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United States  
Department of Interior  
War Relocation Authority  
McGehee, Arkansas

PN - A.T. Thompson

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

of

A. G. Thompson - Supt. of Education

Education Section

Period Covering  
August 18, 1942 - July 31, 1945



## PERSONAL NARRATIVE

During the month of July in 1942, while employed as First  
Superintendent of Schools in Lake Village, Arkansas, I received Contacts  
a telephone call from the State Commissioner of Education,  
Mr. Ralph Jones, in regard to the possibility of accepting a  
position with the War Relocation Authority as Superintendent of  
Education in the Jerome Relocation Center, Denson, Arkansas.  
Until this time, there had been no thought on my part given to  
the nature or purpose of the program of the War Relocation  
Authority in the various centers. In fact, I was entirely  
uninformed, not only concerning these centers and their mission,  
but concerning Americans of Japanese ancestry as well. After  
careful consideration, the decision was made to accept the posi-  
tion, if and when offered. Within a few days, Mr. E. B. Whitaker,  
Regional Director of the War Relocation Authority, called on me  
in person at Lake Village and explained the situation. On August  
18, 1942, I was inducted and began serving as an employee of the  
War Relocation Authority.

Since the buildings in the Jerome and Rohwer Relocation Assignment  
Centers were in the process of construction, offices were to  
maintained in the Pyramid Building in Little Rock. Employees Little Rock  
selected at an early date were assigned an office in this build- Office  
ing. The Superintendent of Education of the Rohwer Relocation  
Center, Mr. J. A. Trice, was also selected and inducted on the  
same day. Prior to my induction, Dr. Lester K. Ade, the Direct-  
or of the Education Section in the Washington office, came to  
Little Rock and spent some time in an explanation of the pro-  
gram of education planned by the War Relocation Authority. He  
also reviewed my qualifications and background of experience in  
relation to the position. Dr. J. B. Hunter, Chief of Community  
Service of the Rohwer Relocation Center, was able to give guid-  
ance and information concerning the proposed Centers, evacuation,  
and the economic, political, and cultural background of the peo-  
ple who were to live in these centers. His many years of exper-  
ience in the orient and his study of oriental history proved  
valuable.

The duties, during the first few weeks in Little Rock, Chief Duties  
consisted largely of recruiting personnel. The telephone and in  
telegraph were used freely for this purpose. The novelty and Little Rock  
apparent glamour of the situation attracted the curiosity, if  
not the interest, of many people. Some people were outspoken  
in their opposition, not only to the Centers and to the people  
who came to the Centers, but to any personnel who might work in  
these Centers. An employee of the War Relocation Authority and  
especially one connected with education was looked upon as a  
person with peculiar interests by many people. He became an



object of curiosity or the target for ridicule and criticism wherever he went. He was always in the spotlight.

The experience of the first few weeks in the Little Rock Teacher office was stimulating and interesting. The personal contacts Interviews with fellow teachers and educators kept one alert and was never conducive to professional stagnation. Teachers from the entire state and from many other states, either came in person, or communicated with our office in regard to a position. This was an opportunity also to test ones judgment and power of discrimination in the selection of employees. This experience stimulated growth and development of professional judgment. Some mistakes were made, due to quick decisions or to the fear of failing to secure a sufficient number of employees. Many types of personalities came to the office.

There were many contacts with persons other than teachers. Contacts Appearances before public groups or meetings and before small With informal groups of friends and associates sharpened ones wits in Persons the effort to answer the questions asked about the people who Outside were coming to the Centers. An explanation of the action of the Education program was usually given. In the main people were genuinely interested and constructively critical. Most people, though uninformed, were able to see both sides of the issue and to concede that there was some justification for educational programs within the Centers. As expected, a few people were blind and unreasoning in their attitude toward Americans of Japanese ancestry and employees who were to work within the Centers. The opposition was frequently unjust. The determined attempt to be fair tended to develop character and moral stamina in the employee who faced such opposition.

One revealing experience of employees who had not worked Need for for the Federal Government previously was that of watching the Orientation processes and channels by which and through which Federal employees and agencies must work. It was unfortunate that the employees of the War Relocation Authority could not have had a short course of orientation. This would have meant so much to the uninitiated. It would have paid big dividends in efficiency, satisfaction and morale. The experienced Federal employees held a great advantage in this respect and frequently caused the inexperienced employee to appear at a great disadvantage. Insignificant, but absolutely essential, details of procedure frequently discredited the apparent efficiency of the new employee, out of all proportion to his ability and industry. I am convinced that it would be good practice to require all new employees to take a course of orientation before entering the service of the Federal



Government.

The recruitment of teachers in the Little Rock office was done through the United States Civil Service Commission and with the assistance of the United States Employment Service, Arkansas Education Association, the State Department of Education, the University of Arkansas and other colleges of the state. Since all employees were Civil Service employees, it was necessary to submit applications to the local Civil Service office. The United States Employment Service had formerly maintained a Teacher Placement office which aided us in finding prospective teachers. The Civil Service requirements seemed a little different from the standards and practice of the normal public schools. A teacher might seem to be qualified for the secondary school and yet be a teacher in the elementary school. The formal written application had more weight with Civil Service than the personal interview. Personal traits and qualities of character would not be well determined by means of formal written applications. We had the close cooperation and assistance of the Civil Service representatives, but felt that they did not see the necessity of personal interviews and possibly did not place sufficient emphasis on personality, attitudes and traits of character. It is easy to understand how large formal organizations must depend almost entirely on the fulfillment of rigid requirements if subjective judgment and personal discrimination were to be reduced to a minimum.

Cooperating Agencies

A conference of educational leaders and interested laymen was called at the Hotel Marion in Little Rock, while we were stationed at the Regional Office. Representatives from educational institutions and leading professional organizations as well as interested friends were invited to this conference. Our National Director and the State Commissioner of Education made definite contributions to a better understanding of the educational program of the War Relocation Authority. Most of the guests invited were present. There is no doubt but that the positive contributions of the State Department of Education and the Arkansas Education Association stimulated a better understanding and a more sympathetic cooperation of school and lay leaders with the program.

Educational Conference

The school administration, while in Little Rock, was presented a real problem to the preparation of lists of supplies and equipment needed for a school system in a community of 10,000 people. No supplies and equipment were available, the exact number of children to be served remained unknown, the supplies and equipment over the entire nation were insufficient

Supplies and Equipment



to meet the normal needs and little definite information could be obtained as to the amount of money which might be spent on supplies and equipment. Several staff members were given the task of preparing these lists. Commercial firms were solicited for information in regard to specification, availability, and price. All the commercial firms were actively cooperative and willing to give any assistance possible. Occasionally, some representatives of one of these firms would express resentment that the government was spending so much money in providing adequate equipment for the people of the Center, while schools in Arkansas were compelled to operate on much less money.

After several weeks in the Regional Office, the announcement of the arrival date of evacuees in the Center was made. Immediately plans were laid to send most of the staff of the education section to the Centers. The first arrivals went to the Rohwer Relocation Center. The staff of both Centers assisted in the reception of the first residents. This was an unusual experience. It was a story of adjustment between the staff and the residents as well as one of the adjustment among the residents themselves. The first impression of an uninitiated employee was one of confusion, but evidently plans had been made in detail because all of the people were assigned living quarters and given their meals on time. The personnel, regardless of assignment assisted in performing many duties, including cooking, waiting on tables, washing dishes, administering first aid, providing recreation, carrying baggage, acting as guides, driving motor vehicles, and other varied tasks. After the advance contingent of the evacuees had arrived in Rohwer, the superintendents of the two schools returned to the Little Rock office for a brief stay. Only a short time later, the first group arrived at the Jerome Relocation Center. The experience at Rohwer was helpful to those who worked at Jerome. By this time the education office was moved to the Center.

Transfer  
to the  
Center

During the first few days, there was no definite office assigned for the education section at Jerome. Business was transacted through the offices, located in a small school building outside the Center. Within a short time, a small room in one of the barracks was assigned to the education section. Several people worked in this room. When the administration offices were moved from the school building outside the Center to the new administration building within the Center, an open space, a few desks and chairs were assigned to the education section in one of these buildings.

First  
Office

The appointed personnel of the education section performed many new and interesting duties, not ordinarily related

Many Duties



to public school work. The reception room setup in one of the warehouses near the railroad, was used for the induction of the evacuees. The teachers assisted in receiving the evacuees and in caring for the children. Some teachers were assigned to the housing section. Others were stationed in the blocks to receive the new residents and assisted them in finding their quarters. Some teachers assisted the hospital in making garments for the sick and the needy. Altogether, the experience was unique in the lives of the teachers.

One of the most difficult adjustments the teachers had to make was that of securing permanent living quarters. As construction progressed, changes were made. Teachers were frequently asked to move from one building to another, with the promise that suitable and permanent quarters would be provided later. These moves were so frequent and the promises so vague that the teachers became critical of the administration. The teachers believed that the administration was not trying to provide suitable living quarters. The teachers wanted an equal chance with the remaining personnel. Confidence was almost lost. Some teachers left the Center because living conditions were not satisfactory. Direct responsibility for poor living conditions could not be placed on any one person. The contractors were certainly not interested or concerned. However, if more personal attention and human interest had been shown by the officials in charge of the Center, the confidence of the teachers might have been retained and their morale and efficiency might have been kept at a higher level. Teachers lived first in empty barracks rooms. Later they were shifted to the hospital and then to temporary quarters, while dormitories and apartments were being completed. Although teachers frequently complained about seemingly insignificant matters, it must be said to their credit that they were usually cheerful and reasonable.

Living  
Quarters

No group of teachers ever needed more orientation for their work than those of the Centers. The teachers had worked in public schools and knew little about government procedure. They were unacquainted with camp life. They were not familiar with the traditions, customs, characteristics, and background of the people whom they served. The teachers had to learn how to deal with their new patrons by the method of trial and error. A few teachers never learned to make the adjustment. Some teachers quickly adjusted themselves. Other teachers, through patient plodding and determination, were able, over a period of time to make reasonable adjustments. Especially in the early history of the Center, the teachers probably did more to build morale and to know the real feeling of the people than any other

Orientation



group in the Center. Each teacher was given a careful explanation of the historical background of evacuation and the Center.

The opening of school in the Jerome Relocation Center was delayed due to the incompleteness of building construction by the contractors. The Rohwer Relocation Center schools opened in November. The Jerome Relocation Center schools could not be assigned buildings for schools, since the residents themselves were not adequately housed. Building construction progressed slowly. It seemed at times that the workmen deliberately prolonged the construction of the buildings and facilities. The announcement, that the schools would open, was made and remade. This condition was detrimental to the morale of teachers, pupils and parents. Each delay caused the parents to be in some doubt as to the kind of school there would be, further retarded the pupils in their normal progress. The pupils had already in most cases been out of school since evacuation, except for short periods of rather unproductive and loosely organized work of the assembly center. The teachers, although occupied with other tasks, were made to feel that they were not very useful and were not performing the duties they were employed to do. Although much of this feeling was not justified, the very fact that the other personnel were pointing an accusing finger even in jest, placed the teachers in an unpleasant light and on the defense. The morale of the teachers in the school was definitely harmed by the delay in the opening of the school. There was also a feeling on the part of the personnel of the education section that the administration was not sympathetic and understanding as it might have been in regard to the schools. Frequently other things were placed first by the administration when the schools might have been given at least an equal priority. It was and is the opinion of the personnel of the education section, that the general morale of the entire community would have been much better had facilities and buildings been provided for the opening of the schools at an earlier date. The parents were very anxious to have their children in school, not only for reasons of academic progress and normal educational development, but to counteract the evil influences and deteriorating effects of camp association. The opening of the school was a positive factor in the improvement of community morale.

Opening  
of  
School

One of the most troublesome problems of the mechanical operation of the school was the necessity of forcing the time schedule of the school and the teachers to comply with Civil Service regulations. Teachers and educators have always regarded their work and their mission in terms of the task to be performed or objectives to be reached, rather than hours to be met. The teachers realized that Civil Service requirements

Time  
Schedule



must be met. They tried sincerely to set these requirements in their schedule. The many hours of class preparation, lesson planning, paper grading, and supervision of social activities outside the regular Civil Service day were not taken into consideration in the time schedule setup by Civil Service. Some adjustments were made which permitted a little flexibility in the time schedule, but it was never made entirely satisfactory and the teachers were never compensated for their work outside the school day. The thing that most disturbed the teachers was the fact that the other personnel and the administration failed to understand the true situation. Teachers were constantly subjected to a certain amount of friendly ridicule, part of which was the outcome of resentment by other employees. It is true that some teachers tended to abuse the privilege of a flexible working schedule, but probably no more if as many teachers abused the work schedule than other personnel. Few teachers recommend the unbroken Civil Service day as a practical working time schedule for class room teachers.

It was remarkable how quickly and how well the appointed personnel of the education section were welded into a group with a common purpose and unity of attitude. These teachers came not only from different localities and states but from as many different types of schools. Their backgrounds were widely different and their professional training represented widely divergent view points. There was no community pressure to force them into the same general mold of educational thinking. There were no time honored school traditions to serve as guide posts for the general direction of the school. There was also a feeling of independence, due to the fact that they were Civil Service employees and could not as easily be reprimanded, advised or dismissed as the employee of the usual school districts. Good teachers did not permit this latitude of action and newly acquired freedom to interfere with their efficiency or to cause them to part from the beaten path. Some teachers who were not stable in their philosophy, or who had always been kept in line by the pressure of public opinion wherever they worked, departed quickly from the conventional life of the teacher as found in the public schools on the outside. In the main, the purposes and the outward actions of the teachers were consistently and constantly like those of good teachers everywhere. At the end of the second year, the situation strongly resembled that of the ordinary school.

Unity

Realizing that an insufficient number of appointed personnel was allowed to operate the school system of that size as it should be operated, an early and thorough program of recruitment of evacuee teachers was begun. During the first

Evacuee  
Teachers



few days, the education office was open in the center, a number of teachers with a college background and a little experience, were secured. Many prospective teachers had an excellent academic background, but little experience in the field of education. This was due to the fact that most of the California schools employed Caucasian teachers. Some of the applicants had a little experience in the assembly centers. This experience was not very valuable, since the schools in the assembly centers were loosely organized. Many applicants felt a hesitancy in assuming responsibility for the control and management of a class room for fear the pupils and patrons who were their friends and neighbors and with whom they lived in close contact day by day, would resent any disciplinary action they might take. This feeling existed throughout the history of the school, although a few evacuee teachers gained sufficient confidence in themselves to assume a type of management as firm as that of the appointed personnel. Many evacuees might have become teachers had the working schedule not been so rigid and regular. They could secure easier positions where less work, more lenient hours, and little nervous strain were involved. In the beginning, teachers who were not college graduates, received no more compensation than the laborers. These factors worked against the recruitment of qualified evacuee teachers.

The turn over of the evacuee teachers was very great, due largely to the difficulty of the position, relocation, and other related factors. It is likely that the strenuous nature of the position was the greatest factor. Teachers were usually from the better educated group and consequently were those who, as a rule, relocated first. If there had been sufficient time for training before relocation, many of the evacuee teachers would have been excellent instructors. The tenure of teachers was too short for adequate training and orientation. Unity of purpose and attitude was difficult to establish. Although the service of some teachers was unselfish, the minds of most were unsettled and disturbed, because their future was insecure and relocation was foremost. From the stand point of a stable school, it would have been better to have operated entirely with appointed personnel. However, since the number of appointed personnel was inadequate, the evacuee teachers rendered a great service to the school. The enlargement of the program and offering of the school was made possible only through the services of the evacuee teachers.

One of the major tasks in the beginning of the school, Credits was that of securing the former school records of all pupils. This task was undertaken at least two months before the opening of the school. Transcripts from scores of places in both



California and Hawaii came to the school office. Careful evaluation and translation of these records were necessary. The problem was complicated by the fact that many, if not most of the pupils, left their schools at the time of evacuation before the end of the school term. The pupils were naturally anxious to receive full credit for their work. This was impossible except on a conditional basis. There was more difference of opinion about this question among the staff and the teachers of the school than about any other question. A compromise of opinion was effected. The school erred on the side of leniency. Little injustice was done by being too severe in evaluation. Some pupils were permitted to advance beyond their rightful places and consequently did not receive the most from their high school courses. Some pupils were quick to take advantage of this leniency. Some staff members wanted to give everything, being influenced by emotional thinking. A few staff members wished to give nothing, but required that all incompleting work be done before credit was awarded. The situation became an unhappy one and created dissension and differences that were never overcome as long as the Center existed. In general, the collection and evaluation of these records was done efficiently and thoroughly.

The appointed personnel gained the impression that pupils of Japanese ancestry were probably more interested in grades and credits than Caucasian pupils. These pupils had great pride in their academic achievements. They worked harder for grades and strove more diligently to please their instructors than Caucasian pupils. This, from the stand point of the teachers, was a great advantage. It was a pleasure to teach pupils who tried to master all the assignments. There was some danger in this excessive pride in that pupils might think more of grades and credits and mechanical achievements than in the real benefit to be derived from their classes. Parents were ardent in their support of this type of work. It is likely that this is a partial carry over from the traditional ways of living of people of Japanese ancestry.

The confidence of the pupils in the teachers did not develop quickly. Teachers had expected a free and easy acceptance of themselves by the pupils as they would find in the public schools. They were rudely awakened by the fact that Caucasian teachers were outsiders and did not belong to the same group with the pupils. There were sufficient reasons for this slow acceptance. Resentment over evacuation, fear of the future, doubt as to the sincerity of the teachers, frequent frustration in the past, and apparent fickleness of some of their Caucasian friends, caused the pupils to be wary of placing their confidence

Confidence



in the teachers. Registration and segregation further retarded this growth of confidence. Over a long period of time, those teachers who remained, came slowly to acquire the confidence, respect and affection of at least some of the pupils. This confidence grew as time went by. Although acceptance and confidence was slow, it was probably more permanent than in the ordinary situation.

Since school began during the first part of January, 1943, it was necessary to continue the academic school term until the first week in September. This meant classes would be held throughout the summer during June, July and August. The summer months in the state of Arkansas are warm and uncomfortable. To have held classes in the crowded small barracks rooms with inadequate ventilation and light during the hot summer days with other unusual and disturbing conditions was in itself an achievement. Some changes in school hours, in order to take advantage of the cool mornings were made. The attendance was good on the part of both teachers and pupils. There were no fans in the class rooms as found in the offices. Teachers and pupils, although hot and perspiring, managed to keep their poise and cheerful disposition reasonably well. It was a summer, however, that most of those who attended would not want to repeat. It was without doubt the most difficult school summer the pupils and teachers ever spent. Some of the teachers near physical collapse at the end of the summer and doubtless many of the pupils felt the same way. The majority of teachers and pupils performed their work creditably. It was with great rejoicing that the summer and the school term together finally ended. A few weeks were to elapse before the opening of the next school term.

The first year in such a situation must, by its very nature, have brought changes in personnel. Some of the personnel were tired and felt they could not remain longer under conditions so physically uninviting. One of the personnel left by request or on the suggestion that his personality and actions did not fit into the program of the education section. This first year was in some respect, the most difficult one that the Superintendent of Education had ever experienced. His greatest problem was that of adjusting clashing personalities and differing philosophies. Some staff members did not perform their administrative duties as might have been expected. The deficiency or lopsidedness of one person's words or actions made the whole situation an unhappy one for other staff members. To compensate for the resignations, there were additions to the staff. At no time was the number of persons allowed by the quota completely filled. Changes in the staff made recruitment

First  
Summer

Staff  
Changes



a continuous process. The leadership of the high school went from one man to a former teacher in high school. The new principal met many obstacles, including a tough and determined opposition from certain organized groups. Petitions were presented, anonymous leaflets were circulated, group meetings were held and other methods of pressure were used to prevent the change. In spite of this opposition, the new principal provided an aggressive and positive leadership for the high school. Friction and management troubles were at a minimum in the elementary schools.

The problems of the first year of school in the Jerome Relocation Center were many and varied. Some of the problems seemed almost without solutions. Other problems resisted solution stubbornly, but were partially solved. Some of the major problems of the first year might be listed not necessarily in the order of their importance as follows:

Problems  
of First  
Year

1. Recruitment of an adequate number of trained personnel.
2. Securing supplies and equipment through the government channels and yet quickly enough to benefit the school.
3. Orientation of the personnel to their task.
4. Securing and evaluating school records.
5. Winning the confidence of the pupils and their parents.
6. Meeting the standard setup for accreditation by the State Department of Education and other agencies.
7. Maintaining the morale of the teachers through living conditions and convenient work schedules.

The problems of the second year in the Jerome Relocation Center were as numerous but different from those of the first year. Some of the situation which caused difficulty in the first year eliminated itself. The personnel problems became less troublesome, although recruitment continued to be a real need. The teachers became better acquainted with their work and the background of the students. The living conditions of the teachers improved. The students became more accustomed to the school in the Center. In general, the entire situation became more stable. Toward the end of the year, the announcement of the closing the preparation for the closing resulted in hasty and ill planned action. The transmittal of records to the other Centers and to the Washington office was tedious and difficult. The addition of a permanent high school principal to take the place of the acting principal was not very satisfactory. The teaching personnel did not take kindly to the change. The new

Problems  
of Second  
Year



principal did not adjust himself very well. This particular change was ill advised near the close of the year. The teachers and students became concerned about their future. The freeing of teachers on the job after the close of school was not, in my opinion, a good idea. A sufficient number of teachers would have remained to assist in closing the center without this action. As it was, some of the teachers did not want to leave the project when no longer needed, and the project director had to insist that the teachers leave. The problems of the second year were more easily met than those of the first year.

The transition from Jerome to Rohwer was both interesting and pleasant. There was stimulation in closing one situation and accepting another. The school at Rohwer was well organized and administered. This was due, in a large measure, to the firm and competent administration of the former superintendent. The transfer of a number of personnel from Jerome to Rohwer, lessened the change. The Jerome personnel were graciously accepted by the Rohwer personnel. Living conditions at Rohwer were not quite as good as those of Jerome. This caused some reaction among the Jerome personnel. The school at Rohwer, as would have been the case at Jerome, had become stable and almost traditional in the sense that traditions had been established and precedents had been set.

Problems  
of Third  
Year



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United States  
Department of Interior  
War Relocation Authority  
McGehee, Arkansas

PN - W.M. Beasley

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

of

William M. Beasley - Jr-Sr High School Prin.  
Education Section

Period Covering  
September 14, 1942 - July 9, 1945



PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF WILLIAM M. BEASLEY

Organization Title: Junior and Senior High School Principal

Class Title: Educationist

Entered on duty to Jerome Relocation Center on September 14, 1942  
Transferred to Rohwer Relocation Center as High School Principal  
on October 16, 1942

In order to set the stage for the personal narrative, the following quotation from the instructions for writing this narrative is given:

"The substance of the personal narrative report is what happened when the writer attempted to carry out policy, what worked and what did not work, and according to his most carefully considered judgment, what factors made a particular program a success or a failure. In the simplest terms and each narrative should answer frankly and thoughtfully the following questions: What was your job? What did you accomplish? How did you do it? What, if you had it all to do over again, would you do, and what would you avoid doing?

Writers of these narratives are requested to bear in mind the purpose of their reports, which is to provide guidance to future administrators faced with similar or related problems."

In order to further clarify the position for which this narrative is written, the job description is given here.

- I. SERVES, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, AS HEAD OF THE SECONDARY (JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH) SCHOOLS.
- II. CONFERS WITH SUPERINTENDENT ON GENERAL POLICIES AND ON SPECIAL PROBLEMS THAT ARISE, AND MAKES SPECIAL AND PERIODIC REPORTS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT.
- III. INCUMBENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ORGANIZING AND ADMINISTERING SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.
- IV. ADVISES ON TEACHER SELECTION.
- V. ASSISTS IN SETTING UP STANDARDS MEETING MINIMUM STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS.



- VI. ASSIGNS CLASSES TO TEACHERS.
- VII. SUPERVISES CLASSROOM PROCEDURES AND INSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES ESSENTIAL TO A SATISFACTORY STANDARD OF INSTRUCTION.
- VIII. CONFERS WITH FACULTY MEMBERS ON CURRICULAR CHANGES, EDUCATIONAL RESULTS, SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, AND NEW PROGRAMS. COOPERATED WITH SUPERVISORY AND ADVISORY STAFF MEMBERS IN DEVELOPING FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS OF CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT.
- IX. COORDINATES SCHOOL VOCATIONAL PROGRAM IN SCHOOL PART-TIME AND ANTICIPATED PART-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT.
- X. CONFERS WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS.
- XI. PROMOTES FORMATION STUDENT BODY ORGANIZATIONS.
- XII. REQUISITIONS AND ASSIGNS SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT.
- XIII. PREPARES SECONDARY SCHOOL BUDGET FOR SUPERINTENDENT.
- XIV. SUPERVISES MAINTENANCE OF ATTENDANCE, PUPIL PERSONNEL, AND OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOL RECORDS.
- I. SERVES, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION AS HEAD OF THE SECONDARY (JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH) SCHOOLS.

As Junior and Senior High School Principal, it was my duty to serve as head of the secondary schools. When I first came on duty it was expected that special buildings for the secondary schools would be built and tentative plans were made accordingly. Where it was found that these buildings would not be available, the education staff decided that it would be wise to house the Junior High School and one Elementary School in Block 31 and one Elementary School and the Senior High School in Block 35. For administrative purposes this made it necessary to place the Assistant High School Principal in Block 31 as Principal of the Junior High School, but responsible to the High School Principal. Since there was only one Vocational Guidance Counselor, she was installed in Block 35.

The two schools were set up with as much unit and coherence as possible. The administrative details, records and regulations were set up on the same plan in the two schools. Authority was delegated to the assistant principal



to enable him to operate the Junior High School efficiently. He was made the immediate supervisor of the personnel directly under him. The Vocational Guidance Counselor worked out with the principal, a program which was augmented, cut down or revised from time to time as results and the rise of new situations seemed to warrant. The counselor gave more time to the Senior High School than to the Junior High School. This was possible due to the fact that the Junior High School Principal was prepared and inclined to include much of that phase of school activity in his own program of work.

II. CONFERS WITH SUPERINTENDENT ON GENERAL POLICIES AND ON SPECIAL PROBLEMS THAT ARISE, AND MAKES SPECIAL AND PERIODIC REPORTS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT.

Close contact with the superintendent was had at all times. The principal was given every assistance possible by the superintendent throughout the existence of the schools. Complete authority was placed in the hands of the principal and all matters under his jurisdiction. All general policies, however, and special problems were matters of conference between the superintendent and the principal. The superintendent was kept informed concerning the progress of the school through weekly staff meetings conducted by the superintendent for principals and supervisors and through W. R. A. and state reports prepared monthly. In addition, special memoranda passed between the superintendent and principal in regard to special matters of the moment.

III. INCUMBENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ORGANIZING AND ADMINISTERING SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

After deciding upon the school location, the principal and assistant principal worked out the offering for Junior and Senior High Schools, established the subjects to be required and decided what elective subjects should be offered. They were guided by recommendations of the State Department of Education in Little Rock, the University of Arkansas entrance requirements, the requests for subjects by prospective students, the teachers available and the equipment on hand or soon to be available. Other details which need not be enumerated here such as time schedule, activity plans, requirements for graduation, attendance regulations, selection of textbooks and the like were worked out. Many of these were worked out by teacher committees and submitted for approval. Wherever possible, teacher participation was encouraged in the formulation of plans and regulations directly affecting their job. Final authority rested in the principal who made it a practice to use as many teacher prepared units of the program as seemed feasible. Student



activities, home rooms and assemblies were placed in the hands of the vocational guidance counselor for administration. Close touch between the principal and counselor enabled the principal to promote desired programs.

#### IV. ADVISES ON TEACHER SELECTION.

Immediately upon entrance on duty, the chief activity of the superintendent and principals was the recruiting of teachers. Forms 57 and personal references were studied, and selections made after due consideration of the applicant's fitness for the job to be done. The principal was given considerable voice by the superintendent in the selection of his teachers.

#### V. ASSISTS IN SETTING UP STANDARDS MEETING MINIMUM STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS.

In order to be able to meet the state requirements for an "A" grade school, the principal went to the State Department of Education and conferred with the High School Supervisor, the Agriculture and Vocational Training Supervisor and the Supervisor of Home Economics. A complete understanding was reached as to the requirements in terms of class hours, laboratory hours, equipment, teacher qualifications and standards of achievement. These requirements were equalled or exceeded in practically all subjects during our three years of operation.

#### VI. ASSIGNS CLASSES TO TEACHERS.

The principal did assign classes to teachers. Every effort was made to give the classes to the person best qualified to teach a given subject. This was frequently impossible because of a constant change in personnel, but generally speaking, the class-to-teacher assignments were well placed.

#### VII. SUPERVISES CLASSROOM PROCEDURES AND INSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES ESSENTIAL TO A SATISFACTORY STANDARD OF INSTRUCTION.

The principal held conferences with teachers in regard to classroom procedures and instructional techniques and did some visiting. More visiting would have been beneficial.



- VIII. CONFERES WITH FACULTY MEMBERS ON CURRICULAR CHANGES, EDUCATIONAL RESULTS, SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, AND NEW PROGRAMS. COOPERATED WITH SUPERVISORY AND ADVISORY STAFF MEMBERS IN DEVELOPING FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS OF CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT.

Regular faculty meetings were held each Saturday morning with some few exceptions. Discussions of all matters of interest to the faculty were held. Explanations of new procedures, reports on educational results, special committee reports and teacher and pupil welfare reports were some of the types of the matters for discussion at these meetings.

- IX. COORDINATES SCHOOL VOCATIONAL PROGRAM IN SCHOOL PART-TIME AND ANTICIPATED PART-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT.

Soon after the beginning of school, all part-time in-school employment was placed under the direction of the vocational guidance counselor. This enabled the secondary schools to do the best possible job in placing part-time workers. This is given in detail in the narrative report of the vocational guidance counselor.

- X. CONFERES WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS.

The principal made every effort to encourage pupils and parents to come in for the purpose of talking over their plans and problems. Frequent discussions of school problems at Parent-Teachers' Association meetings, with invitations to parents to come for interviews, were held. In many instances where the situation seemed to call for it, the principal asked specific students and parents in for interviews. The vocational guidance counselor visited the homes frequently.

- XI. PROMOTES FORMATION STUDENT BODY ORGANIZATIONS.

A full program of student activities under the direction of the vocational guidance counselor was instituted. The administrative unit for these was the activity or home room period, which ran from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. Student organizations included Student Council, Girls' League, National Honor Society, Quill and Scroll, class and grade organizations, home rooms and clubs. Included as clubs were Hi-Y, Tri-Y, Glee, Girls' Athletic Club, hobby and service clubs. The documentation on extra-class activities reports these in full.



## XII. REQUISITIONS AND ASSIGNS SCHOOL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT.

Very few school officials face the task of starting a large school without any equipment, supplies, or even buildings. The principal with the aid of the principal from Jerome and Mr. Eugene B. Brewster, teacher of science at Rohwer, made out what was intended to be a complete list of equipment and supplies needed in the secondary schools at each of the Arkansas Centers. This list was turned over to procurement. Being neophytes in government service and procedure, we expected to receive these items within a few weeks. Of course, we did not. The list was completed in September. Folding chairs reached us in December, the first items to arrive. Textbooks, desks, arm chairs and teachers' desks arrived during December and January. Other items came in gradually. Some were not obtained.

By the middle of January, the Rohwer Schools were equipped and supplied with enough basic equipment and supplies to carry on, though few, if any, departments were complete. The warehouse and the surplus lists furnished our shops to a large degree. This was fortunate since shop equipment became increasingly hard to procure.

## XIII. PREPARES SECONDARY SCHOOL BUDGET FOR SUPERINTENDENT.

A project for the secondary schools was prepared according to regulations. Every teacher in the secondary school was given an opportunity to participate in the selection of materials needed in his or her particular field.

## XIV. SUPERVISES MAINTENANCE OF ATTENDANCE, PUPIL PERSONNEL, AND OTHER SECONDARY SCHOOL RECORDS.

Agreement as to the type of records to be considered in the Rohwer Center Secondary Schools was reached in a joint conference between the superintendent, high school principal and the assistant principal. The standard permanent record form was set up. The transcript used most of the time was the W. R. A. Form 280. Office grade sheet to be filled in after each grade period by each teacher for each class was the official record of pupil marks. From this sheet, the marks were transferred to the permanent record. A pupil location card for each pupil showing his daily schedule and certain other information frequently needed was kept in an alphabetic file in the office. These were not considered permanent records and were made out each semester. Individual subject pupil report cards were



used. Attendance register was kept in the main office from absence reports made at the beginning of each period during the day. Individual teachers kept attendance also in a class book which also was used for keeping grades.

For organizational purposes, I shall divide events and discussion into four parts.

- I. EVENTS PRECEDING THE OPENING OF SCHOOL
- II. THE SCHOOL IN OPERATION
- III. CLOSING THE SCHOOL
- IV. EVALUATION

I. EVENTS PRECEDING THE OPENING OF SCHOOL

On September 14, 1942, I joined the staff of the W. R. A. as Assistant High School Principal of the Jerome Center Schools. The headquarters for W. R. A. including the education section were located at the time in the Pyramid Building at Little Rock. Together with Superintendent A. G. Thompson and Principal Dr. Karl Hankins, I spent a week recruiting teachers, preparing lists of equipment and supplies for the secondary schools, studying W. R. A. policy and procedure and in conference with other officials in regard to the school philosophy, the school program, etc.

Out of this preliminary work came a tentative set-up for the secondary schools, a list of equipment and supplies considered necessary to set up a school program and a partial understanding of the W. R. A. policy in regard to schools. These were useful as a starting point but, of course, were revised constantly as the program unfolded and developed. The lists of equipment and supplies were turned over to the procurement section and eventually most of the items were secured, though many items were deleted and others added.

On September 29, 1942, part of the education personnel, including the writer, came to Rohwer Center to set up headquarters and to prepare to survey the school population. An office was established in Block 27, Barrack 1. Soon after arrival, the Principal of Rohwer Secondary Schools, Guy Blakey,



resigned because of ill health and it was agreed that I should be transferred from the position of Assistant Principal of Jerome Secondary Schools to Principal of the Rohwer Secondary Schools. This transfer was not made effective on the payroll until October 16, 1942. At the same time, W. F. Hays, Assistant Elementary Principal of Rohwer was transferred to the position of Assistant High School Principal of Jerome.

Together with the staff on duty and four evacuee clerks, a registration form for secondary and elementary pupils was devised. Within a few days after the residents of a given block had moved in, the staff and clerks went to each block and registered all prospective students possible. Such information as was considered helpful was secured. The secondary pupils gave not only the usual information, but also subjects completed before evacuation, subjects being taken when evacuated together with choice of subjects (if available) to be taken at Rohwer. This registration was taken as a basis for planning the course offerings for the first semester and enabled us to write for transcripts from previous schools. Even then, we did not get all transcripts in until the following spring. The Stockton, California High School from which a large number of our students came, sent all transcripts in one group. One of our school clerks who had formerly been a school clerk at Stockton High School, had prepared these before leaving. Her knowledge of the California schools and practices enabled us to interpret the transcripts much more intelligently than otherwise would have been possible.

The registration was not perfect since there were many late arrivals, transfers, and pupil who simply did not show up for registration. The 100 or more of these made our tentative schedule unworkable. Another factor was the fact that the students had changed their minds about their choices of subjects between the preliminary registration and the opening of the school.

Evaluation: Under similar circumstances, I think my basic procedure would remain the same. Because of the early confusion in housing, the uniting of families assigned originally to different blocks and the uncertainty on the part of residents about the kind of school being set, the percentage of pupils actually registered was good.

The date for the opening of school was set for November 9, 1942. A pre-school conference of one week was to precede the school opening. During this week of orientation, planning and establishment of teachers in barracks,



three days were taken for the purpose of selecting textbooks. Publishers had been invited long before to send samples of texts for consideration and in addition they were permitted to send representatives to interview the teachers. Teacher committees from the various departments were asked to study the texts and make recommendations. A bulletin on criteria to be used in judging texts was prepared by the principal and furnished to each teacher. The recommendations of the teacher committees were followed closely in the choosing of texts. Where disagreement arose within the committee, the principal in conference with the assistant principal and superintendent made the final decisions. The choices were very satisfactory and no cause for regret arose except in Social Science and Biology.

In the course called "Civic Problems", we originally used 12 weeks on Government, 12 weeks on Economics and 12 weeks on Sociology. Because of our 18 weeks semesters, some administrative difficulty arose in scheduling. Other complications arose because of our efforts to save money by staggering the use of the texts for these three parts of the course. After one year of this, we revised the course so that we offered one semester each of Government and Sociology. The Economics texts were used for short periods in each course for special units.

In Biology, the teacher chose to order an assortment of text for reference type study but this proved unsatisfactory in that pupils wanted very much a book to take home with them. Additional texts were ordered and the single text used, although the others were still valuable for special reference.

## II. THE SCHOOL IN OPERATION

It was evident from the beginning, that our student body and parents were deeply concerned about the type and class of school opportunities to be offered. Their chief interest was that our school should be recognized by accrediting agencies and that the work offered here be accepted in outside institutions. To accomplish these ends, our school program included the same type of work and the same subjects being offered in other schools over the country. It was first thought that we would be able to operate a community-type school but because of the state of mind of the student body and of the Center residents it was considered wise to give them solid, sound courses of the type to which they were accustomed. With the exception of efforts to offer a few special courses and an effort to include as many opportunities for part-time work as possible, our school could be classified as traditional. The major problems that



arose came from physical handicaps connected with procurement of equipment and supplies, housing facilities and teacher recruitment.

The program of student activities was greater than most of the students were accustomed to. This perhaps was the chief cause for difficulty in securing pupil participation in the very beginning of the program. As time went on, a reasonably satisfactory participation was secured and in many instances accomplishments by student organizations were unusually good.

School spirit could have been more nearly normal had it been possible to have athletic competition with outside schools. Efforts were made to establish this program but the neighboring schools considered it unwise to include us in their athletic programs.

A summer school was conducted in the schools during the summer of 1944 in which work for credit under authorization of State Department of Education was conducted.

The original plan for using evacuee teachers and student teachers was modified at the end of the first year to the extent that student teachers did not attend regular classes in professional courses. For reasons described in the documentation report, the In-Service Training program for student teachers was not entirely successful. Better results were obtained when the evacuee teachers were used as teachers and assistant teachers with the guidance and help of the principal and teachers of the various departments. On the whole, the quality of work done by these assistant teachers was very satisfactory. The rapid turnover, however, was a handicap to the students in their classes.

At all times the secondary school was able to keep an efficient staff of clerical workers whose loyalty to devotion to duty was not exceeded in the entire project. The chief weakness in the functioning of this part of the school operation was the rapid turnover of workers. Since we were able to have at least one experienced worker on hand during the training period for new workers, we were able to carry out standardized procedures in record keeping.

### III. CLOSING THE SCHOOL

When it was announced that the school would close at the end of the spring semester in 1945, the principal assigned a classroom teacher with part-time duties in the office for the purpose of preparing records for the closing of school.



The clerks began immediately preparing 2 copies of transcripts for graduates and withdrawals and 3 copies of transcripts to date for students still in school. At the close of school, these partial transcripts were completed and placed in the student folders. The third copy of transcript was prepared for students enrolled during the current year in order that efficient service might be given to relocating students. At the close of the school year, a teacher was retained full-time for the careful inspection of all permanent records and files. Every permanent record was checked against office grade sheets and transcripts from previous schools. Each permanent record was given this thorough checking by at least two people.

After the folders had been compiled all irrelevant material was removed from the folders and all pertinent information retained. These folders for Grades 7 to 12 inclusive, were then arranged in alphabetical order including all students who had enrolled in our school at any time, even though he may have transferred to another center, relocated to the outside or simply withdrawn from school. The office grade sheets for the three years were placed in folders and included in the files. Correspondence relative to the individual pupil was placed in the folder of that pupil.

Attendance registers kept by the office were also included in the files.

A very careful inventory and transfer of property was made under the direction of the Superintendent of the Education, the High School Principal and the Assistant High School Principal. Surveys were prepared for all items which had been issued to the secondary schools and missing from the inventory.

#### IV. EVALUATION

When it is considered that the schools were set up with nothing on hand to begin with, the problems encountered do not seem unreasonable. The problems of proper housing of classes, ventilation, lighting, textbooks, equipment and supplies were such that they would be unnatural in a normal school situation. If I were to do this job again, I would make every effort to have as many of the physical facilities ready for school as possible before the actual opening of the school. The problem of the administrative staff would have been greatly simplified if all teachers had been fully accredited and experienced. There would have been considerable loss, had we not used evacuee teachers, of the valuable



help afforded by these teachers in bringing about an understanding by the appointed personnel of the previous life, habits, customs and ways of thinking of our student body.

If it had been possible to foresee the rapid turnover in the clerical force, it would have been desirable to have had an appointed personnel chief clerk or registrar, since that person could have remained throughout the life of the school and maintained a complete knowledge, through experience, of all procedures, records and happenings within the school. As stated previously, this was not a tremendous handicap since I was fortunate in the beginning to have an evacuee clerk, Miss Mary Fujita who had served for 10 years as a school clerk in the Stockton, California High School. In December 1942, Miss Kikue Toyota joined our staff, and when Miss Fujita was married and subsequently relocated, assumed the position of chief clerk and remained with the schools until the departure of the principal. It is, therefore, evident that our office was under the almost continuous care of one person. These two people contributed greatly to the success of the record keeping and office routine. On many occasions in cases of illnesses and emergencies, the clerical staff would meet classes, take care of clubs, etc.

The principal assumed that his teachers were acquainted with the operation of home rooms, clubs and other extra-class activities. This was true in a majority of the cases but greater success would have been obtained had he given more help to his teachers in this phase of the work.

The efforts of the education section to place students in training positions in center offices, shops, and other units were due, no doubt, to the lack of trained supervisory personnel in these situations and the lack of time for the heads of these units to give to this work. I believe that in a similar situation, project-wide attention to training on the job as a part of the school program could be made to work and would be a valuable part of the school program.

The principal enjoyed a satisfactory degree of cooperation from the other divisions, sections and units on the project. One of the most satisfactory was the installation of health rooms in each of the school blocks, supervised by nurses' aides furnished by the hospital. Arrangements were made between the school and the hospital so that necessary attention to school students was given with a minimum loss of school time.



*Copy 2*  
United States  
Department of Interior  
War Relocation Authority  
McGehee, Arkansas

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

of

Vance Martin - Asst. Jr-Sr High School Prin.  
Education Section

Period Covering  
October 19, 1942 - JULY 1, 1945

PN - Vance Martin



## PERSONAL NARRATIVE

I, Vance Martin, Assistant Junior Senior High School Principal at Jerome and Rohwer Relocation Centers, accepted a position as secondary teacher in the Jerome Relocation Center early in September, 1942. I reported for duty on Monday, October 19, 1942. It was not possible to open the school term until a later date and I was detailed by the Project Director to work with the Director of the Jerome Cooperative Enterprise in the establishment of this enterprise and in setting up certain services such as the distribution of newspapers, the beginning of bookkeeping system and a few other things of minor importance. After several weeks, I was relieved of any duties in this connection and was employed in the Education Section. Some time later in December, I was detailed to this assignment because I had had previous experiences in engineering.

The first school term at the Jerome Center opened January 4, 1943. I was assigned to a teaching load of six classes per day in the field of Social Science. The school term ended in September 10, 1943. Immediately afterwards I was detailed to the Operations Division and assigned to the supervision of loading the baggage and freight for the residents of the center being transferred to the Tule Lake Center by train. There were three trains scheduled to leave for Tule Lake during this 30 day period from September 10 to October 10. I supervised the loading of two trains but was relieved of further responsibility because I had been employed as the Assistant Junior Senior High School Principal and charged with the responsibility of opening the high school on October 4, 1943. I was acting Principal of the high school from September 20, 1943 until about April 15, 1944 at which time a principal was employed.

At the time I was appointed acting Principal of the high school. I asked that the former Curriculum Advisor, at this time the only head teacher in the high school, be assigned to work with me, performing the duties of Assistant Principal and as supervisor of classroom teaching. I asked this person, a woman who had had more than ten years of experience as superintendent of a public school system in a town of approximately 8,000 population, to prepare a schedule with the assignment of teachers for the opening of school. The second schedule was prepared, meeting with the superintendent's approval and school opened on October 4.

Due to the fact that I was employed in this capacity before the opening date which had been set for the next school term and also because at that time I was busy with duties mentioned before I did not have sufficient opportunity to set up proper administrative policies in the beginning. I was handicapped for some time because



of this fact and because I was not in agreement with certain major policies which had been set and followed by the previous administration. The opening of school term was planned, however, with three policies in mind: (1) To delegate authority to the other staff members working under my supervision in such a manner that there would be a minimum of overlapping of authority, that the person charged with a responsibility would know that the authority to discharge responsibility was in their hands, and that the students would have no doubt in their minds as to the responsibilities and authority of various staff members. (2) To delegate to each of the more capable teachers as much responsibility aside from the actual classroom as ability and schedule time would permit the teachers to accept. (3) To distribute equally among the faculty members the teaching load, and in so doing leave each teacher with a vacant period in the day, if at all possible, because of the large number of students per class which the W.R.A. administration had imposed upon us.

I believed, in the very beginning, that I had the good-will of the staff members and also of the great majority of the faculty members. Their cooperation with me in the first 2 months of school proved to my satisfaction, that I was correct in my assumption and was the important factor in the beginning of the second school year. We faced the following major problems in the beginning of the second year. (1) A tendency on the part of students to be truant from school and to "out classes" at will. (2) A necessity for a re-evaluation of credits for a rather large number of students. These problems, those connected with the administration, and those concerning the students, I will now take up one at a time.

I. The delegation of authority to staff members. The superintendent has impressed upon me the necessity for exercising care in the delegation of authority to the staff members. The staff members working under my supervision had in a subtle way conveyed to me the desire to know their exact duties, responsibilities, and the extent of their authority. I tried, as best I could to follow these suggestions. At the first faculty meeting previous to the opening of school and at the first student assembly the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the staff members was presented to the teachers and students. The head teacher was asked to assume certain duties of the Assistant Principal and the supervision of classroom teaching. The Vocational Advisor was asked, too, in addition to her regular duties to assume the responsibilities of a registrar, since we had no registrar, and because of her previous experience before and during the first year of operation of the school. This was deemed essential due to the second major student problem: the necessity for a re-evaluation of credits for a rather large number of students and because of the laxity of the previous administration in awarding credits for courses which had not been completed.



II. Delegation of added responsibilities to classroom teachers. Due to the fact that there had been tendency on the part of the students to be truant from school and to "cut classes" at will, one of the classroom teachers, who had had previous administrative experience as Principal of Junior High School was asked to assume the duties of a Attendance Officer in the hope that attendance would be more satisfactory to both the administration and to the teachers. This was a grave problem due to the laxity of the previous administration in dealing with absences. During the first year evacuee clerks, who had had no previous experience with high school students, accepted excuses from the students and wrote re-admission blanks for them. Many boys were quick to take advantage of the hesitancy of the clerks to question the validity of the excuse for absence presented by the students; many unexcused absences were allowed for this reason. These clerks asked to be relieved of this responsibility and it was assigned to the teacher previously mentioned, who immediately began to work at the solution of the problem. By the end of the first month of school this situation was under her control, who had the teachers greatly pleased by the improvement. One other teacher, who had had much clerical experience, was also assigned to two periods of duty in the office assisting in the compilation of absentee records from day to day.

III. The equal distribution of teaching loads. This problem was more acute than it had been during the previous year for two reasons: 1. Several of the qualified evacuee teachers had resigned and, 2. The number of appointed personnel teachers was the number permitted. However, it was possible to shift some teachers from one field to another, upon approval of the State Department of Education, and several teachers expressed the desire to have more students in the classes per period and one less teaching period. This made it possible to allow each teacher, with the exception of one or two, to have off periods during the day at the beginning of the school term. From time to time, as each teacher resigned or were transferred to another section, various teachers were called upon to accept additional class periods per day. In most cases this was done in a spirit of cooperation and with the knowledge that every effort had been made to care for the situation in some other way.

The most serious problem confronting the administration during the second school year was that of building the teachers morale. Several factors entered into this problem. (1) The opening date of the first school year, coming on January 4 made it necessary to continue throughout the summer into September to finish the school year. This meant that during the hottest months of the year teachers and students, 30 to 45 in number, were seated in barrack rooms, on the average of 20' x 24' in size, without fans and with



poor ventilation. This was an unbearable situation. An attempt was made to alleviate the situation by changing the school hours during the day starting at 7:00 A.M. Central War Time and going on until 12:00 noon, running almost all of the school schedule during the morning to take advantage of the cooler part of the day. Even then, however, it was necessary to have one class in the afternoon. In addition, the school situation itself was a tense one due to the fact that many boys and girls were still resentful of their confinement to the center and were not cooperative in many respects. The fact that the administration during the first year had been very lax with regards to disciplinary action was also present in the minds of both the teachers and the students, leaving many of the teachers uncertain in their minds as to what steps would be sanctioned in maintaining discipline in the classroom. Finally the fact that the Civil Service regulations required the teachers to remain at their post of duty, namely, the school block, was irritating and inconducive to a good teaching situation. School teachers, generally speaking, feel that their job is done soon after school is dismissed in the afternoon and, except when the duties demand, have the feeling that the time is wasted in remaining on the post of duty merely to satisfy a requirement of hours. This led many teachers to assume that this particular job was one of "putting in hours" and not really a job to be done. I feel that many of the teachers resented this requirement and that this requirement had an undesirable effect upon the morale of the teaching staff. An attempt was made to adjust the situation to this requirement but it was not satisfactory.

The great majority of the teachers were cognizant of the efforts made by the staff to remedy the hour situation and, though it was not done in a satisfactory manner they showed their appreciation of this effort and in general the morale of the teaching staff was maintained on a surprisingly high level, despite the factors previously mentioned, until the latter part of the school year. During the last few months several events brought about a drop in teacher morale. First, the announcement that the Jerome Center would be closed and that it would be necessary to have school on Saturday in order to meet with the requirements for a full school year caused teachers and students to lose interest in their work and assume the attitude that the only thing to do was to "drag out" to the end. Second, a Principal had been employed, in my opinion, at the insistence for the Washington office of the W.R.A. This was not done because of the need for the Principal at Jerome but to give this person some experiences in a center school with the thought in mind of placing him in another center after the Center closes. The coming of the man for this short time remaining seemed unwise and undesirable from the standpoint of the persons in charge and of the teachers. There had already been many changes



and the teachers felt that they could expect some more. Soon after the Principal's arrival they found that they were correct in their assumption. This man indicated that he intended to make numerous changes in the operation of the school, with only 60 days of school remaining. Within 3 weeks of his arrival several of the best teachers asked for permission to resign or for transfer to other sections. Students were resentful of this man's attempt to impose his personality and ideas into the situation at this time.

In May 1944, I was sent to Denver to a conference to represent the chief of Community Management for the Project Director. Upon my return to the center, on May 17, I worked for two days in my office in the high school. On May 19 the Community Management chief I discovered that they wanted me to assume supervision of processing the papers which had been presented by each evacuee family in requesting their future center residence. I soon discovered that this job would require all my time everyday from this time until the residents of the center had been moved. Two weeks of school remained after May 19, at which time I was assigned to these new duties. During that two weeks period I was constantly in touch with the high school, with clerks and teachers, in response to their request for advice and suggestions that were needed in closing out the school term. This happened because the new Principal had not gained the confidence of the teachers and the office clerks, and they felt a hesitancy in approaching him with their problems. I worked in the administration office from May 19 through June 30, at which time I was transferred to the Rohwer Relocation Center as Assistant Junior Senior High School Principal, in charge of the operation of the Junior High School.

#### ROHWER SERVICE

The Junior High School in the Rohwer Center was located in a block apart from the Senior High School. For this reason the Assistant Junior Senior High School Principal was assigned to the supervision of the operation of the Junior High School, subject to the approval of the Senior High School Principal, in policies and other administrative matters. This was technically the setup; however, in actual practice, the Junior High School Principal was given almost complete authority in the operation of this unit. At the beginning of the 1944-45 school year there was an enrollment of 445 students, a faculty of 12 appointed personnel teachers and 5 evacuee teachers. The operation of this unit was very easy except for the two factors. (1) The Civil Service requirement of hours had, as stated before, created on the part of some faculty members the attitude that this was a job of "putting in the hours" rather than a task to be done, and because of this reason, several of the teachers had a tendency to loaf on the job. (2) There were also several personalities that clashed repeatedly, causing a lack of cooperation among the teaching staff.



In my opinion the Principal of the Junior High School should have been responsible to the Superintendent of Education for the operation of Junior High School unit and for the property assigned to this unit. There was no conflict between the Principal of the Senior High School and the Assistant Principal throughout the operation of the school year. If the property assigned to the Junior High School had been assigned directly from the superintendent the records and accounting of property would have been more accurate and more easily kept. I will conclude with stating that, in my opinion a better situation would have prevailed if (1) The Junior High School unit had been operated with the Principal being directly responsible to the Superintendent or (2) The Junior and Senior High School had been set-up in the same block with the Principal having over all charge for the operation of the total of units and the Assistant Principal acting as Assistant.

Respectfully submitted,

Vance Martin  
Jr. - Sr. High School Principal



*Copy 2*  
United States  
Department of Interior  
War Relocation Authority  
McGehee, Arkansas

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

of

M. H. Ziegler - Elementary School Principal  
Educa tion Section

Period Covering  
September 11, 1942 - July 1, 1945

PN - M.H. Ziegler



## PERSONAL NARRATIVE

by

Merrill H. Ziegler

I joined the WRA staff in Little Rock, Arkansas, in time to attend the Education Workshop Conference that was held at the Hotel Marion on September 10-11, 1942. This conference was a great help in orientation. During the next few days I worked with Superintendent J. A. Trice as he interviewed prospective teachers for the Rohwer Center Schools. I also had numerous conferences with Byron Thompson, Elementary School Principal of the Jerome Relocation Center. We reviewed and outlined standards necessary to meet the requirements as an Arkansas Class "A" school. We selected and ordered basic textbooks and all school record forms. Also, curriculum, promotion, and grading policies were discussed and outline.

Induction

I was transferred to the Center in time to meet and help with the induction and housing of the first train load of evacuees. As no personnel had been appointed to Community Activities, I was detailed to organize a recreational program. Later I supervised the building of shelving and counters for the first canteen. At the same time I contacted local wholesale houses to arrange for supplies. By this time the majority of the evacuees had arrived and I was called back to school administration.

Pre-School

One of the first duties was the compilation of a tentative roster of pupils. A schedule was set up. High school and elementary school principals, assistant principals, and evacuee secretaries spent one half day in each block. Parents and children were questioned and tentative enrollment cards filled out. Very few children brought progress reports from previously attended schools. Grade placement was made by questioning the pupil concerning the grade last attended. As some pupils confused the activity classes of the assembly center with school work they overstated their progress and skipped a grade. Some of the errors were found and corrected when reports were received from California schools. Some schools answered our request for transcripts by saying that all evacuee records had been sent to "some center". A few schools wrote "records lost" and one said "destroyed". All this meant ragged classes and rooms with a wide range of interest and ability. It also accounted for a number of failures at the close of the first year.

Grade  
Placement



With pupils enumerated it was possible to make spot maps of the grades and determine attendance areas for the two elementary schools. The division line had to be changed the second year with a shift in student population of some blocks. During the third year a number of changes had to be made after school had started. In most classes only three teachers were available for a grade section instead of four. In order to avoid split sections with two grades in a room we shifted pupils from one school to the other. The school in Block 35 had two teachers to each grade while Block 31 had two teachers in grades one and six and only one teacher in grades two, three, four, and five.

School  
Districts

All teachers were asked to report for duty on Monday, November 2, 1942. A pre-school conference was held from Tuesday morning through noon on Saturday. The major emphasis of the general meetings was orientation while sectional meetings were devoted to curriculum. An effort was made to give as broad an understanding as possible of the cultural background of the Japanese-Americans. Dr. J. B. Hunter, Assistant Project Director, contributed a great deal from his first hand knowledge of Japan. The Japanese school system and many oriental customs were explained in the parents understanding or lack of understanding the American school procedure.

Pre-School  
Conference

Since a good many of the elementary school teachers had not taught in Arkansas some time was spent in discussing the state educational aims and the progress made through the Arkansas Cooperative Program to Improve Instruction. Teachers were urged to break away from traditional textbook teaching and do some work with units, projects, or integrated subject matter teaching.

Educational  
Progress

During the first part of the week the principal discussed experience and fields of interest with each teacher. Grade assignments were made and approved by the superintendent. As soon as this was done the faculty for each school was announced and classrooms assigned. Some time was given each day for the teacher to become acquainted with available material.

Discussion  
and  
Assignments

During the month of October, the supervisor of student teachers had been busy interviewing many young people to serve as assistant teachers. An attempt was made to get people with as much college training as possible. I believe that an error was made when these prospective teachers were asked to wait until school started before they could be put on the payroll. Many applied early in September. Rather than be idle until the second week in October they took office

Evacuee  
Assistants



jobs in other departments and sections. I believe it would have been best to hire them at once and start in-service training classes.

As we had very few teachers on the staff, pupil load was high. Following the policy of giving the pupil the best start possible, we tried to have the most teachers in the primary grades. We ended by having a pupil teacher ration in grade one of about thirty-five to one. These teachers had no assistants. In all other grades each teacher had the responsibility of from fifty-five to seventy pupils. They were placed in two classrooms and an evacuee assistant teacher was assigned to each room. These assistants could do little more than supervise study periods for the first few weeks. This meant almost constant teaching for the regular teacher and a great deal of running back and forth between rooms. Most of the assistants assumed responsibility quickly and were soon teaching about half the classes under the supervision of the master teacher. The plan worked very well.

Classroom  
Organization

During the second year only about half as many evacuees could be recruited. In most cases the teacher and her assistant "departmentalized" their work and alternated in the two rooms. By the third year only two evacuees remained with the teaching force. They were given the entire responsibility of classrooms of about twenty pupils.

Fewer  
Evacuee  
Teachers

In three years the evacuee teaching force in the elementary schools dropped from twenty-eight to two. Chief among the reasons for this unpopularity was the fact that the work was exacting. One could not wander to the canteen for a mid-morning or mid-afternoon lunch. Also, there was no visible future on the "outside" for an evacuee teacher. One of the chief handicaps to using evacuee teachers was the lack of respect on the part of most of the pupils. Most of the assistant teachers had very little control over their classrooms. The regular teacher had to "control" both classrooms. The children learned to waste a great deal of time. I believe that much better progress would have been made with an all-Caucasian staff.

We had very little with which to work when school opened. The pupils sat on the floor. There was a four or six foot piece of blackboard, a chair for the teacher, and occasionally a rough table. I do not believe that this was a handicap. It think it was a challenge to both teachers and pupils. The steady acquisition of equipment was a big help in boosting morale. This might be a good place for another opinion. I believe that a school building already built (and painted white) would have given greater stability and

Equipment



tranquility to the new camp than any other one thing. The school is the center of every community and there was none here - not even a school block.

Supervision of the appointed personnel was a satisfying and interesting undertaking. The teachers had an adventurous spirit or they would not have applied for the position. They were willing to experiment. They were above the average in training and experience. Most of our undertakings were more in the nature of a cooperative workshop than a supervisory program.

Supervision

Turnover was so high among the evacuee assistant teachers that training and supervision was practically a single service under the guidance of the supervisor of student teachers. During the third year the supervisor's position was eliminated and the work taken over by the principal.

Turnover

A lack of adequately trained personnel handicapped all phases of our work. Our teacher quota was never reached and the pupil load was high. Our philosophy had to be "the greatest good for the greatest number". To this end the appointed personnel had to devote their time to the regular classes and regular classwork. Atypical children, if given any special attention, were directed and helped by evacuees. These assistant teachers were given as much help and training as possible but they were not able to do much for the children except in the field of reading.

Atypical  
Program

School closing presented very little in the way of new problems. Pupil reports were made out and filed in the usual manner. The files for both offices were then consolidated to facilitate the handling of transcripts for relocating pupils. All textbooks, reference books, and supplemental teaching materials were warehoused in one large room. This made checking a less cumbersome undertaking. School furniture was sent to the warehouse as soon as possible after the close of school.

Closing

There is only one point that I would like to change markedly if I had a similar situation to meet in the future. I believe that orientation of new teachers should receive a good deal of time and attention. New teachers, arriving by train, should be met - and not by the evacuee driver of a freight truck. The first day, the first meal, the fact that a room or apartment is ready means much in building morale. I firmly believe that an orientation program should give the new teacher a sense of security, of belonging, of being wanted.

Next  
Time



-5-

I have thoroughly enjoyed these three school years with WRA. I can only hope that I have helped as much as I have profited by the contacts made here.



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United States  
Department of Interior  
War Relocation Authority  
McGehee, Arkansas

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

of

Lola Lauhon - Head Teacher, Elementary  
Education Section

Period Covering  
November 2, 1942 - July 1, 1945

PM - Lola Lauhon



## PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Lola Lauhon

I came to the W.R.A. November 1, 1942, and lived for a week in make believe world, called a pre-school conference. We were lifted to the heights by lectures, sermons, prayers, and dramatic presentations from the Caucasian and Japanese residents of this evacuation city---converted from a cotton field in 71 days.

The following Monday, however, life again became real and settled into routine.

I asked for sixth grade work, but two teachers who had had experience in this grade were given this assignment and Monday morning, November 9, 1942, I saw before me a sea of 73 fifth grade soic faces---registering nothing! Their world had turned over. It was my responsibility to help right it.

I was given two evacuee assistants. With their help, we divided the group into two sections, one for each assistant - then I spent my day in teaching a little, supervising a little, but mostly dashing out of one of those rooms into the other.

By the end of the first six weeks one of the before mentioned six grade teachers resigned and I was given her group with the same two room, two evacuee teacher set up.

We were told repeatedly, "This is 'teachers' heaven - Do those many things you've always wanted to do and couldn't. No impediment here. Do this or that. But get results". The outcome for the first year was a junky work shop---barrack room, no wall board, too many children, big turn over in inexperienced evacuee assistants---with good results. Fairly good proof that the children and the teacher are, undoubtedly, the school.

The second year "Our Uncle" gave permission to cut doors in the partitions thus eliminating the excess sale of boots, umbrellas, and raincoats necessary to do the pedestrian acrobatics between the two classrooms.

Frazzled classification of the first year, caused by lost, destroyed, and missent records, was corrected to an appreciable extent, thus accounting for a large number of failures, social promotions and a general replacement. By this time, too, we were acquainted with the background and the present problems of the student body-their problems now were ours. My second year in the sixth grade was practically unruffled - Each day was a new world.



November 1, 1944, I was changed from elementary to senior elementary classification. My new duties in addition to teaching sixth grade was to work as assistant to the elementary principal. This entailed care of records, and general supervision, under direction of the principal, of the Westside elementary school. By this time a workable program was in progress, and keeping this schedule in channel became merely routine.

One of our major problems was establishing better attitudes. The attitudes of the student body from the beginning were wholesome. Although on the defensive side of the major problem of evacuation, these students with a foreign background who had not attended school for several months, were found to reflect, for the most part, desirable qualities of thought. The pledge of allegiance to the American flag was given with enthusiasm; patriotic songs were sung from memory; Junior Red Cross Drives were popular; and American customs and traditions were familiar and appreciated.

Japanese parents were charmed with anything pertaining to education, and even though they looked upon the future with disdain and doubt, they wished for their children the best that the schools could offer - probably for this reason they were cooperative and interested in any phase of the school program. Studious habits were well established. To study was honorable.

Tradition had stamped her imprint. Stoic traits of the forefathers were evident to a pronounced degree. Children were as obedient as you probably have heard they were, but with qualifications. Response was slow, too slow for the Scotch - Irish heritage of the Caucasian at the teacher's desk. One teacher punished a boy because he looked at her too long before answering her question. She thought he glared. He merely looked.

Time to the Orientals was no element. They worked patiently on the smallest details. Once an assignment was made, it was practically impossible to stop them until the task was completed. You were greeted with "I haven't finished already". And be it recess, lunch, or school "let out", the teacher wasn't obeyed until her directions had been carried out to their own satisfaction.

Statements were heard making it obvious that some parents were not sold on the American way of life. There was the third grade boy who wanted to shoot down the American airplane flying overhead; another boy wished he were a man so that he could kill all the Americans; and another who asked, "Do we have to go to the V-Day Program".



The above picture though depicting the majority of the elementary school body, does not give the entire trend. The Oriental background was sometimes present. Smaller children occasionally revealed that they had been well informed as to the customs and the beliefs of the "Land of the Rising Sun".

Were there to be a "next relocation project", and I were asked for an opinion, it would be---have a school building---not the traditional little red one, but one with halls, bells, a library, superintendent and principals' offices, gymnasium, and others things you find in most school buildings lending dignity and security to the purpose of education. It would, too, have had a tendency to intensify our efforts to acquaint center residents with our desires for the establishment of American ideals as they really are.



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McGehee, Arkansas

PN - Francis Amis

PERSONAL NARRATIVE  
of

Frances Amis - Vocational Adviser  
Education Section

Period Covering  
November 2, 1942 - December 14, 1945



ROHWER CENTER HIGH SCHOOL  
Office of the Vocational Guidance Director

FIRST SCHOOL YEAR 1942--1943

The vocational guidance director was among the first of the education section personnel to report at the Rohwer relocation center to make preparation for the opening of the center schools. She arrived on October 1, 1942, one month before the first pre-school conference began.

In an effort to orient herself to the new kind of life here in the center, to make personal contacts with boys and girls who would enroll in the high school, to become acquainted with their point of view, to meet and talk with their parents, and to know the living conditions in the blocks, the guidance director spent most of this first month visiting in the homes of the evacuees. With the aid of an interpreter, 311 home visits were made. Since few of the boys of high school age were at home during the day, the majority of the interviews were with girls of senior and junior high school ages and with their parents. This experience was invaluable to the counselor in her understanding of the problems of the prospective students. She was able also to share this background of information with other members of the school personnel who arrived later. The reports of these home visits were the beginning of the personal record files of the senior high school students. ORIENTATION

The guidance program of the senior high school necessarily developed somewhat slowly, since in many cases it was a trial and error process. The guidance office was set up in the senior high school block adjoining the principal's office. The organization of the school provided for the home room group to be the medium for the guidance program with each teacher serving as sponsor and counselor for her group. The principal, after consultation with the guidance director, appointed four of his staff members to serve as a counseling committee to assist the director in developing a guidance program and in providing each student with a follow-up counseling interview at least once a year. ORGANIZATION OF GUIDANCE PROGRAM

One home room period each week was set aside for group guidance for the subject of the week and was conducted by the home room sponsor. Topics for these aids were approved by the counseling committee and the outlines were worked out by faculty members, home room groups, club groups, or by the director. Through the home rooms, inventory questionnaires were completed by each student and an "analysis of present situation", used as a basis for group counseling, was made by each student. These completed forms were basic information for the personal files set up in the guidance director's office. Later, autobiographies, written by each student as an English class assignment, were added to the personal files.



In December, 1942, the responsibility of the placement of part time workers was transferred from the Personnel Management Section to the vocational guidance office in order that students might be selected and placed in jobs with as much dispatch as possible. The placing of part time workers continued to be the responsibility of the vocational guidance office until May 12, 1945, when all records of part time workers were returned to the Personnel Management Section; and part time workers became full time workers after May 25, the closing date of the schools.

PLACEMENT  
OF  
PART TIME  
WORKERS

The assembling of an occupational library was begun during the first semester. Pamphlets and other printed materials on twenty-four occupations were collected. These were on file in the guidance office until the high school library was established and a place for them was made in the vertical files. Materials were continually added to these files.

OCCUPATIONAL  
LIBRARY

A list of twenty-six suggestive theme subjects relating to vocational guidance was given to the English teachers. Many of these were used. The occupational files were sources of material for these themes, for occupational units in classes and home rooms, and for individuals interested in choosing their own occupations.

The guidance office became the central office of the appointment of student assistants and for the records of the service credit program. A scale of service credit awards for all types of student service activities was set up by a faculty committee near the end of the first semester. Service badges were presented at an award assembly at the end of each semester.

EXTRA  
CURRICULA  
ACTIVITIES

Under the supervision of the guidance director, a committee composed of representatives of each home room drew up a constitution for the Associated Students of Rohwer Center High School. By the end of the first semester, the constitution had been adopted by the student body, officers and home room representatives elected, and the organization was ready to begin functioning with the guidance director as sponsor as soon as the second semester began.

In consultation with the guidance director, the principal appointed a member of his staff as general chairman of each extracurricula activity, responsible directly to the guidance director. Chairmen of clubs, assemblies, National Honor Society, social affairs, special day programs, service credits, home room groups, and freshman orientation program were named and these committees were functioning when the second semester began in March.

In March, 1943, a group of senior high school boys and girls from Little Rock met in the guidance office with a selected group of Rohwer students representing a cross section of the school to discuss the organization and activities of the various schools represented by the group. Some of the extra-



curricular activities subsequently organized were an outgrowth of this meeting.

In May, 1943, the files of the student relocation office were transferred from the adult education office to the guidance office, the guidance director assuming responsibility of student relocation counseling. This change was made because by this time most of the evacuees who had finished high school before leaving the West Coast and who wanted to enter colleges or universities had made plans for doing so. Henceforth student relocation would be chiefly among students graduating from high school. Each semester the guidance director had a personal interview with every senior regarding his choice of occupation, the possibility of continuing his education, and his other relocation plans and problems. The guidance director worked in close cooperation with the office of the Japanese American Student Relocation Council of Philadelphia in placing students of the Center in colleges and universities. When Mr. Tom Bodine, field secretary, and other representatives of the council visited the Center, conferences with students and parents were arranged through the guidance office.

STUDENT  
RELOCATION  
COUNSELING

Before the close of the first school year, the Parent Teacher Association recognized the necessity of providing jobs for high school boys during the summer vacation. In 1943 and again in 1944 arrangements were made by the P.T.A. to take a group of high school boys out during the summer vacation to work as fruit and vegetable harvesters. Conferences between the P.T.A. representatives and the high school boys were arranged through the vocational guidance office. Approximately twenty boys took advantage of this opportunity the first summer and approximately eighty the second summer.

SUMMER  
WORK  
for Boys

#### SECOND SCHOOL YEAR 1943--1944

The counseling program of the second school year, 1943--1944, was basically the same as that set up the first year. The supervision of attendance was an additional responsibility assumed by the guidance director in order that she might keep in closer touch with students needing counseling on health, home, and other problems.

SUPERVISION  
OR  
ATTENDANCE

In the spring of 1944, the Otis Group Intelligence Scale was administered to all students of the secondary schools. These tests were graded and filed in the junior high school office and in the senior high school guidance office and scores were recorded on student's permanent records. Again in 1945 the same test was administered to all students of the secondary schools who had not previously taken it. This included 242 in junior high school and 183 in senior high school.

IQ TESTS

With the change in Selective Service regulations in January, 1944, making Nisei subject to the draft, the guidance

SELECTIVE  
SERVICE



director assembled in her office as much information as possible relating to Selective Service and to the Armed Forces and provided counseling service for high school students faced with the probability of being drafted. This service was much sought by boys who had many questions to be answered. The director assumed responsibility for having DSS Forms 213 (Data on Registrant) completed for all boys fifteen years old or over who were separated from this school for any reason. These forms were forwarded to the state headquarters of Selective Service. Educational Summary Cards for all boys graduating from high school or called to the Armed Forces were also completed by the vocational adviser until the use of these cards were discontinued.

## COUNSELING

On May 21, 1944, the high school teacher who had been chairman of the counseling committee reported to the guidance office for assignment of duties for the summer. From that date until August 5 she assumed the responsibility of the routine of part time employment, separating the active and "dead" files, compiling the calendar of events for the school documentation, preparing half of the WRA reports for graduate students, sorting of college catalogues, interviewing 10B girls expecting to enter senior high school in September, etc., and a series of conferences on Saturday mornings for former Jerome girls who would enter this high school in September.

## SUMMER ACTIVITIES

In addition to the responsibilities of the assistant, the guidance office carried on such activities as supervision of the writing of a handbook for new students entering school, mimeographing one hundred copies of the second edition of the Student Relocation Handbook and making approximately twenty-five home visits. The guidance director taught a class in "Personality Problems" during the second summer term. She also completed many questionnaires from colleges, from the Welfare Section, and from the Selective Service Headquarters concerning former students of Rohwer center high school.

Having been named official testing agent for the secondary schools, she administered college entrance examinations for the University of Chicago and for the Pennsylvania Hospital of Philadelphia. She also handled the heavy duties of student relocation work through the Japanese American Student Relocation Council in Philadelphia.

## THIRD SCHOOL YEAR 1944--1945

The vocational guidance director resigned October 15, 1944. She was succeeded by her former assistant whose appointment as vocational adviser became effective the following November 1.

The time of the director's resignation, the student relocation counseling duties were assigned to another high school teacher whose schedule was adjusted to give her extra time for these. The guidance office was also relieved of the supervision of attendance records.



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McGehee, Arkansas

PN - B.D. Ramsdell

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

of

Ben D. Ramsdell - Head Teacher, Shop  
Education Section

Period Covering  
October 13, 1942 - July 4, 1945



## PERSONAL NARRATIVE

By

Bert D. Ramsdell

I came on duty at Rohwer Center October 11, 1942 charged with the responsibility of establishing an Industrial Education program for the high school. In surveying the prospects, several points were evident:

1. I would be given a free hand in determining the scope and aims of the department.
2. The program would probably not last more than two to five years.
3. Equipment and supplies would be difficult to procure.
4. Curriculum content would have to be determined by equipment and teaching personnel available.

Our three years existence bore out these expectations.

The problem of what proportional emphasis should be given to vocational as compared with industrial arts education soon became obscured by virtue of the sheer physical problem of getting something, anything with which to begin work.

Early contacts with other section heads in regard to cooperative training efforts on the vocational level did not give promise of success evidently due to the pressure on such persons for immediate production.

By November 9, I had acquired the services of 6 evacuee assistants, all young men either with college trade or high school training along general shop and related subject lines. The cooperation from these young men was fine.

Fortunately, a considerable quantity of surplus N. Y. A. and C. C. C. equipment was being sent into the Center at the time and although we were short many critical items and supplies, actual classes were begun on schedule with over 300 students on the first day meeting in two shop locations, the public service hall in Block 31 and 35.

From the very start, progress was continual and by the end of the second year, a well rounded program of exploratory industrial arts on the junior high school level with pre-vocational auto mechanics, cabinet and general shop, mechanical drawing and related subjects on the senior high level was achieved.

For about six months during 1944, I was reassigned to the position of Vocational Training Supervisor but was able to accomplish little beyond the school program that we then had operating due to an insufficient trained staff to whom existing responsibilities could be shifted.

Three primary obstacles stood in the way of producing a better program:

1. The terrific difficulty and delay in obtaining needed specialized equipment and supplies.



2. The high rate of personnel turn-over and the lack of specifically trained personnel.
3. The failure in the original Center plan to place Center-wide training in a higher official category than production.

As a result of this last error, production appeared to be constantly inadequate and behind schedule and cooperation training efforts were nil. Had the rank order of these two Center-wide objective been reversed, it is the writer's opinion that both objectives would have been accomplished more effectively.

On the happy side of the ledger has been the fine help and cooperation given to me by the school administrators with and under whom I have worked. No other school experience has been more pleasant.



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McGehee, Arkansas

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

of

Mathilda Muyskens - Librarian  
Education Section

Period Covering  
April 19, 1943 - September 5, 1945

PN - M. Muyskens



### LIBRARIAN'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Library service was perhaps the most important leisure time activity provided in the relocation centers. Suddenly transferred from the responsibilities of normal living to the vacuum of protective custody the evacuees needed desperately some constructive outlets for their interests and energies. The whole range of human attitudes and aptitudes was represented in this need. The college graduate and the tom-boy, the technician and the domestic servant, the business man and the artist, the old grandfather whose working days were over and the busy young mother, all expected to find reading matter to suit their needs when library service was provided. Many had to be disappointed because the budgetary allowance for library purposes was restricted to the educational program and the librarian was a member of the educational staff. This inadequacy of the library service program was brought to the attention of the WRA Chief of Community and a change in organization was made, removing the librarian from the high school staff and placing her on the staff of the superintendent of education as a department head, thus freeing her to give technical supervision to the community library. This brought the librarian in closer touch with community interests, policies and objectives; also, it brought the library needs of the community within the educational program, and conversely it made the school library facilities, if only in a limited way, available to all the residents of the community. This was a step in the right direction, but by this time the situation had "jelled". It is here recommended that the library be a free and separate service unit in the community. Professional librarians are trained in the educational principle of responsiveness to the individual and group needs of a community; they are trained also in economical efficiency of organization, and in the civic responsibility of assembling and interpreting pertinent statistics. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the scope and effectiveness of the library in a community if promoted by coordination, not subordination, with other service organization in the project.

It is further recommended that the service a unit purposes to offer would be effectuated if a basic outline of procedures were worked out and made available to all persons who participate in performing the services of the unit, in short, that a democratic attitude be taken by supervisors toward all personnel who take part in carrying out the policies of an authority. The frustration experienced when a piece of work carefully done is rejected because of a minor detail degrades both the work and the worker. More



pertinent data could be obtained and much of the time spent in paper work could be spared if objectives for records were clearly defined. (That critic was not unjustly ironic who said, "So you're going to work for Uncle Sam. Well, You won't have to worry. You won't even have to think; you just do as you're told".

In searching for better ways to do what had to be done, the achievements of the library service program must not be overlooked. Briefly the high points are:

1. School enrollment almost 100% registered as library borrowers.
2. A higher than average percent of the population of the center registered as library borrowers.
3. A higher than average per capita use of the library.
4. Frequent expression of appreciation of the library.

These points were treated more fully in the documentation of the education program.



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McGehee, Arkansas

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

OF

Helen Frasier  
Adult & Vocational Education Supervisor  
Education Section

Period Covering  
September 28, 1942 - June 30, 1945

PN - H. Frasier



PERSONAL NARRATIVE

by  
Helen Frasier

I reported for duty as Curriculum Adviser for the Rowher Center Schools on September 28, 1942. I spend that first week in the Little Rock office acquainting myself with the whole WRA program and thinking in terms of the schools to be established. I studied the plan presented in Curriculum Procedures for Schools in War Relocation Centers which had been drawn up during the summer.

Report  
for  
Duty

After I began to dream of a community school such as Dr. Paul Hanna and others had suggested. I learned that the WRA had already purchased Arkansas State adopted textbooks for the elementary schools. For the first time, I questioned the statement which the Arkansas Commissioner of Education had made me when I asked his advice about accepting the position with the WRA schools. His sincere statement had been, "This is a chance to build your ideal school; the sky's the limit; the world is your oyster."

Projected  
Plans

Hearing that a blanket purchase of books had been made caused two pictures to arise in my mind. The first was the ideal community school where boys and girls engage in meaningful, worthwhile activities which contribute to the good of all and cause them to become a real part of the community- a school where they read to get information for which they feel a need and to pass on to others where differentiation of instruction is such that the individual is developing at his maximum rate- a school where learning and living converge. The second picture frightened me. It was a school where the boys and girls read the same book at the same time, and the teacher's job is to see that everybody read it, creating about as much interest as one gets from having the morning paper read aloud to him after he has finished reading it- where the children are treated as if they were all alike and individual differences did not exist.

Two  
Possibilities

The latter picture was the "bugger" I fought as long as I was Curriculum Adviser. Our greatest mistakes were made in those instances where we allowed the school to become traditional and routine.

Greatest  
Mistake

I spend the month of October, 1942 in the Center assisting with a survey of school population, studying the facts gained from that survey, interviewing prospective workers, collecting information and materials which the schools would need.

October, 1942

ence preceding the duty to prepare the plans for a week's conference the teachers were made familiar with the general policies of the WRA and the educational plans for a community school.

Plans for  
Pre-School  
Conference



The conference was held November 3-7.

During that planning period we were also busy with the task of selecting textbooks for the secondary school and the supplementary books for the elementary school. It was my duty to assist teachers in examining and selecting books, and to handle purchase orders.

Other  
Duties

I made recommendations for professional books and materials needed for the entire school program. I collected literature about community schools, curriculum programs in various states, guidance, English for adults, and for all the subject-matter fields included in the whole school program.

When school opened on November 9, we knew very little about the pupils. My first work was to lead the faculty in learning the abilities and significant needs of each pupil. Then in the light of pupil needs and community needs, we listed objectives and made out tentative plans.

Finding  
Pupil  
Needs

At the end of the first school month, I mailed to the WRA Education Consultant a brief report of the school program which the various committees had developed. In the elementary school, a separate committee had been organized for the teachers at each grade level. In the secondary school each committee was made up of teachers of the same subject matter field. I found difficulty in getting faculty members together for committee work. Throughout the year, I continued to emphasize the importance of discovering significant pupil needs and planning to definitely meet those needs. I asked for frequent discussions and reports on ways in which each teacher's pupils had improved. This emphasis was in keeping with my philosophy of differentiation of instruction.

Early  
Problems

After deciding what subject-matter we would offer, I tried to help teachers select supplementary reading material of a wide scatter of difficulty. Since we found a language difficulty throughout the school, I made special efforts to locate much easy reading material for each group. This undertaking was especially successful in the elementary school—that is selecting material to be purchased and getting each teacher to make her plans in terms of individual differences.

Selecting  
Materials

My failure lay in the fact that I did not foresee that other staff members would want to distribute these books we selected according to their difficulty, that is all books of third grade difficulty in third grade rooms, etc., nor did I foresee that all the children who were not at the average in their grade would be considered atypical.

One  
Failure

The teachers and I had planned a program of improvement in reading. Yet keeping the groups together as much as

Reading  
Plans



possible and centering their interests around purposeful, worthwhile activities. We considered reading as a language process rather than a subject. In a psychological sense, it is a thinking process. In another sense, it is a "social process" that relates the reader to his environment, and conditions that relationship. I tried to lead the teachers to plan the reading programs in terms of the varying abilities of all the pupils and in terms of the interests and activities of the group. So, each child would read about something in which he was interested, not just "read readin'".

During the 1942-1943 school year, I gave attention to tasks such as the following:

1942-1943  
Tasks

1. Leading the teachers to study the background, needs and problems of the evacuees, so that they may better work with them toward the solution of their problems.
2. Assisting in the development of a program in keeping with the suggested courses of study in Arkansas schools and the proposed curriculum developed at Stanford University for WRA, a program which will prepare the pupil to enter any other school. Giving attention to major functions of social life with emphasis on life in Rohwer, pupils participate in life of the Center whenever possible.
3. Assisting the teachers in the selection of textbooks and library books.
4. Promoting integration through meetings of teachers of each grade level and discussion of the subject-matter and activities in each course. Lead teachers to plan work wherever practical in terms of what pupils are doing in other courses.
5. Promoting unification of offerings in each subject-matter field through meetings of all teachers of that subject, both elementary and secondary.
6. Attacking the most conspicuous problem found throughout the school which is the language difficulty resulting from speaking Japanese at home and English at school. Suggesting corrective speech procedures, providing materials to be used, and arranging for demonstrations of choral reading.
7. Development of an integrated program of language arts including reading, spelling, and English. Promoting a program of reading instruction throughout the twelve grades. Assisting with English classes for adults who



speaking only Japanese, and for Kibei who do not know enough English to continue in regular high school classes.

8. Emphasizing integration of English with program of social studies and the community affairs.
9. Collecting information which will aid in education for relocation such as jobs available. Collecting information on life outside such as rationing problems, cost of living, etc.
10. Developing a program which will promote understanding of American ideals and loyalty to American institutions, indoctrinating the child in the principles of democracy.
11. Coordinating the work of various departments, such as, home economics and consumer science.
12. Helping with teaching of atypical children. Collecting information on teaching the deaf. Had two deaf and two nearly deaf.
13. Promoting teacher contacts with parents. At secondary school level we have problems caused by the lack of understanding and cooperation between these young folk and their parents.
14. Development of a science program in the elementary and secondary schools, giving much attention to the local environment.
15. Leading teachers to differentiate work so as to take care of wide differences in ability found in most groups. To plan next year's work in the light of what they know about the pupils they will teach. Circulating bibliographies and curriculum materials to the teachers.
16. Leading groups of teachers in discussion of plans for the next year's work. Leading the teachers to formulate the following questions to be answered in writing plans for the work.
  - a. What information can you obtain concerning the group you will teach next year?
  - b. What core ideas will be presented? Indicate possible approaches to the subject matter.
  - c. What materials are available? What films will you want your pupils to see?



- d. What are the possible activities for pupils?
- e. What opportunities will you have for stressing the American way of living?
- f. What phases of Center life will your group study? What worth-while contributions can your group make to Center life?
- g. How can you guide the pupils' thought toward relocation? What facts concerning relocation can you use in the course?
- h. Indicate the possibilities for correlation with other subjects.
- i. Indicate the tie-up with guidance program.
- j. What study habits will you stress?

I planned the 1943 pre-school conference so as to present information about developments in the whole WRA program, emphasize the school's part in education for relocation, and stress plans for unifying and integrating the whole school program.

1943  
Pre-school  
Conference

I sent the following memorandum to the principals in the secondary schools:

Memorandum  
to  
Secondary  
Principals

We should keep notes and records which will aid in writing complete courses of study. Many phases of the curriculum should be carefully planned with groups working together.

The accounts of the units of work should contain such information as:

1. Main purpose
2. Successful approaches
3. Concepts worth considering
4. Worthwhile learning experiences
5. Major problems
6. Differentiation of instruction
7. Valuable references
8. Culminating activities
9. Means of evaluation



At the beginning of the 1943-1944 school year I suggested to the elementary principal that the following points be considered in writing up this year's work:

Suggestions  
to  
Elementary  
Principal

1. An account of the concepts to be developed in each grade.
2. Plans for units, indicating materials collected, references available, possible activities, methods of evaluation, etc.
3. An account or journal of the progress of the unit.
4. Record of consideration given to differentiation of instruction and instances of such.
5. Course of study in different subject-matter fields.

The Superintendent of Education requested the principals to take the initiative in organizing their teachers for continuous curriculum planning and revision. He asked them to think of my position as being that of adviser and call on me whenever they needed my services. The elementary school soon went atypical. The principal of the Junior High School asked me to work very closely throughout the year in committee work and faculty meetings. That group did an excellent job of acquainting each teacher with the whole program. Through these committee and weekly faculty meetings the teacher knew what was happening to the pupil when he was not in her class. Their guidance program fitted into the whole scheme of things. It was most interesting to me to work with this Junior High School faculty in tearing down the main evils of departmentalization. One high school teacher was sent to ask my assistance in building a course in reading for those who could not read well enough to continue in regular classes. Otherwise, the high school felt no need for my assistance.

Continuous  
Curriculum  
Revision

The Supervisor of Adult Education asked my help in planning the program of beginning English for adults. I worked closely with the teachers, helping them to select content, develop methods, and find helpful materials to use.

Aid to  
Adult  
Education

In April 1944, I was assigned to the position of Supervisor of Adult Education, having charge of the English, academic courses, sewing, drafting, tailoring and stenography.

Assigned as  
Supervisor of  
Adult Educ.

In continued working on the program of English. It was the most difficult and perhaps the most important.

English  
Continued

At the close of the regular school program, five Civil Service teachers were assigned to teach English to adults for the summer. I spent much time in conference with community leaders, such as council members and block managers.

Appointed  
Personnel  
Assigned



By interesting those leaders in the program, it was fairly easy to go into the various parts of the center and organize classes. We started numerous classes of adults who knew practically no English. The teachers put emphasis on speech and conversation. Through weekly conferences and observation of classes, the evacuee teachers learned much from the summer program.

These successful new classes were helping in breaking down the resistance to learning English. It became less difficult to get folk to enter classes. The task of getting evacuee teachers became increasingly difficult because of relocation.

Resistance  
to  
English  
Decreases

After the auditorium building was finished we were able to use four of the small rooms for English classes, including one large room which was used as a place for bringing several classes together for singing and other social activities.

Use of  
Auditorium

The announcement of the closing of the Center by January 1946 caused an increase of interest in learning English

Announcement  
of Closing

The only problems in connection with the sewing program was taking care of all who wanted to enter class. That program has been popular and very worthwhile.

Sewing  
Popular

The courses in shorthand and typing have continued throughout the year. However, the classes have been gradually decreasing in number as folk relocated. During the fall of 1944 an in-service training course in office practice was offered. About seventy five enrolled in this course.

Typing  
and  
Shorthand

During August 1944, the Project Committee on Adult Education and Orientation was organized. I served as executive-secretary and engineered the work of the Committee. I selected the members, choosing appointed staff members and outstanding evacuee leaders. This Committee did much to unify the efforts of various divisions and to help all to better meet the needs of the people. It strengthened the program of Adult Education both in advising and in causing a more general understanding of the program. The mistake was in our failure to organize such a committee earlier in the program.

Committee  
on Adult  
Education  
and  
Orientation

In order to contribute to relocation, short courses and community forums were organized. We tried to acquaint the residents with the various areas of the United States, showing the opportunities for them in each area, as well as helping them to understand the unusual conditions that have developed during the last three years. The community forums caused some evacuees to assume more interest and leadership in the relocation program.

Short  
Courses and  
Forums



I think the biggest mistake in WRA's program of education has been in the plans for teach the adults. Instead of one Civil Service employee, untrained teachers, no housing, and practically no budget, there should have been many well trained teachers on the staff who devoted full time to teaching English to those who know only Japanese, and in doing so, do much in an Americanization program. I believe that all the relocation workers agree that a better program for adults would have paid dividends. Mistake of WRA

My work in Adult Education was challenging and most interesting. I am glad I had the experience. I received a great deal of satisfaction from learning to work with the people as well as solving many of the problems of teaching, especially English.