove maintenance workers. Mail such as letters, postcards, and telegrams in English or their native language was subject to censorship. Internees could receive food and clothing from family and friends; some 5,000 packages were received for the 160 day period.^[9]

Herbert Nicholson, a Quaker missionary and friend of Japanese Americans, was one of the earlier visitors to Tuna Canyon and other internment camps. He would report to the internees and to the worried families how each was doing; many were his friends from Terminal Island. During his visits, he would aid Issei internees as an interpreter and a character witness at their hearings since he was fluent in Japanese. He also thought that M.H. Scott was kind and sympathetic to the Japanese internees.^[10]

On May 28, 1942, Francisco de Amat, the Spanish Consul at San Francisco, visited the camp. (As a neutral party, Spain represented the interests of the Japanese.) In a report filed by Bernard Gufler, assistant chief of the Special Division, Department of State, the internees lodged a number of requests and observations. Interviewed by the representatives of the protecting power alone then as in a separate interview in the presence of the representatives of Department of State and Justice, they stated they had no complaints with regards to the detention camp or treatment. They

especially requested that the representatives of the protecting power convey to the Japanese diplomats interned in a hotel for Japanese government officials (the Greenbrier Hotel) in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, that they were being treated well and requested good treatment of the Americans in Japanese hands. The internees also requested a male nurse. The did complain about the slowness of action on their hearings, expressing a desire that speedier action be taken in communicating decisions to release or parole in order that they might join their families in assembly centers. The second complaint was that some Korean interpreters employed by the FBI had not interpreted their answers to questions fairly or correctly and had endeavored to trick them and to deceive the American officers interrogating them. The report also described the camp as being located in a former CCC camp in an attractively wooded valley with lots of shade.^[11]

One of the most notable internees held at Tuna Canyon was Toraichi Kono, Charlie Chaplin's chauffeur and personal secretary until 1934. Kono was picked up before and after the attack of Pearl Harbor and was accused of being a spy for the Japanese military. On his second arrest he was sent to Tuna Canyon Detention Station on December 19, 1941, as was subsequently transferred to detention camps in Fort Missoula, Santa Fe twice, and Kooskia, before finally being reunited with his family at Crystal City. Kono worked in Little Tokyo after the war to help attorneys Wayne Collins and Tetsujiro "Tex" Nakamura on many Nisei and Kibei renunciant cases. Kono went back to Japan to live and continued to assist Wayne Collins with restoring U.S. citizenship to the Nisei and Kibei who had renounced and were stranded in Japan.

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Aftermath

According to Tetsuden Kashima, Tuna Canyon Detention Station closed sometime after September in 1945.^[12]

After the war, the former CCC camp and Tuna Canyon Detention Station became an L.A. County probation school for boys. In 1960 a group of doctors purchased the land and built the Verdugo Hills Golf Course. Though the course is still operating today, the property has been sold to a developer who will be building 229 homes on the site. Tuna Canyon Detention Camp and the former CCC camp were located in the southeastern area of the golf course, where the driving range and overflow parking is located. Lloyd Hitt and the Little Landers Historical Society and Mike Lawler, president of the Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley, have been working to get a historical marker built at the site. Despite their efforts, there is no agreement yet with the developers to do so. Tuna Canyon

Detention Station is not mentioned in the National Park Service's *Japanese Americans in World War II National Historic Landmark Theme Study*.^[13]

Authored by Marie Masumoto

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For More Information

Marlene A. Hitt, and Little Landers Historical Society. *Sunland and Tujunga: From Village to City*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002.

Kashima, Tetsuden. *Judgment Without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

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Footnotes

- ↑ Marlene A. Hitt, and Little Landers Historical Society, *Sunland and Tujunga: From Village to City* (Charleston, SC, Arcadia Publishing, 2002) 9–14.
- ↑ Memorandum Report to W.F. Kelly, Chief Supervisor, United States Border Patrol from M.H. Scott, Officer in charge of Tuna Canyon Detention Station, 5 pages and dated May 25, 1942, p 1. Document copied by Lloyd Hitt and Paul Tsuneishi of the Little Landers Historical Society, <http://www.littlelandershistoricalsociety.org/>, at the National Archives in Laguna Niguel, CA and a copy was donated by Mike Lawler to the Hirasaki National Resource Center.
- ↑ Memorandum Report from M.H. Scott to W.F. Kelly, May 25, 1942, p. 1.
- ↑ Confidential Report On Civilian Detention Camp Tuna Canyon, Tujunga, California, Near Los Angeles, California, May 28, 1942 by Bernard Gufier, Assistant Chief, of the Special Division, Department of State, concerning the visit of the Spanish Consul Francisco de Amat accompanied by M.F. Kelly, Chief Supervisor Border Patrol, copied at the Laguna Niguel National Archives by Lloyd Hitt and Paul Tsuneishi of Little Landers Historical Society, Records RG 59, General Record of State Department, Special War Problems.
- ↑ Tetsuden Kashima, *Judgment Without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 107 and 253n11.
- ↑ "A Friend of the American Way: An Interview with Herbert V. Nicholson," in *Voices Long Silent: An Oral*

Inquiry into the Japanese American Evacuation, edited by Arthur A. Hansen and Betty E. Mitsun (Japanese American Project, The Oral History Program California State University, Fullerton, 1974), 124–26.

7. ↑ *Kashima, Judgment Without Trial*, 3.
8. ↑ Hitt, *Sunland and Tujunga*, 147.
9. ↑ Memorandum Report from M.H. Scott to W.F. Kelly, May 25, 1942, pp. 1 and 3.
10. ↑ "A Friend of the American Way: An Interview with Herbert V. Nicholson."
11. ↑ Confidential Report On Civilian Detention Camp Tuna Canyon, Tujunga, California, Near Los Angeles, California, May 28, 1942 by Bernard Gufier.
12. ↑ *Kashima, Judgment Without Trial*, 123.
13. ↑ Information provided by Mike Lawler president of the Historical Society of Crescenta Valley from articles he has written about Tuna Canyon Detention Center and the future of a historical marker. There is still an ongoing effort to have a historical marker placed there; see <http://www.cvhistory.org/> and www.littlelandershistoricalsociety.org. For information about the theme study for other markers or landmarks, see *Japanese Americans in World War II National Historic Landmark Theme Study*, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, online, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nhl/themes/jats.pdf>.

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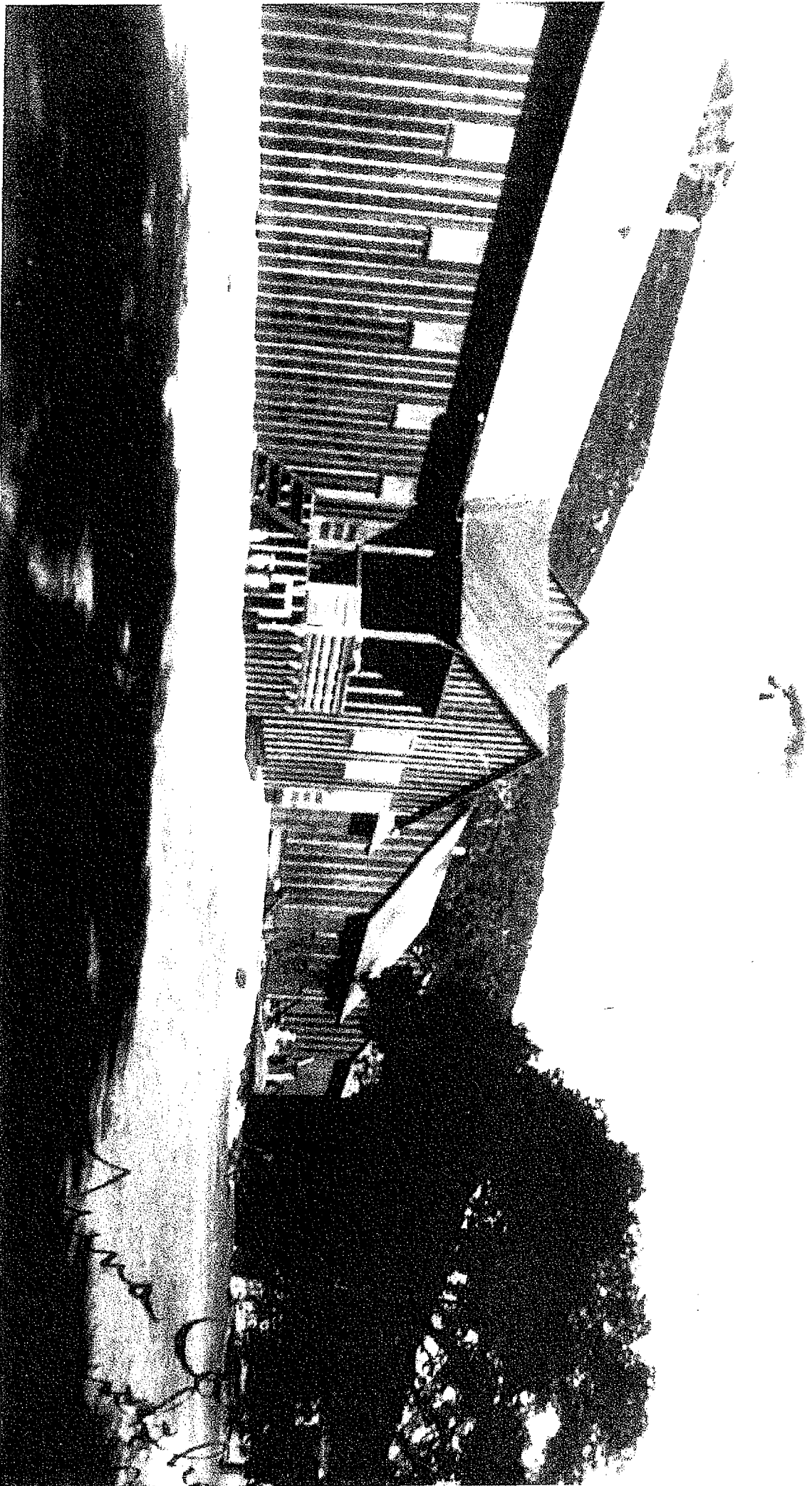
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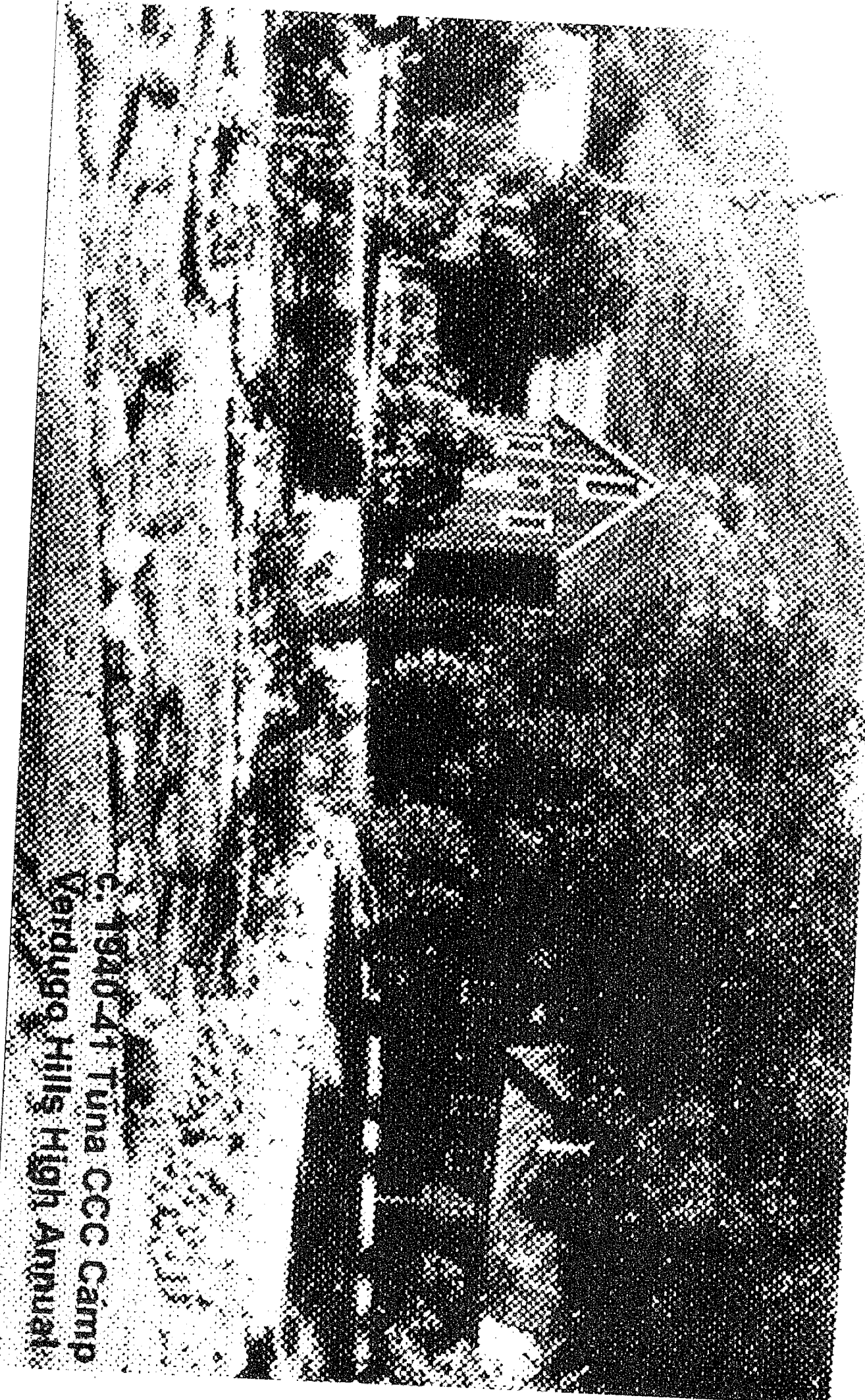
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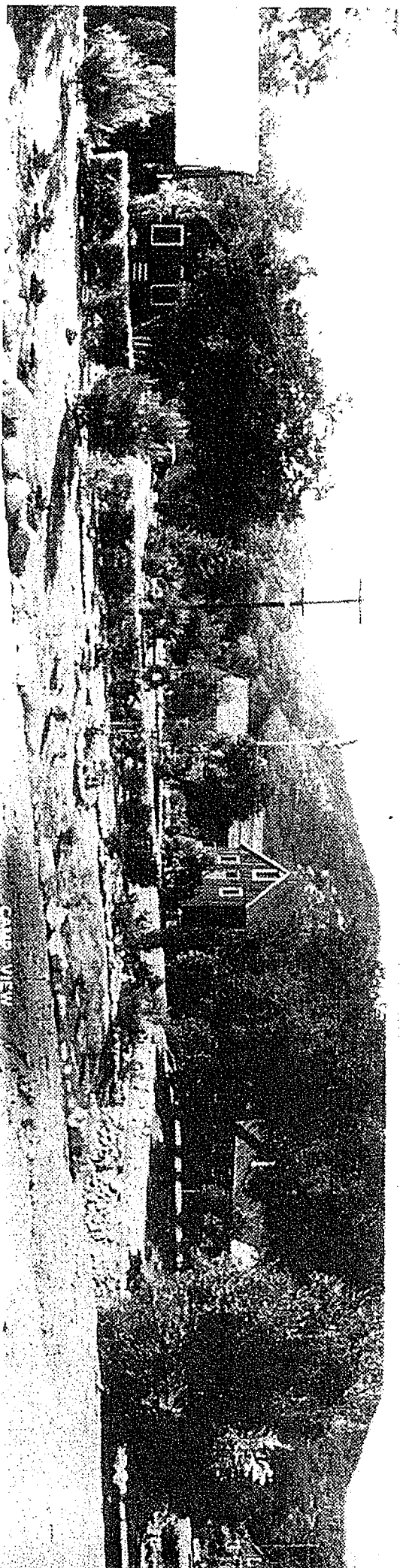
ST. JOHN'S METHODIST



The Tuna C.C.C. Camp 1933

c. 1940-41 Tuna CCC Camp
Vardugo Hills High Annual





Tuna C.C.C. Camp 1933 ~ 1941 ~~~ Tuna Canyon Detention Station 1941 ~ 1943

