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FINAL REPORT OF DISTRICT OFFICE ACTIVITIES

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Description of the District:

When the Omaha office was first opened on May 1, 1943, the territory it covered was the eastern half of Nebraska and the eastern half of South Dakota, or more specifically the Nebraska counties of Boyd, Holt, Knox, Cedar, Dixon, Dakota, Thurston, Wayne, Pierce, Antelope, Garfield, Wheeler, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Burt, Boone, Valley, Dodge, Washington, Greeley, Sherman, Howard, Nance, Platte, Colfax, Butler, Saunders, Douglas, Merrick, Polk, Hall, Hamilton, York, Seward, Lancaster, Sarpy, Cass, Adams, Clay, Fillmore, Saline, Otoe, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Webster, Muckolls, Thayer, Jefferson, Pawnee, and Richardson; and the South Dakota counties of Campbell, McPherson, Brown, Marshall, Roberts, Walworth, Edmunds, Day, Grant, Potter, Faulk, Spink, Clark, Codington, Sully, Hyde, Deuel, Hamlin, Hand, Hughes, Beadle, Brookings, Kingsbury, Buffalo, Jerauld, Sanborn, Miner, Lake, Moody, Aurora, Hanson, McCook, Minnehaha, Davison, Douglas, Hutchinson, Turner, Lincoln, Charles, Mix, Bon Homme, Yankton, Clay, Union, and portion of Brule east of Missouri River. Later, the following Nebraska counties were added to the Omaha territory: Keyapaha, Brown, Rock, Blaine, Loup, Custer, Dawson, Buffalo, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Furnas, Harlan, and Franklin. These counties had previously been a part of the Scottsbluff, Nebraska, District, now abolished.

While no section of Iowa has ever been a part of the Omaha District, an oral agreement was made between the Relocation Officer of the Des Moines,

Iowa, District and Relocation Officer of the Omaha District to the effect that the Omaha Relocation Officer could work in and attempt to make job placements in Council Bluffs, Iowa, just across the Missouri River from Omaha, and at other points along the extreme western border of the State of Iowa. Mention is made of this fact because an unfavorable incident arose at Hamburg, Iowa, which was handled by the Omaha District Officer, and discussed later herein, and which otherwise might not be mentioned in the report submitted by the Des Moines, Iowa, District.

The principal Nebraska cities are Omaha, population of 240,000; Lincoln (Capital city), population 85,000; Grand Island, population 20,000; and Fremont, population 12,500. In South Dakota, the principal cities are Sioux Falls, population 41,000; Aberdeen, population 15,000; Mitchell, population 12,000, and Huron, population 11,000.

The area east of the Missouri River in South Dakota served by this office is a diversified farming area in that there is livestock on nearly every farm. Most farmers have milk cows and raise chickens and hogs. The northern part of the South Dakota area is noted for its production of hard spring wheat, and corn is raised in the southeastern corner of the state. South Dakota has a reputation of being one of the best hunting states in the Union.

The type of farming in South Dakota is unfamiliar to the average resettler; and although the soil is rich, rainfall is a limiting factor to crop production. Therefore, few persons relocated to that part of the district. There was some seasonal work for a straw baling company at

Mitchell, South Dakota, which attracted about twenty-three men during the summer of 1943; and during the school term of 1943-1944, approximately twenty-one students attended colleges at Sioux Falls, Huron, Mitchell, Aberdeen, and Yankton. Two girls were in training as Cadet Nurses at Mitchell, South Dakota; another Cadet Nurse was in training at a hospital in Aberdeen.

The principal industries in this part of Nebraska are farming, cattle feeding and dairying, sheep raising, and manufacturing of food products. Omaha achieved the reputation during the fall of 1945 as being the largest livestock market in the world. This section of Nebraska has also had a good share of defense industries. Several farm families were attracted to the Tri-County (irrigated) Area of Nebraska which comprises the counties of Dawson, Gosper, and Phelps. Many single men, especially Issei, went to work on a sheep ranch at Cozad, Nebraska. Most of the persons going to Lincoln were those who desired to attend the State University of Nebraska, Wesleyan (Methodist), and Union College (Seventh Day Adventist). Omaha attracted the largest number of resettlers because there were opportunities in practically every line of endeavor, and some of the defense factories were open to Nisei at top wages.

Community Participation:

Church and social groups as well as interested and tolerant individuals came forward immediately, some on their own initiative, to participate in the relocation program. Outstanding assistance in the War Relocation Program was contributed by Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld of the

Temple Israel Church; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Monsky; Rt. Rev. Msgr. E. J. Flanagan of Boys Town; Dr. and Mrs. Dana T. Warren; and Mr. and Mrs. S. K. Yoden, a Japanese family, who had resided in Omaha for about twenty years.

Citizens Relocation Committees were organized in Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney, Holdrege, Bertrand and Lexington, Nebraska. There were no committees of this type established in South Dakota since there were so few resettlers going to that part of the district.

The Lincoln Committee has been the most active committee in that they have assumed a definite responsibility--they have found jobs, handled housing problems, and assisted in educational problems. They also have a list of speakers available to speak to interested groups whenever called upon. Several Nisei were among the speakers; however some of them, having finished their college courses, have gone on to fine positions in the East or returned to their former homes on the West Coast. Reverend Robert E. Drew, Director of Wesley Foundation of Methodist Student Work at the University of Nebraska, who was named Chairman of the Lincoln Citizens Relocation Committee, deserves special mention at this point for the exceptional assistance rendered and courage extended to resettlers in Lincoln; and much credit is also due to Mr. Fenner E. King for his participation in the relocation program.

The Omaha Citizens Relocation Committee consisted of four sub-committees, namely Social Adjustment, Public Relations, Housing, and Employment; and these were called upon by WRA for help on many occasions. One of the most important acts of assistance rendered by the Omaha Citizens

Relocation Committee, which was then headed by Reverend W. B. Waltmire, Pastor of Pearl Methodist Church, was to bring about the opening of the University of Omaha to students of Japanese nationality.

This district office has always had the complete cooperation of civic officials, church groups, and social agencies. Both the YWCA and YMCA have participated in the relocation program to the extent that resettlers in Lincoln and Omaha have found these agencies to be most helpful in the planning of recreation, counselling, housing, and employment. The State Department of Public Assistance, various County Assistance Bureaus, Community Welfare Councils, Family Welfare Association, Travelers Aid, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and Red Cross are all agencies that have given complete cooperation to resettlers.

When the office was first opened in Omaha, various labor unions took the stand that they would not employ evacuees for the reason that many of the members had sons in the Guadalcanal region and various South Pacific points and "while there may be a shortage of skilled labor, we do not think it is necessary to put our enemies into war industries," the foregoing quoted from a letter written by the Local Business Agent of I.A.M. to an Omaha machine shop. A Labor Union Committee, composed of members of the various union organizations was then formed, through the efforts of the Relocation Officer, to act as an advisory committee on placing evacuees in Union and Non-Union shops and business firms; to help develop placement where labor was needed by working with the business managers of the local in which placement was concerned; to advise as to assisting in labor shortages in the various industries and business

firms; and to advise on working conditions and other information about industries where evacuee labor might be placed. After investigation and survey by the Labor Union Advisory Committee, an agreement was reached whereby no Japanese-American (citizen) would be placed by WRA in any industry wherein union contract was involved without first notifying the specific Union and obtaining their consent thereto. As a result carpenters, truckers, mechanics, and packing-house workers were able to obtain employment in Union shops, and we especially wish to commend the action taken by the CIO in making this possible.

The committee at Bertrand was especially interested in relocating the people in the rural area around the town of Bertrand, whose population is only 623. The farmers were planning to increase their acreage in sugar beets and realized the need for a larger supply of labor. They were also anxious to bring in Japanese to build up the community with truck gardening and fruit-growing farmers who had experience in irrigation. Few resettler farmers, however, answered the call.

Public Acceptance:

Sentiment toward the evacuees in the entire district is unusually good. The people here are open-minded, conservative, home-loving, with the attitude of "Live and Let Live." There are persons with definite race prejudices, but fortunately, they are in the minority.

When the office was first opened, the Relocation Officer made it his first official duty to call upon the Mayor of Omaha, the County Sheriff, and various other city officials and civic leaders to acquaint them with the relocation program. It is felt that this prepared them

for the resettlement of evacuees in this district and gave them an incentive to assist wherever possible.

Early in the program, none of the schools of nursing in Nebraska would accept Japanese-American young women. After a series of conferences by the members of the Omaha and Lincoln Citizens Relocation Committees, together with WRA officials and the State Board of Nurse Examiners, opposition was overcome and the matter was left to the discretion of the individual hospitals. The Methodist Conference then passed a resolution asking the Methodist hospitals to accept girls, otherwise qualified, for nurses training "without regard to race or color." Few girls, however, applied for the training.

One of the first incidents in which this office became involved was the protest on the part of several persons in southeastern Iowa to the purchase of a 612-acre farm near Hamburg, Iowa, by three Japanese-Americans. This occurred in December of 1943. While the locale of this incident was not within the territory under jurisdiction of the Omaha office, it was handled by Omaha District Relocation Officers and the Relocation Supervisor at Kansas City, Missouri, the Omaha officers having come into the picture by reason of the property having been in the hands of a Lincoln, Nebraska, real estate firm.

The owner of the farm indicated that in his opinion there would be no objections raised to the sale of his property to persons of Japanese nationality; however, as the story became known, a mass indignation meeting was held with about 150 or 200 farmers and townspeople present.

A practicing physician and surgeon just across the state line in Missouri who was also a newspaper editor and the district representative to the Missouri legislature, called the meeting. His paper carried an editorial written by him under the caption "Japs to Invade Atchison County." Petitions of protest, according to reports, had been circulated by the American Legion Posts at Sidney and Hamburg, Iowa. A resolution was drawn up by a committee composed of local prominent people and sent by wire to the WRA Director at Washington, which read in part: "A large gathering of several hundred citizens of this community have voted unanimously to petition the WRA not to locate any Japanese in this community. In our opinion, it is very essential that immediate action be started to stop the relocation of any 'Japs' in Atchison County, Missouri, or Fremont County, Iowa." The Omaha Relocation Officer was so heckled by the group when he endeavored to speak that it was suggested by the Chairman of the meeting that he give up the attempt.

At a second meeting, attended by 24 of the local residents most interested in the matter, together with Omaha WRA Officers, the Relocation Supervisor of Kansas City and the Regional Reports Officer, the Mayor of Hamburg, Iowa, acted as Chairman. Iowa State Senator, Carl O. Sjulín, is reported to have injected into the meeting the thought that a vast real estate coup was being made by the Lincoln Real Estate firm, who was handling the sale transaction. It was his opinion that since this firm was acting agent for several thousand acres of Missouri River bottom land, they might be taking this opportunity to unload and sell land to others of Japanese

nationality, thereby sponsoring "another Tokyo." "This, we will not have," he stated emphatically. It was explained by the WRA officials that they had no knowledge of any plans that the real estate firm may have; but that WRA was merely interested in a program of assimilation. The angle on the real estate firm, however, continued to hold sway and those present remained rigid in their decision not to permit resettlement of Japanese Americans in their community. After the meeting adjourned, some of the people remained and a general discussion followed and a spirit of friendliness was injected; however, it was the opinion of WRA officials that it was folly to suppose that relocation of Japanese Americans could be accomplished without more public relations work, first preparing a community to the point of securing an invitation from its populace to relocate people of Japanese ancestry within their midst. The final outcome of the incident was that the transaction was abandoned and that the money advanced by the Nisei 'as prospective purchasers was returned to them by the real estate firm.

The next incident arose at Grand Island, Nebraska, when a petition signed by 159 persons of that community was presented to the Mayor and City Council in April 1944, asking that such steps be taken as may be necessary to "initiate an exclusion law for members of the Japanese race having more than 25% Japanese blood. It is becoming increasingly apparent to the undersigned that Nebraska will eventually be overrun with members of the Japanese race unless they are excluded of citizenship and ownership of property."

In a letter to the Mayor of Grand Island, the United States District Attorney, called attention to the probable violation of Section 51,

Title 18, U. S. Code, and stated that he knew of no law which would permit the city authorities or anyone to compel the people to leave so long as they were conducting themselves as law-abiding citizens. In reply thereto, the Mayor stated that he had received protests from local people, when a Japanese family proposed to purchase a home in Grand Island. Furthermore, he felt the WRA had not kept their word to him when they explained they would not relocate persons of Japanese nationality in Grand Island "unless and until a definite plan was approved by the city," because shortly thereafter he learned that several Japanese people had been moved into the city. The Mayor stated that "it was very plain that the program of the Relocation Administration would change very materially the economic structure of the City and very shortly our social structure."

The Omaha Relocation Officer met with the City Council to discuss the matter further, and at that meeting a counter-petition was introduced, signed by 300 students of the Grand Island High School and school patrons. The petition stated: "We, the undersigned, students of Grand Island Senior High School and voters in this community do respectfully petition the City Council of this City of Grand Island not to pass any legislation which would deny any group of people living in this community their constitutional right of owning property."

A series of conferences were had by WRA officials with the Mayor and the City Council, and a committee called "The Committee for Fair Play" was organized among tolerant and broad-minded citizens of Grand Island, who were to deal with the City Council. The editor of the largest

local newspaper was a member of this committee, and various ministers took a firm stand against the intolerance of the petitioners as well as the City officials.

Little by little the feeling died down, the family completed the purchase of their home, other families of Japanese nationality moved into the city, and at one time about twenty Nisei men were employed at the QO or Cornhusker Ordnance Plant near Grand Island.

In March of 1945, an incident arose in what is known as the "Gibbon Shelton area" of Nebraska. It involved the removing of two Japanese-American families, one Japanese-American workman, and one Japanese alien from the farm of a prominent farmer and landowner. The farm was located to the south of and between the towns of Shelton and Gibbon. These persons had all been employed by the owner of the farm until in March of 1945, because of ill health, he leased the farm to a partnership firm. This company retained the workers since their services were known to be satisfactory. The principal in the case, Hi Korematsu, Nisei, was named as manager of farm operations and he was to supply the necessary labor to operate the 800-acre farm on which it was planned to grow 200 acres of sugar beets, 160 acres of early potatoes, 50 acres of sweet corn, 50 acres of cabbage, 50 acres of carrots, a considerable green tomato acreage, and the balance in field corn.

When plans became known, a number of the local citizens became alarmed in that there may be a colony of Japanese in that community. Threats were made by six persons who visited the farm and told Hi Korematsu

that he and the rest of the Japanese workers and their families would have to leave the community within three days. A meeting was called by the local implement dealer for the purpose of determining what could be done about having the Japanese people removed from that territory. The meeting was attended by approximately 100 farmers, business and professional men in the community. A motion was passed to draw up a petition to present to the lessors of the farm, and accordingly the following petition was drawn:

"We, the undersigned citizens of the community of Shelton and in Buffalo County, Nebraska, hereby respectfully request Camp and Niedfelt, Platte Valley Construction Company, Gibbon Farms Company, or any other person or employers of labor of Japanese ancestry to consider our urgent desire for the betterment and continued progress of the agricultural production and improvement of the community of Buffalo County by discouraging the migration of labor of such Japanese ancestry into our community which would create a steadily growing colony of them and we believe that such employers would assist us greatly, having in mind the future and steadily growing improvement of our community, if they would desist from employing such labor--and desist from leasing land in our community to such persons of Japanese ancestry."

There were 91 signers on the petition, including the County Attorney and the County Sheriff.

A committee of six took the petition to Messrs. Camp and Niedfelt, operators of the farm in question, to see if they would remove the Japanese-Americans; but Camp and Niedfelt informed them they would have no part in moving these people and if the committee was insistent about moving the Japanese out of the community, they would have to do it themselves. When the committee called on Mr. Korematsu asking him and the others of Japanese nationality to leave, they gave the following as their reasons:

- (1) That it would be bad for Japanese Americans when the soldiers came back to the Platte Valley area from the Pacific War theaters.
- (2) That the farmers of Platte Valley were afraid that the Japanese would colonize in the valley when they recognized the value of the land and locality. Thus, they would drive the local farmers out because they could live cheaper.
- (3) That the Japanese could produce more per acre than the local farmers.
- (4) If California didn't want the Japanese-American people, they didn't want them either.

From the foregoing reasons as given by the committee, it will be readily seen that there was a feeling of economic jealousy which we believe was the underlying motive for this incident.

There were a series of meetings held attended by WRA officials; and again the Ministerial Association came forward with a denunciation of such intolerance, and the editor of the local newspaper at Grand Island wrote some

splendid editorials in behalf of the Japanese resettlers. Since Gibbon and Shelton are only a few miles from Grand Island, Nebraska, many of the persons who assisted War Relocation officials in the Grand Island case, came to their aid in this instance. Mr. Milton Beckmann, Superintendent of Schools at Gibbon, Nebraska, denounced the attitude of the petitioners and wrote letters which were published by various newspapers in this district, in which he decried the intolerance that seemed rampant in that community. The United States District Attorney again took part by calling the attention of the petitioners to probable violation of the Civil Liberties Code.

The resettlers felt that they did not care to stay where they were not wanted, and since other farmers and ranchers sent offers of employment to them, they all left the community and are happily located on farms within a radius of fifty miles of the scene of the incident.

Even though the aforementioned incidents did occur, it left no unfavorable impression upon the general public in this district. Each time an incident occurred, the Omaha WRA office was deluged with offers from persons desiring to employ the Japanese Americans on their farms or in their businesses.

Employment:

The first resettlers of Japanese ancestry in this district were employed at Father Flanagan's Boys Home, Boys Town, Nebraska. They were assigned to positions on the Welfare and Counseling staff, stenographic and clerical positions, and to farm and dairy operations. Relocation Officers made a canvass of business firms, attempting to develop job offers. As

a result, offers came from packing houses and food manufacturing plants, hotels and cafes, bakeries, garages, jewelry stores, hospitals, photographic studios, factories having various defense contracts, and private homes desiring domestics and gardeners. A firm in Omaha, manufacturing war machinery, at one time employed seven Nisei; and in a letter from one of the officials of the firm to the WRA office, he made the following statement: "I told you that these Japanese boys were doing an excellent job as employees for our plant and I can tell you honestly that they are hard workers, very dependable and I think they are among the best workmen we have in the plant." Many of the workers in defense factories during the war have been retained on the company payroll and are now engaged in reconversion work.

Almost without exception, employers have declared the workers to be capable and dependable, and have commended them for their ability to get along with their co-workers. The middle west has never been a strong area for the labor unions, due to the fact that it is not predominately industrialized. Both the CIO and AFL unions are represented in Omaha. The CIO has worked whole-heartedly with the WRA office, but some of the AFL locals have not been so cooperative.

Wage scales in Omaha are not as high as in larger industrial cities. In fact, the wage scale throughout the district is relatively low. However, the cost of living is likewise low.

The relationship of WRA and the United States Employment Service in this district has been most friendly. At the outset, the WRA office handled practically all job placements; however, some of the resettlers

went to the USES offices of their own accord, and they always reported a cordial reception. As early as 1944, a cooperative arrangement was in force with the USES offices in Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island, Nebraska; and educational contacts had been made with USES offices in Fremont, Hastings, and Kearney, Nebraska; and Huron, Aberdeen, Mitchell, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In June of 1945 when liquidation plans for the War Relocation Authority were being formulated, the Relocation Officer took steps to transfer all placements, except domestic and agricultural, to the USES offices. In Lincoln, the Manager of the office assigned a member of his staff as Special Interviewer. In Omaha where USES has always worked with WRA practically from the beginning of the WRA office, they furnished information on firms needing employees. Such firms were then contacted by the Relocation Officer to determine if they would be willing to accept Nisei or Issei. One of the reasons for this early cooperation was the fact that Mr. R. A. Hand, Manager of the Omaha USES office, had previously worked with the placement of seasonal evacuee workers in western Nebraska; and he was quite familiar with and sympathetic to the WRA program. The Omaha USES office agreed to accept the task of finding employment for all resettler applicants either on first interview or repeat. Cards from the WRA office indicating employers willing to hire Issei or Nisei were left with the USES office so that they might transfer such information to their records. A member of the staff was specially designated to counsel applicants and to interview prospective employers, thereby giving the resettler as much personal and individualized attention as possible. In cases where

language difficulties might arise, the USES office was advised to call upon certain resettlers in the community who would be willing to interpret.

The purpose of this plan was to acquaint resettlers with the service rendered by the USES and to also acquaint USES personnel with the fact that the resettlers would look to them entirely for assistance in securing employment. The Managers of the various USES offices were most receptive to the plan.

Agricultural opportunities were developed by contacting County Extension Agents. Through their cooperation, placements were made for seasonal work, year-around farm labor, and on share-crop basis. Twenty resettler families were on farms in 1944, and a real effort was made to interest evacuee farmers in the Tri-County Irrigation District of South-Central Nebraska. This comprised the counties of Dawson, Gosper, and Phelps. The Tri-County Area had considerable to offer, but since it was a relatively newly-developed project, many resettlers felt the future a bit uncertain. Also, it is believed that the incident which occurred in an adjoining county discouraged newcomers; and as previously related, some farm families moved from that locality as a result of it. One of the farmers in the Tri-County Area, however, has made a real success of his share-crop operations. He resides with his family on a 160-acre farm near Holdrege, Nebraska, and in 1945 had a bumper potato crop, his share being 180 one-hundred pound sacks which he sold at \$2.35 per sack. In addition to the potatoes, he raises other vegetables, sorghum and sugar beets. His younger children attend the local high school and rural school where they have been most favorably received.

This district has experienced no difficulties in finding suitable employment, urban or rural, for the resettlers. At all times, there have been more job offers than persons to fill the openings.

Business Establishments:

There have been few business ventures by resettlers in this community. One family purchased a small cafe from a long-time resident Japanese in Omaha, the financing of which they handled themselves. The same is true of a greenhouse and florist business, which is operated by an Issei and his family in Lincoln. Both businesses are prospering.

Community Adjustment:

Resettlers seemed to experience very little difficulty in becoming assimilated in this district. With the exception of the three incidents previously described, they were able to assume normal living conditions. They were welcome in the schools, churches, theaters, and other public places of amusement and recreation.

A questionnaire was sent out by the Relocation Officer to the resettlers early in 1944 to ascertain their interest in forming an evacuee social and advisory committee. The response was whole-heartedly in favor of such a group, and in May of that year the Omaha office was commended by the Kansas City Area Office for having organized the first evacuee advisory and reception committee in the area. This group carried the name of "Omaha Reception Committee" and has been the major factor in making the resettlers feel at home in this community. The group has sponsored monthly social functions for both Issei and Nisei from the time

of its organization. In November of 1944, they arranged a "Good-Will" banquet, honored guests being City officials and prominent persons in the Omaha and Lincoln area as a tribute to their spirit of friendliness, and an expression of thanks for their kindness and cooperation. Over 200 persons attended the banquet, the main speaker of the evening being Sgt. Ben Kuroki, who was then stationed at the Harvard, Nebraska, Air Base.

Through the joint efforts of the Relocation Officer and Mr. S. J. Gordon, Director of Adult Education of Granada Center on tour of several districts, the Omaha Schools of Vocational Education in connection with the War Production Training Program were opened to resettlers. Adult classes were in arc welding, machine shop, wood pattern-making, and power machine operation. For boys and girls the classes were machine shop, wood pattern-making, wood tool-making, and power sewing machine operation. The classes were given at a local high school, and were attended by several resettlers. As a result of the training received in the arc welding course, one of the Nisei has become top-wage welder with an Omaha concern.

Both public and private welfare agencies have been most generous in offering of their services. Under the plan of Resettlement Assistance, a smooth-working referral system was adopted at a meeting of various social agency representatives, Social Security Board representatives, and WRA officials. All concurred in the plan whereby the WRA office, upon receipt of a Resettlement Assistance case, would refer the same to the State Department of Public Assistance, and that office in turn would submit

the case for investigation, approval and final handling to the appropriate County Assistance office. Douglas County (Omaha) and Lancaster County (Lincoln) Assistance Bureaus rendered financial aid in emergency medical cases; assisted in arrangements of and provided financial aid for funerals; assisted in the purchase of furniture; arranged for hospitalization of tuberculosis patients; paid school tuition for unattached minors relocated in Omaha, and gave counseling in numerous and sundry cases. Travelers Aid has been called upon for assistance in connection with traveling. As a whole, the resettlers have been very self-sufficient; and they have not, up to the present time, had to avail themselves of many of the services offered by the private welfare agencies. The agencies, however, stand ready to give assistance at any time requested.

Both the YMCA and YWCA have extended the use of their facilities for the various meetings and socials of the Omaha Reception Committee. Both maintain employment and housing registries. Many of the single men are housed at the YM and participate in the recreational programs. The YM has also offered the use of their Chapel to the Issei group for any religious services they might wish to conduct.

Many of the Nisei girls are members of the YWCA, and a special invitation has been extended to the younger girls to become members of the Girl Reserves. The Girl Scouts organization and the Boy Scouts have also invited the membership of the resettlers.

Various churches have offered the use of their club rooms to the resettlers, and the First Central Congregational Church has been especially

active in the social adjustment of the evacuees. Mrs. Martha Friesen, former Director of Religious Education at the church, took considerable interest in the program. She worked continuously with her Sunday School classes to familiarize the younger members of the church with the problems confronting the Japanese Americans. Inter-racial meetings and programs have been held, and a number of the evacuees were invited to participate. Among other projects, the young people of this church have helped to pay the expenses of a Nisei girl who attends Doane College at Crete, Nebraska. The new Director of Religious Education at the church is Mrs. C. K. Ross, who is also Chairman of the Inter-racial Committee, and a most active member of the Omaha Citizens Relocation Committee.

Housing:

While the housing situation in this district has always been acute, the relocatees have been able to find living quarters after diligent search, often bettering themselves after they have become known in and familiar with the community. There has been no concentration of persons of Japanese nationality in any one section. The people have found houses and apartments in all parts of the city. In addition to the assistance given them by the WRA office, the YWCA and YMCA have furnished housing leads; and some of the real estate rental agencies have been most cooperative. Several of the newcomers have purchased their homes, having themselves arranged for loans through local concerns.

Early in the program, there was some discussion relative to the opening of a hostel but such plans never materialized. Therefore,

temporary housing was provided by the YMCA for single men; Salvation Army offered housing for women; and there were many fine, clean private homes offering room and board to single men and women. Families were able to secure temporary housing in either of two clean hotels in Omaha at a nominal charge; however, all hotels were open to any of the resettlers who might wish to remain there. In Lincoln, Reverend Drew provided housing through the Wesley Foundation for any of the students; and in some cases he was able to provide temporary housing for families.

The Omaha Housing Authority (Logan-Fontenelle Homes and Terrace Garden Homes) offered their facilities to any resettlers who could meet the qualifications as to income; and the Federal Public Housing Authority cooperated to the fullest extent. Several families are now housed in FPHA units.

Other Problems and Activities:

The Omaha World-Herald, the Grand Island Independent, and the Lincoln Star and Journal deserve special commendation for the fine cooperation they have always rendered the WRA office, and for publishing many splendid editorials in support of the rights of this minority group.

In the fall and winter of 1944-1945, the Relocation Officer conducted an extensive visual educational program by showing the film "A Challenge to Democracy" to all the high schools in the City of Omaha, to PTA groups, church organizations, private clubs, and clubs of business and professional men and women. The film was also shown to several groups in Lincoln, Grand Island, and Kearney, Nebraska.

Outstanding Communities:

Omaha, Nebraska, attracted the largest number of resettlers where there was employment offered in all fields of work. The employer of the largest number of resettlers is Mr. Noel Cover, Cozad, Nebraska, owner and operator of a large ranch and sheep farm. There are now about fifty men, both Issei and Nisei, on his payroll. The single men are housed in dormitories, eating their meals at a community mess hall. Families have houses or apartments, and some are temporarily residing in trailer units.

Administration:

The Omaha office of the War Relocation Authority was opened on May 1, 1943, with Walter N. Parmeter as Relocation Officer and Mrs. Adah L. Eier as his assistant. Mr. Parmeter served in that capacity until June 1, 1944, at which time he resigned; and Mrs. Eier resigned on September 23, 1944. Mr. Myrle L. White was Relocation Officer and worked out of Lincoln, Nebraska, during the period April 22, 1943, to December 15, 1943. Mr. William K. Holland began employment with WRA on March 16, 1944. He was employed as Assistant Relocation Supervisor of the Kansas City Area with his official station being Kansas City, Missouri. Effective July 1, 1944, his station was transferred to Omaha, and his title was automatically changed to Relocation Officer. He served the Omaha office in this capacity until April 16, 1945, when he was transferred to the position of Relocation Program Officer, Tule Lake Center, Newell, California. Mr. Jay H. Sheldon was Associate Relocation Officer in the Omaha office from April 3, 1944,

to June 24, 1944. Claude C. Cornwall was appointed Relocation Officer, effective June 1, 1945, and resigned as of September 4, 1945.

Mrs. Frances H. Hotz was named as Assistant to Mr. William K. Holland on November 1, 1944, to fill the vacancy left upon the resignation of Mrs. Adah L. Eier. Mrs. Hotz served in this capacity, and as Acting Relocation Officer until October 7, 1945, when she was named Relocation Officer. Miss Lucie M. Kawafune joined the Omaha staff on August 4, 1943, as Clerk-Stenographer and served faithfully until the closing of the Omaha office on February 1, 1946.

