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Procurement Section

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FINAL REPORT
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION--PROCUREMENT SECTION

by
Alton O. Mead

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GRANADA PROJECT
Amache, Colorado

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
GRANADA PROJECT

HISTORY OF PROCUREMENT

BY

ALTON O. MEAD

The Procurement Unit of the Granada Relocation Center became operative early in September, 1942. Prior to that time, Procurement was handled through the Denver WRA office and the OEM. Considerable quantities of equipment and supplies were received from such agencies as NYA and CCC. Arrangements for these transfers were made by Denver and Washington. They resulted in our receiving much that was badly needed to get the Center into operation. Confusion best describes our situation in the early months of Center procurement. From this we gradually emerged with an orderly procedure. Sources of supplies were developed, a system of filing and recording was worked out, personnel added to the staff, extensive catalog files were built up and policies and procedures were established. Each purchase, contract or lease was presented to us in those early days as an emergency. Units and sections had not been in operation long enough to be able to foresee their requirements. As needs developed, they were rushed to us for action. Because we were not properly organized and did not have trained help, our work in many instances appeared slow. However, there is no case on record where one of our people suffered because

procurement failed to function. An example of how these needs came to us and how they were met occurred one Saturday morning in September, 1942. Mr. Harbison, Assistant Project Director in charge of operations, rushed into our office with the information that we were due for a terrible epidemic of sickness unless we "get our kitchens cleaned up immediately". We asked what he required and were advised that he needed such items as mops, mop buckets, fly spray, scouring powder, etc. We drove about 140 miles that day to Pueblo, Colorado, loaded our car to capacity and had the required items on the Center the following Sunday morning.

Doodstuffs were secured through facilities of the Kansas City Quartermaster. The cooperation and service rendered by that agency deserves the highest praise. Medical and hospital supplies were secured through commercial sources until the Denver Medical Depot was established, after which our requirements were supplied by them. Noteworthy among the Army agencies that rendered excellent service to us was Camp Carson near Colorado Springs, Colorado. Many items which were not available from Commercial sources could be secured from them. As an example, when the Army directed all automotive equipment of 1939 and older as too old for service to them, Mr. Smith, Equipment Maintenance Supervisor, and the Procurement Officer were permitted to go through the yard of serviced equipment and select our own cars and trucks. We chose three passenger cars, two

ambulances, two dump trucks, fourteen pickups, and twenty-one stake trucks, all of which were tagged for us and which we secured a few days later. Another example, one of our large GMC semi trucks was out of service because of a cracked head. Ten to twelve weeks was the best service we could get on a replacement. Camp Carson permitted us to requisition a new GMC engine and our truck was again in operation in about three days.

Recently the Army Service Forces at San Antonio, Texas made our coal contracts and the U. S. Engineers at Denver secured lumber for us. However, in the first months of our existence, these items were handled through our own office. Prior to the time that the contracts were made by the Army, we were obliged to take vigorous action to provide our center coal. Originally the Army Engineers of Omaha, Nebraska, assured us that they would make a survey of our heating requirements and would provide us with coal to meet our needs. Nothing happened. The OEM, which at that time was our parent organization, was called upon for assistance. They entered into a contract with a retailer located in Lamar, Colorado for 2,450 tons of coal at \$9.50 a ton delivered on the project. After signing the contract, the vendor discovered that his mine could not provide the coal. It was then up to us. We secured coal on telephone solicitation for approximately \$7.50 a ton laid down on the project.

Our filing and recording system was constantly under fire

until finally our exact needs were determined and a workable system installed. This was used until Mr. Rose of the Auditing Staff strongly recommended that we use his system. After several months trial, we were obliged to go back to our old system since it was found that we had neither the supplies, the space, nor the trained personnel to operate the elaborate system recommended.

Sources of supply were developed by letter, telephone and direct contact. It was soon discovered that two things were strongly objected to by most vendors. First, the so-called red tape involved in preparing their certified invoices, and second, the usual delay experienced in receiving their pay after selling to a Government agency. We were quite successful in assisting them with their invoices and by exercising close supervision over procedures within the center, we were able to secure payment within a reasonable time. Vendors soon learned that our methods of business were acceptable to them and careful attention to the above mentioned points soon resulted in most cordial relation between our center and the vendors of our trade territory. A noteworthy example of how relations between a Government agency and a vendor were maintained is our experience with the Southeast Colorado Coop at Holly, Colorado. This firm buys grain and seels many articles required by their farmer members including an extensive line of repair parts for farm machinery. We sent out messenger to this firm

for a small order of repair parts and they bluntly refused to sell to us. The Procurement Officer called on the manager of this firm a few days later in an effort to learn just why he had refused to serve us. It developed that a member of the WRA staff who had no purchase authority had some six months before asked this firm to secure two plow beams for us. The vendor still had them on his floor with little chance of selling them elsewhere since we had the only equipment in this territory that they would fit. We promptly arranged to take the beams, and further clarified the situation with this vendor as to who had authority to make purchases. Afterward we were able to purchase many repair items that were urgently needed and very critical. This firm also was the best bidder we could secure for our surplus grain which was for sale.

Our catalog file consisting of several hundred catalogs from manufacturers, jobbers, and wholesalers, proved to be of great value in verifying specifications, estimating costs and locating sources of supply. We found that a very large percentage of firms were willing to supply us with a copy of their current catalog wherever they were available. Of course, many firms discontinued issuing catalogs for the duration and we found many of these were able to supply us with a catalog of a former issue, which, in many instances, met our requirements quite satisfactorily. In the closing days of this center, these catalogs again proved their value in providing the auditors and

and property clerks with specific information regarding specifications and terminology applicable to the several items which we have on hand in our property units and warehouses.

The matter of personnel was one that received major attention in our office. Approximately thirty people have been on our payroll since the opening of the center three years ago. It was impossible to find persons who were trained in our particular line of work. It, therefore, became necessary for us to choose persons of proper educational background wherever available and give them such training as was required to fit them for our work. We were also confronted with the need of encouraging our people to relocate as rapidly as possible. Thirteen evacuee employees is the largest number we had at any one time. Many of our former employees are now relocated in very satisfactory positions and in several instances they have been kind enough to write us letters expressing their appreciation for the training they had received while here. We consider this one of the best pieces of work we have been able to accomplish during the term of our office.