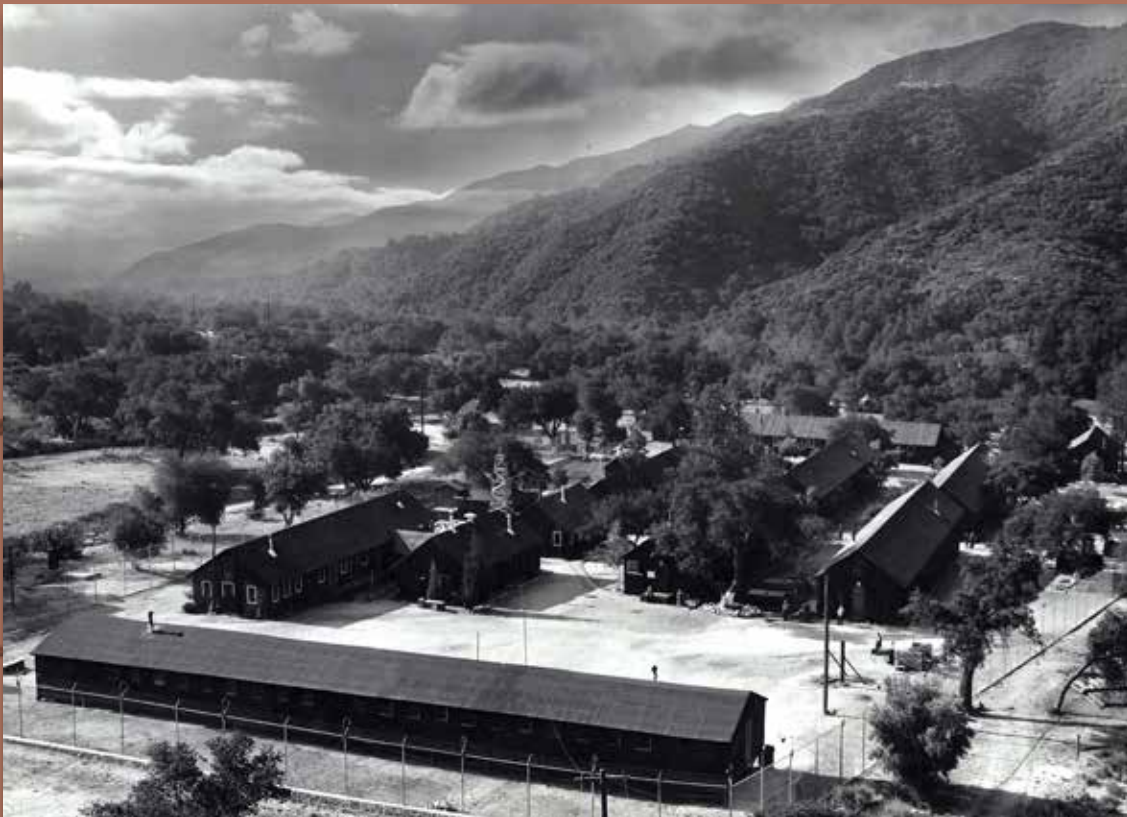


TUNA CANYON DETENTION STATION



Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition

As a society, we often uncover and illuminate dark corners of the American past. This does more than “setting the record straight.” These dark places are part of our collective experience, but how we respond to them is also important. For many, the Tuna Canyon Detention Station initially raises echoes of the wartime mass incarceration of 120,000 individuals of Japanese descent. But Tuna Canyon is actually a window into a different story that begins with deliberate prewar government planning to arrest alleged internal “enemies” from several groups in the name of national security. At its core, this is a frightening tale of labeling individuals as suspects for potential future acts of espionage, sabotage, or terrorism primarily because of nationality and in the absence of specific evidence. Once dark corners are illuminated, we need to go one step further and actively respond to what we learn. This is the meaning of the Tuna Canyon story. It gives us a better understanding of the present and a call to action for the future so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Russell Endo

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This booklet is dedicated to Dr. Lloyd Hitt and Paul Tsuneishi who together shined a light on Tuna Canyon so that we would always remember its story.

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Front cover photo credit: Merrill Scott family



Introduction

This booklet tells the story of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station. Only the oaks remain on the site today. But we tell this story to illustrate the fragility of Constitutional and human rights, and to help ensure that no other groups ever suffer such a loss of liberty and freedom.

The momentous entry of the United States into World War II on December 7, 1941 set many things into motion. One of these was President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, issued on February 19, 1942, authorizing the incarceration of Japanese immigrants (known as Issei) and their American-born children (Nisei) from the West Coast in ten primary War Relocation Authority camps such as Manzanar, Tule Lake, Poston, and Heart Mountain. This event has received considerable attention in recent years.

What is less known is the separate arrest and imprisonment, beginning on December 7, 1941, of thousands of Issei as well as German and Italian immigrant leaders. These actions were authorized by Presidential Proclamations 2525, 2526, and 2527. In Southern California, arrested individuals were initially confined in two main facilities, the Tuna Canyon Detention Station and the San Pedro Detention Station. This booklet is about these little-known arrests and about Tuna Canyon. Knowing about this is important not only for a complete understanding of the injustices of World War II, but also to prevent such events from ever occurring again.

Opposite

Visitors' entrance to the Tuna Canyon Detention Station.

Credit: Merrill Scott family



German immigrants arriving in the U.S. in the late 1800s.

Credit: National Archives

Pre-World War II Background History

Italian and German immigration to the United States began before the Revolutionary War. The Italian population grew steadily from the mid-1700s to the late 1800s. Significant growth in the German population occurred from 1820 to 1880 when they were the largest group of immigrants, numbering over three million.

Between 1880 and 1924, there was a large influx of over four million Italians. This period also saw the arrival of over 2.5 million Germans. During this time, Italians in particular experienced strong economic and social discrimination. During World War I, anti-German animosity led to widespread discrimination, harassment, and violence against German Americans. After America's entry into this war, the U.S. government required all Germans who were not U.S. citizens to register, and it imposed restrictions on this group. Over 6,000 considered to be disloyal and threats to national security were arrested, and of these over 2,000 were imprisoned. The basis for these restrictions, arrests, and confinement was the Alien Enemies Act of 1798.

Before World War II, Japanese immigration to the United States occurred largely between 1880 and 1924. In contrast to the Germans and Italians, the numbers of individuals were much smaller, around 380,000. Also in contrast to these other groups, Issei experienced severe racially-motivated discrimination and acts of violence. They were, for example, not allowed to become naturalized U.S. citizens and many states passed laws preventing them from owning property.

In the post-World War I period, and especially during the 1930s, the governments of Germany, Japan, and Italy began pursuing more aggressive economic and political strategies, which were accompanied by significant increases in their military capabilities. U.S. officials were concerned about this and began developing plans to safeguard the internal security of the United States.

One focus of such plans were the migrants from Japan, Germany, and Italy and what was seen as their potential disloyalty. The government began creating lists of such immigrants who might be arrested in the event of a war. The best known was the custodial detention index created by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Additional lists were also compiled by the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Army's Military Intelligence Division.

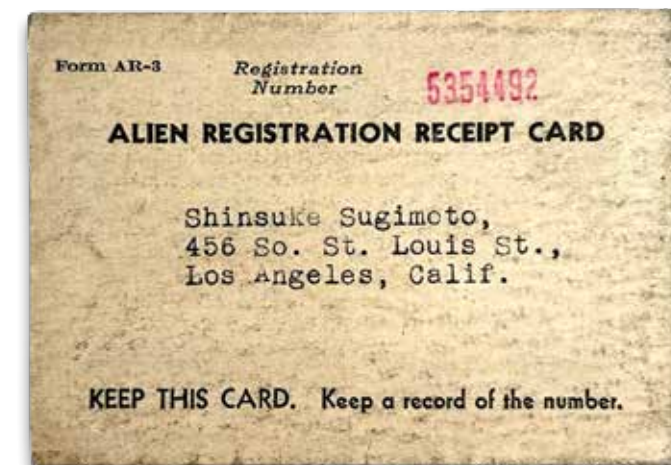
In 1939, the Special Defense Unit was put in charge of evaluating these individuals. Allegedly suspicious Japanese, German, and Italian organizations in America were put into three categories—A, B, and C—with A being the most dangerous. Organization officials and members were then given a corresponding A, B or C classification. These individuals included prominent religious, business, educational, and mass media figures, and other members of organizations sympathetic to or perceived to be directly or indirectly under the control of the Japanese, German, or Italian governments.

However, the FBI continued its surveillance of Japanese, German, and Italian communities and to evaluate individuals on its own. FBI arrest lists included Issei in occupations seen as dangerous, such as fishermen who the FBI feared could monitor U.S. shipping and naval activities and who might aid Imperial Japanese military operations against the U.S. mainland. Later FBI arrest lists included Japanese language school teachers who the FBI thought could be teaching loyalty to Imperial Japan.

After much discussion, various federal agencies agreed on their respective roles in the event of a war. Within the contiguous United States, the FBI would be responsible for making arrests. Individuals would then be detained in Department of Justice camps by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. There they would be given a hearing. Those that the government determined were a threat to national security would be permanently interned in Army camps. In other parts of the U.S., such as Hawai'i and Alaska, the military would be in charge of arrests, hearings, and imprisonment.

Maintaining internal security was the overriding priority, and there was little concern about how such procedures might be abused or lead to human rights violations. The American public was largely unaware of these prewar plans.

In 1940, the U.S. government required all adult non-citizens to register and be fingerprinted. After the start of World War II, in early 1942, all non-citizens from enemy nations had to register.



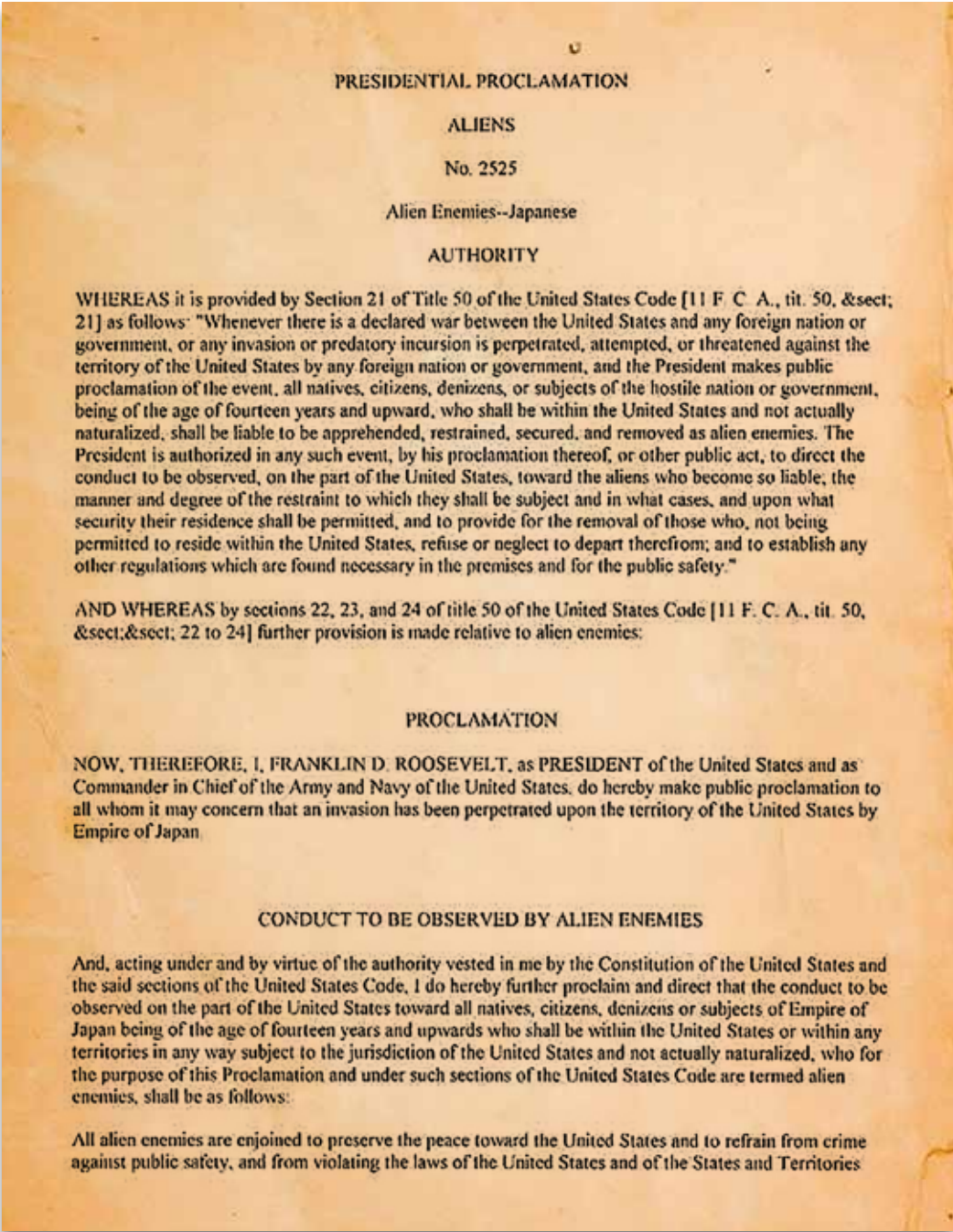
1940 registration of a non-U.S. citizen.

Credit: Sugimoto family



1942 registration of a non-U.S. citizen from an enemy nation.

Credit: Sugimoto family



The first page of Presidential Proclamation 2525

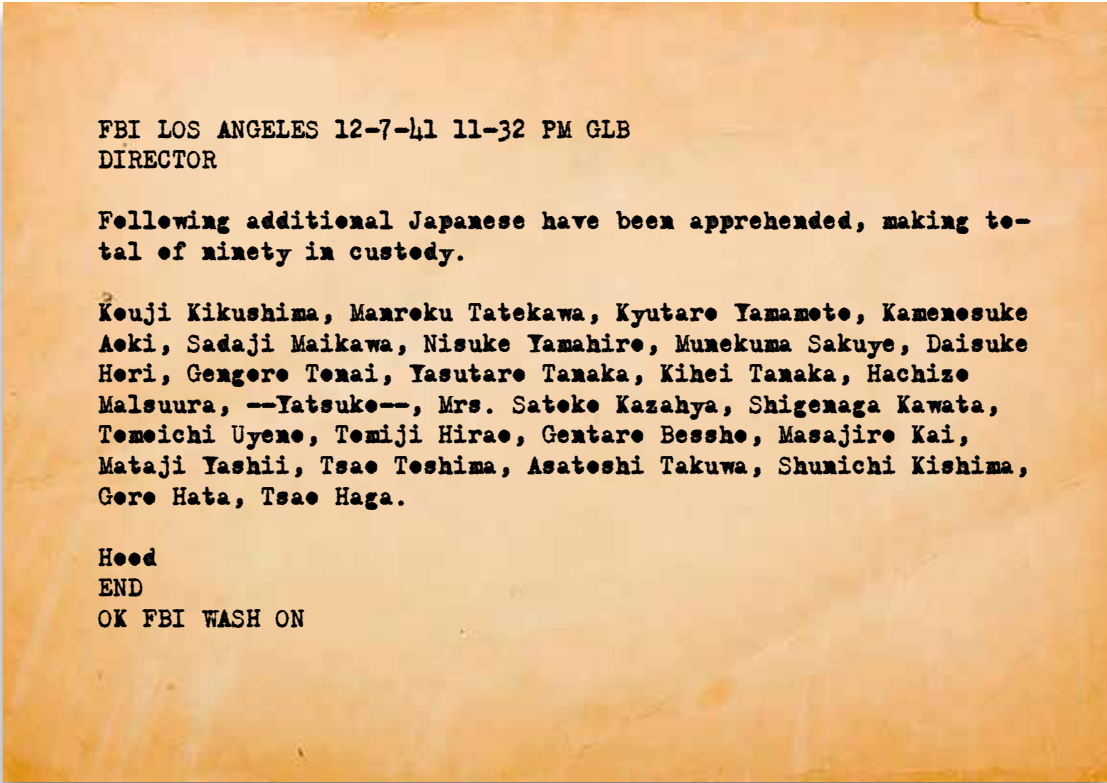
Credit: National Archives

World War II

When World War II began, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Presidential Proclamations 2525, 2526, and 2527. These authorized the government to incarcerate non-citizens, or “enemy aliens,” from Japan, Germany, and Italy suspected of being threats to national security. It also authorized curfews, travel restrictions, and the exclusion of enemy aliens from designated sensitive areas such as ports, airports, railyards, power plants, and military facilities. Possession of items such as firearms, cameras, and shortwave radios was forbidden. The basis for these Presidential Proclamations was the 1798 Alien Enemies Act as amended in 1918.

FBI telegram.

Credit: National Archives





Search of the Palos Verdes home of Tuna Canyon detainee Sannosuke Ino.

Credit: San Francisco Public Library

On the afternoon of December 7, 1941, the FBI began arresting enemy aliens throughout the United States, many but not all of whom were on their prewar custodial detention lists. Arrests were often accompanied by disruptive searches in homes for “incriminating evidence” such as letters, photographs, and books. For families, this was a frightening and traumatic experience.

In the hours following the attack on Pearl Harbor, after authorization by President Roosevelt, Territorial Governor Joseph Poindexter placed Hawai'i under martial law. The detention and internment of enemy aliens in this U.S. territory was handled by the military.

Among the notable early actions in Southern California was the arrest of over 100 Issei fishermen entering or leaving Los Angeles and San Diego harbors. The California Highway Patrol set up roadblocks to search cars driven by Japanese. Arrests and other actions by the government made Japanese, German, and Italian communities feel threatened and had a chilling effect on their activities.

Japanese aliens in custody at the Los Angeles County Jail, December 1941.

Credit: Dr X's Free Association



February 1942 arrests of Issei fishermen on Terminal Island..

Credit: AP Photo/Ira W. Guldner

In Southern California, the San Pedro Detention Station was to confine most of the initially arrested enemy aliens, but their numbers were more than anticipated. Therefore some were temporarily held in space rented in the adjacent Terminal Island Correctional Institution while others were temporarily held in county jails, notably in the Los Angeles County Jail. Work was also begun to quickly convert a former Civilian Conservation Corps camp into the Tuna Canyon Detention Station.



FBI agents and other law enforcement officials arresting Japanese aliens in December 1941.

Credit: Los Angeles Daily News negatives collection, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA

All Issei arrested in Southern California were to have hearings in Los Angeles. But General John DeWitt of the Western Command wanted enemy aliens, especially Issei, moved away from the West Coast, which DeWitt considered a likely target for an Imperial Japanese attack. So most Issei detainees were transferred to detention facilities in the interior, such as Fort Missoula in Montana and Fort Lincoln in North Dakota. Except for a small number of individuals deemed to be especially high security risks, Germans and Italians arrested in Southern California had hearings in Los Angeles.

Arrests of Japanese men on Terminal Island in February 1942.

Credit: Los Angeles Herald Examiner



In Southern California, mass arrests of Issei were often made in a specific city or region, but some targeted groups such as religious leaders and Japanese language school teachers. Arrests of all enemy aliens continued throughout the war but at a slower pace after the spring of 1942.

By the end of the war, approximately 2,500 enemy aliens had been arrested in Southern California as a result of Presidential Proclamations 2525, 2526, and 2527, including 2,100 Japanese, 200 Germans, and 140 Italians. Throughout the entire United States, around 31,000 enemy aliens had been confined at some point by the Department of Justice.

Most of the arrested enemy aliens were men. They left behind wives and children who suddenly had to fend for themselves. These arrests removed almost all of the senior leaders of Japanese communities leaving the remaining individuals more vulnerable to increasing anti-Japanese racism.

Outside of the United States, President Roosevelt's administration was concerned about Axis influence and infiltration of the substantial German, Japanese, and Italian populations in Latin America and the possible military, political, and economic threats this might pose. During the war and after negotiations with Latin American governments, about 6,600 men, women, and children of Japanese descent from eighteen Latin American countries were sent to enemy alien internment camps in the United States. Many were forced to be part of exchanges with Axis nations for the American civilians they held in captivity.

POLICE AID FBI IN GIGANTIC ROUNDUP

A gigantic roundup designed to net 500 Japanese aliens was sprung suddenly and wittily just before dawn today on Terminal Island, vital naval center in Los Angeles harbor.

More than 150 G-men, police detectives and deputy sheriffs in plainclothes, moving with careful co-ordination and timing, swarmed onto the long island armed with "presidential warrants" from Washington, D. C., and began taking the Japanese fishermen and cannery workers into custody from their homes clustered about Fish Harbor.

The alien Japanese will be held under the presidential warrants pending hearings before enemy-alien boards, according to J. W. Vincent, assistant chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who was in charge of the drive.

Later, he said, those aliens whom the boards do not release will be given "an opportunity to decide between leaving the country and being interned for the duration."

The aliens were booked as "en route to the Immigration Office." Vincent said this latest and most dramatic move to combat the danger of Fifth-Column sabotage and espionage was "the result of carefully planned and well-thought-out program."

As the roundup got rapidly under way, the drawbridge to the island was raised to prevent escape to the mainland of any of the aliens scheduled to be taken into custody.

Tension and drama marked the drive on Terminal Island, site of the vital naval air base in Los Angeles harbor.

(Continued on Page 5, Column 6)

cluding its seaplane landing, and location of an Edison Co. power plant and numerous shipping docks. Approximately 2100 Japanese live on the island, about 800 of them aliens. Nearly all the Japanese are either cannery workers or members of the Japanese fishing fleet, and a public rumor often has had it that Japanese naval officers in innocent disguise were members of that fleet.

In today's raids an F. B. I. agent would rap on the door of a fisherman's tiny house accompanied by two other officers, either police detectives or sheriff's deputies. Asking for the person named in their warrant, they would walk inside, wait until he had dressed, bring him out and put him in an automobile.

WEEPING WIFE

A Mrs. Saito leaned out the door of her cottage and wept loudly as her husband was led away, not knowing where he was being taken or when he would return. The scene was typical as families were separated by wartime's harsh precautions.

One door was opened by a tiny youngster in response to the knock of officers, who asked, "Where's papa?"

"He's asleep," said the child. "That's all right, we'll come in," said the officers, entering as they spoke.

The officers awakened their man and waited while he ate breakfast.

Los Angeles Herald Examiner
February 2, 1942

Credit: Los Angeles Herald Examiner

OMINOUS ATMOSPHERE

Officers about to undertake the roundup stood in knots on street corners, and Japanese youngsters walking to school looked them over apprehensively, knowing something ominous was in the air.

The tiny wooden homes of the Japanese are so crowded together there is barely room to walk between on the narrow brick alleyways in some sectors. The structures have their backs to the streets and their fronts face together across the narrow passageways.

Seeing a man who might be a Japanese alien on the street, officers would tell him to go home and wait. As the raids progressed, American fishermen nearby went calmly ahead cleaning their nets.

Only men were taken into custody, and Japanese women and children were told to remain in their homes.

The roundup apparently was the government's answer to the question—"What's to be done about Terminal Island?"—which has arisen since enemy aliens last week were ordered ousted from 13 "prohibitive zones," not, however, including Terminal Island.

CAREFULLY PLANNED

The move was carried out with precise teamwork and careful, secret preparation by the street-ing officers.

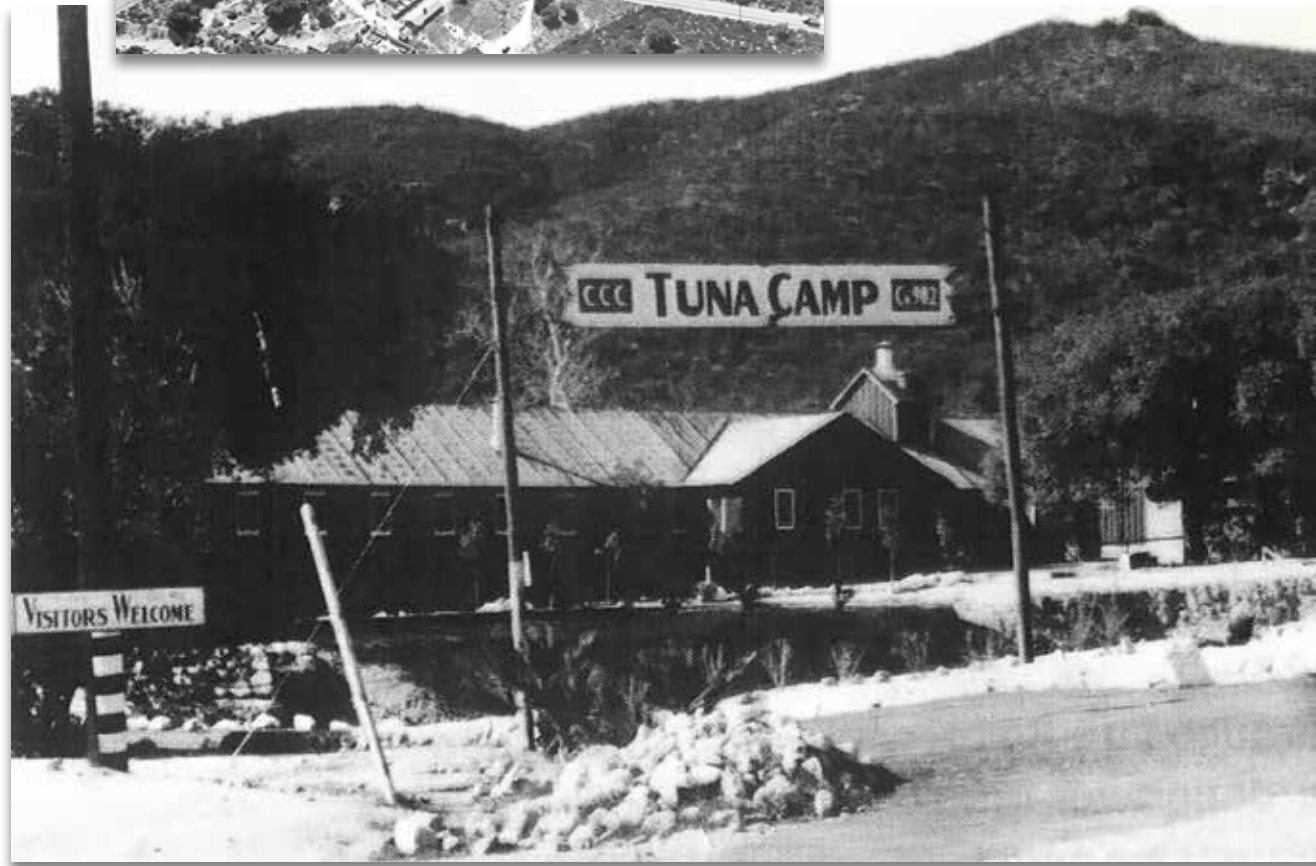
Police and sheriff's deputies were called in to aid in the roundup by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Ninety police detectives met at their Los Angeles City Hall headquarters before dawn and, commanded by Inspector Bruce Clark and Capt. Vern Rasmussen, were dispatched, two to a radio car, to Terminal Island.



1950 Photo of Los Angeles Probation Camp (the former Tuna Canyon Detention Station)

Credit: Los Angeles Historical Aerials



Tuna Canyon Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, circa 1934

Credit: Little Landers Historical Society at Bolton Hall Museum

Tuna Canyon Detention Station

The Tuna Canyon Detention Station was located within the City of Los Angeles, in Tujunga, about fourteen miles northwest of the Los Angeles City Hall. Before World War II, plans were made to imprison enemy aliens from Southern California in San Pedro. A search was conducted for a second site. Several places in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties were considered. Just before the war, an unused Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Tujunga was selected.



Tuna Canyon Detention Station vehicle entrance

Credit: Merrill Scott family

Hours after the Pearl Harbor attack, this camp was turned over to the Department of Justice. Work was quickly done to turn the camp into a detention facility. A ten foot fence topped with barbed wire was erected around the main buildings along with guard towers and floodlights. A lookout tower was built on a nearby hillside. The camp had six barracks for detainees, a mess hall and kitchen, a recreation building, an office building, and a small infirmary.

Tuna Canyon could hold up to 250-300 prisoners. Immigration and Naturalization Service Border Patrol officers were assigned to Tuna Canyon as guards and Merrill Scott was designated as the Officer-in-Charge. On December 16, 1941, Tuna Canyon received its first prisoners, Issei transferred from the San Pedro Detention Station. In the spring of 1942, Tuna Canyon began to receive Germans and Italians.



The guard control room at Tuna Canyon Detention Station

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*

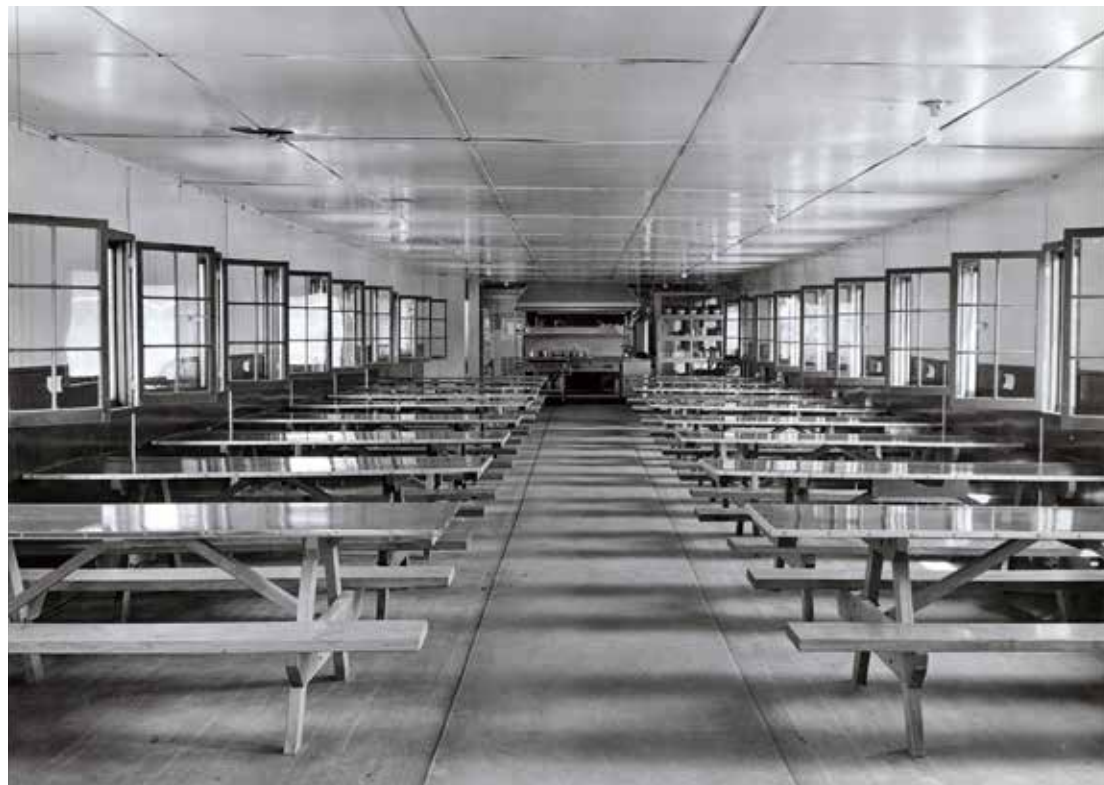
Looking north with barracks on the right, guard tower on the left, and watchtower on the hill.

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*



Merrill Scott was an experienced Border Patrol officer who was familiar with Japanese communities in the Los Angeles area from his tenure at the San Pedro Immigration Station. He understood his responsibilities in running a confinement site but also the difficult circumstances faced by arrested Issei (and later Germans and Italians), and he wanted to deal with them in a respectful manner.

Scott welcomed detainee input from barrack representatives. Detainees were allowed to supply their own cooks and took care of serving food and cleaning the mess hall. Scott ordered traditional ethnic food supplies for his Japanese and German detainees.



The mess hall
at Tuna Canyon
Detention
Station

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*

Detainees were allowed to organize recreational activities such as ping-pong, horseshoes, and baseball, and to grow vegetables in a garden for the camp's kitchen. The recreation building had a library and was used to show movies, for language classes, and to hold services conducted by detainee religious leaders. A shop was set up for detainees interested in woodworking projects. Despite such activities, detainees were always aware of the injustice of their imprisonment, and they constantly worried about the welfare of their families.

Most Issei detainees were at Tuna Canyon for a few weeks until they could be transferred to inland confinement sites. German and Italian internees were often at Tuna Canyon longer until they had hearings in Los Angeles and were either transferred to Army internment camps or paroled or released.

Tuna Canyon's visitation procedures were constantly changing to reflect the numbers of family members who came to Tuna Canyon. The amount of time families were allowed to see detainees ranged from a half hour or more to as little as a few minutes per person. At one point, Wednesdays and Sundays were the designated visitation days, and visitors were required to stand outside the perimeter fence. Articles that were to be given to detainees had to be searched beforehand. There was a requirement that only English could be spoken. Most Issei could only speak a little English, so communicating was often very difficult.

On one occasion, in February 1942, the number of arrested Issei exceeded the capacities of the Tuna Canyon and San Pedro Detention Stations. It was necessary to create a temporary Tuna Canyon substation, under the supervision of Merrill Scott, at the Army internment camp at Griffith Park. Most of the Issei held at this substation were from Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Visitors
waiting at the
Tuna Canyon
Detention
Station.

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*





Recreation building on the left, infirmary in the distance, barracks on the right.

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*



Cooking area of kitchen

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*

The barracks at Tuna Canyon Detention Station

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*



Exterior of the mess hall.

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*





Japanese
Peruvians in the
Panama Canal
Zone.

*Credit: National
Japanese American
Historical Society.*

In early 1943, 184 Japanese immigrant men from Peru arrived at Tuna Canyon for a few days before being sent to the Kenedy, TX internment camp. These men had been arrested by Peruvian authorities with the guidance of U.S. officials. They were initially sent to a transit camp in the U.S.-controlled Panama Canal Zone and then put on a ship bound for Los Angeles Harbor. During this voyage, their Peruvian passports were confiscated. After their arrival in Los Angeles, they were charged with illegal entry into the U.S., given a perfunctory hearing, and then sent by truck to Tuna Canyon.

The last detainees left the Tuna Canyon Detention Station on October 30, 1943. By that time, over 2,000 prisoners had passed through its gates.

After the war, the Tuna Canyon site was converted into a reform school for boys operated by Los Angeles County. In 1959, a group of doctors purchased the land and created the Verdugo Hills Golf Course, which opened in 1960. In 2004, the property was sold to a group of investors. These investors and their successors intended to construct commercial and/or residential buildings on the site.

In 2006, Dr. Lloyd Hitt and Paul Tsuneishi began examining World War II enemy alien documents newly released by the National Archives at Laguna Niguel, California (now located near Riverside). Thus, they began the journey to preserve the Tuna Canyon Detention Station's history.

The owners of the land, who eventually had planned a very large housing development on the property, held community meetings and circulated drafts of an environmental impact report. At this time, community members and organizations became involved in learning about the history of the site and became concerned about the impacts of the proposed development. It was during this time that the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition was formed.

In response to community concerns, the Los Angeles City Council, on June 25, 2013, unanimously passed a motion introduced by Councilman Richard Alarcon to designate an approximately one-acre site on the Tuna Canyon property as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument 1039.

Tuna Canyon Biographies

The following are a few short biographies of those detained at, or associated with, the Tuna Canyon Detention Station.

Kishiro Hayashi

Peruvian Immigrant From Japan, Manager
Tuna Canyon Detainee

Kishiro Hayashi, circa 1995

Credit: Grace Shimizu

Twenty-five-year-old Kishiro Hayashi was arrested because, as a factory and store manager, his name was on a Peruvian government blacklist. He and over a hundred Japanese men were taken from jail and driven by truck out of the city of Lima. With his destination and fate unknown and separated from his pregnant wife, Mr. Hayashi stated in a 1995 oral history interview:

“I have no word to describe this utterly cruel treatment.”

Three days later, they arrived at a harbor. Mr. Hayashi recalled,

“American soldiers with bayonets urged us to move...to the ship as if we were some animals....The military cargo ship set sail to Panama. Finally, it was clear that we were not going to be sent to the remote area in Peru, but were being sent to [the] U.S.”



Heigoro Endo

Issei, Fisherman
Tuna Canyon Detainee

Heigoro Endo, circa 1920

Credit: Endo Family

Issei made major contributions to the growth of the large California fishing industry. Heigoro Endo was part of this story. He was 15 when he left Shizuoka-ken in 1900 and came to the United States. After a succession of jobs, he worked on fishing boats sailing from Terminal Island and then as the captain of his own tuna boat based at Wilmington. Later, he started a pioneering sportfishing business at White Point, San Pedro.

In addition to being a fisherman, Heigoro faced additional suspicions because of his affiliation with the Compton Gakuen, a well-known Japanese language school.

On March 30, 1942, Heigoro's family was given an order by the Army to leave their home within six days as part of the mass incarceration of West Coast Japanese. But two days later, he was suddenly arrested by the FBI without a warrant and detained at the Tuna Canyon Detention Station.

At his hearing, Heigoro was not allowed to have legal counsel. The government made numerous false accusations about his complicity with the enemy – he was presumed to be guilty unless he could prove his innocence. Other arrested enemy aliens had similar experiences. Heigoro was later incarcerated with his family at Jerome under Executive Order 9066.”



Cesare Grimaldi

Italian Immigrant, Assistant to Movie Director
Tuna Canyon Detainee

Cesare Grimaldi in a 1942 Army internment mugshot
Credit: National Archives at College Park



When Cesare Rene Grimaldi was 25, he left his native Rome and emigrated to the United States. The year was 1928, and Benito Mussolini's tyranny was growing.

College-educated with an ability to speak Italian, English, Spanish, and French, Grimaldi was admitted to the United States legally under an immigration quota and secured a position with the Italian consulate.

While working for the consulate in Los Angeles, he met California-born Corrinne Ross Harris. They were married on July 26, 1938, and three years later they had a son who they named Gian. Attracted by the emerging Hollywood film industry, Cesare left the consulate and found work as a personal assistant to a movie director.

On December 8, 1941, FBI agents arrested Grimaldi, leaving his wife, Corinne, and six-month-old son to fend for themselves.

Transferred from one confinement site to another, Grimaldi wound up at the Tuna Canyon Detention Station on May 26, 1943. By the time he was released in October 1943, he had spent almost two years in confinement.

Dr. Eugen Banzhaf

German Immigrant, Businessman
Tuna Canyon Detainee

Dr. Eugen Banzhaf in 1941
Credit: Dr. Sigrid Banzhaf Toye



In 1927, Dr. Eugen Banzhaf, a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering, came to America from Germany as a sales representative for a German company. Two years later, his fiancée, Emmy Ahrend, arrived and they were married. They made their home in Los Angeles where their only child, a daughter, was born. The couple had applied for U.S. Citizenship and were awaiting a date.

On the night of December 7, 1941, to the sound of screaming air-raid sirens, Eugen was apprehended at his home by the FBI. There was no explanation given as to where he would be taken. His whereabouts were not announced for a tension-filled three weeks. Eugen's arrest left his wife and four-year-old daughter without any means of support as the government froze all of his business and bank accounts. Emmy found it impossible to find work as no one would hire a "Nazi-German" – a term used to refer to individuals of German descent. Fear gripped the population that such persons could be potential saboteurs – spitting on a German was even considered a patriotic gesture. The psychological ramifications of Emmy's experiences were extensive and included occasional hospitalizations. As a result, she was forced to abandon her daughter housing her with strangers during her time in the "sanitarium."

Fritz Caspari

German Immigrant, Scholar
Tuna Canyon Detainee

Fritz Caspari

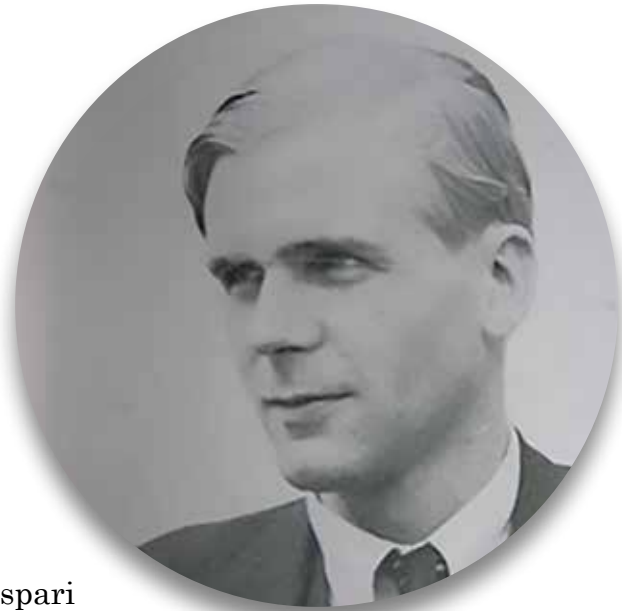
Credit: Caspari family

In 1932, Fritz Caspari was one of only two students from Germany to win a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University. A strong opponent of Hitler, Caspari spent the war years in what he called “voluntary political exile” in the U.S. where he taught German and history at Scripps College in Southern California.

The day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Caspari was arrested with the charge against him summarized as “German sympathies.” Detained at San Pedro, he was released in February of 1942 but arrested again later that year in September and detained at Tuna Canyon.

At Tuna Canyon, Fritz became the mess officer and tried to ensure that all the detainees could obtain decent food in line with their cultural preferences.

Released without parole in January of 1943, Caspari lost his teaching job for the duration of the war, becoming a librarian and subsequently teaching at the University of Chicago. He returned to Germany in 1954 to work in the German Foreign Service. He served as a Counsellor at the German Embassy in London, then as Deputy Chief of the German Mission to the United Nations, foreign policy advisor to the President of Germany and later as the German Ambassador to Portugal. Knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1972, he is remembered as Professor Sir Fritz Caspari.

**Nikuma Tanoue**

Issei, Truck Farmer
Tuna Canyon Detainee

Nikuma Tanoue

Credit: Los Angeles Public Library, Herald Examiner Collection

Nikuma Tanoue was born in 1886 in Kumamoto-ken. He came to America in 1903 and worked as a farmer, eventually settling in Torrance, California. He married Momoe Uemura and they had six children. Nikuma was apprehended on February 21, 1942 as part of an FBI mass arrest of kendo instructors. The next day, he was sent to Tuna Canyon. On March 4, he had a hearing. There it was decided to parole Nikuma partly because, as an indication of loyalty, he said he was willing to fight for the U.S. against Japan. Nikuma was later incarcerated at Jerome and Rohwer under Executive Order 9066.

Nikuma’s oldest son, Ted, was inducted into the U.S. Army the night before Nikuma’s arrest. Ted was an honor student in high school, a lettered athlete in two sports, and was class president in his sophomore year. He joined the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and he died fighting for his country on Hill 140 near the Arno River in Italy. Nikuma learned of Ted’s heroism and death from within the guarded and barbed wire fences at Rohwer. For his bravery, Ted was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.



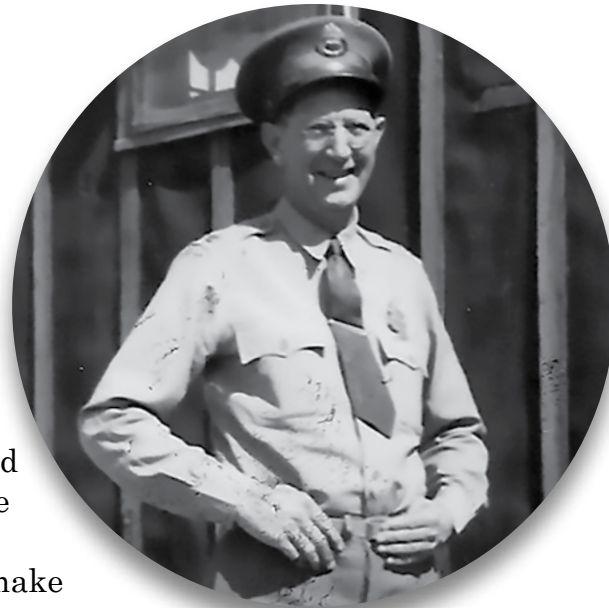
Illustration of Technical Sergeant Ted Tanoue

Credit: Fallen Heroes Project

Merrill Scott
U.S. Border Patrol Officer
 Tuna Canyon Officer-in-Charge

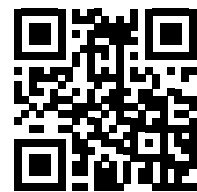
Merrill Scott

Credit: Merrill Scott Family

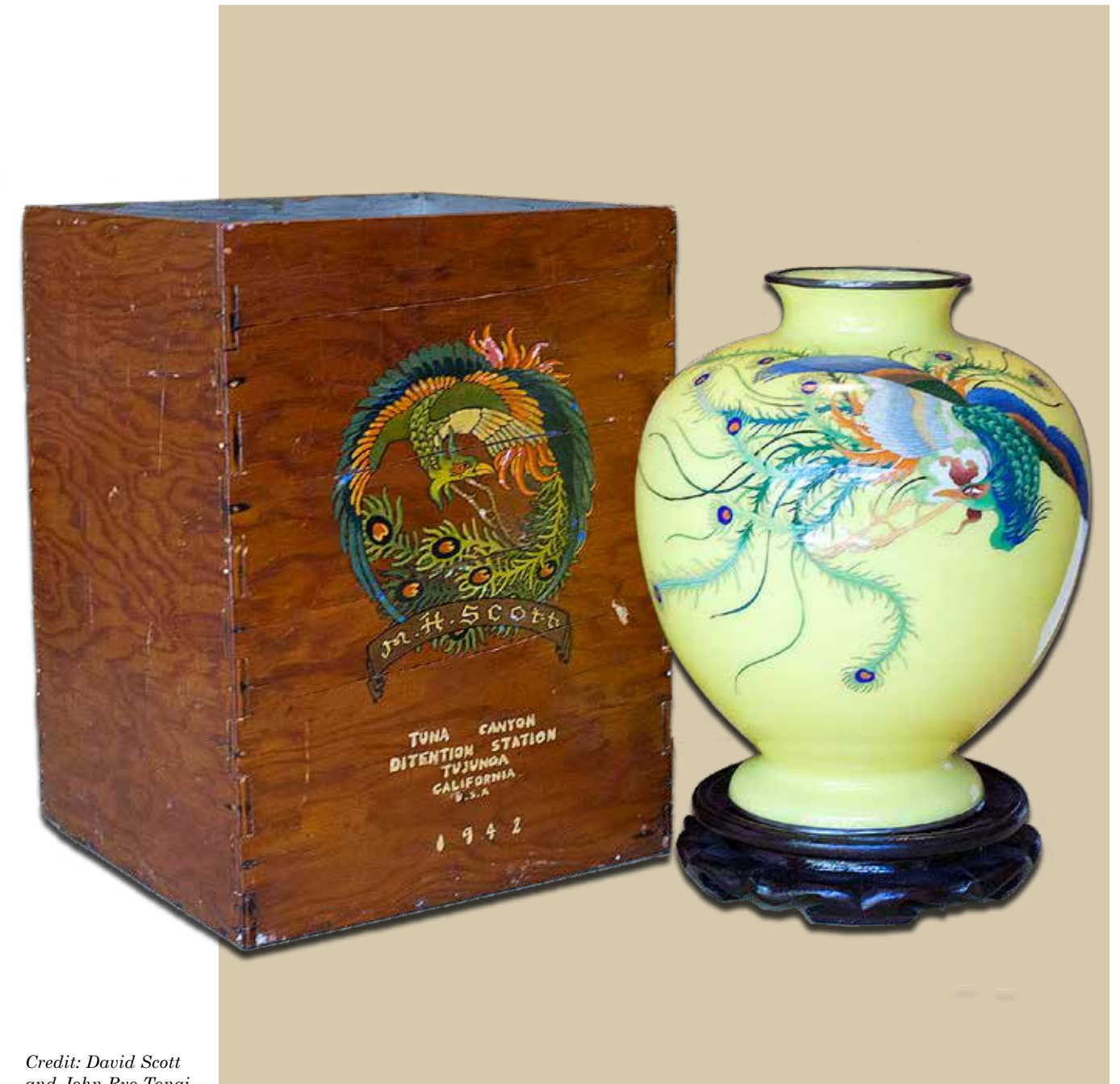


In December of 1941, Merrill Scott was appointed Officer-in-Charge of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station. He oversaw the conversion of the Civilian Conservation Corps camp to a detention facility. Scott showed a deep respect and understanding for the prisoners in his care. While always mindful of his duties and responsibilities, he was kind and fair and went out of his way to make things easier. He told his friend Reverend Herbert Nicholson, a visiting Quaker minister who was a missionary in Japan, that if it were up to him, he would let the prisoners go home to take care of their affairs. He knew they would be back by nightfall. All of this was reported by Reverend Nicholson.

The inmates gave the vase in a handmade case shown opposite to thank Merrill Scott for his fairness.



For more complete stories and other detainee biographies, please scan this QR code to visit the Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition website.



*Credit: David Scott
 and John Ryo Tonai*

Personal Reflections of Tuna Canyon Detainees

Diary Entries

Reverend Daisho Tana

Reverend Tana with his family, ca. 1955

Credit: Akira Tana

Daisho Tana was a Shin Buddhist minister who was separated from his wife and two sons during the war. He wrote a diary in Japanese from December 7, 1941 to March 26, 1946. Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams translated Tana's thoughts, as recorded in his diary while at Tuna Canyon, that describe the anguish he felt. These diary excerpts reflect camp policies in effect during Daisho Tana's detention. However, it should be noted that such policies did change over time.

Rev. Daisho Tana was first detained at Tuna Canyon and then interned at Lordsburg and Santa Fe, New Mexico.



I woke up in the CCC temporary internment camp in Tujunga, located on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Rain last night turned into snow on the mountains. Woke up at 6:00 A.M. At 6:45 A.M. guard inspection, 7:00 A.M. breakfast and room cleaning, 11:45 A.M., guard inspection. At noon lunch, 4:15 P.M. guard inspection, 5:00 P.M. dinner, 8:30 P.M., guard inspection, and 10:00 P.M. lights out. Living in this collective and ordered environment made me think of regimented military life... Being cut off from the outside is the most painful thing about being in camp.

Visitors came starting at 1:00 P.M. Visitors are permitted on Sundays and Wednesdays. Many family members were particularly excited because today was the first Sunday since we were detained..... After the brief 30-minute visit, detainees near the fence and their families in a bicycle parking lot waved to each other, all in tears. How could one communicate through a grate during the 30-minute visit? A fellow internee who could speak English was required to be present to translate if one could only speak Japanese. Prisoners and families could only touch their fingers through the grate. I can only imagine how these families felt, seeing their husbands or fathers in prison. Many detainees did not sleep that night after lights out. Letting them see their families in this unsatisfactory way is not necessarily kindness.

Shuichi Sasaki

Shuichi Sasaki was a respected poet, teacher, and journalist writing under the name of “Sasabune Sasaki.” In December 1941, he was detained at Tuna Canyon. Because Sasaki was bilingual, he was given many responsibilities at Tuna Canyon including translating for Officer-in-Charge Merrill Scott, coordinating dining hall workers and cooks, circulating information to detainees, and acting as an interpreter for visitors. He kept a detailed diary of his wartime experiences which was published in 1950, as Yokuryujo Seikatsuki (Living Conditions in an Internment Camp). The following are four selections translated by Yoko Mansfield.

There were large oak trees on the grounds here and there. Young olive trees and trees that looked like Japanese popular were also planted. The grounds were pebbly sandy soil in a gentle slope higher on the north side. The area in front of the office was already nicely leveled.

One thing was clear to us from the words of most of the visitors that day: since all the important leadership figures were taken away from Japanese communities, many people who were left did not know what to do. To make matters worse, there were groundless rumors spreading, and everyone out there was just utterly bewildered.

The small pond near the front gate was cleaned up and our request of putting some goldfish in it was approved. Two sets of barber tools had been purchased for us and our haircuts had been done by Mr. Naokichi Namekawa and Mr. Yoshimura. As for the food, in addition to miso and soy sauce, even Kyushu-zuke was stocked....The roll calls were revised to four times a day. We stood in a double line in the front yard before every meal, and there was another roll call at night.

Today is Christmas....One of the guards came and said to me, “Mr. Sasaki, Inspector Scott wants to see you. Will you come right away?” I got dressed in a hurry and went to the office. Mr. Scott said with an expression of true sympathy, “You will be transferred today. Please inform the people and have them get ready”..... I started to leave the office. Mr. Scott called and stopped me. “Please wait. I want to tell you how much I appreciate your work here. I am very pleased that we have been without troubles and this camp has been tidied up inside and out. Please send my regards to the people.”

Personal Reflections of Tuna Canyon Detainees

Poetry / Haiku

Tomoe Tana

Born in Hokkaido in 1913, Tomoe Tana emigrated to the U.S. after marrying Daisho Tana. During the tumultuous World War II period, Tomoe became separated from her husband when the two were sent to different camps. After the war, Tomoe became a U.S. citizen and received a master's degree from San Jose State University while pursuing her interest in tanka poetry. In 1949, she won Japan's Imperial Poetry contest, eventually emerging as an internationally recognized tanka poet and a leading proponent of the art form.

The following is an English translation of an excerpt of a poem written by Tomoe Tana to her husband while he was at the Tuna Canyon Detention Station in March 1942.

*Open my eyes and there is the face of my husband,
close them and I still see him, he is mine.
Give me a cloak and wings also,
and I will visit where my husband sleeps.
Trying hard to keep my heart strong in vain,
night and day the desires of a wife never cease.
Waking up at night, thinking that the eyes of my husband are close, but in vain.*

Credit: Akira Tana. Translation by Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams.

Personal Reflections of Tuna Canyon Detainees

Letters Home

Kenzo Sugino, in a letter to his wife, Chica

We used to have so much freedom and [have been] living in this country so long that we never felt we are foreigner[s] until this war start[ed] and upset everything when we are called enemy alien[s]....Now I am living as an enemy alien....

Credit: Japanese American National Museum



View of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station from the public road east of the camp.

Credit: Merrill Scott family

Personal Reflections of Tuna Canyon Detainees

Letters Home

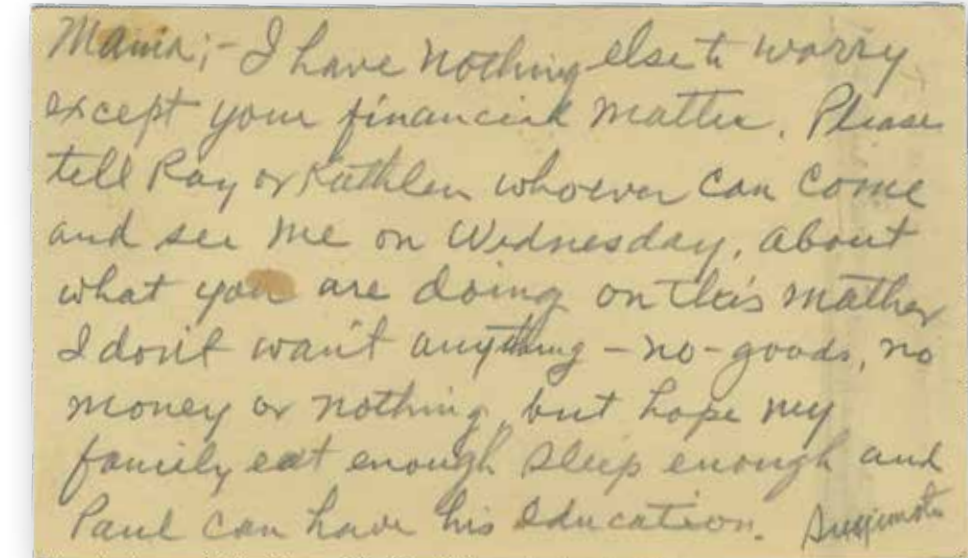
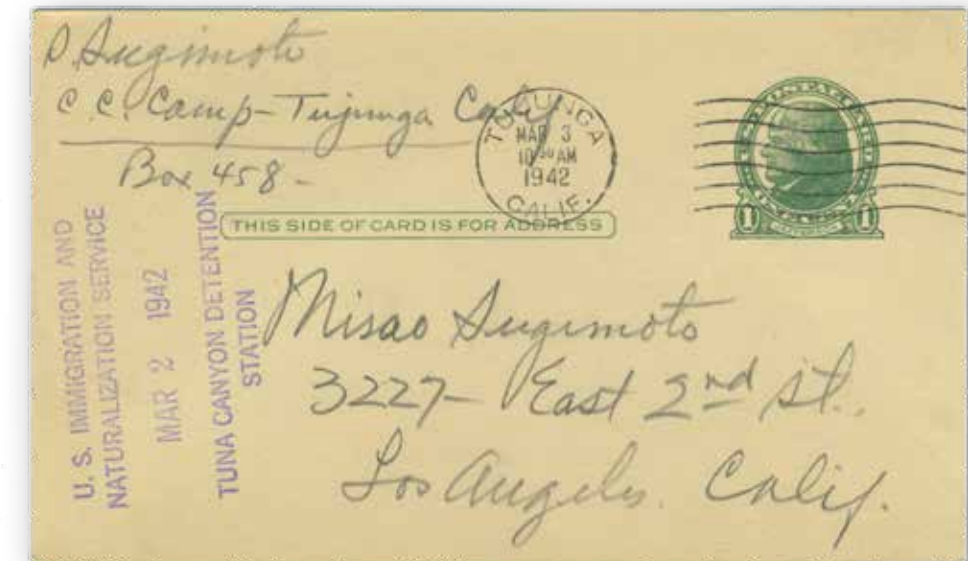
Shinsuke “Sam” Sugimoto, in a message to his family.

*Take care of everybody, avoid quarrels, live without worry,
not to think so deep, live like a happy family.*



Shinsuke and
Misao Sugimoto
at Hoover Dam,
1941

Credit:
Sugimoto Family



Postcard from Shinsuke to Misao Sugimoto from the Tuna Canyon Detention Station, stamped March 2, prior to his being moved to the Santa Fe detention facility.

Credit: Sugimoto Family

Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition

The Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition was incorporated in 2014 as a nonprofit corporation. Its mission is to illuminate the U.S. government's World War II incarceration of Japanese, German, and Italian immigrants and others at the Tuna Canyon Detention Station and to promote social justice and equity so that such injustice is never again experienced by any group.

In 2015, the Coalition received a National Park Service Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant to build a traveling exhibit that tells the story of Tuna Canyon. Dr. Kanji Sahara was the project director. The exhibit consists of 36 informational panels and a diorama of the camp.

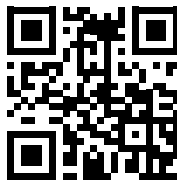
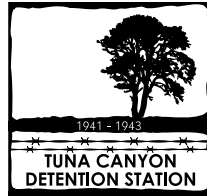
The Coalition's educational outreach includes the showing of the traveling exhibit at various venues. Such events are accompanied by presentations. Outreach also includes talks at schools, conferences, and before civic groups.

The Coalition holds an annual Marc Stirdivant Scholarship for Justice contest for high school students to further its mission's education goal.

The Coalition has compiled a list of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station detainees.

Also funded by a JACS grant, the Coalition (led by June Aochi Berk and Dr. Russell Endo), with assistance from the Japanese American National Museum Watase Media Center, conducted and recorded more than 50 interviews with descendants of Tuna Canyon detainees.

The Coalition has a website where there is more information on Tuna Canyon history, its detainees, and a proposed park plan for the site. Go to **www.tunacanyon.org** or use this QR code.



Future Goals

As of this date, the Coalition intends to install a plaque on the site of the Los Angeles City's Historic-Cultural Monument No. 1039.

ONLY THE OAKS REMAIN

The beauty of this oak grove belies a tragic history. At the beginning of World War II, the U.S. Department of Justice turned Civilian Conservation Corps Camp P-223 into the Tuna Canyon Detention Station by enclosing it with barbed wire and posting armed guards.

From December 1941 to October 1943, Japanese, German, and Italian immigrants, Japanese taken from Peru, and others were imprisoned here in violation of their civil liberties.

On June 25, 2013, the Los Angeles City Council designated this site as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

The oaks, as witnesses to history, compel us to learn from our nation's mistakes and stand strong against prejudice, wartime hysteria, and injustice.

An unfinished piece of business for the Coalition is to construct a memorial at the actual site of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station in Tujunga, a community that is part of the City of Los Angeles. When we begin the construction, we will want to again ask for support from our generous friends.

The story of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station is the story of the fragility of Constitutional and human rights. Through a permanent memorial and other work, we will continue to tell this story to help ensure that no other groups ever suffer such a loss of liberty and freedom.

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and edited by Vanessa Gomez.

Special appreciation to Dr. Russell Endo who wrote
the first four sections.

Opposite

The perimeter
fence at
Tuna Canyon
Detention
Station.

*Credit:
Merrill Scott family*



Book and outer cover design by
Inside front cover and Tuna Canyon Detention Station logotype by N



Tuna Canyon Detention Station, Tujunga, California
Los Angeles Historical-Cultural Monument #1039

Only the oaks remain on the site of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station

Credit: Kyoko Nancy Oda

www.tunacanyon.org

