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A STATEMENT ON HANDLING OF EVACUEE PROPERTY

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

may 1943
When Pacific Coast residents of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from military areas in 1942, they left behind them a reported \$200,000,000 worth of real, personal and commercial property. To assure full use of this property in the national war economy and to protect the property rights of evacuees, the Executive Order which established the War Relocation Authority contained a section authorizing assistance to evacuees in the management and disposal of their properties. This authorization does not mean that WRA was empowered to act as receiver of, to warrant title to, or to sell or otherwise dispose of evacuee-owned property without the owner's consent. Persons evacuated from the West Coast still retain all their former property rights. WRA acts merely as an intermediary between the owners and the individuals or agencies with whom they are conducting business. Evacuees are assisted in putting into operation decisions at which they arrived by their own free will.

Because of the rapidity with which evacuation was conducted by the Wartime Civil Control Administration, property matters had to be cared for at a corresponding rate of speed. Initially the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and the Farm Security Administration undertook the evacuee property program pursuant to a request from Lieut. Gen. John L. DeWitt. By letter dated March 25, 1942, the Director of the War Relocation Authority delegated to the Treasury Department all authority of WRA with respect to the management and disposal of evacuee property.

The Farm Security Administration, under agreement with the Treasury Department, took over the agricultural aspects of the evacuee property program, and the Federal Reserve Bank assumed responsibility for handling urban property problems. Warehouses were leased by the government for the storage of household goods.

As soon as evacuation was completed, the War Relocation Authority assumed its delegated authority regarding evacuee property, and the Evacuee Property Office was established to carry on the program. The main property office is set up in San Francisco, and two field offices are maintained at points where there is the greatest concentration of evacuee-owned property. These offices are equipped to handle property problems of all kinds. Among the services they render are arranging for the rental or sale of both agricultural and commercial properties, establishing contact between evacuees and persons who wish to conduct business with them, effecting settlements of claims for or against evacuees, checking inventories of stored personal goods, auditing accounts rendered to evacuees, and adjusting differences arising out of inequitable, hastily made or indefinite agreements.

Field offices and the areas they serve are as follows:

Whitcomb Hotel Bldg.
San Francisco, Calif.

Main property office; also
serving northern and central
California, Nevada, and
Utah.

Room 955, 1031 So.
Broadway, Los Angeles, Calif.

Southern California, including
San Luis Obispo County and
all area below the Tehachapi
Mountains and the State of
Arizona.

Room 6609, White Bldg.
Seattle, Washington

States of Washington, Idaho,
Montana and Oregon

Farm Property

Prior to evacuation, Japanese farm operators in the Pacific Coast owned outright or had a financial interest in approximately \$7,000,000 worth of farm equipment and machinery. To prevent any unnecessary storage or disposal of this equipment during the war period, the government directed major attention immediately to helping evacuees dispose of it in a manner which would assure its most efficient use. Evacuees were encouraged to sell or lease their equipment in conjunction with their land when it was turned over to substitute operators. In other instances, sale or rental agreements were negotiated with other operators in the locality insofar as was possible. Some evacuees, who had not finished paying for their equipment turned it back to dealers, sometimes at a loss. Storage was discouraged in every instance. That this policy was largely successful is borne out by a survey made by the Farm Security Administration during May, 1942. As of that date, in that portion of the military area already evacuated, field agents reported there were only 13 farms with undisposed of equipment, valued at approximately \$11,655.

Toward the end of 1942, rumors began to circulate on the West Coast that large quantities of evacuee-owned equipment were either lying idle in storage or rusting away in the fields. For example, it

was reported to one of the service organizations in the Salinas Valley that 500 pieces of farm equipment were stored in that area. A representative of WRA, with the assistance of the local Chamber of Commerce, implement dealers, and other persons of the community, went to Salinas immediately, and their combined efforts uncovered a total of five - not five hundred - pieces of equipment.

In addition to promptly investigating specific reports of idle equipment owned by Japanese-American families, WRA has been making a planned survey of farm and automotive equipment both in the field and at relocation centers. All through the Pacific Coast states implement dealers, county war boards, agricultural commissioners and other persons who might have factual knowledge have been contacted by WRA field men. Newspapers have cooperated by publishing announcements asking anyone with knowledge of idle evacuee-owned equipment to notify WRA or the United States Department of Agriculture county war boards. Project Evacuee Property Officers at relocation centers are, by means of questionnaire, interrogating evacuees regarding the whereabouts of any farm equipment which they may have left behind, and are offering to help them dispose of it. As of April, 1943, these procedures have uncovered a total of 195 tractors, and 497 pieces of miscellaneous equipment, including harrows, plows, discs, and small tools.

Each county USDA war board receives from WRA a list of all equipment uncovered in the survey of its own area, the location in which

it is stored, and the name and address of the WRA representative who is locally responsible for the disposal of the equipment. At the same time, the State War Boards are being informed of all equipment that is found.

At the time of evacuation, approximately 232,159 acres of land were farmed by Japanese-American operators in the evacuated area. Some of this land was owned by evacuees who are American citizens, and some was held under either long or short term tenure agreements. That evacuation was accomplished without any substantial crop loss is largely due to the effective work performed by the Farm Security Administration, which, until the fall of 1942, handled all farm property matters. By June 1, 1942, roughly three months after the first evacuation order, practically all farms had been transferred to substitute operators, and thousands of dollars of vital food crops had been saved.

Many of the farm tenure agreements negotiated either by the evacuees themselves or by the FSA for evacuees are still in effect. Some agreements have not worked out, however, and WRA, through its field property offices, is now assisting evacuees to negotiate new agreements.

Automobiles and Tires

In the early months of 1943, reports were published that 33,000 automobiles owned by Japanese-Americans now living in relocation centers were in storage; and that, as a consequence, the rubber in well over 100,000 tires being wasted. Very few residents of the centers still

hold title to automobiles, and the majority of those who do plan to leave shortly to accept job offers in the Midwestern states.

The estimate of 33,000 is based on the number of cars registered by persons with Japanese names with the Motor Vehicle Departments of Oregon, Washington, California, and Arizona, in the year prior to evacuation. About 5,000 of these cars were owned by Japanese-Americans who took their automobiles with them when they left the evacuation area during the period of voluntary evacuation, and about one hundred more were located in parts of the four states outside the evacuated areas. During the evacuation period, the records of the Motor Vehicle Departments show that almost 20,000 cars were transferred to non-Japanese owners. Some evacuees, having only a small equity in the cars and being unable to dispose of them before leaving their homes, turned them back to the dealers who have since sold them.

Commercial and Urban Real Property

Slightly more than half the Americans of Japanese ancestry who lived in the coastal states prior to evacuation lived in urban and suburban districts. Many either owned or were buying homes of their own. Approximately 6,000 were proprietors, managers, or officials of business concerns ranging from large manufacturing establishments to small lodging houses, retail shops, and laundries. Others were craftsmen, mechanics, or members of professions, and owned equipment with which they carried on their work. A comparatively small percentage of this property was

brought to the attention of the Federal Reserve Bank, based upon the number of evacuees who availed themselves of the services of the bank.

As an example of the scope of the holdings of evacuees, the Japanese-Americans Citizens' League reported that in the city of Seattle, Japanese operated 206 out of a total of 325 hotels, one-fourth of the laundry and dry cleaning establishments, 140 grocery stores, and 50 green houses.

To preserve and protect this property and to prevent huge losses in enforced sales, first, the Federal Reserve Bank, and now the Evacuee Property Office, aid evacuees in the storage, sale, lease, and operation of property.

Personal Property

At the time of evacuation, the government leased warehouses and offered to store the household goods and other non-perishable personal property of evacuees free of charge for the war period. Only 2,867 families took advantage of this service. Most evacuee families made the best private arrangements they could in the limited time available. Some evacuees sold their personal property completely, but the majority stored their goods with friends, in church basements, in attics, in garages, and in any other available storage place.

The Federal Reserve Bank aided evacuees in personal property problems until evacuation was completed, and since that time WRA has been

called upon to perform myriad services. Field property representatives have investigated the condition of personal property reported broken into, have checked inventories of privately stored goods and arranged for its removal to government-operated warehouses or to the evacuee's place of residence, and have arranged for the sale or other disposition of considerable quantities of small articles.

One of WRA's chief tasks now in connection with personal property is to forward household equipment, clothing, and other personal goods to evacuees who leave relocation centers for private employment. This means collecting property from the various places in which it is stored and arranging transportation by the most economical method to the point where the family is resettling. Each evacuee is entitled to one movement of personal property at government expense over and above movement to a government warehouse for storage. If he chooses to have his goods brought to him at a relocation center, he will then have to assume the transportation expense for the next himself, but if he waits until he leaves the center on indefinite leave, the government transports his personal property to his new place of residence.

May 1943

Evacuee Property

PREPARATION FOR AND LOADING OF CARLOAD SHIPMENTS
of
EVACUEE PROPERTY

ORDERING OF CARS

The ODT has placed upon the shipper the duty of loading cars to full space capacity; therefore, car orders should designate the length of the car desired. Ordinarily, orders should not specify a length greater than necessary for the full utilization of car space. In no event should an order be placed for a car exceeding 50'6" in length. Requests for cars should be confirmed in writing with a copy to Chief of Transportation. Carriers have granted a special rate concession on Evacuee Property (the "B" Class rate or the Tariff Commodity rate, whichever is the lower) subject to a minimum weight of 20,000 lbs. when the length of the car (specified in the car order) does not exceed 40'7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and of 26,000 lbs. when the length exceeds 40'7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " but does not exceed 50'6".

Before loading is begun, cars should be inspected carefully for leaks and faulty brakes, and protruding nails should be removed. Unfit cars should be rejected.

PACKING FOR CARLOAD SHIPMENT

In our rate concession, the carriers have relaxed their packaging requirements for Evacuee Property, merely requiring that articles tendered for transportation be in such condition and so prepared for shipment as to render the transportation thereof reasonably safe and practicable.

Many articles will not require packing or crating; however, judgement must be used when departing from accustomed packaging practices.

It is desired to reduce packaging costs to a minimum consistent with the delivery at destination of all articles in as good condition as when received by WRA at origin; however, the following general rules should be observed:

(a) All finished and upholstered parts and pieces of comparatively new furniture in good condition (furniture not scratched or soiled) to be protected against damage and soiling, by crating and/or wrapping in fiberboard, burlap, or two or more thicknesses of heavy wrapping paper. It is often practicable and more economical to wrap in cardboard instead of crating.

(b) Mirrors to be removed from bureaus, vanities, chiffoniers, etc. and boxed, or crated with glass well protected.

(c) Book cases with glazed doors and showcases with glass doors and sides to be boxed, or shipped in strong crates with glass well protected.

(d) Desks with enclosed pedestals containing drawers on one or both sides of an open knee space, but without strong supporting cross pieces at the foot of the pedestals, to be crated to prevent loosening of the pedestals.

(e) Sewing machines and other articles having fixed cast-iron legs to be crated to protect the cast-iron parts and head.

(f) Cast-iron legs to be removed from stoves and similar articles.

(g) Heavy and unwieldy articles such as lawn mowers and hand trucks to be lashed to trunks or heavy boxes or stowed so that they can not shift in transit. Such articles should never be stowed next to fragile crates or articles.

(h) Steel bed rails to be bundled by a rope or wire tie at each end, and firmly wedged to prevent damage to other articles.

STOWAGE OF EVACUEE PROPERTY IN CARS

As there has been a relaxation of the packing protection, it is important that Evacuee Property be stowed in cars in a manner designed to reduce to a minimum the backward-forward and side-to-side shifting of any portion of the load while the car is in transit.

Experience has indicated that the following loading plan produces best results: First, to lay across the end of the car (side to side) a base of heavy articles (trunks, heavy wooden boxes and strong crates of comparable shape, not easily susceptible of damage) so closely stowed that there may be no side-to-side shifting. Build up a tier by a second layer of medium weight (but not fragile) articles, care being exercised to fill odd spaces with cartons, bedding, rolled mattresses, etc., which cannot be damaged by sway of the car, to prevent side shifting. The upper layer (to roof of car) may then be made up of light weight and fragile articles, compactly stowed and braced by snugly filling of odd spaces with light weight cartons, bedding, rolled mattresses, etc.

Successive tiers may be built up in like manner, except that it is often practicable to load in one end of the car (a) articles such as bed ends, bed springs, and box mattresses, standing

end on end on a layer or base of trunks, heavy boxes, etc., and (b) bulky but sturdy articles such as school desks and benches.

Inner spring mattresses should never be rolled. When cartons are available, it is preferred that they be shipped in cartons.

Articles such as sewing machines and tables should not be used as base for heavier articles.

No article should be stowed upon another article of less weight (per cubic foot) unless the lighter article is in a sufficiently strong crate or box.

Care should always be taken that light weight and fragile articles or packages are not used to prevent the shifting of heavy pieces or packages.

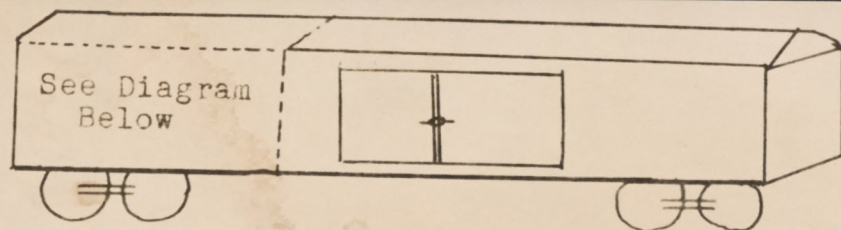
It is often the case that the manner of loading renders the unloading through one car door more difficult than through the other. In such instances, a notice (either placard or chalk) should be placed on the car, indicating through which door unloading should be begun, such as: "Unload from this side."

A copy of the manifest must, henceforth, be placed in every car. This must be complied with.

BRACING IN CARS OF PART CARLOADS

The attached photostat indicates the manner of bracing of a partially loaded car adopted for general use by professional consolidators of Household Goods. It is recommended as practicable for the bracing of part carload lots when being forwarded to a stop-off transit point for the completion of loading.

Supervisors and warehousemen are especially cautioned to give particular care to the bracing of property in a partly loaded car.

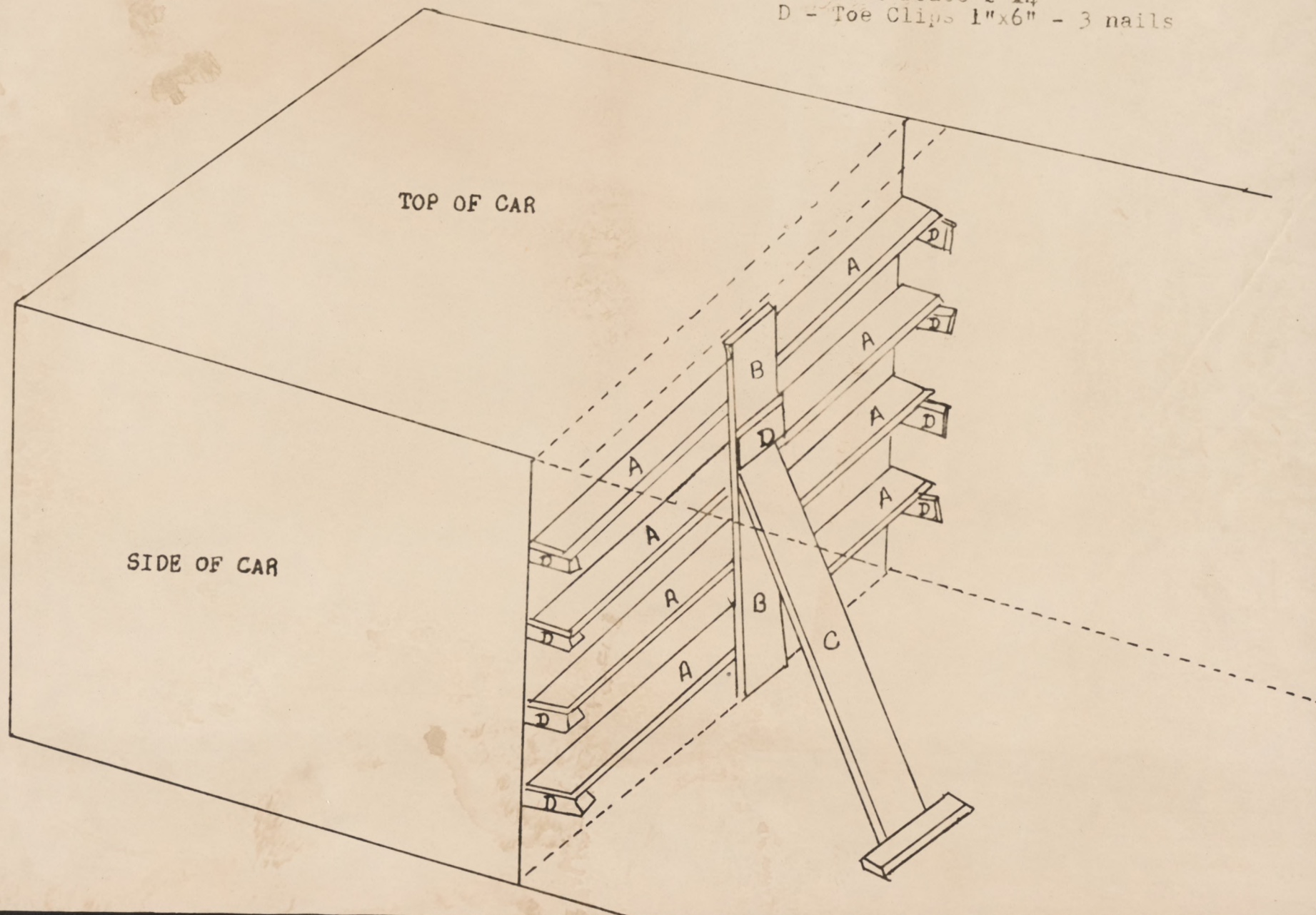


Use fairly good grade of lumber,
free of knots.

A - Cross Braces 2"x6" - 3 nails
B - Standing Brace 2"x6" - nailed
to Cross Braces

C - Foot Brace 2"x4"

D - Toe Clips 1"x6" - 3 nails



RETURN OF CONTRABAND

The problem of obtaining such articles as cameras and radios for evacuees has grown to be a major function of the Evacuee Property Office. The evacuees' desire to recover their belongings seems out of all proportion to their need for them and unfortunately we have not been able to provide prompt service due primarily to the fact that for many months we have had unfilled requests for shipment of household goods and other types of personal property that seem to us to be far more essential to the evacuees than would their items of contraband.

The regulations governing the surrender and the release of contraband are somewhat involved because they do not apply uniformly to all evacuees nor are they the same in all parts of the United States. It will probably help you to understand the situation if we go back and review how this situation first arose.

There were three sets of regulations from different sources proclaiming articles the possession of which was prohibited to certain individuals. The first was Presidential Proclamation No. 2525 of December 7, 1941, which prohibited all aliens of enemy countries from having in their possession fire-arms, shortwave radios, cameras, radio transmitters and several other items that were of relatively less importance and do not particularly concern us. The second regulation was Proclamation No. 3 of the Western Defense Command issued on March 24, 1942, setting out a list of items pretty much the same as that contained in the Presidential Proclamation but

prohibiting possession by any person of Japanese ancestry within the Western Defense Command. The Western Defense Command, as you probably know, comprises the eight westernmost states and extends as far as the eastern boundary of Montana, Idaho, Utah and Arizona. The third set of restrictions is found in WRA's own Administrative Manual in Chapter 50.3, and deals chiefly with the prohibition of shortwave radios in all centers.

Now a word about what was done with the articles surrendered by evacuees in accordance with these various rulings. Although the Presidential Proclamation was directed only toward aliens, a great many citizens turned in their property designated as contraband as there were aliens in their household and they were warned that failure to turn in this property would be considered a violation of the proclamation. The FBI was designated to enforce the order and the U. S. Marshal was directed to take custody of the surrendered property. Actually the collection of contraband was handled by the police departments, sheriff's offices and constables in various communities with the understanding that the U. S. Marshal would later take possession. We find that in some Federal districts the Marshal has transferred contraband from the various collection stations to his own office, but in a great many instances the contraband is still held by the local authorities and incidentally, this is a source of one of our present difficulties. When the Western Defense proclamation concerning contraband was issued, most of the persons of Japanese ancestry in the Western Defense Command had already surrendered their contraband so there was a relatively small quantity produced

as a result of the proclamation. Some of these articles were surrendered to the local authorities who collected contraband under the earlier proclamation but a considerable quantity was turned in BX offices of the U. S. Employment Service, which were being used by the WCCA in the evacuation program. The property turned in to the USES eventually found its way to warehouses under the control of the Civil Affairs Division of the Western Defense Command. In addition to the property voluntarily surrendered under the Presidential and military proclamations there was also a quantity of property gathered up by the military police at assembly centers and in relocation projects. These items for the most part were not included on any list of proclaimed contraband but were such articles as knives, hatchets, flashlights, phonograph records and any other articles that the police detail felt should not be allowed to remain the possession of the owners. This property was stored in various warehouses under the control of the Army but was later concentrated in Lyons Van and Storage Company warehouses in San Francisco and Los Angeles along with the contraband previously mentioned that was deposited at U.S. Employment offices.

The contraband proclamations are still in force, so in order for an evacuee to qualify for the release of any item there must be either a change of residence, a change of ownership, a change in the contraband item itself, or a change in the regulations. The most numerous requests for the release of contraband comes from evacuees who have relocated and are now living outside of the Western Defense

Command. If they are American citizens there are no restrictions on the possession of any of the articles designated as contraband. Citizen evacuees still in relocation centers but outside of the Western Defense Command are subject to only WRA regulations.

Evacuees residing within the Western Defense Command are not eligible for the return of any contraband, however, both the U.S. Attorney's office and the Western Defense Command have consented to the release of short-wave radios to project residents provided the receivers are rendered non-contraband by the removal of short-wave attachments before delivery to the owners.

Any evacuee, citizen or alien, regardless of residence, may apply for the release of contraband where ownership is being transferred to a person who is eligible to possess it.

Information has been supplied to all of the projects and more recently to the Relocation Supervisors instructing them in the preparation of applications for the release of contraband. In brief, this involves the execution of a Department of Justice Form on which the evacuee describes the articles requested and states the reasons for his request. This form when approved by the District U. S. Attorney is an authorization to the custodian to release the specified articles. In addition the evacuee must execute a Certification for the Return of Personal Property, Form WRA-250, in which he attests his citizenship and in the case of a project resident carries the approval of the project director

for the delivery of the item to the project. If WRA is to pick up the property and forward it to the owner there must also be executed two copies of WRA Form 156, requesting shipment, and the storage receipt issued by the custodian when the article was surrendered. In case a third party, such as a friend of the evacuee, is to obtain the property for him, Form WRA-153 is required, authorizing us to deliver the released papers to the party designated. Usually the evacuee has already made arrangements with that person and has sent him the storage receipt.

An evacuee in a relocation center who requests shipment of a short-wave radio must state on the Department of Justice Form that he agrees to the removal of the short-wave bands and in addition the Form 260 must contain a statement of the project director that the short-wave bands will be removed before release of the set to the owner.

For several months we have been telling you that requests for release of contraband surrendered at assembly centers or at relocation projects was being discussed with the military authorities and that a procedure was being worked out. A representative of the Civil Affairs Division has been working with this office and our Principal Attorney and we have now agreed among ourselves on what looks to be a satisfactory program. The memorandum is being presented to the Commanding General and to the Director of WRA for approval and until it is signed the procedure is, of course, inoperative. There is no reason, however, that we cannot give you an

idea of what is proposed. It is expected that the Western Defense Command will turn over to WRA the custody of all of the contraband that is now stored in the warehouses in Los Angeles and San Francisco, authorizing WRA to release articles whenever a release does not conflict with the regulations of the Western Defense Command. WRA will, of course, observe the provisions of the Presidential Proclamation and our own administrative manual in considering requests for the return of contraband.

The articles most frequently applied for are radios, cameras and Japanese language phonograph records. The return of radios and cameras will be subject to the same policies as the contraband surrendered to the U. S. Marshal. The Army will not approve the return of any Japanese language phonograph records or any firearms regardless of citizenship or residence of the owners. Articles that are not actually listed as contraband such as knives, hatchets, tools, are not restricted by the Army and can be returned at the discretion of WRA. When and if this memorandum is approved we expect to use practically the same procedure in the use of forms except that there will be no need for the Department of Justice form. Receipts for the requested articles will be required although in many cases the evacuees will have lost their receipts, in which case they should submit an affidavit to that effect describing the article and the circumstances under which it was surrendered.

Several special problems have been experienced in the field and I think a brief mention of them will be of interest to you.

In several cases evacuees have asked us to arrange for the release of property to be picked up by some friend and it has later developed that the friend does not wish to act in the matter. The Evacuee Property Officers on the projects should make sure that the evacuee has obtained the consent of the person designated before asking us to send the forms to that person for handling. Otherwise considerable loss of time results in getting back the executed forms so that WRA can complete the assignment.

Several cases have come to light where contraband has been lost or stolen while in the custody of the agency that collected it. We are not sure just what remedy is available to recompense the owners for loss. Possibly a claim can be filed against the U. S. Government or in some circumstances a claim against the custodian might be in order. This latter seems somewhat doubtful because most of the agencies who collected the material merely acted for the convenience of the marshal and it was anticipated that he would take the property off their hands in a short time. Because of the volume of property and its wide distribution, the marshal, at least in San Francisco, has never collected the property, but at the same time denies any responsibility since it has never actually been in his possession. We have not yet notified the four or five evacuees whose property has disappeared as we felt that we should have some helpful advice for them when notifying them of their loss. Possibly some of our attorneys can suggest how this problem can be handled.

In at least two places where a large amount of contraband was

stored, we are having difficulty in getting it released because the custodian claims that it is not his responsibility, and that he does not have the available help to sort and identify the items in his possession. This situation is true at Sacramento and at Monterey and will probably not be corrected until the U. S. Marshal takes over the property and brings it to San Francisco. He has promised that he will do this but will not say definitely just when he can get around to it.

Many evacuees are attaching money orders or currency to their applications and are asking that their property be forwarded to them by insured parcel post. We usually return the money with an explanation that this type of property will be forwarded charges prepaid by express. We have no convenient way of using parcel post and since WRA is willing to prepay the charges it seems unnecessary to use the evacuee's money.

We realize that many evacuees' requests for the return of contraband have been pending for as long as eight months. However, we have been making noticeable headway in cleaning up the backlog and it is our belief that within another month or two we will be current insofar as it is possible to get the property from the custodians.

File

INSTRUCTIONS RELATIVE TO SHIPMENT OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS FROM
PRIVATE WAREHOUSES TO GOVERNMENT RECEIVING WAREHOUSES

501.03

I. Central Receiving Warehouses have been established as follows:

CALIFORNIA

Fresno	414 "P" Street
Long Beach	324 East 4th Street
Los Angeles	119 South Central Avenue
Oakland	230 Madison Street
Sacramento	Front & "P" Streets ("P" St. Dock)
San Diego	410 Market Street
Santa Barbara	1025 Chapala Street
Stockton	517 North Hunter Street
Watsonville	Ford and Walker Streets

OREGON

Portland	733 N. W. Everett Street
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WASHINGTON

Seattle	208 Third Avenue South
Toppenish	Richey & Gilbert Warehouse

II. Procedure:

- A. As heretofore announced, only household goods and personal effects will be shipped from central receiving warehouses to Projects at government expense. Any shipments from private to government warehouses must be paid for by the evacuee.
- B. The evacuee is requested to select the central receiving warehouse nearest to the point of present storage and enter the address in the blank provided on Form WRA-83.
- C. The applicant should then examine the reverse side of the form to assure that the listing is correct. Any additions or deletions desired may be made.
- D. The applicant is then requested to sign the original and two copies.
- E. The original and one signed copy should be given to the interviewer for forwarding through the Project Office. The remaining two copies should be retained by the applicant.

F. The applicant should then correspond with the custodian of the property to issue instructions and make financial arrangements for movement of the goods to the central receiving warehouse. The remaining signed copy should be sent to the custodian with the request that it be forwarded to the designated receiving warehouse with the goods when delivered. Bundles, crates, or packages, etc., should be individually identified as to ownership, to prevent loss.