

RELOCATION COMMUNITIES

for Wartime Evacuees

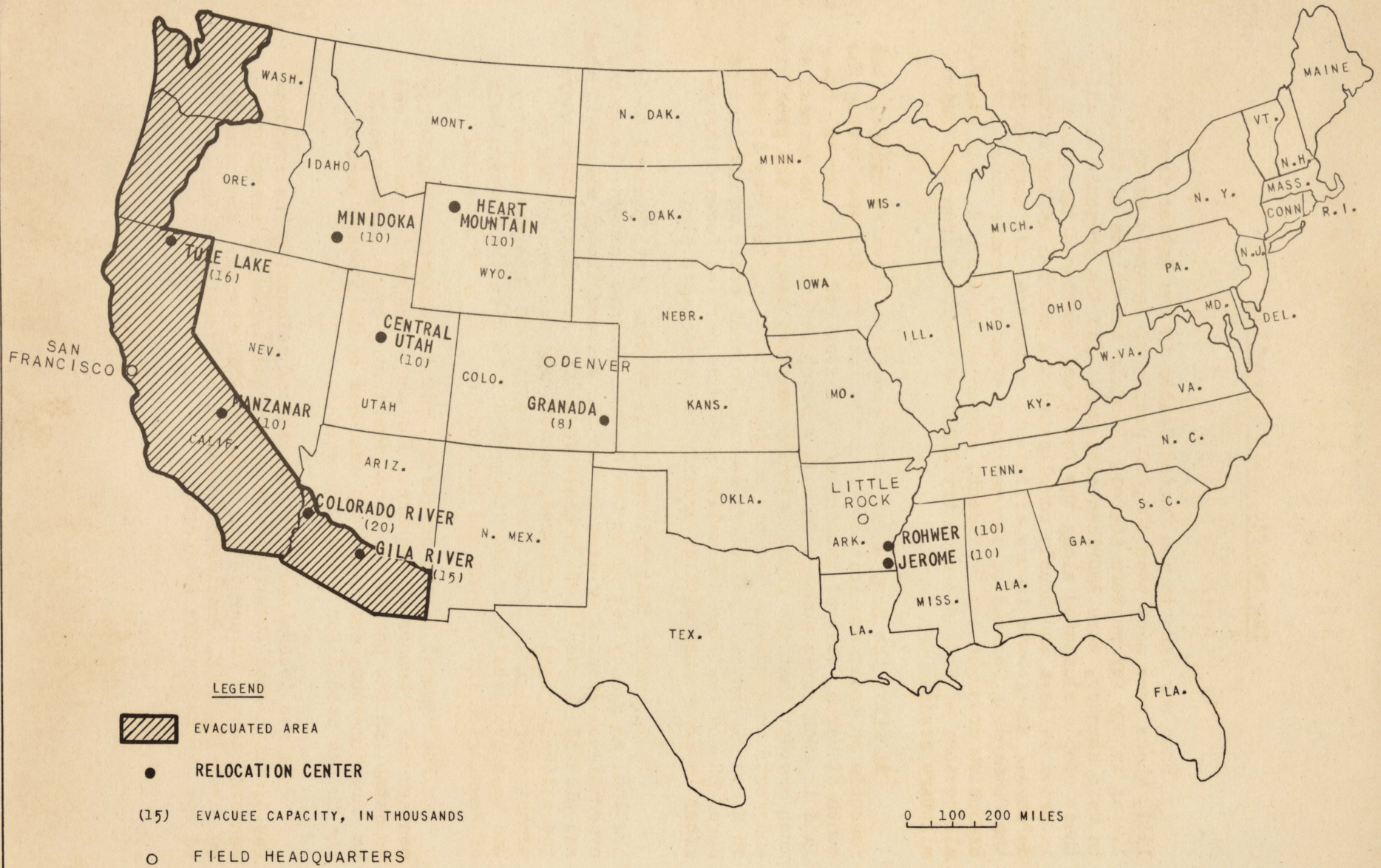


A RELOCATION CENTER

War Relocation Authority
Washington, D. C.

September, 1942

WAR RELOCATION CENTERS



JUNE 30, 1942

The Pacific Coast Evacuation

When war came to the United States in the latter days of 1941, there were more than 100,000 people of Japanese ancestry living in our far western states. Roughly two-thirds of them, born in this country, were American citizens. Yet the presence of all these people clustered along the Coast and scattered throughout the interior valleys enormously complicated the problem of far western defense. And so--to insure efficient, unhampered military operations--the Commanding General of our western defenses, acting under Executive Order of the President, announced on March 2, 1942 that all persons of Japanese ancestry would be excluded from designated military areas.

At first the Army urged these people to leave voluntarily and resettle on their own initiative in the interior States. During the month of March, several thousands did leave, but their arrival inland in such large numbers in such a short period of time aroused so much protest that the great majority remained behind in the prohibited and restricted zones. Because of this situation, the Army decided on March 27 that all voluntary evacuation must cease on midnight of March 29 and that the evacuation should be carried forward thereafter in accordance with an orderly and systematic plan.

In the weeks that followed, the Wartime Civil Control Administration, an agency set up by the Western Defense Command, began the evacuation. Area after area in the far western States was designated and cleared of people of Japanese descent. Assembly centers where the evacuees could be gathered, housed, and fed were thrown up almost over-night. By midsummer all people of Japanese ancestry had been evacuated from the State of California, the western half of Washington and Oregon, and the southern third of Arizona.

The removal of the people of Japanese ancestry to assembly centers was a temporary measure. For many reasons it was desired to establish the people in places where work opportunities would be more numerous, and where the evacuees could produce part of the things needed for their subsistence.

It was determined that the task of relocating the evacuees (as distinguished from their temporary quartering in assembly centers) should be carried on by a civilian agency. Accordingly, on March 18, 1942, President Roosevelt by Executive Order established the War Relocation Authority.

In essence, the job of this agency is to reestablish the evacuated people as a productive segment of the American population; to provide, as nearly as wartime exigencies permit, an equitable substitute for the lives and homes given up; and to facilitate the reassimilation of the evacuees into the normal currents of American life. As an initial step in this job, the Authority with the approval of the Army in each case, has selected 10 sites for relocation communities. As rapidly as possible the Army is now preparing these sites for reception of the evacuee population. As soon as the basic housing is completed, in any relocation area, evacuees will be moved in from assembly centers and their maintenance will become the responsibility of the War Relocation Authority.

Two of the sites selected are in eastern California; two are in Arizona; one each in Utah, Idaho, Colorado, and Wyoming; and two are situated almost on the banks of the Mississippi River in southeastern Arkansas. These communities, when completed, will provide living quarters and work opportunities for a total of 119,000 evacuees.

Selecting the Sites

Since about 45 per cent of the evacuees were engaged in agriculture before the war, the Authority naturally looked first of all for areas with good farming possibilities. Soil, water supply, climate, and growing season had to be favorable. At the same time it was necessary to find lands readily accessible to electric power lines and to rail and highway transportation. In order to avoid displacing large numbers of people, the site selection crews had to center their attention on lands which were undeveloped or sparsely settled. And since the Army cannot afford in time of war to disperse its manpower for protection of numerous small communities, the Authority had to locate areas capable of supporting a population of at least 5,000 evacuees.

In order to satisfy all these rigid and sometimes conflicting requirements, the Authority tended to move more or less in the direction of "wilderness" areas--among others, to the desert-type terrain of western Arizona, to the intermountain country of Wyoming not far from Yellowstone National Park, to the delta section of Arkansas only recently reclaimed from periodic floods.

Work Opportunities for Evacuees

In these centers the evacuees with agricultural experience will have a chance to work the land and produce crops for the community kitchens. Those with manual skills will be able to manufacture articles needed in community life. Those with professional or "white collar" backgrounds will provide the whole range of services needed by a population of several thousand people. In short, each relocation center will be as nearly self-sufficient as possible.

In addition, the reservoir of manpower represented by the evacuees will be used in many ways to fill gaps in the wartime economy of the Nation. Under proper safeguards, groups of evacuees will be permitted to leave the centers for seasonal agricultural work. American-born residents in some cases will be given a chance to accept outside jobs in private employment for an indefinite period. Private industries engaged in essential war work may be permitted to establish shops in or near the centers and to employ evacuee labor at prevailing wages. Surplus crops produced on the relocation center farms will be used to meet the wartime food needs of the Nation. Evacuee labor will be employed to develop raw lands and to carry on other essential public works.

Returns for Work

All residents of the relocation centers will be provided with food, shelter, medical care, and educational opportunities. In addition, those who work within the relocation areas on government jobs will receive clothing allowances and monthly cash wages based on the type of work they do and the number of days they work. These wages will be paid at the rate of \$12, \$16, or \$19 a month depending on the degree of skill and responsibility involved in the particular job.

Community Life

Although it is impossible to transplant all phases of normal community life into the relocation centers, the evacuees will set up their own community government, elect their own officers, and provide their own police and fire protection. Schools and recreation halls will be built. Stores, newspapers, barber shops, dental offices, movie theaters and many other community enterprises are being established.

Evacuees will be encouraged to improve their family living quarters and will be provided with the necessary building materials. Before many months have passed, the relocation communities for wartime evacuees will have lost much of their pioneer appearance and character. In many, though not all, details they will bear close resemblance to an ordinary American city of 10,000 or 15,000 inhabitants.

THE RELOCATION CENTERS

Name	County	Location State	Evacuee Capacity	Gross Acreage	Acreage Suitable for Agricultural Development
Manzanar	Inyo	California	10,000	6,000	500
Tule Lake	Modoc	California	16,000	26,000	24,000
Colorado River	Yuma	Arizona	20,000	72,000	41,000
Gila River	Pinal	Arizona	15,000	16,467	14,750
Minidoka	Jerome	Idaho	10,000	68,000	17,000
Central Utah	Millard	Utah	10,000	19,900	10,000
Heart Mountain	Park	Wyoming	10,000	45,000	26,000
Granada	Prowers	Colorado	8,000	10,000	6,500
Rohwer	Desha	Arkansas	10,000	10,000	9,000
Jerome	Chicot and Drew	Arkansas	10,000	9,500	8,500
Totals			119,000	282,867	157,250

Manzanar

Location: Inyo County, California	Gross acreage: 6,000
Evacuee capacity: 10,000	Suitable for agricultural development 500

Virtually under the shadow of snow-capped Mt. Whitney, highest peak in continental United States, the Manzanar (pron: MANzanar) Relocation Area is situated in historic Owens Valley about five miles north of the town of Lone Pine and 220 miles north of Los Angeles.

To the southward, Owens Valley slopes slowly into the Mojave Desert, and beyond an 11,000 foot range to the east lies Death Valley. Notwithstanding this close association with deserts, Owens Valley is fairly fertile, the climate is temperate, and water is supplied from year-round glaciers in Whitney's deep canyons. The relocation area is owned by the City of Los Angeles and is being operated by the Authority under permit from the War Department.



In these "victory gardens" at the Manzanar Relocation Area, evacuees are raising truck crops for their own community kitchens. By 1943 many of the relocation centers should be agriculturally self-sufficient.

Manzanar was built as an assembly center by the Wartime Civil Control Administration, later turned over to the War Relocation Authority as a relocation area. It is mostly undeveloped land, partly covered by sagebrush and mesquite. Under evacuee operations, a water system will be built and approximately 500 acres of land will be turned into a farm to produce subsistence crops for the center's population.

An orchard of apple trees ("Manzanar" means apple orchard in Spanish) has been reclaimed and irrigated and is expected to bear some usable fruit this season after having received neither care nor water for fifteen years. Here, too, camouflage nets for the United States Army are being garnished by evacuee workers, and guayule cuttings have been planted on one plot as part of the nationwide effort to develop a substitute source for rubber.

Tule Lake

Location: Modoc County, California

Gross acreage: 26,000

Evacuee capacity: 16,000

Suitable for agricultural development 24,000

In extreme northern California, only a few miles south of the Oregon line, the Tule (pron: TOO-lee) Lake Relocation Area lies chiefly in an old lake bed reclaimed for irrigation by the United States Bureau of Reclamation as part of the Klamath Reclamation Project. Irrigation structures have already been built for about half the acreage in the relocation area and some 2500 acres are already in cultivation. The evacuees will level the additional acreage and construct necessary irrigation and drainage facilities with the object of having about 6700 acres in production by 1943.

Twenty years ago, when the work of draining Tule Lake first was started, much of the surrounding region was little more than a desert-type wilderness. Since that time, and with about two thirds of the lake now drained, the region has been gradually settled by homesteaders, mostly ex-service men and their families, attracted by its agricultural opportunities. There were, however, no settlers on the lands taken over for the relocation area.

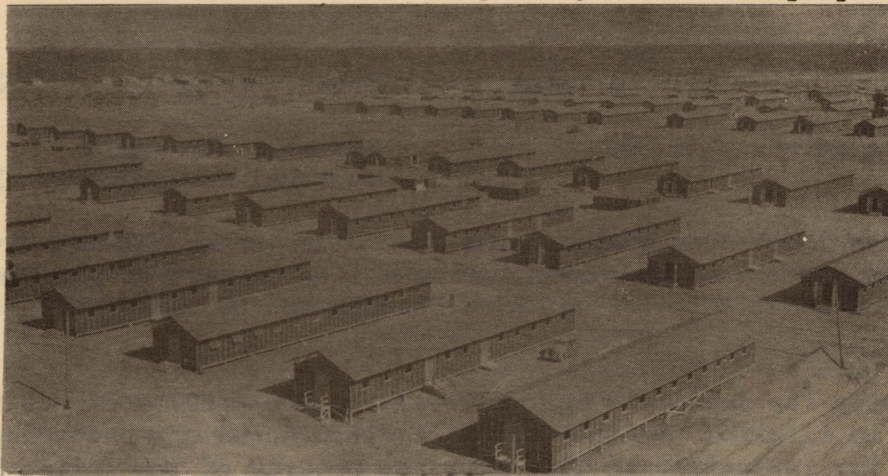
Nestled between scenic mountain ranges, the basin will be irrigated by water from a diversion dam on Lost River, a mountain stream. The project lies at an elevation of about 4,000 feet and has

a black loam soil capable of intensive cultivation. Although precipitation averages only about nine inches a year, the land is well adapted-- under irrigation--to the raising of potatoes, small grains, berries, alfalfa and other forage crops as well as the hardier varieties of vegetables such as carrots, peas, lettuce, turnips, celery, beans and onions. Temperatures range from 99 degrees above zero to 27 below, and growing season averages about 130 days.

Colorado River

Location:	Yuma County, Arizona	Gross acreage:	72,000
Evacuee capacity:	20,000	Suitable for agricultural development:	41,000

Largest of all the relocation areas is the one located on the Arizona side of the Colorado River at Poston, about half way between Yuma and Needles. Here, out of the sagebrush and silt on the Colorado River Indian Reservation, evacuees from the Pacific Coast will develop a green irrigated valley for their own use during wartime and for post-war use by the Indian tribes. The relocation area is situated on a part of the Reservation not now occupied by the Indian people.



Double-roofed quarters at the Colorado River Relocation Area. The barrack type of construction is typical of the living quarters provided in the relocation communities. Desert in the background will be cleared, irrigated and brought into production.

Three relocation centers have been built on this desert area where the rainfall averages only three inches a year and much of the

The land already developed, which has been planted to alfalfa for five to six years, and the tract planned for irrigation are both well adapted to the growing of garden truck, such as melons, beans, tomatoes, carrots and lettuce, as well as feedstuffs. This area is also one of the few in the country where long-staple cotton, being developed by the Experiment Station on the Indian Reservation, can be grown, and 1943 production plans contemplate 3,000 acres of this crop.

The relocation project includes two communities, about three miles apart.

Minidoka

Location: Jerome County, Idaho	Gross acreage:	68,000
Evacuee capacity: 10,000	Suitable for agricultural development:	17,000

Second in gross acreage only to Colorado River, the Minidoka Relocation Area in south-central Idaho on the Gooding Division of the Minidoka Reclamation Project presents a peculiar problem of land development. Because the area is broken up by huge outcroppings of lava, only 25 per cent of the broad acreage is even potentially suited to agriculture. Yet the soil between the outcroppings is fertile and needs only irrigation water to yield abundant crops.

Plans for development of this public land area were laid out by the Bureau of Reclamation and will be carried forward by the evacuees. By next year several thousand acres would be under cultivation and producing most of the food needed for the evacuee community and perhaps a surplus for other relocation centers. Major crops will be potatoes, beans, and onions. Hay crops such as alfalfa and clover will also be grown, along with barley, and oats. After the war the land will revert to the Bureau of Reclamation and will be available for settlement.

Lying at an elevation of 3800 feet, the Minidoka area has temperatures ranging from 30 degrees below zero to 104 above. The average annual rainfall is 10 inches and the growing season averages about 138 days.

Central Utah

Location: Millard County, Utah	Gross acreage:	19,900
Evacuee capacity: 10,000	Suitable for agricultural development:	10,000

Located some 4700 feet above sea level and about 140 miles south of Salt Lake City, the Central Utah Relocation Area includes land formerly in private ownership as well as State-owned land, and public domain. The War Relocation Authority has purchased the private acreage and is operating the public land under agreement.

More than 9,000 acres in the area have previously been cultivated and are capable of producing good yields of alfalfa, sugar beets, and grain. The evacuees will use irrigation water provided through the canals of the Abraham and Deseret Water Companies' systems and will repair and recondition laterals already extending over the project lands.

Characterized by a dry and a wet season, the area gets about half its annual rainfall of eight inches in the spring and little or none during the summer. Temperatures range from about 106 degrees in summer to about 30 degrees below zero in the winter months. The first killing frosts usually come in late September and the last ones occur during the latter part of May. This makes for a growing season of approximately 120 days.

Heart Mountain

Location: Park County, Wyoming	Gross acreage:	45,000
Evacuee capacity: 10,000	Suitable for agricultural development:	26,000

Situated in the Big Horn Basin, less than 50 miles east of Yellowstone National Park, the Heart Mountain Relocation Area is the northernmost of the sites so far selected for resettlement of West Coast evacuees.

Because of latitude plus its 4,600-foot elevation, the area is cold in winter and has a growing season that averages about 130 days between killing frosts. Over most of the area, however, the soil is fertile, light-textured, and easy to work. Alfalfa, small grains, beans, potatoes, and seed peas are typical crops.

Like Tule Lake and Minidoka, the Heart Mountain Relocation Area is on public land made available by the Bureau of Reclamation. It is on a division of the Shoshone Reclamation Project. Although most of the area is now used for grazing and precipitation averages only seven inches a year, nearly 10,000 acres are served with a complete system of canals and laterals, and ample water for further development is available from the Shoshone Reservoir. Temperatures range from 40 degrees below zero in winter to 100 above in summer.

Granada

Location: Prowers County, Colorado	Gross acreage:	10,000
Evacuee capacity: 8,000	Suitable for agricultural development:	6,500

In the old X-Y Ranch country of southeastern Colorado, the War Relocation Authority is establishing its smallest relocation community, named Granada after a nearby town. The Authority has purchased the land outright especially for use as a relocation area.

About 5,500 acres in the area are already under cultivation and ready for immediate farming by the evacuees. Another 1,000 acres have been earmarked for crop production in 1943, after the irrigation system has been repaired and extended.

Crops best adapted to the area include sugar beets, alfalfa, small grains, and truck crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, peas, cabbages, and melons. Rainfall averages 15 inches a year and snowfall 14 inches. Temperatures over a period of years have ranged from a maximum of 110 degrees down to a minimum of 25 below zero. The growing season averages 156 days a year.

Rohwer

Location: Desha County, Arkansas	Gross acreage:	10,000
Evacuee capacity: 10,000	Suitable for agricultural development:	9,000

Far to the east of most evacuee communities, on land leased from cooperative organizations sponsored by the Farm Security Administration in southeastern Arkansas, the Rohwer Relocation Area lies

in a region of abundant rainfall. Fifty-two inches a year is average for this section, and the chief agricultural problem will be to keep the land properly drained.

In addition to drainage, the most immediate task facing the evacuees, will be to clear the land of its present dense cover of brush, second-growth timber, and stumps left from earlier logging operations. As this work goes forward, the harvested timber will be processed on the project as railroad ties, staves, heading blocks, fence posts, and rough lumber. As the land is cleared and drained, it will be used to produce crops for relocation kitchens and for the war effort.

Like most Mississippi Delta areas, the Rohwer Relocation Area has a rich alluvial soil and a comparatively long frost-free growing season. Winters are mild, and plowing is possible all months of the year. Alfalfa, small grains, cotton, and a wide variety of fruits and truck crops are the principal agricultural possibilities. The area lies at an elevation of only 150 feet and has had temperatures ranging from six degrees below zero up to 112 above.

Jerome

Location: Chicot and Drew Counties, Arkansas	Gross acreage: 9,500
Evacuee capacity: 10,000	Suitable for agricultural development: 8,500

Also in the Mississippi Delta Section of Arkansas, only a few miles south of the Rohwer area, lies the twin relocation project near Jerome, an old logging town.

The Jerome Relocation Area is nearly the same size as Rohwer and is also on land leased from FSA-sponsored cooperatives. It will have the same population and roughly the same acreage in agriculture. Land development work and cropping possibilities at the two projects are virtually identical. In fact, the only noteworthy difference is that the Jerome area has somewhat less timber than Rohwer and will consequently yield a considerably lighter harvest of wood products.