

MINIDOKA WAR RELOCATION PROJECT

Hunt, Idaho

TO: D. S. Myer, Director
ATTENTION: John C. Baker, Chief, Office of Reports
SUBJECT: Quarterly Report for Period Ending March 31, 1943

Introduction: In the first three months of 1943, the Minidoka Relocation Center passed through the most crucial period of its existence. The WRA registration for leave clearance and the volunteering for induction into the Army were comparable to evacuation in the effects they had on the evacuee residents. Once again the memories of humiliating experiences of evacuation and deep-seated bitterness over past discriminations were brought to the surface to create a turmoil of emotions in the minds of those affected.

It seemed at first that no good would come from this reopening of old wounds. However, the volunteering of 304 evacuee residents to lead all the centers indicated that perhaps a better feeling and a more wholesome attitude did result. The endless discussions and debates on volunteering served to crystallize the residents' thoughts on relocation and to get rid of a lot of bitterness which had been harbored in their minds since evacuation.

The center itself did not progress much physically during this quarter because the registration and volunteering absorbed such a large proportion of the time and energy of the administrative staff and residents.

There were fluctuations in population due to work leaves and transfers. On January 1 there were still many out on work leave and the center's population was 9091. The population reached an all-time peak of 9393 on February 26 following the transfer of 193 former residents of Bainbridge Island (Wash.) from the Manzanar center. On March 31 more than 800 had left the center on various types of leave and the population was 9138.

Registration on Army Volunteering: Secretary of War Stimson's announcement of January 28 that American citizens of Japanese ancestry would be accepted into the U. S. Army for duty in a special all-Nisei combat team started a cycle of events of far-reaching consequence. While many developments had run a complete course before the period ended, there were still many aspects of volunteering and registration still alive. As the period ended, it was just beginning to be realized that the registration for leave clearance and the volunteering were steps in the direction of segregation and that the future of relocation and of the relocation centers tied in directly with attitudes displayed during registration and volunteering.

Secretary Stimson's announcement touched off a display of enthusiasm on the part of the more vocal residents, the young evacuee citizens who saw in it a belated recognition of their citizenship.

There followed in a day or two a reaction as prospective volunteers and their families grew aware of the full significance and far-reaching implications of the announcement. The first news was sketchy and in the absence of any explanation the fact that an all-Nisei unit would be formed was interpreted as rank

segregation or "Jim Crowism".

The project administration realized from the outset that the Army volunteering could not be put across by themselves alone and that the advice of evacuee leaders be necessary to make an intelligent approach to the rest of the residents so that there would be a complete understanding of the motives and implications of the volunteering. With this purpose in mind, members of the community government planning commission and other leaders, both young and old, were called together and the entire proposal laid before them. This group of leaders raised the same questions about the volunteering that were to be raised later by other residents time and time again. These were questions involving the segregation aspect of all-Nisei combat unit, the uncertain future facing alien parents if their citizen sons were killed and they were unable to own property; the fact that they would be fighting to uphold the government and principles which had resulted in discrimination against them and caused them many hardships. After long discussion and debate this group decided that regardless of the past it was the responsibility of the Japanese people to make the volunteering program a success in order to secure a better future for generations to come in this country.

While the support of this evacuee group was invaluable, equally important was the service they performed in guiding the administration's approach to the evacuees taking into account the Oriental psychology. The Army approach was notably unaware of the difference between American and the Japanese ways of looking at things.

It remained for the administrative staff to provide the incentive and the mechanics to put over the registration and volunteering program. The administration was fully aware of the task they faced. In 30 days it had to develop a body of opinion in the community almost directly contrary to the prevailing community attitude. It had taken many normal American communities almost two years to come around to supporting the war effort and these communities did not have a background of discrimination, oppression and evacuation.

The assistant project director held preliminary meetings before the arrival of the Army team to get discussion of the program started to bring the real issues to the surface and to channel thinking into a logical stream. Mass meetings were held throughout the center to present the volunteering program officially by the Army representatives.

The resistance to the volunteering stemmed from the past and the concensus was that the government was asking too much when in the recent past they have been deprived of citizenship rights and had suffered economic reverses and humiliations of all sorts in what they believed was violation of their constitutional rights.

The volunteering program started slowly. The names of the volunteers were kept secret and when a boy volunteered he did not know if he was the first and only one. In retrospect this appeared to be a mistake. Latter in the program when volunteers were wearing a sleeve insignia and the volunteers knew who had volunteered, there developed immediately a much better attitude. Almost overnight volunteering became something to be proud of. When the regular period

of volunteering ended 175 had come forth. Convinced that many were still on the fence and that the success of relocation depended to a large extent upon the show of volunteers, the administration staged a final series of four meetings and sent personal invitations to every citizen male over 16. These meetings were short and dramatic with straight-from-the-shoulder talks by the project director, assistant project director and volunteers. After these meetings the volunteers total was 270 plus 11 aliens and 14 conditional volunteers, the latter being men who asked for commissions. Subsequent volunteering raised the total to 304 by the end of the period.

The volunteers became the heroes of the hour and were entertained extensively at block banquets, formal banquets, private parties and other programs. They were given special privileges enabling them to go to Twin Falls to have family photographs taken and in other ways to prepare for induction.

One bad feature of the volunteering was the lapse of time between the end of the volunteering period and the call for induction.

When the period ended nearly two months had passed since many volunteers had volunteered and the prospect was that they would have to wait another month before leaving for the training camp.

Leaves: The departure of evacuee residents on indefinite leave mostly to take outside employment was accelerated. While the advent of the farming season was one of the chief reasons for the increase in departures, most farm workers left on short term or group leaves. The affect upon project operations became increasingly apparent

as important workers in various departments left. This trend at the end of March was gaining momentum.

A total of 325 indefinite leaves were granted in the period January 1 to March 31 as follows:

Type	NUMBER
<u>Social</u>	<u>24</u>
1. Join husband, family, etc.	18
2. Mixed marriage	3
3. To be married	3
 Volunteering	 1
 School	 61
 Employment	 196
Agricultural	53
Clerical	18
Restaurant work	13
Instructor in Japanese	4
YMCA work	1
Fishery	2
Greenhouse	3
Poultry house	1
Mechanic	4
Porter	1
Commercial Artist	1
Foreman	1
Handy Man	1
Optometrist	1
Hotel	6
Domestic	61
Gov't. Service	3
Bakery Work	3
Chick-sexer	2
Grocery	1
Nursery School	1
Establish business	2
Hospital	3
Refrigerator Servicer	2
Janitor	1
Warehouse	1
Chauffeur	1
Maintenance	1
Laboratory Technician	1
Miscellaneous	3
 Accompany parents, husbands, etc.	 23
 TOTAL	 325

The totals at the end of March were: Indefinite leave, 429; short term leave, 99; group leave, 339.

The principal factor in relocating seemed to be economic. Few family groups went out. Generally the head of the family left and his family remained in the center. There seemed to persist a fear of economic insecurity outside the center. Despite continual spiking, the rumor persisted that once an evacuee left the center he could not, under any circumstances, return. Perhaps some grounds

for the rumor were in the administrative policy of encouraging family units to accompany the wage earner when he left. Week-end visits of the wage-earner out on indefinite leave to his family remaining in center were discouraged.

The granting of financial assistance by the WRA to those with indefinite leave needing such assistance was too new to be well enough understood in general to provide incentive for going out. Also a major factor was the actual fear on the part of evacuee residents relocating in the mid-west and far from the center were mostly young people. Many of the older residents took farm jobs in the region of the center. However, numerous young evacuees showed a preference for western locations such as Denver, Ogden and Salt Lake City. Girls displayed a desire to take domestic jobs since they were the quickest way of getting out of the center. Stenographers in the center did not hesitate to take manual jobs outside.

Agriculture: Faced with the prospect of diminishing food supplies for civilian consumption, the project farm program was aimed in the direction of providing subsistence for the center residents. Because the farm area was in sagebrush about five times more work was necessary than to cultivate ordinary ground. Additional handicaps were a shortage of farm workers and a lack of heavy equipment. To overcome the former, volunteer groups from other departments, including administrative appointed personnel, spent time in the fields breaking and burning sagebrush. At the close of the period it appeared that 350 to 400 acres of ground near the east side of the center

area would be planted entirely in vegetables. If labor is available later on some acreage far out from the center may be put into field crops. A poultry farm and possibly some hogs were planned to be added to the agriculture operation.

Internal Security: The Army volunteering caused some clashes among residents of the center, especially among workers in various departments. Some members of the fire department who volunteered did not speak for several days to members who did not. The same was true among warehouse crews. A mother locked her son out of the apartment after he volunteered. Yet no violence occurred and no demonstrations were staged during this tense period. The Internal Security was occupied with promoting traffic safety, with performing watch and patrol duties, with maintaining the peace and performing investigating service in connection with leave applications.

The absence of a jail on the project was not noticed except by those who saw a good psychological effect. One case was taken to an outside court. An 18-year-old boy pleaded guilty to forgery in a Twin Falls court sentence was suspended pending his good behavior and he was placed in the custody of the Chief of the Internal Security department. There were a few cases of drunkenness and gambling.

The project's traffic safety record remained good. The most serious accident to date occurred in March when a 6-year-old school girl darted in front of an automobile and suffered a fractured skull. A schoolboy patrol was formed in the elementary schools.

Placement: The most significant development in project placement was getting underway as the period ended. When it became evident that the outside demand for labor and a simplified leave pro-

cedure would result in a labor shortage on the project, the placement office began a study of those working and those not working.

It was found that many residents were not doing the work in which they were experienced. A total of 214 farmers were found doing other work in various departments; mostly in the Stewards division and in Public Works. Steps were taken to transfer them from these jobs to the farm division. The placement office began a personal and more careful study of job requirements in order to fill placement requisitions more intelligently.

Because the payment of unemployment compensation would be illogical while an acute labor shortage existed on the project, suitability of a job to an unemployed resident was eliminated as a basis for unemployment compensation. Each of the 296 women drawing unemployment compensation was offered a job in the hospital as a nurses' aide. Fourteen accepted and the others were taken off the unemployment compensation rolls. Ten of the 23 men drawing unemployment compensation were ill and job offers were made to the others. Thus unemployment compensation was virtually eliminated on the project and at the same time there was removed cause for disgruntlement among the residents because an idle resident was receiving more than half as much as a working resident.

The placement office abandoned memorandum procedure in favor of personal contact in trying to get 250 and 450 women, all able-bodied and not registered for employment, into project jobs. Of the men 60 per cent were between the ages 16 - 19 and 55 - 64.

The education department pushed its training program of high school students and 236 students were employed on a half-time basis

in many divisions. The typing pool to train stenographers and typist was drained of all but its student members. It appeared that the high school students would be the principal source of office labor in the months to come.

As of March 31, 4652 were employed on the project compared with 4157 three months earlier. Employment by divisions was:

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Administration	48	86	134
Community Enterprise	123	89	212
Community Service	140	232	372
Employment	28	51	79
Fire Department	57	8	65
Housing	70	17	87
Information	15	10	25
Internal Security	107	3	110
Medical	164	281	445
Public Works	874	191	1065
Steward	907	737	1644
Transportation & Supply	326	34	360
War Works	52	2	54
TOTAL	2911	1741	4652

The Army volunteers who were still on the project at the close of the period nearly two months after their volunteering kept the project in an upset state. Many of them quit their jobs and spent much of their time hanging around their former working place which distracted the other workers. Many parents quit their jobs to spend the remaining time with their volunteer sons.

Outside Employment: The start of the farming season set in motion the wholesale recruiting of labor by sugar beet companies' representatives and individual farmers. While the Army program was in progress outside employment activity was in the background, but by the end of the quarter the signing up of groups and individuals for agricultural work was in full swing.

As of March 31 there were 338 working in outside group employment and 392 on indefinite work leave.

Agricultural and domestic jobs continue to be the principal work offered. Many girls who were doing office work on the project took domestic jobs on indefinite leave simply because this was the quickest way to get out of the center and relocate.

Community Government: The community government planning commission was inactive until late in the period. After the registration and Army volunteering program was finished, new attention was focused on community government. The planning commission felt that some step should be taken to accomplish something in this direction. Because the project director, assistant project director and members of the administrative staff felt that the plan for community government set up in administrative instructions was not workable to the benefit of the community, an alternative was sought. It was decided that some sort of an advisory committee would be the best organization to give the residents a voice in the administration of the community. As the quarter ended, steps were being taken in this direction.

Consumers' Enterprise: The Minidoka Consumers' Enterprise staged its membership drive during the period and as of March 31 had 2,463 members or about one for every family in the center. Total paid-in share capital was \$11,576 and in addition residents purchased \$10,050 in bonds. As of February 28, the latest report available, there was an unallocated inventory especially in general merchandise because much of the goods ordered for winter sales did not arrive until most of the cold weather was over.

The Co-op operated 17 enterprises including four general merchandise stores, two dry good stores, two laundry and dry cleaning pickup locations, two barber shops, one beauty shop, two shoe repair shops, two watch repair shops, two general and radio repair shop, one floral shop, two mail order departments, a newspaper department, a ticket selling service for the commercial bus line to Twin Falls and way points, a rice sales department, a fish store, three motion picture theaters, one optical department, and a western Union desk.

The mail order business fell off after Christmas and in anticipation of the new catalogs. Rationing of canned foods, soups and other processed foods dealt a severe blow to sales of these items since the residents formerly purchased large quantities of soups and canned fruits and fruit juices to supplement their project meals.

New enterprises included a ticket selling desk for the commercial bus service established by an outside agency between the project and Twin Falls; a fish store which was immediately successful; a rice sales department and the publishing of the project newspaper. Gross volume of all Co-op enterprises continue to run about \$70,000 a month with the net income running between 12 and 15 per cent.

The permanent board of directors was installed in March and permanent job appointments were made.

The shoe repairing situation remained one of the biggest problems. The two shops were so far behind on orders that shoe repairs were put on a ration basis with tickets available at block managers' offices. The Co-op was still trying to get equipment and personnel to set up a third shop.

In February the Board of Directors voted to assume the responsibility of publishing the project newspaper and the first issue under Co-op sponsorship came out February 27. Although the paper has not yet paid its own way, the Co-op has willingly taken a small loss in order to provide the community with a printed newspaper with no subscription cost. The Japanese section continued to be mimeographed. Costs of this section and the wages and clothing allowances of the entire staff were paid by the WRA.

Fire Protection: The Minidoka project continued to be free from serious fires. During the period a crew inspected every dining hall and H-type sanitary building. In addition fire drills were organized in the schools and volunteer fire crews were started throughout the center. A volunteer crew of young men to fight forest and grange fires during this summer at the request of the U. S. Grazing Service and U. S. Forest Service was also set up. Facing a prospect of a manpower shortage due to the enlistment of 18 members in the Army and the plans of many others to leave the center, steps were taken to utilize whatever labor remained on the project.

Evacuee Induction: A group of 193 former residents of Bainbridge Island (Wash.) were transferred to Minidoka from Manzanar late in February. This was the only large group transferred to the center. Applications for transfers to this center from other centers continued to be about 10 times more numerous than applications for transfer from this center to other centers.

Housing: The evacuee housing board assumed more responsi-

bilities for making changes of residents' quarters to provide space for schools and offices. Because there were more large apartments than needed and not enough small apartments, the partitioning of two large-size apartments in one barrack in every block was begun. There were no doubled-up families at the end of the period except seven by their own choice.

Religion: Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist religious activities were developed during the period. The Federated Christian Church, a consolidation of all-Protestant churches except Episcopal made many outside contacts through small groups, musical and religious, which appeared at churches in the surrounding area. The Catholic group held a joint meeting with a group of 60 men from Jerome and Wendell and a group of a younger people held a joint meeting with young people from Twin Falls.

Health and Sanitation: Hospital records showed a tendency of the project residents to seek minor medical attention although fewer residents required hospitalization. Both births and deaths showed a small increase compared with the previous quarter.

In the three months ended March 31 there were 310 in-patients compared with 406 the previous quarter; 6853 out-patients against 4636 the previous quarter; 4230 dental patients against 2981; 38 births against 31 and 14 deaths against 12. The average occupancy of the hospital was 106 patients.

The general health picture was good. Occurrence of childhood communicable disease was practically negligible. Meissnerian

infections which appeared in January and February were completely cleared up by March. Cultures were run at the Twin Falls laboratory and the reports were all negative for Neisserian infection. There remained considerable doubt as to the exact causative organism involved. The placing of the sewerage into operation for the entire project actually improved sanitary conditions and also had a very beneficial effect upon the morale of the residents.

The medical program was carried out with a reduced staff. Part of the time there were only two full-time physicians besides the principal medical officer. There was a constant necessity for employing and training new personnel because of the acceleration of the relocation program in the project. It was necessary to start recruiting older men and women as well as high school part-time workers for aides and attendants in the wards. About 30 volunteers for the Army were from the hospital personnel. At the start of the quarter the evacuee personnel in the hospital included six physicians, one assistant physician, six registered nurses, three student nurses, 37 full-time nurses' aides, 19 part-time nurses' aides, 30 full-time male attendants and one part-time male attendant. On March 31 the staff included five physicians, one assistant physician, and three externs; five registered nurses' aides, 13 full-time male attendants, one part-time male attendant and three public health aides.

The public health nurse made 937 visits to homes during the period. Especially during the outbreak of venereal infection in January she was instrumental in securing the evacuee residents' cooperation in appearing for examinations and in other health and sanitation matters.

Mass Operation: The important part of the stewards division's work which was also carried out by other divisions was education of the evacuee residents in the general food situation existing throughout the nation, in particular the likelihood of diminishing supplies for civilian consumption. Different groups were contacted in this program of acquainting the residents with the facts of food rationing and the necessity for working on the project farm to raise vegetables for their own dining halls.

Procurement: The procurement division had the problem of getting the cooperation of evacuee residents and appointed personnel in complying with rationing and priority regulations. Priority restrictions affected so much construction work and planning on the project that it was necessary for the procurement division to work at length with all departments to obtain an understanding of the complex situation.

Public Relations: The Minidoka project passed through another three-month period without suffering any serious outbreak directed against the relocation center.

The fact that the Minidoka center led all the centers in the number of Army volunteers and the fact that this number (more than 300 or 19 per cent of the eligibles) was considerably higher than the public response to volunteering were publicized and did much to convince the public in this region that the great majority of the Minidoka center residents are loyal Americans.

Much credit for the harmonious relations between the residents of the center and residents of nearby communities, notably Twin Falls,

Chamber of Commerce, was instrumental in lining up solid support for the center. The editor and publisher of the Twin Falls daily newspaper, the general manager of the largest department store, the president of the ministerial association and others helped to influence public sentiment in favor of the evacuees.

The volunteers and members of their family were given passes from the center and large numbers of them visited Twin Falls. It was publicized who these persons were and there was no incident involving these people. In general there prevailed a satisfactory condition in this region concerning the relocation center. There remains some isolated instances of prejudices and as the period ended plans were being made to have prominent people in this group visit the center in the hope that such a visit would change their attitude.

Contacts between center residents and outsiders were numerous. The Minidoka Mass Choir sang three concerts to a total of 3500 people in Jerome, Twin Falls and Rupert. Smaller musical groups and school groups also made valuable contacts. The number of visitors to the center declined sharply indicating that curiosity of the center had been pretty well satisfied.

Steps were taken to secure a better understanding of the evacuees who left the center to work in agricultural communities. In the interest of obtaining maximum efficiency in the use of evacuee labor for production of food in the war effort, there was cooperation from United States Department of Agriculture agencies,

war boards and local labor committees and farm groups. The experience of evacuee workers from the Minidoka center in Idaho harvest fields last fall was satisfactory on the whole and as good a season or better was anticipated as the result of pre-season steps taken by the project in cooperation with other groups.

While there was no single incident of discrimination or outbreak of prejudice, some anti-Japanese sentiment was still close enough to the surface to be brought into the open by the slightest excuse. Late in the period reports were given circulation that the WRA was aiding evacuees in the acquisition of farm land and at least two state and city groups were ready to take drastic steps on the basis of such reports without first investigating them.

Community Activity: Community Activity centered around the Army volunteers. After the volunteering program succeeded, the community threw itself into a month-long period of banquets and programs honoring those who volunteered. In mid-March four formal banquets were held in different sections of the center. The volunteers and parents, Japanese-American soldiers already in the Army and their parents were invited to these affairs. Leaders of the community, both young and old, some of the volunteers, the project director and the assistant project director were the speakers. These were impressive affairs paying tribute to the spirit of sacrifice displayed by the volunteers to be torchbearers along the road to a better understanding of the Japanese American people.

As soon as good weather arrived, construction of play fields,

ball diamonds and other outdoor recreational facilities was started. Since heavy machinery was not available to any extent, most of this work had to be done by hand by volunteer crews. This program like many others on the project suffered from the lack of manpower and from the lack of enthusiasm unwillingness of man residents since relocation was just around the corner for them.

The evacuee residents participated wholeheartedly in fund-raising drives for worthy causes. These were spontaneous and not inspired by administrative sources. At four regular Saturday night dances on January 30 collections were taken for the president's infantile paralysis fund and \$45.30 was raised. A total of \$2595 was collected in the Red Cross war drive.

Contacts with national organizations were kept alive. The Boy Scouts participated in a National Boy Scout Week celebration at Twin Falls. A one-day conference of YWCA leaders and Girls Reserves attracted nearly 100 visitors from nearby towns. A volunteer group was organized by the Fire Protection department to help the U. S. Grazing Service and U. S. Forest Service fight brush and forest fires this summer.

Community recreation was hampered by lack of sufficient recreation halls (many halls were used for other purposes such as offices, schools, stores, etc.) and the absence of a community building larger than a dining hall.

Education: The Minidoka center schools made notable progress during the quarter in the accomplishment of matters which had been in planning for several months. Training courses and adult education

were expanded; state and federal vocational training departments provided teachers and equipment for classes in farm machinery, auto mechanics, carpentry, electricity and the production, conservation and use of food. Recognition was secured for evacuee resident teachers to gain three credits a semester from the University of Idaho for this work and for other professional courses. Evacuee with at least sophomore rating in college were eligible.

The training courses assumed added importance as the project labor supply diminished. The high school students, working now part-time and later to work full-time, will be one of the chief sources of workers to relieve the project shortage. The fact that school started late and will not be out until mid-July was an unfavorable factor. The elementary schools brought out their first student growth reports which were developed after considerable thought and study. They were individual reports of attitude and progress and contained enough of the old familiar comparative gradings to satisfy the parents that Hunt school were regular schools.

School teaching vacancies totaled five in the elementary school where 18 appointed and 22 evacuee taught; and eight in junior-senior high school where 26 appointed and 26 evacuee teachers taught.

On leave from the project to attend college were 86 men and 46 women.

Welfare: Public assistance grants increased month by month; 35 in January, 50 in February and 62 in March. The counselor be-

lieved this was due to diminishing cash reserves of evacuee residents. The majority of those receiving assistance were elderly single persons.

Declinations of former applications for repatriation increased. It appeared from the reasons put forth that many who applied for repatriation during assembly center residence did so in their bewilderment at evacuation and in their bitterness toward the government. Now their faith is being restored and their uncertainty about their future status is being dispelled.

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