

CONFIDENTIAL

Preliminary Report on

DEFENSE AREA

IDAHO

EDEN-JEROME COUNTY

JAPANESE EVACUEE CENTER

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## CONTENTS

	Page
General Characteristics. . . . .	1
Geography . . . . .	1
Operation of Center . . . . .	1
Population. . . . .	2
Economic Characteristics. . . . .	2
Governmental Characteristics. . . . .	3
Social Characteristic . . . . .	3
Assessed Valuation, Tax Rate, Annual Tax Levy, Bonded Indebtedness and debt Limits of Jerome County, Idaho and Included Taxing Units as of January 11, 1941 . . . . .	4
Defense Activities . . . . .	5
Relocation Center . . . . .	5
Defense Industrial Situation. . . . .	5
Planning . . . . .	6
Local Planning Agencies . . . . .	6
Planning Problems . . . . .	6
Community Facilities and Services . . . . .	7
Housing. . . . .	7
Transportation . . . . .	7
Public Utilities . . . . .	8
Education. . . . .	8
Sanitation and Health. . . . .	8
Public Safety. . . . .	10



5/6/42

Preliminary Report on  
EDEN, JEROME COUNTY, IDAHO  
DEFENSE AREA

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

A. GEOGRAPHY

1. The initial site selected by the War Relocation Authority for relocation center for Japanese evacuees proposed for establishment in Southern Idaho is approximately in the center of Jerome County. The area to be included in the project is 18,000 acres of uncultivated but fertile sage brush land with slightly rolling topography and situated to the south of the Milner-Gooding Irrigation canal from which the tract will receive water for irrigation - as it is proposed to bring the 18,000 acres of raw land under cultivation by irrigation.

The settlement area for housing the evacuees is tentatively designated (but not officially confirmed) as being in sections 33 and 34, Twp. 19 E., Rgs. 8 S., Boise Meridian. The nearest incorporated town is Eden (population 400) which is six miles south on State Highway route No. 25 and on the North Side Branch of the Union Pacific Ry. extending from Minidoka, a main line point to the east and to Bliss, a main line point to the west. Hazelton, another village of 400 population, is 3 miles east of Eden. The City of Jerome, the county seat of Jerome County, is 15 miles west and 3 miles north of the proposed center. Twin Falls City in Twin Falls County is 18 miles south and west of the center.

B. OPERATION OF CENTER

In line with the policy announced by the War Relocation Authority, it is understood that:

"The economic and community life of evacuees will be developed within the relocation area and that ownership of the area shall remain with the Federal Government."

In the case of the Eden Project, it is proposed to assign to the Japanese, under Federal Authority and Direction, the job of constructing the necessary irrigation facilities to bring the 18,000 acres under water and cultivation for the duration. This will mean a nearly self-contained

community of 10,000 people within an area of 18,000 acres, located in a county with a population of 9900 and with its largest city having a population of 3537. The Center, so it is reported, will operate and maintain its own service industries, professions and such light manufacturing as may be economically practicable for use of the evacuees. Just what the economic and social effect will be on the community life of Jerome County will take some time to determine; however, the immediate problem is temporary housing for white construction workers who will build the camp and how to aid the nearby villages of Eden and Hazelton provide additional community facilities to meet a temporary increase in population. It is doubtful if Jerome and Twin Falls cities will be greatly effected.

It is understood that the War Department has advertised for 300 civilian guards for use in connection with the operation of the Center.

C. POPULATION (Jerome and Twin Falls Counties)

Jerome County - In 1940 the population of the county was 9,900, an increase of 18.4% over the 1930 population of 8358.

Jerome (city)	1940	population - 3357.
Eden (village)	1940	population - <u>413</u> .
Hazelton (village)	1940	population - <u>417</u> .

Twin Falls County - In 1940 the population of the county was 36,403, in 1930, - 29,828 - a gain of 22%.

Twin Falls (city)	1940	population - 11,851
Kimberly (village)	1940	population - 968
Murtough (village)	1940	population - 272
Hansen (village)	1940	population - 527

Note: It is reported that the population of the evacuee center will be 10,000, of which 50% will be 21 years of age or under. The total number of white civilian and military personnel to be connected with the operation of the project has not been announced, however, as noted above, there is indication that as many as 300 civilian guards will be employed.

D. ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Most of the employees in the locality and region engage



in agriculture. There is highly diversified agriculture; dairying, and the production of farm flocks of sheep, also hogs and some beef cattle. Principal row crops are dry beans, potatoes, and sugar-beets. Alfalfa and clover hay are extensively grown.

Located at Eden are large bean and potato storage and sorting facilities. There is very little manufacturing in Jerome County. The 1939 Census of Manufactures reports eleven manufacturing establishments with an average of 107 wage earners for the year compared with seven manufacturing establishments in 1937 with an average of 50 wage earners for that year. (Pertinent trade and production statistics will be included in a more detailed report later.)

#### E. GOVERNMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS (Jerome County only)

1. Eden, a village - administration by village board.  
Hazelton, a village - administration by village board.  
Jerome, a city of 2nd class - administration by mayor and city council.  
Jerome County (3rd class) - administration by board of commissioners.

#### F. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTIC

Of the total 1940 population of 9900 in Jerome County, 9554 (96%) were native born white, 46 were native born of all other races, and 300 were foreign born of all races. In 1940 about 64% of the population of the county was rural.

G. Assessed valuation, tax rate, annual tax levy, bonded indebtedness and debt limits of Jerome County, Idaho and included taxing units as of January 11, 1941

<u>Taxing Unit</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Tax Rate per \$100</u>	<u>Tax</u>	<u>Bonded Debt</u>	<u>Debt Limit</u>
Jerome County	\$7,134,033.00	\$1.29	\$101,368.18	\$ 76,000.00	\$713,000.00
Jerome City	934,040.00	4.00	37,361.60	87,830.58	93,400.00
Eden Village	97,851.00	3.00	2,935.53	5,200.00	9,800.00
Hazelton Village	110,477.00	3.00	3,314.31	5,000.00	11,000.00
Highway Districts:					
Jerome Highway District	3,800,724.00	0.65	24,705.48	131,000.00	
Hilldale Highway District	2,496,562.00	0.38	9,487.20	64,000.00	
Good Roads District No. 1	529,888.00	0.35	1,854.61		
School Districts:					
Independent #33	3,440,692.00	1.62	55,739.08	139,500.00	
3 Rural High School Dists.	2,494,793.00	0.70			
		to 1.20	19,717.71	23,800.00	
10 Common School Districts	3,577,864.00	0.50			
		to 1.60	36,113.69	41,760.00	
American Falls Reservoir Dist.			101,741.22	396,800.00	
Hilldale Irrigation Dist.			33,700.61	138,000.00	

The probable effect on the tax structure of Jerome County due to the establishment of the proposed evacuee camp, with subsequent improvement of 18,000 acres of uncultivated land will be to later place 18,000 acres of improved lands in private ownership, and thereby greatly increase the amount of levy for tax base.



## II. DEFENSE ACTIVITIES

- a. To be a relocation center for 10,000 Japanese evacuees. These will be employed on a Federal Reclamation project to clear and prepare the sage-brush lands for cultivation, and to construct canals, laterals and other irrigation works necessary to irrigate the lands, and, it is reported, to farm the lands (temporarily).
  1. The land to be occupied and improved is slightly rolling and of highly fertile volcanic ash soil underlain with fissured lava. The area reported by the press, comprises about 18,000 acres extending in a somewhat compact body paralleling the existing irrigated section adjacent to Eden, which village is approximately 6 miles south of the center of the area.
  2. Military personnel not available at this time.
  3. Civilian Personnel - reported as 10,000 Japanese evacuees in family groups. Number of Federal civilian staff not available at this time, but expected to be 300 plus.
  4. Type of camp buildings -- reported to be frame, barracks type, designed to accommodate family units. Temporary -- for the duration.
  5. It is reported, but unconfirmed, that contracts are pending for the construction, and that approximately 3,000 American civilian workers, skilled and semi-skilled, will be required to get the construction under way; these to be augmented by Japanese as they arrive. Time schedule not available at this time, but construction should be completed within about 60 days.

### B. DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL SITUATION:

1. Type of industry will be public works construction, then agriculture development and allied industry, and as the colony is to be a self-contained unit, service industry and other business activities will, of course, be carried on.
2. Operation under U. S. War Relocation Authority rules and regulations.



3. The project is so located that both rail and highway facilities are available and access and project road construction will be easily accomplished.
4. Labor Situation. The actual employment requirements of agriculture, the major type of activity in the general area, are not available at this time, but a shortage of local labor is expected to occur; and the shortage will become more acute as the farm season advances. A few local construction workers are available to start the construction, but of the 3,000 workers required, it is estimated that at least 2,000 will have to be brought in from other sections of Southern Idaho. Employer specifications not known at this time. There is about 85,000 acres of crops in Jerome County. No shortage or surplus of farm workers was reported in early May 1942.

### III. PLANNING

#### A. LOCAL PLANNING AGENCIES:

Local, State, and Regional Planning is authorized under Chapter 51, Idaho 1935 Session Laws. There are no local planning agencies in Jerome County organized under the above legal authorization. However, Jerome County does have a County Agriculture Land Use Planning Committee.

The United States Bureau of Reclamation is greatly concerned in the planning and development of the proposed 18,000 acres of land for agriculture purposes, as these lands are a part of the so-called Minidoka Irrigation project under the jurisdiction of the Bureau.

#### B. PLANNING PROBLEMS:

The area requiring defense planning may be roughly defined as the 18,000 acres included in the evacuee project and the communities of Eden, Hazelton, and their immediate environs, and possibly the evacuee colony.

There is no comprehensive plan for the general area other than the plans of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for the construction and operation of the irrigation works and of the U. S. Army Engineers for the lay out and construction of the community facilities within the military reservation.

Summary of main facilities and services for which plans are required (other than on the reservation) are:



Housing will be needed to accommodate 1,500 construction workers (some with families) near the reservation who will be unable to obtain housing in the near-by towns.

Public transportation facilities between the reservation and near-by towns, including Twin Falls and Jerome.

Sewers and disposal plants for the Towns of Eden and Hazelton, which are now without such facilities and which may experience a boom. They may also require extensions to the water distribution systems, also additional fire and police protection facilities.

There are no legal provisions for rural zoning, and the extent of urban zoning in the towns in the county is not available at this time.

## C. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### 1. Housing

The immediate housing need is for temporary construction workers (60-day period). Contractors indicate the following: Construction will begin May 15 and 3,000 men will be employed for 60 days to complete the housing for the evacuees. Preliminary investigations by contractors and local chambers of commerce show that probably 800 men can be housed in Twin Falls and 800 in Jerome. However, there is some question of availability of housing at Twin Falls due to F.S.A. migratory camp facilities having to be reserved for agricultural laborers. It looks now as though 1,500 workers would have to be housed near the project either in trailers or tent camps. Local officials are cooperating with the contractor in a housing study.

### 2. Transportation

- a. The project is located within 6 miles of the so-called North Side Branch of the Union Pacific railroad and also State Highway No. 25. Eden, the nearest town to the project, is served by the Union Pacific Stages, operating one bus each way each day between Twin Falls, Eden, and Rupert to the east, leaving Twin Falls 7:00 A.M., arriving Eden 7:25 A.M., returning leaves Eden 10:00 A.M. and arrives Twin Falls 10:30 A.M. Will need to be revised to best serve commuters.

- b. Access Roads, etc. --- Facilities are adequate for present traffic on highway No. 25. The access road north from Eden to the project is only partly improved.
- c. Traffic Control - O.K.
- d. Parking - O.K.

### 3. Public Utilities

Ample electricity and power service is available from the facilities of the Idaho Power Company located within about six miles of the project. Telephone facilities are within about the same distance.

### 4. Education

What the defense connected needs of the local school districts will be cannot be accurately forecast until some reliable estimate can be made of the probable permanent in-migration of white citizens and the defense connected demands for teaching staff will be. A press release indicates that the U.S.O.E. and W.R.A., tentatively at least, estimate that there may be 2,000 Japanese of school age, which would necessitate 60 to 75 white teachers and while the schools would be located within the military reservation, the teachers would have to be drafted from sources outside the reservation and in competition with local school districts. This matter is now under consideration by both Federal and State Departments of Education.

### 5. Sanitation and Health

- a. Water Supply: Dependable water supply for domestic use in this area comes from deep wells. Water supply data for the defense affected areas are as follows:

EDEN: Source, well; depth, 325 feet; capacity of pump, 50 g.p.m.; storage, elevated tank, 24,000 gal. capacity; main pressure 37 pounds; open hydrants, drops 7 pounds; population served, 325; reported as safe and ample supply.

HAZELTON: Source, well; depth, 316 feet; pump capacity, 80 g.p.m.; storage, elevated tank, 30,000 gal. capacity; main pressure 25 pounds, population served, 419; reported as safe and ample supply (untreated).



JEROME: Source, 3 wells; depth 310 feet; capacity of pump, 700 g.p.m.; storage, elevated tank, 150,000 gal. capacity; safe (chlorinated).

b. Sewerage and Sewage Disposal:

EDEN: No sewers - Disposal, open and cesspool

HAZELTON: No sewers - Disposal, open and cesspool

JEROME: Sewers and a modern disposal plant, Imhoff tank, chlorination, effluent into drain ditch.

c. Drainage and Flood Control: No problem.

d. Garbage and Refuse Disposal:

EDEN: Actual conditions not ascertained.

HAZELTON: Actual conditions not ascertained

JEROME: Actual conditions not ascertained

e. Hospitals and Clinics:

Nearest hospitals are Twin Falls: Twin Falls County General Hospital, 85 beds and reported to be badly crowded; Gooding, St. Valentines Hospital, general, Catholic, number of beds not ascertained. There is no hospital at Jerome.

f. Public Health Organization:

Jerome County is included in the south central district Health Unit with headquarters at Twin Falls. Its personnel consists of:

Director - full time - Dr. G. T. Parkenson of Twin Falls; 1 Sanitarian, full time, Twin Falls; 1 public health nurse for Jerome County.

There are three doctors in Jerome County, and 1 doctor located at Eden. Two dentists at Jerome.

Twin Falls City: There are from 17 to 20 doctors and about 15 dentists in Twin Falls.

The Public Health Unit activities include prenatal clinics, child health conferences, school health service and home delivery service.

Other health agencies - Statutory County Boards of Health.

- g. People unable to pay for medical service (relief clients) are provided for by the County.
  - h. Communicable Diseases: Jerome and Twin Falls Counties reported as communized.
  - i. Industrial Hygiene program - By the Idaho Bureau of Industrial Hygiene
6. Public Safety: Specific information not obtained but believed to be reasonably adequate under normal conditions.

Items H, I, J. K and Section V to be reported later.