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Administrative Management Division
Final Reports Ben F. Runyan

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History of Administrative Management
GILA RIVER PROJECT
RIVERS, ARIZONA
Division by
Ben F. Ruzon

May 11, 1945

I arrived at Gila River during August, 1943 to serve in the capacity of the Assistant Project Director in charge of the Administrative Management Division. The Administrative Management Division consists of the housekeeping, or servicing functions of the project. Nothing is produced or dispensed with in this division except service.

At the time of my entrance the division was made up of the following sections: Finance, Procurement, Mess Operations, Statistics, Personnel and Office Services. Due to the fact that the Assistant Director's position had been vacant for quite some time, the division was more or less in a disorganized state. Early observation also disclosed that it was very much understaffed. In spite of the above, however, by and large the work was being turned out in a fairly satisfactory manner with a few exceptions.

There was no particular problem involved in organizing the work into an orderly functioning process. The major problem during the first few months of my tenure was recruitment

of an adequate staff. Property and Warehousing at this time was set up under the Finance Officer, and was very inadequately staffed. The Finance Officer was only acting in that position. There was no one at the head of the Cost Accounting Unit, one new and unproved man at the head of the Budget and Accounts Unit and a very inadequate person in the Auditor's job. The Personnel Section consisted of a Personnel Transactions Officer. The Statistics Section had no appointed personnel, but was operated entirely by evacuees. The other sections were fairly well staffed and operating rather smoothly. As stated before, I realized the first problem was to bring all of the sections up to full strength as well as made the necessary replacements in staff. This was done immediately by contacting Civil Service, which apparently had not been done in the history of the project, and soliciting their aid. This, along with a lot of outside recruiting, with the permission of Civil Service, soon began to show results.

It was then discovered that finding people for the jobs was not the end of the problem. Morale on the project seemed to be at a very low ebb, particularly in the Administrative Management Division. Obviously it was from lack of entertainment. According to the instructions issued from Washington, we were also responsible for this phase of the program. We immediately, therefore, went to work on the recreation hall

and all the facilities that it might furnish. Once this was accomplished, morale immediately went up and the work benefited materially.

It was noted during this period, however, that one of the important phases of the division was still not functioning properly, namely Property and Warehousing Unit. It had always been my contention that this unit did not belong under a Finance Officer. If a Finance Officer does a good job in Finance in an organization of this size, he does not have time to devote to a program as important as Property and Warehousing. In view of the above, we immediately started recommending that this unit be reassigned to the Supply Officer. Approximately one year rolled by before this was accomplished. Once, however, we succeeded in getting this unit under the Supply Officer and adequately staffed, it began to function smoothly.

During the early part of 1944, the Administrative Management Division was somewhat reorganized. It was at this time that the Supply Officer was set up. Under him was placed Procurement Unit and Property and Warehousing. Mess Operations was set up as a section, reporting to the Assistant Director. The Evacuee Property Section was added to the division. As stated previously, quite a bit was accomplished by setting Property and Warehousing up under the Supply Officer.

The appointed personnel problem by no means has been the only personnel problem of the project. Actually they only serve in an advisory and supervisory capacity. Theoretically, approximately 90 per cent of the work has been done by evacuee personnel. During the first two years' operation of the project, about the only problem involved here was proper assignment and classification. During 1943, however, when the Relocation Program began to step up, it became quite a problem. Naturally, the best employees among the evacuee personnel were the first ones to leave. At first it was not too difficult to replace them, because we had a wealth of material to draw from, but as time went on, particularly during 1944, each replacement was a notch lower in ability. Naturally, under this procedure, we sooner or later get to the bottom of the barrel, and operating problems become increasingly difficult.

One other problem that has been faced and solved might be pointed out. It was necessary after the project became thoroughly organized to make some reductions in evacuee personnel, due to reasons as outlined below.

The first thought at the project was to put everyone to work in order that they might be actively engaged in doing something for morale purposes. Once, however, the project was thoroughly organized and settled down, it was obvious that re-

ductions had to be made in order to get into efficient operation. Never having experienced this type of reduction before, some mistakes were made. We soon realized that you could not just announce that 100 or more people would not be needed on a certain date. Fortunately, the Administrative Management Division at Gila got over this problem very smoothly. All reductions were handled through Community Government Officials, that is, the Councils of the project, Block Manager's organization. Once they were educated as to the necessity of the cut-back, they handled the people without so much as a ripple of disturbance.

There have been many problems which came up in the various sections in this division. I'll not attempt to go into detail in this narrative as each unit and section head is writing his own story. I have merely attempted to state some of the high lights of the over-all problems of the division.

I stated in the opening remark of this narrative that this division is a service one, and actually comes in contact with the community very indirectly, possibly with the exception of Mess Operations.

In all fairness to the section heads, however, I think it should be stated that during the last year and a half, all evacuees as well as appointed personnel have gotten their paychecks on payday. All clothing allowance vouchers have been

delivered during the current month for the previous month. The Personnel Section has managed to keep right up to our ceiling in recruiting. The Statistics Section has many letters from Washington commending them on their promptness in getting reports in on time. The examiners from Washington have stated that the Property and Warehousing Unit is in good condition, and finally, but by no means least, it has been well over a year since I have heard more than just a minor complaint about Mess Operations. I attribute the smoothness of the operation of the division entirely to the unit and section heads who have organized and carried out their responsibilities in such good fashion. They have done it under most trying and difficult conditions. Not one has faltered during all their trials.

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