

Fresno Reception Center

Hilda Rosenbloom, Sam Nakano, and I went out to the Center together. The entrance, guarded by a soldier with gun and bayonet was a high fence with a large gate. On the top of the fence are three rows of barbed wire. The Center is the old County Fair Ground. We first went into the Administration buildings to pick up our permits. Mr. Pullum who is the Manager of the Center was not there but we were taken into see Mr. Pollack who is the Recreation Director. (He was formerly with the Recreation group for the WpA in the Valley.) The offices were of the usual rough wood with wood floors and newly built desks, filing cabinets etc. The office help consisted in both Caucasians and Japanese girls. Mr. Pollack's secretary is a young Japanese-American who is very efficient.

Mr. Pollack explained that they were inducting their first group today, and so were very busy. The people being inducted were the early professionals and work crew signed up in Fresno, Selma, and Madera. He said he would show us around in his car. Sam (our Japanese friend from the WCCA office) was not allowed to go with us but had to stay in the Admin. Building since he was to be inducted this Friday himself. The outside of the buildings were exactly like those in the Merced Camp. They are low buildings of wood covered with tar paper with small windows the no. depending upon the size of the apartment. Every window had a screen on it unlike the Merced camp. We drove first down to where they were inducting the group. There were several lines waiting at turnstiles for their turn to have their baggage searched by a soldier for contraband. Most of them had already been through this and were sitting on benches or standing in groups watching the proceedings. The thing that first struck me was the organization of the groups who were visiting together. There seemed no mixture of the young and old. The old single men sat in front of their barracks together and smiled as we passed. The older women were either just watching or were taking care of children or talking together in groups of around eight. But the younger group were laughing and quite

boisterous. As we got out of the car, one of the younger fellows yelled at us "Cal". We laughed and said "Yes, you too?" they all roared at us that they were from Cal. One of the boys said he had been in a course which I had read for (Dr. Gordon's Econ. 109)

We then went into a mess hall. Like in Merced each Ward has a mess hall at the end of the unit (sometimes in the middle) In the hall there was great activity. Dinner was being prepared and the tables set. All the workers and cooks were Japanese. We inspected the tables which were wood slabs with benches along either side. The tables were being covered with linoleum (but only three were finished at that time) The dishes were new, shiny white crockery. On the tables were the eatery for the people plus a large bowl of sugar, salt, pepper, two large platters of white bread, two cubes of butter. In the center of each table was a very large bowl of cooked raisins which were to be the dessert. We asked the boy what the menu was for tonight. None of the kids knew and said to see one of the cooks. Finally, we had to ask the Chief Cook who had it written out and pinned to the wall above him. The menu for that night was: boiled beef, rice, squash, Mexican beans, tea, milk (for children) bread, butter, raisins. (I might say it smelled wonderful)

We then inspected one of the uninhabited houses. Like in Merced there were apartments for six and four. The partitions were only up to the

place where the roof became cone shaped so there was a space of around four feet inbetween. Mr. Pollack said they were definitely planning on filling that in if the people were going to stay there any length of time and he thought they would be there around six months. The floors were wooden and good. He explained that they had mixed floors, most of them being wood, some concrete and some asphalt. (We saw all three) In the rooms were nothing but the cots and mattresses on them. The windows were fixed so they would slide open and closed. Again housing regulations were followed for space and air. As we drove on I looked into several apartments which were already inhabited. One was extraordinary in that the people had brought along a full rug and curtains. It was being fixed up by two women. They had the curtains up and the beds made etc. The men had been building other furniture as there were peices of wood and saw, hammar lying outside. The ground outside was firm and not rutted. a lot of green alfalfa was growing around which was to later be cut down since it grew through the cracks in the houses. It was not a dusty place.

We then went through one of the hospitals. There are three of them one for men, one for women and one for contagious diseases. We went into the mens. There was a small kitchen in which two women were cooking what looked to be a special diet. The kitchen was clean, compact, and modern. There were three small consultation rooms with regular hospital equipment. There was a sterilizing room and an operating room with all the equipment. There were two long rooms which were to be used for wards. One only was equiped and in use. In that one was a young nurse--a Cal nussing graduate who was sitting at a small desk in her white uniform. There ware rows of cots, separated by sheets draw between them on wire. Two patients were already in the hospital. One boy was sitting up in bed playing with the covers. The nurse said he was a congenial syphillus case and an idiot. (He may be transferred to an institution later). He has fits often which verge on epilepsy. The other patient was a young boy with the measles. They were both from the same family so the nusse explained that the one had been exposed before so they did not separate them. The nurse said they had one very good Doctor and also one of the best surgeons. They have had a large signup of scientifically trained people and they plan to use them.

We inspected a womens toilet. They were in rows of wood--seats carved out like privies. Instead of one long row like in Merced, these were double---back to back. About 15. Nice wash basins of tin--regualr size and shape. The toilets had the same flushing system as the Merced camp. But the pressure was set for every three or five minutes so that no waste accumulated. Mr. Ploock said that this was an invention taken from Popular Science magazine. He also said that they were at the present time engaged in building partitions inbetween the toilets in all the womens toilets. This is mainly because young children will be using them. This will not be done in the mens. There were originally built toilets for children (We saw several labelled Children) but this proved bad as no one knew how to classify a child--so they were converting them into womens toilets.

We saw the shower room---infinitely better than the Merced one. There were two rooms--one with benches and basins. The other had about ten open showers. The fllor in the rooms were wood slabs covering concrete--like in bath houses. The wood was clean. Someone had been taking a shower before we came in so we saw how the water drained from the cement under the wood--it was good drainage. The wash rooms were like those in the Merced camp--rows of tubs with ironing boards and plugs be-

side them. There was a sign which said "No washing on Mon. Tues, and Wed." He explained that this was because the hospital had to wash then as did the Administrators. Lines for clothes were hung up between two rows of barracks. There was wash on some of the barrack lines already.

We saw the postoffice, which was a large room with a counter, mail slots, scales etc. on the one end. Desks (long planks built against the wall) had ink, pen etc. on them. There was a small slot in the wall of the building so that mail could be moved through it when the office was closed. The postmaster will be a regular civil service employee but will have Japanese assistants. Mail will be delivered once a day to each apartment .

There were no "Fire lookouts" as there had been in Merced. Soldier made rounds like policemen but no guards. But one of the soldiers we talked to said they were going to build him a station so that he would not have to do so much walking.

The camp is built to hold 5000 and was built rapidly. It is a much better job than the Merced one. The camp is divided by a county road which is blocked off. On both sides of this road are equal numbers of camp. At the far end of the second side of the road (going from the main entrance gate) there is a large field which is being cleared to make three baseball fields, basketball court and perhaps a tennis court.

We went back to the Administ. building and picked up Sam and our passes out. Sam had just seen a young fellow who had been at the Tulare Camp. The fellow told Sam this story: a boy who was interned in the camp went out of his mind and started running wildly for the fence. He started climbing over the barbed wire, but soldiers using machine guns killed him. We said we could hardly believe it since in the first place we hadn't seen a machine gun in any of the camps. Sam seemed on the believing side--horrified but wanting to make the camps as bad as he could since he was very blue about going to one. We reasoned him out of it and asked him to check the story if he could. I could not find out anymore about it before I left, but Sam promised to write if he heard.

Story of the Turlock Evacuation as told to me by the FSA crew who worked there and were made MPs in the escort of the Japanese into the center there.

The train arrived with 600 Japanese evacuees at 2:30 in the afternoon. The camp Manager was not ready to take them in until 4:30. The group sat in the baking sun for two hours. There were no toilets nor water around. The social workers tried to relieve the mothers of the babies in relays so they would not get too tired. The FSA crew took many of the children into the bushes so they could go to the toilet. The children were hot and thirsty and began crying. Everyone wanted water. The social workers went to one of the Ltts. and asked if there wasn't some way they could get water for the babies as they were crying for it. He said he had sent a soldier into Turlock for a bucket of water. The soldier came back with a bucket full and one dipper in the bucket. He gave all the soldiers and crew a drink from the dipper and then went among the Japanese yelling "Any of you Japs got a paper cup you can have a drink of water". They of course didn't bring any paper cups. The social workers found an old can which they washed out and used to give the babies water. By that time several women had gotten very sick and one had fainted. At 4:30 the group were herded down the railroad ramp and walked one mile to the camp carrying the babies and luggage they had brought. The FSA crew carried as much as they could and the social workers tried to carry as many babies as they could. Several women fainted and had to be taken care of. Finally when they arrived they were taken into the camp---stood in line to be inspected and then were given their typhoid shots. There was a great deal of illness.