

Box 1:1

Chap I

Manzanar History



THE STRUGGLE FOR SELF GOVERNMENT AT MANZANAR RELOCATION CENTER

prepared by

Gladys C. Schwesinger, Ph.D.

(unfinished)



4. *Subject  
Slow to organization  
omit names & addresses.*

*Dave Itami*

# INFORMATION SERVICE

SECRETARY

Co-managers of Information Service:  
 1. Dave Itami ~~in~~ in charge of coordination between Information Service & Management.  
 2. Roy Takeno ~~in~~ in charge of coordination between Information Office No. 1 & Field Offices.

BULLETIN  
 Supervisor--  
 Kiyotoshi Iwanoto

INQUIRIES  
 COMPLAINTS  
 SUGGESTIONS  
 Supervisor--Kiyoshi Yano

MISCELLANEOUS  
 SERVICE  
 Shigeo Furuta

LOST  
 &  
 FOUND  
 Nobuko Sakai

VOLUNTARY  
 SERVICE  
 CORPS  
 Organizer  
 Foreman-Bill Tanabe

TRANSLATION

INFORMATION  
 NO. 1  
 MAIN OFFICE

INFORMATION  
 NO. 2

INFORMATION  
 NO. 3

INFORMATION  
 NO. 4

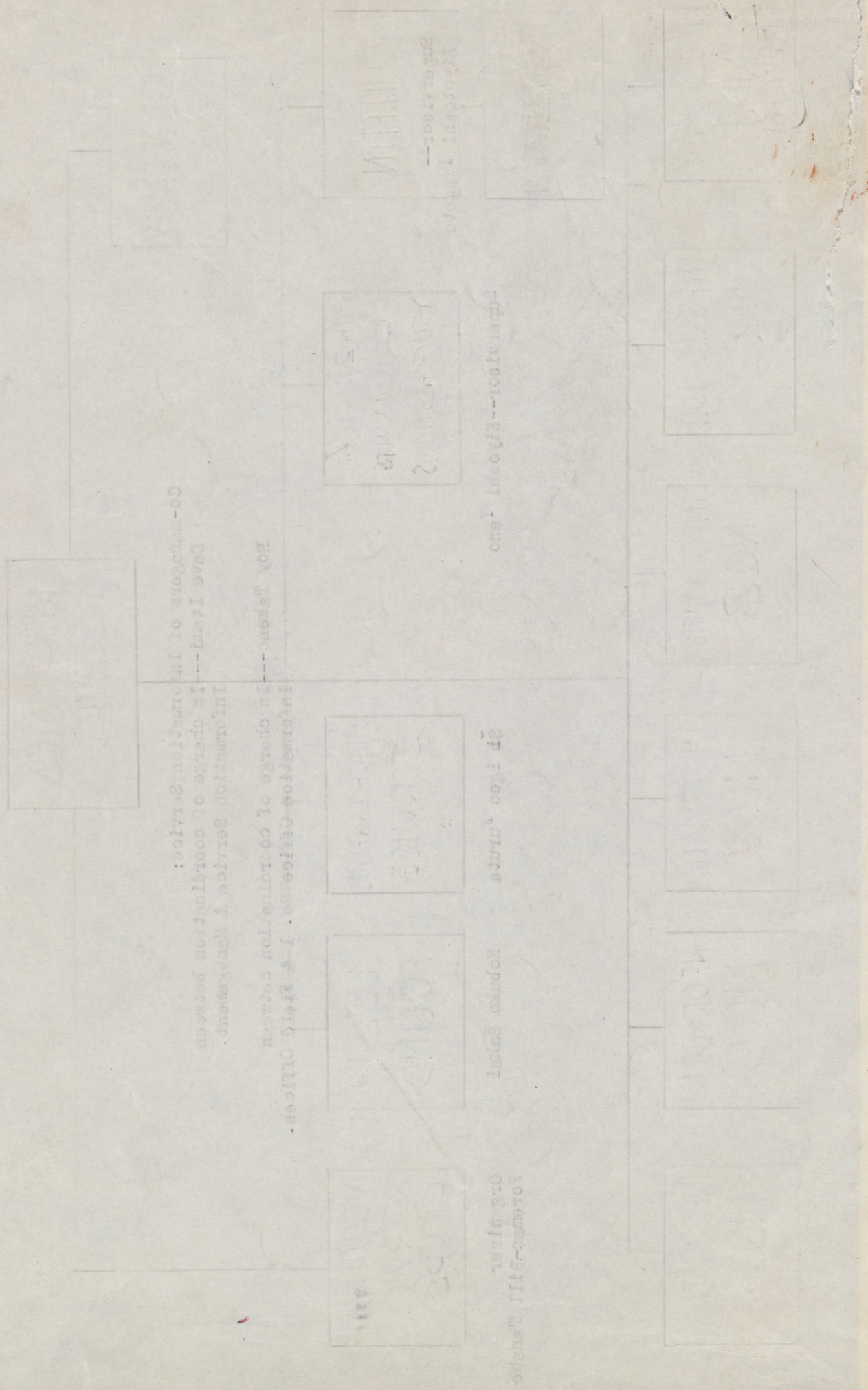
INFORMATION  
 NO. 5

INFORMATION  
 NO. 6

	1	2	3	4	5	6
LOCATION	1-11-1	10-8-4	12-8-4	26-1-1	22-8-1	29-1-1
JURISDICTIONAL AREA	1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 14	3, 4, 9, 10, 15, 16	5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 18	19, 20, 25, 26, 30, 31, 35, 36	21, 22, 27, 28, 32, 33	23, 24, 29, 34 Hosp. & Orph.
OPENING DATE	3/25	4/28	4/21	5/16	5/10	
PERSONNEL MANAGER	Dave Itami Roy Takeno	I. Shirokawa	M. Hori	N. Nakai	H. Mukai	T. Ozamoto
STAFF CLERKS	K. Yano K. Iwanoto S. Furuta M. Koba M. Kadomatsu H. Masuda N. Sakai BILL TANABE	F. Takimoto	K. Hori	C. Yamada	K. Matsumoto	Muraki R. <del>Mukai</del>
TYPISTS	R. Nakaji E. Kohigashi Mrs. S. Furuta F. Ido S. Ishikawa	K. Oka	Y. Takahashi	M. Nakamura	C. Hirami	F. Miyake
MESSENGERS	F. Koba B. Harada O. Fujii M. Yamasaki I. Yamashita <del>I. Hayama</del> D. Iwata <del>F. Hoshi</del> <del>O. Hoshi</del> S. Kawamura	K. Nakanishi R. Kai Y. Tatsumi <del>M. Matsuda</del>	H. Nakada T. Tokuda	J. Iwaki N. Kuroyama	M. Hayashida H. Izumi	H. Honoguchi M. Takimoto
SOCIAL WORKER under FAMILY RELATION	Mrs. Kikuchi	Mrs. Tayama	Mrs. Nakamura	M. Ohashi	Mrs. Hayashi	
BULLETIN STAFF	T. Fukumoto T. Kunisada A. Katsuno G. Kagawa					



May 1942 (?)  
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PART I

THE STRUGGLE FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

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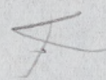
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(unfinished)



## CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING  
THE BACKGROUND OFI ~~EVACUATION: Background~~A Executive Order<sup>3</sup>

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt issued an executive order giving the Army authority to establish military zones anywhere in the United States from which persons, <sup>2</sup> ~~citizens~~ <sup>physians</sup> or aliens, might be evacuated and excluded. Chiefly affected were American citizens of Japanese ancestry. Citizens of German and Italian descent were not to be involved except for specific cause.

## B Implementation of Executive Order

1 Arrival of Representatives of Department of Justice and the Army

On February 27, 1942, a group of U.S. Army officers and their staffs visited the Owens Valley to survey a possible site for a reception center for Japanese who were to be evacuated from their home communities. Present also were Tom C. Clark, assistant to Attorney-General Biddle, Bob Brown, secretary of the local Inyo-Mono Association, and Ralph P. Merritt, who had worked with the federal government in the last war. Roy Boothe, representing the U.S. Forest Service, transported the group, and George W. Savage, co-owner of the three valley newspapers, was called upon later. At the request of the Army and the Department of Justice, all discussions and tentative plans were held in the strictest confidence.

On March 3, 1942, the following Tuesday, General deWitt of the Fourth Army Command at San Francisco, considered the Owens Valley site



favorably. That same afternoon, Tom Clark, alien control coordinator representing the Attorney-General of the United States, requested a local group to present a constructive program for the federal government in the event a Japanese camp would be placed in the valley. At this meeting, Merritt, Brown, Boothe, and Savage were reinforced by Douglas Joseph, president of Inyo Associates, R.R. Henderson, chairman of the county evacuation committee, and Dr. Howard W. Dueker, spokesman for medical aid and sanitation. These men were instructed to draw up a program for the Japanese which would be beneficial to the valley.

On March 5, the same seven local men were asked to head a committee to cooperate with the government. Additional persons would be added by the Department of Justice or some other agency.

On the evening of March 5, Wallace Howland of the U.S. Department of Justice announced that the location of the center would be at Manzanar, on property leased by the federal government from the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. A total of 8,000 acres of land would be used, this tract to be on the west side of the highway. General deWitt would complete the announcement of the general plans on the following day.

2 Consultation with Local Residents The government was approaching its huge task wisely and well. It was calling valley residents into consultation with the Army and the Department of Justice. It was selecting local citizens and business men to form a committee of cooperation with the government in its plans. True, it was enlisting local help in present <sup>ing</sup> suggestions for a program but also it was bidding for support ~~from~~ local public opinion for its daring and unprecedented venture.



Owens Valley had always been clannish and jealous of incursions into its territory. A few years before, it had vigorously protested the admission of evacuees from Middle West dust-bowl areas. Now it was to be called upon to harbor evacuees, howsoever unpopular, from its own state of California. Tact and judgment were called for.

As part of the preparation of public opinion, the INYO INDEPENDENT issued an "extra" on Friday, March 6, calling upon the people of the valley to support the new project. Patriotism and a wish to do something for the war effort required that valley residents accept this Army order without protest. The evacuation was to be regarded as a major defense matter.

✓ Advance enlightened self-interest was shrewd enough to detect that this threatened liability might be turned into an asset. Additional labor would be brought into the valley which <sup>residents thought</sup> might be used to complete the broad-gauging of the railroad north of Owenyo. Agricultural lands could be developed and valley crops harvested. Recreational and other projects planned by the U.S. Forest Service as post-war projects, could be completed ahead of time. Possibly, too, roads such as the Saline Valley road, could be built, and fish and game facilities increased.

It was pointed out that, under the Constitution, American-born Japanese could not be unfairly treated. What was done to Japanese in America would be reflected in Japanese treatment of allied prisoners in the Orient. Also, observations would be made and comparisons drawn with the way the large population of Japanese-Americans in Hawaii were handled.



The INYO INDEPENDENT'S readers were assured that no expense or added burdens would accrue to them as a result of the influx of the Japanese. Local police power would not be drawn upon, for the Army would be in charge. The federal government would bear all the expense of administration, schooling, hospitalization, and policing. Professional men from among the Japanese themselves would render their services to their own people. Evacuees would all be returned to their homes after the war.

These were good beginnings towards developing attitudes of receptivity among the people who lived in Owens Valley. True, some of the expectations and predictions of profit to the valley would never be realized. Some, such as a potential labor market for public road-building, ought never to have been raised. But the idea of preparing local residents for what lay ahead was sound.

3 Sidelights on Construction Bids were opened by the U.S. Army Engineers at 4:30 p.m. on March 5, for construction of the reception center. Preliminary estimates called for 6,300,000 feet of lumber, delivery to be completed within 30 days.

This would entail the use of 500 trucks and trailers, averaging 18 tons net loads. If hauled by rail, then some 252 carloads, averaging 25,000 feet per car, would be required; or a train load that would be more than 2 miles long. The 6,300,000 feet of lumber would be enough to construct a 2-foot boardwalk that would reach from the Manzanar Reception Center to Gallup, New Mexico!

Besides the lumber, quantities of other materials would be required, including roofing, building papers, pipes, electrical items,



sanitary facilities, hardware, sashes and doors, nails, and so on. Of nails alone, approximately 2,100 kegs, or 105 tons, would be needed!

#### C The Wartime Civil Control Administration is Established

On March 14, 1942, the Wartime Civil Control Administration was established as an agency of the Western Defense Command, with Colonel Karl R. Bendetsen in charge, to supervise the evacuation of the Japanese population from certain West Coast areas which were specified.

On March 18, President Roosevelt issued an Executive Order, Number 9102, which created the War Relocation Authority, a non-military agency, to plan and carry out the orderly evacuation of all people of Japanese ancestry from the west coast military area. This included Japanese-Americans as well as Japanese aliens. Under this War Relocation Authority, enemy aliens, forced to move from military areas, might voluntarily enlist in a War Relocation Work Corps. Milton S. Eisenhower was designated as Director of the new WRA.

#### D The "Pioneers" Arrive

On March 23, the first contingent of evacuees moved north in response to the new conditions, when a group of 1,000 volunteers from Los Angeles undertook to precede the general evacuation of all Japanese. These volunteers had been recruited to do the initial work of the first Assembly Center which was under construction at Manzanar. They would take over where the construction workers left off, and would set up initial necessary services to receive evacuees.

Recruited at Maryknoll, these 1,000 volunteers represented the



"survival of the fittest" from among many hundreds who had responded and then dropped out through fear. The "fitness" of the pioneers could be judged by a certain mental and physical stamina to resist the many threats and apprehensions which had been put into circulation and fanned by wild rumors as to what lay in store for all Japanese when they reached the assembly centers. But the pioneers had successfully withstood all such threats and fears. They had stuck to the terms of their recruitment. They arrived in Camp Manzanar in the evening of March 23.

## II EARLY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND PROBLEMS

### A Information Center

The Information Center or Office was one of 5 sections set up under the Service Division of Manzanar Assembly Center <sup>to handle the most immediate needs of the new arrivals</sup>. Closely <sup>+ the Information Center</sup> affiliated with it, and indeed growing out of it, was the Family Relations Office. Also growing out of it, and operating somewhat separately as a unit, was the Voluntary Helpers Corps. A fourth <sup>section</sup> was the Employment Section, which handled job requests and complaints. This left two other areas of work within the Information Center which functioned as separate units. The first handled the notices and bulletins issued by the Administration, containing announcements and instructions for the evacuee residents. The second covered such personal services as writing letters for non-English speaking Issei, filing forms for aliens, reporting changes of address, and the like.

Of these various divisions within the Information Center, the first, namely the Family Relations Office, was later to develop into



*a social welfare*

✓ section that continued to the end of Manzanar's existence. The second, the Voluntary Helpers Corps--whose name was later changed to the Voluntary Service Corps--grew up quickly ~~and~~ thrived like a weed while it lasted, and then as quickly folded up and died when its services were absorbed by other agencies or rendered no longer necessary by change of conditions in the Center. The Lost and Found Department endured as long as the Information Office endured, and was then taken over by the Police Department, *and maintained until the end,* for in every community as long as human frailty continues, there is need for a Lost and Found.

1 The Information Center Opens On March 24, 1942, the first evacuee service was set up at Manzanar. This took the form of an Information Office ~~whose~~ *the of which* purpose was to issue and interpret the instructions and orders given by the Administration to the evacuees. The office was to be staffed by five men who were to be bi-lingual. A bulletin board was to be erected in front of the office and on it announcements, schedules, news, rules and regulations, and so on, were to be posted. It was suggested, too, that at a regular time each morning, an assembly should be held at which "managers" could "make statements or give lec-

✱ This is the first reference to the word "manager". It suggests that at that early date in the Center's history, namely the day after the first evacuees arrived, a "manager" system was expected.

tures to keep the boys informed and in good morale."

✓ A messenger system, staffed by 10 boys, was to connect the *evacuees* barracks with the Information Office. These "runners" would round up workers as they were needed for jobs. Also they would organize groups of workers when such *work* groups were needed.

*Gr does it  
refer to the  
administration  
one.*



It was hoped, too, that negative attitudes which the newcomers brought with them could be broken down through a public-relations service which would let the outside Japanese know that conditions in the <sup>assembly</sup> center were not what they were said to be and that fair treatment was being accorded residents <sup>therein</sup> ~~within the assembly center~~.

2 Rules and Regulations By March 25, 1942, the second day at camp, the work of laying down general rules and instructions for administering the Center was well under way. On that day, some 15 items of need and conduct were covered in a memorandum issued by the Chief of <sup>the</sup> Service Division. Presumably the instructions were posted on the ~~Bulletin~~ Board.

These instructions had to do with room occupation <sup>and food</sup> ~~for instance~~, friends of the same sex over 18 years were allowed, with permission of their parents, to live together. Boys could not change their rooms except on permits issued by a designated administrative officer. Bedroom equipment was asked for. Individual cooking could not be permitted within the barracks. Rice would soon be available in the mess halls.

Evacuees were permitted to go outside of camp upon presenting suitable evidence of their need to do so and the arrangements they were making. Caucasians were permitted to visit the Center on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, but visits from Japanese were discouraged. It was pointed out that "local people number strong objectors."

There would be no stores in the vicinity to which evacuees could go, but newspapers would be sold at the camp canteen or individual subscriptions taken. Old subscriptions to Japanese newspapers were allowed to continue, but new ones were discouraged.



Individuals would be permitted to send out checks. Absentee balloting in elections was urged, and provision for ~~doing so~~ <sup>voting in absentia</sup> was promised. All accidents, even minor ones, were to be reported to the physician in charge of public health.

The work program covered hours but not wages. There was to be a 44-hour week, with 8 hours daily and 4 hours on Saturday. Against this, a subsistence rate of ~~\$15.00~~ <sup>dollars</sup> a month would be charged to evacuees, with certain adjustments to be expected for young children. Payments for purchases at the canteen would be conducted by a system of debit and credit. Piece work would be done on a worker's own time.

3 Sample Problems of Evacuees On March 26, 1942, the newly set-up Information Center made its first report to the Administration. This report consisted of a series of 19 statements of problems of individuals, which, when inspected, ranged all the way from provision for second helpings at mess hall meals to requests to move out of the Center or to set up a manufacturing facility within it. After the statement of each problem, an answer was set down in ink showing that the Chief of the Service Division was alert to the desirability of quick solutions. Wherever possible, the inquirer or complainant was referred back to an appropriate official or department. Sometimes the complainant himself suggested a solution for his problem and this would then be approved or rejected by the Director of the Service Division.

To indicate how this question and answer method worked, in practice, the following examples are given: An inquiry relative to the cause and cure for sore eyes was referred to the hospital head; a boy who had to send money to his parents was referred to ~~Father Lavery~~ <sup>his Catholic priest</sup>; a



man who wanted work immediately was asked to come to the Information Office the following Monday; an unnamed individual who threatened to create a disturbance as a way to get ordered out of his room (from which he wanted to move) was flatly told that it would be of no use; a request for three volunteers to check workers at the mess hall doorway to permit working men to be fed ahead of others was approved.

In this way, day after day, during the first weeks of Manzanar's existence, problems were brought to the Information Office and appropriate solutions were offered by its evacuee staff. Or, when the staff could not answer, referrals were made to the Chief of the Service Division.

A large proportion of the queries centered around financial problems for which there was not always a ready solution. Another large proportion was concerned over what jobs the evacuees could get and what wages they could expect.

Mail, money orders, checks, radios, telephone, telegraph and other contact with friends and relatives outside were topics of constant queries. Baggage expected or long overdue, parcels lost or undelivered, requests for materials which were needed in occupying the barracks, such as brooms, mops, buckets, soap, took up a large share of the questions put to the Information Office. Problems of cleanliness and health, recreation and education, were matters of great concern among the evacuees, and their questions never ceased to pour in. Answers were given courteously and conscientiously as they were raised, but the very repetition of them soon posed its own problem to the Information Staff.



Within a couple of days, it became evident that bulletin boards should be placed in spots where people were wont to congregate. In lieu of a non-existent corner grocery store, <sup>or cracker barrel</sup> the most obvious place was the block latrine. Notices were then posted there in Japanese and English, so that all could read and be informed. In this way, it was hoped that the need for repeating answers would be reduced, and that the information which was being given out to individuals would reach <sup>out to</sup> other people with similar problems. All unauthorized bulletins were to be checked.

4 Policies of Information Center The primary task of the Information Center, as conceived by the camp's Service Division, was to serve the evacuees. Each evacuee who came to the Center necessarily had to undergo a sharp readjustment from his previous mode of living, and it was not an easy adjustment for him to make. Amid the confusion of arrival in a strange place, surrounded by heavy baggage, gripped by varying degrees of uneasiness and apprehension as to what might be in store for him, the newly arrived evacuee needed a friendly service at the very moment he was being inducted into Manzanar. It was at the gate, therefore, that he became acquainted with the Voluntary Helpers Corps which took him to his quarters, carried his blankets and baggage, answered his questions as to camp life, showed him the location of the mess halls, the latrines, the shower rooms, and the laundries.

Within the next few days <sup>newcomer</sup> he had many more questions to ask, many complaints to make, many problems to meet. It was in the Office of the Information Center that he found willing and friendly attention and assistance. There he received detailed instructions as to what



would be expected of him, there he got help in filling out strange forms or writing necessary letters in English, there he retrieved his lost spectacles or purse or what not, there he was given information as to how to get or adjust to a job, there he lodged his protests against the headaches of camp life, there he was led to understand the limitations and potentials of a government controlled existence.

As the population of Manzanar grew, often by sudden gross increases, the work of the Information Center expanded and grew with it.

A department was formed to handle employee requests and complaints; another became a family relations office. Both grew into full-fledged sections which were maintained to the end of Manzanar's existence.

But two functions, namely, to issue and interpret the Administration's announcements, and to render "personal service" to evacuees, continued to occupy the attention of the Information Center proper. These functions formed the nucleus of what was later to be taken over by the Block Leaders when the Block Leader system was inaugurated. The story of the rise of the Block Leader system is concurrent with the story of the disintegration of the Information Office. Also, it embodies a record of the struggles at Manzanar to institute a system of self-government.

In the following pages, the growth and decline of the Information Center, from March 23 to June 30 (X), 1942, will be outlined only insofar as <sup>the account</sup> it leads into the emergence of the Block Leader system



which eventually displaced it. No attempt will be made to detail the history of the Information Center per se, which itself had emerged promptly in response to a community need; which functioned actively and enthusiastically while it lived; which delegated its respective tasks and duties to other departments as these became concrete and available; and which then emitted a few death struggles as it saw its last remaining functions depart. When the Information Center finally folded up, its staff personnel were taken over by its successor, the Block Leaders. *System*

#### B Problems of Early Adjustment to Center Life

The gross population capacity of the Center was set as at 11,000 residents. The peak hoped for, in the interests of comfortable living, was to be around 10,000. All were to be housed in standard army barracks which did not differ in any detail the one from the other, and all were to be fed on a common diet to be served in mess halls. Previously existing inequalities among Japanese were thus to be ironed out insofar as the standard of living was concerned.

Yet while, economically, none would have material advantage over others—except as they could supply a few comforts through private purchases—nevertheless, psychologically, these individuals differed among themselves and their individual problems demanded individual attention. Group rules and procedures covered fundamental needs and demands. All were housed, fed, supplied with sanitary facilities and a medical service, and a routine for registering their dissatisfactions. It was through this last mentioned channel that individualization came to the



fore. And strangely enough, the chief cause for dissatisfaction was voiced in regard to another need that was common to all, namely the need to keep occupied.

People were told early that they would be expected to work. That the Center would develop as a community in proportion to the interests and efforts the residents themselves were willing to put into building it. All would be given jobs in line with previous training and experience and ability. But the essential work of establishing the camp had first to be attended to. After that, job placements would be made for everybody willing and able to hold a job.

1 Vocational Problems: Wages In spite of the best efforts of the administrators and the workers in the Information Center, however, the days slipped by and most of the evacuees remained idle. Workers with skills and specific job experiences to offer would come to the Information Office to ask if they could set up in business or trade and serve the public. Barbers, bookkeepers, carpenters, vegetable growers and farmers, manufacturing and businessmen, pressed their services upon the Information Office well in advance of any administrative readiness to receive or process them.

Against this, was offset the case of one young man who stated flatly that he didn't want to do any hard work while in camp. He conceded that if an easy job were to be assigned to him, he would take it. The Director's answer was to leave him alone.

✓ A particularly vexatious matter stemmed from the uncertainty connected with the rates of pay which were to be made to WCCA workers. Newspapers, read by the Center evacuees announced that a maximum rate



✓ of ~~\$21.00~~<sup>dollars</sup> per month would be paid, the same amount as awarded to a soldier. ✓ With an expected deduction of ~~\$15.00~~<sup>dollars</sup> per month for maintenance, men became worried as to how they could meet the extra-maintenance needs of their families. This became a topic to which more heat ✓ than light ~~was attached~~<sup>accrued</sup>.

✓ Among those evacuees already put to work, complaints of dissatisfaction with equipment, ~~and~~<sup>or</sup> the personality of foremen and bosses, kept reaching the Information Office. One foreman complained that his boys worked too rapidly, while another demanded that his men should do overtime on a certain day because they had gone home too early the day before. The boys promptly retaliated by going off even ~~than~~<sup>earlier</sup> their customary quitting time. Foremen apparently needed help in managing men. ✓

2 Order in Camp Problems Many of the complaints had to do with the preservation of peace and quiet in camp. Suggestions kept coming in regarding the need for silence at night, for hoise and merry-making were freely indulged in by the younger crowd. As young and old were ✓ ~~being~~ housed together, often with little separation by families, friction of this sort was inevitable. In one apartment, 11 boys were housed together, of whom 10 did not want to change the arrangement. Youth favored companionship; age resented it.

✓ Another focus of unrest and grievance centered about the use of the shower-rooms and latrines. ✓ The men anxiously awaited the "go" signal on the use of the shower-rooms which, when completed, were to be assigned to 2 or 3 or 4 blocks in rotation. Necessary regulations were posted in advance to preserve orderliness and harmony in the use of this coveted facility.



3 Housing A chief cause for concern and complaint was the lack of privacy experienced generally in the barracks. Not only were unrelated families scrambled together, but often bachelors ~~and~~ <sup>with</sup> wives of other men were assigned to the same rooms. Wives would be welcomed at the induction gate by husbands who had preceded them to camp, and then they <sup>husbands would</sup> ~~were~~ not permitted to share their wife's quarters. New-comers were assigned independently wherever space was available. "Old timers", that is, the first group of volunteers, already had their housing assignments. Changes could not be effected quickly. Couples chafed and fussed against conditions which broke up families and separated husband <sup>s/</sup> and wife <sup>yes</sup>, but they had to endure them. <sup>processes had time to take care of them</sup> ~~until administrative~~

What was even harder to endure was the forced company of people who did not belong to the family, or who logically ought not to be assigned to a common apartment. Dictates of decency and logic were violated by the pressure of population and the confusion of conditions.

(April 30, 1942) On one occasion a field social worker discovered a young girl housed with 4 single men. <sup>worker</sup> The <sup>the girl</sup> immediately took her to stay with another family for the night. Next day, thanks to an administrative readiness to make this case an exception to a ban on moving which had been issued, the girl was <sup>transferred</sup> ~~moved~~ to a girls' dormitory where she was able to lead a less embarrassing existence.

On another occasion, a barrack was discovered without partitions in it. Beds had been arranged in 2 rows the full length of the house and in them newly married young couples, single old men, single young men, elderly couples, were <sup>ing</sup> ~~find~~ their sleeping accommodations, all indiscriminately thrown together! A recommendation was promptly made



that only single men or single women could be put in such buildings. Assignment officers tried to follow this ruling.

A particular problem was posed by the case of the expectant mother who in many cases requested an apartment close to the hospital. They could not all be accommodated. Indeed pregnancy did not constitute a serious reason for individualizing a housing assignment. Yet the panic of the pregnant came up again and again as situations were provoked by the exigencies of camp life. Pregnancy continually brought feelings of insecurity and apprehension along with it. Expectant mothers and fathers feared for the safety of the coming child who would be born in so irregular an environment as a relocation center. They were not inclined to trust the promise of the Administration that hospital services would be provided when needed. Well-planned intentions were often defeated by the chaos of the moment. <sup>evacuees</sup> They were not <sup>willing</sup> ~~ready~~ to take the chance.

Japanese women were hesitant, inarticulate, and disinclined to speak up. The Issei woman, indeed, knew only the fewest words in English and their complaints had always to be voiced in Japanese. Workers in the Information Office were men and personal complaints were sometimes sidetracked or worked off in private grouching as women found it impossible to take their personal problems to men.

In early April, a woman worker was added to the staff of the Information Office. This proved to be most helpful, particularly for women who had not found it easy to answer personal questions put to them by young men. Even hesitant men welcomed the appearance of the first woman in the Information Office. She was a trained social



worker, whom the camp was fortunate in having among its personnel.

She, it was, who later organized and headed the Family Relations Office.

4 Toilet Troubles A constant, recurrent, and emphatic complaint had to do with the absence or scarcity of toilet paper in the latrines. A whole report could be written on this subject alone. From the beginning, the toilet-paper shortage was considered to be one of the bottle necks of camp life. Women particularly complained. What with menstrual periods, diarrhoea, constipation, coupled with their innate <sup>an</sup> <sup>feminine</sup> desire for toilet privacy, the installation of an ~~army~~-latrine system could not be accepted with good grace by the ladies.

Men too protested. At one time a man appeared at the Information Office saying that he represented 80 persons who were lodging their complaint through him. His protest had to do with the absence of toilet paper. The warehouseman admitted he had a supply of the paper but that he could not release it without special permission from the medical office. The Information Office apparently was instrumental in bridging this gap, and for the moment the toilet paper problem was eased. But it kept recurring again and again, before rules were relaxed enough to permit consistent replenishment of the stocks.

5 Business Worries Payments for the upkeep of insurance policies, articles and goods bought on the installment plan, automobiles brought to camp which had subsequently to be disposed of, all brought problems in their wake which could not lightly be solved.

One man, on April 7, reported that he wanted to give his car to a Caucasian friend who would be visiting him the following Saturday. Others were concerned over their cars which lay impounded in the dust,



and which were not allowed to be moved. Some had tools and supplies in their cars but could not get the necessary permission to go and take them out.

✓ 6 Religion In the midst of complaint and counter-complaint, protest and inquiry, worry and hostility, petition and demand, came a request from an evacuee asking if a brief weekly prayer meeting might be held in his apartment! It is gratifying <sup>to</sup> learn that an unqualified OK was granted by the Director of the Service Division. The policy of the WCCA was that there should be no restraint on religious services. All were free to worship God, even in groups.

✓ 7 Lost and Found Department A Lost and Found Department was initiated by the Information Office and it served a useful purpose in returning lost articles to their owners. However, as in other Lost and Found Departments, listings of losses were not always followed by reports when articles were recovered elsewhere. The Lost and Found Department, <sup>nevertheless</sup> ~~however~~, continued to function as a receiver of found goods. At times, it had to publish a record of its holdings in the FREE PRESS, the camp newspaper, urging the owners to come and claim their goods.

✓ The Lost and Found remained one of the few functions to be retained by the Information Office when it became stripped of its duties later on. Soon, other departments emerged and developed in Manzanar to carry on the services, which the Information Office attempted to cover in its first few days of existence.

8 Health Health was a matter of vital concern to the evacuees. Early they asked that an identifying sign be put on the hospital, one of the first buildings to be erected in the Center. A public health



program was inaugurated at once and an evacuee physician was put at the head of it.

✓ This facility, like many others placed in camp for the good of the residents, carried its repercussions too. A program of typhoid inoculation was early set up and the volunteer helpers were the first to be <sup>e</sup>trated to typhoid inoculations. As the workers became weakened by the injections and forced to retire to their rooms, they feared they were becoming ill. Most of them did not know what to expect in the way of after-effects from the hypodermic injections and while lying in the discomfort of their bare barracks, ~~could~~ <sup>a</sup> easily become a prey to bad imaginings.

✓ Yet in spite of these and other set-backs, the volunteers did a splendid job of aiding newcomers to fit into camp life. The story of the Voluntary Helpers Corps is a record in itself and appears in a separate <sup>section</sup> ~~chapter~~.

✓ 9 Population Increase (March 28, Saturday) While procedures were being formulated and precedents created, population kept increasing. Unofficial figures listed new arrivals as coming in by the thousands. On a certain Wednesday in March, 1,000 were due to arrive; the day following, another 1,000 were expected. By March 30, 226 additional families or persons were listed as coming from the north. These figures indicate how rapid were the accretions to population and they suggest something of the problems which such large sudden influxes of humanity precipitated into a Center not yet ready to take care of the people it had.

✓ a Directory: A task early recognized by the Information Center



✓ as necessary, was the compiling of a ✓ Directory of names and addresses of residents. ✓ This was no easy job, what with the constant new arrivals ✓ and the shifts and re-arrangements of families as relatives tried to assemble themselves under one roof, or friends and relatives tried to ~~join~~ <sup>reside near</sup> one another in neighboring apartments. ✓ Friends, family, fiancées, and other kin on the outside came in to join resident evacuees who were already beginning to dig in for the duration. (Requests to arrange for family reunions were denied at first but were honored later as camp conditions permitted.) Newcomers would ask for addresses of people who were known to have preceded them to Manzanar, but without the aid of an alphabetical ✓ Directory, <sup>Information Office</sup> these ~~could not be run down~~. Departments holding cards with names and addresses recorded thereon could not spare them long enough for copies to be made which could be put at the service of the Information Office and other offices having need of such data.

✓ A ~~first~~ directory was made up, however, <sup>and</sup> ~~but~~ almost immediately it was outmoded by the need for a revised edition. A second and third revision followed, until finally only card files were maintained. Not ✓ until the population became stabilized could a printed or bound ✓ Directory be compiled for general use.

#### C. Growth of Information Center

As the work of the Information Office expanded, it became necessary to look toward the establishment of branch offices in different strategic areas of the Center. Early in April, sites were tentatively selected for five branch offices. These branches were to be distributed in the proportion of one office for every 6 blocks. For the 36 blocks in the Center, a maximum of 6 branch offices became the objective for expansion.



By April 18, 1942, a second branch Information Office opened in a barrack room at the western edge of the residential section. The first duty of this branch office staff was to "wash the dusty room thoroughly;" the second was to try to secure a strong lock to protect the equipment. Tables, benches, tools, and the like, which were too inviting to block residents who so urgently needed furniture in their almost empty apartments, had to be protected against pilfering.

The first complaint received at this branch office was in regard to a serious leak in the sink at the men's lavatory in one of the adjacent blocks. It was the sort of complaint that would normally be referred to a Block Leader, if a Block Leader had been on hand.

Another complaint which could have been handled by the Block Leader was the matter of arranging shower schedules for families so that the nightly stampede for showers could be avoided and people awaiting their turn might get hot water while it was still available in the pipes.

On April 22, 1942, a request was made that the Information Office be permitted to secure the services of one or two Issai to act as clerks or managers at branch Information Offices. Apparently the older evacuees had been overlooked in making previous appointments of this kind. Hopes, however, were entertained for their future appointment as leaders and executives.

Apparently, too, most of the workers in the branch offices were men, with no women assigned. However, by April 24, when plans were made to open up 2 more branch Information Offices, the services of a girl were secured among the 12 new appointees.

Plans were made, too, to open an emergency ~~information~~ information station



near the induction building to accommodate newcomers and to handle their inquiries at the time of their arrival when they needed help the most.

A staggered working-hour arrangement was devised and completed, with the first shift of workers to report from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and the second shift from 2:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. A special session was scheduled for Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., to give the new staff members their instructions and to acquaint them with the problems which they would need to know about to deal adequately with the people of the Center.

✓ On April 27, 1942, after an extra large influx, all available field workers were sent out from the Information Offices and Family Relations Office to visit the newcomers who had arrived in the Center the previous Sunday evening. These field workers offered their services to assist the new people to get settled, or to get complaints reported, or to have questions answered by the nearest Information Office.

Office space, especially in No. 1 Office, was becoming increasingly congested and interviews often had to be held outside the office with staff conferences finding a place in whatever empty apartments were available. A request was made by the Head of the Family Relations Office for a private room behind the Information Office.

A doubled population meant that more workers were needed to staff the new branch offices in the blocks. ~~the~~

~~On that day~~ A third office was opened in Block 10.

From April 27 to April 29, some 4,000 new arrivals were inducted into Manzanar within the space of 3 days, a congestion which flooded the main Information Office with inquiries. Apparently it was not yet gener-



ally known that branch offices were in operation. Notices were promptly issued to inform the people of the different jurisdictional areas of the branch offices. <sup>and</sup> Efforts were made to transfer some of the business that kept pouring into the main office to the branch offices which has been complaining of a scarcity of things to do.

By the following day, the large increase in the Center's population was reflected in an increased volume of business for the branch offices also, to the great satisfaction of their staffs.

In less than a month, the personnel of the Information Center had swelled from 2 to 50; the offices had expanded from one center to a system having a main office and four branches, with a fifth to be opened shortly. Maximum strength was expected when all 6 offices would be in operation, serving an expected total population of 10,000 residents.

✓ Contact with the Administration was maintained solely through the Director of the Service Division who daily went over, with the head of the Information Office, the problems that found their way to him. Spot advice was often given; equally often referrals were made to other departments or officials for solutions.

Contact with the residents, on the other hand, was kept by having an office staff always on hand to receive visitors. In this way the purpose of the Service Division were met adequately; namely, the Administration's official instructions were disseminated and interpreted to the evacuees; and the evacuees' personal and group problems were brought directly to the attention of the Administration.

A sample of bulletins issued on each of two days, at the end of one month of the Center's existence, will illustrate the kinds of things



which the Administration felt it desirable to bring to the attention of the evacuees. These bulletins carried regular official numbers and dates but only their subject matter will be mentioned here. This covers the following topics: an announcement from the medical office; a notice on occupational classification; a notice on use of the recreation hall; repeat copies of a bulletin on reunion of separated families; a notice regarding the price of goods sold at the canteen; a notice on typhoid and small pox inoculation for newcomers; words of gratitude from the Camp Manager to the Volunteer Helpers' Corps; a notice from the representative of the Federal Reserve Bank; a notice in regard to changing living quarters.

The next day's listing included coverage of an art and handicraft exhibition; an announcement of a girls' volleyball and baseball schedule; an announcement in regard to the found articles still unclaimed in the Lost and Found department; a notice as to the jurisdictional areas of each of the branch Information Offices; and a notice on use of water faucets located on the side of each building.

All in all, the Information Center, main and branch offices, was kept continuously busy, reaching its peak of work by the time the service had been in existence a month.

Subsequent weeks were given over to reducing the load on the Information Center by delegating some of its functions to other departments.



### III DECLINE OF THE INFORMATION CENTER

The Information Center emerged over night in response to an acute emergency. It developed and expanded its services in response to the continuance of the need for them. This expansion progressed so rapidly that it had to be compartmentalized. As the problems and queries presented to the Information Center began to fall into certain logically defined categories, a worker would be assigned to take care of them as a group. Thus, early, there evolved a special service to take care of inductees looking for quarters; a department handling complaints about work and foremen; a department to cover problems of social welfare and social case work; a lost and found department. As these respective departments flourished, they developed into sections which could stand on their own feet without the continuing sponsorship of the Information Center.

In time, the Information Center found itself with a lessening load of activities, or rather with a narrower range of activities. In the end, it was left with three main functions: (a) personal service, such as writing letters, answering inquiries, advising on general matters; (b) issuing bulletins and interpreting them, and (c) <sup>conducting</sup> a Lost and Found Department, which was finally handed over to the police department as an entity.

✓ The story of the rise and separation of the separate divisions of the Information Center's activities is the story of the decline of the Information Center as an area of work in Manzanar. The more successful the proliferation process was, the nearer the Information Center came to ringing its own death knell. Its last few gasps were taken with the



birth of that lustier infant, the Block Leaders' System. This occurred at the end of June, 1942.

#### A The Volunteer Helpers Corps

1 Volunteers Needed to Help New Arrivals On April 2, 1942, two evacuee leaders in Manzanar issued a call for a group of 200 volunteers to assist in handling the people who were arriving from Los Angeles. Recruits responded immediately.

On April 4, an enterprising evacuee was assigned to the Information Service as special assistant in charge of voluntary help activities. It became his task to organize the first emergency corps of 200 volunteers who would be ready to meet emergency calls.

The purposes of the Corps were twofold: <sup>first</sup> (1), to help incoming families carry their packages, baggage, blankets, and other household goods to their new quarters; and <sup>secondly</sup> 2, to improve camp morale by stimulating a voluntary spirit.

The organizer of the Voluntary Helpers Corps spent 4 days working up the plans for his new organization. He began with 25 boys who responded to an emergency call to help unload coal, stoves, hay, food, and so on, from trucks. Almost immediately he enlisted the services of 94 volunteers whose names and addresses are preserved in the files for posterity. But more men were still solicited and an initial goal of 200 volunteers was set for the coming week-end.

✓ The enlistees stood willing and ready to give their leisure hours to community service and were set to respond to emergency calls at any moment during the day or night. Their leader did not succeed in reaching his goal of 200 men, but he did manage to sign up 145



volunteers within the first week, and these in turn were willing to solicit others.

At first, the volunteers did not have many calls on their services, for newcomers did not come into the Center for some time. But the VHC did respond to such emergency calls as unloading coal, vegetables, and the like; also, they worked on the garbage crews, for which workers were hard to find.

Enthusiasm for the new organization came particularly from the Terminal Island evacuees, the names of 51 young men being reported from that locality within a few hours after the request for help was posted.

Other duties for the VHC made themselves manifest as new arrivals had to be escorted to their quarters. Incoming evacuees needed information and guidance in meeting such elementary needs as where to eat, where to find the lavatory, how to light the stove, how to recover lost baggage, and so on. This help was readily given by the VHC.

In addition to the good ~~will~~ which serving brings to the server, the helpers, by their demonstrations of kindness, did much to build up the <sup>9</sup>dropped spirits of the incoming evacuees and to allay their suspicions. Evacuees outside had heard foolish and erroneous rumors in regard to the Center. Some had even bought locks for their apartment doors because of the stories current <sup>(to the effect) there</sup> that ~~so many thieves were~~ in Manzanar that no one could be trusted. The displacement of these fears and suspicions by relief and gratitude was the evacuees' own first contribution to camp morale.



2 The VHC's Role in Morale It had been felt from the start that a readiness to serve would in itself help to bring unity of spirit to the community. If this spirit could be widely communicated, the basis of good community morale would be laid. The problem of finding men to join the VHC--which soon changed its name to the Voluntary Service Corps--seems to have been one of the first assignments tackled by the Block Leaders. Much of the credit for this plan can be given to them.

About April 24, the leader of the VSC met with the Block Leaders to develop a scheme for securing more helpers needed for new inductions. Each Block Leader agreed to supply 15 men from his block, but this plan did not work beyond the following 3 days. Yet, as a result of the Block Leaders' cooperation, the number of signers-up leaped to 400 by April 25.

On April 29, the Assistant Camp Manager issued the following notice which attested to the spirit of cooperation shown by the evacuee helpers:

"The Management wishes to express its sincerest appreciation to all the volunteer helpers who worked ceaselessly in order to facilitate domiciling the new arrivals for the past 3 days. Through your untiring efforts, the inductions on all 3 occasions were accomplished with a minimum of time and congestion.

We have acquired a profound admiration for the zeal and spirit of cooperation among the residents of the Center."

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Manager

The foreman of the VSC worked especially hard and faithfully, and his duties were many and assorted. At one time he would act as a high-caliber messenger for the Information Office. At another, he would take care of the complaints reported to that office, particular-

Typist's  
Student  
5/1/50



ly those which could not be handled by younger messengers. He would visit the quarters of the new arrivals to see what troubles there were that needed quick adjustments. ✓ He reported immediately to the Housing Section such needs as beds, mattresses, and blankets, especially in apartments where babies were quartered. He helped other volunteer workers, such as the lavatory janitors and janitresses, to obtain tools and work slips. He was extremely useful in keeping the Information Office in contact with the warehouse personnel, with all of whom he was on terms of personal acquaintance.

As the Information Office became incorporated into the Block Leaders' Offices, and as newcomers no longer came to the Center in groups, and as the original VSC boys became actively employed at regular jobs, the work of the VSC died down. But its spirit lived on. The leader of the VSC became liason officer for the Executive Council of the Block Leaders and brought into that young organization the spirit of helpfulness which he had fostered and put to such excellent use in the Voluntary Service Corps.

✓ One of the earliest Block Leaders' Reports records the attitude with which the Block Leaders began their work. The inclusion of the letter which follows signifies the acceptance by the Block Leaders of the suggestions given by the retiring Information Office staff:

"We believe that in this kind of community the spirit of mutual cooperation and of mutual tolerance is the only thing that will pull us together when there is no other incentive for community efforts. We are not employing anybody with our own money. We can not make people work by the power of money. The power of authority held by the management and the Army can not be stressed too often. Even if one loses his job, he can still eat at the public mess hall. Sons who do not obey the words of their fathers can stay away from home at their own will and get away with it. Daughters who do not behave well can still live without meeting much difficulty. Everybody is being held in this Center against his

Tyler  
Bullock  
5/11



or her will and there are so many things that do not meet with one's approval. Nevertheless, in this Center which is so completely cut off from the outside world and with a future which is so uncertain, there is no incentive for individuals to feel like doing something constructive and worth while.

With these views in mind, we feel that the leaders of this community should exert more effort to guide the people and to direct them toward cooperating with each other in a spirit of mutual trust. We feel that Block Leaders have a great obligation and a big task to perform.

If each Block Leader tries hard to encourage this spirit of voluntary service among the residents, and if he tries to make this spirit take the place of incentives of power or money, it may not be difficult to make this Center a model community.

This is the very spirit which the Information clerks have always shown, a willingness to sacrifice personal comfort to work for the people and to try to solve their problems in every possible way.

May we request permission to make suggestions to the Block Leaders, or attend their meetings, so that our humble experience and opinions can be presented for their consideration, and that we may also continue to contribute to the welfare of the community."

From Block Leaders Reports  
June 14, 1942

#### B Employment Complaints Office

On April 9, an Employment Complaints Section was created as a separate department within the Camp to take care of complaints about employment. Its first duty was to tell people that everyone in camp would eventually be interviewed as to his qualifications for a job; that jobs held in the beginning of the camp's establishment were not necessarily <sup>final or</sup> permanent, and that eventually jobs would be assigned on the basis of fitness. <sup>PP</sup> As the days went by, the new Employment Complaints Section was confronted with all manner of questions and problems concerning employment: Post Office employees, it was rumored, would be paid according to regular federal civil service wages, while other employees living in camp would be paid lower wages. Might others not qualify for



post office positions by making civil service examinations and could these not be conducted in camp? \_\_\_\_\_

Men were working without work numbers or work slips and were giving the timekeeper much difficulty in recording attendance. High winds were blowing and dust storms would cause diseases to develop in the lungs of people who remained exposed to them. Might workers not stop work when the wind became too strong and dust-laden? Foremen were high-handed and inconsiderate. Might not mediation boards be set up to settle such disputes? (The answer to this one was that the Block Leaders should correct it.) Regular workers could not stand in line at the Post Office to get their mail during the short noon hour. Might they not be given time off to go and get it? Certain Nisei who had been regularly employed as postal clerks had been fired by the postmaster. (But that matter was out of the hands of Manzanar's administration and nothing could be done about it.)

And so, as the weeks went by, complaints were received and disposed of by the Employment Complaints Office, which was run by a highly competent young evacuee who later became a major in the United States Army. The data which were assembled in this office formed the nucleus of an Employment Section to be set up later under WRA. The forming of this early Employment Complaints Section as a separate department relieved the Information Office of much of its heavy load.

#### C The Family Relations Office

The evacuee woman, a trained social worker, who had been assigned to the Information Office as early as April 6, soon found herself taking



over the problems of the family almost exclusively. Since three and four families were forced to live together without the privacy even of partitions, it was inevitable that quarrels and wranglings, and even moral issues, should arise. Furniture was non-existent and people everywhere were walking off with lumber and making much needed tables, shelves, stools, and little closets in which to do their dressing and undressing. Laundry was slung on rudely constructed lines in every room to dry; the family wash was everywhere. People were demanding toilet paper and partitions in the latrines.

Families with members still outside of camp were demanding that their relatives be admitted. Individuals with broken glasses were demanding that their lenses be repaired and that new corrections be made, yet there was no optometrist in camp. Fist-fights were reported from the blocks and the police were not able to bring harmony between the fighters by methods which police proverbially use.

All in all, the problems were such as to expand in all directions. Soon the newly added social worker found herself needing an assistant, and by April 15 was asking for one to be selected from among the residents and sent to a branch office of the Information Center. ~~So~~ Other workers were added who were equipped by natural gift or training to take care of family relations problems, the care of children, social case work, and other such human adjustment matters. These workers rallied around ~~the Head~~ <sup>their department head</sup> each morning and got their training through group conferences. There they reported their findings of the previous day and together they made plans for the new day. Concise written reports were submitted nightly to the Director of the Community Service Division.



The new section, the Family Relations Section, was off to a good start.

Six social workers began calling on families on April 15, and were well received. Family heads offered to cooperate fully with these workers and through them with the Administration officials. Workers returned to their desks, and later to their conferences, with piles of questions, memos, suggestions, complaints, and problems.

✓ Early case reports included a request for a marriage annulment, a neglected blind man who had not been fed properly even though friends had tried to help; empty apartments which were creating fire hazards and moral temptations. Babies were cared for by their mothers but <sup>the washing of</sup> their "potties" <sup>was drawing</sup> ~~were creating~~ <sup>from</sup> objections to users of the shower and laundry rooms where they <sup>not</sup> were being washed. Family quarrels, children's fights (sometimes aided and abetted by parents), block brawls, all came in for a share of the social workers' attention. They, for their part, were able in many instances to produce tactful settlements.

✓ This department, like its predecessors, soon so justified its existence that it became recognized as a ~~Sectional~~ <sup>Sectional</sup> unity and no longer sought help or sustenance from its ~~parent~~ <sup>parent</sup>, the Information Office. Arrived at maturity early, the Family Relations Office broke off, leaving the parent office with one less area of activity to operate.

Then came the problem of justifying its own continuing existence, particularly as the community became more conscious of an emerging Block Leader system, the functions of which they first recognized as falling within the area of activity that was being covered by the Family Relations Service. By the middle of May the Block Leaders themselves had acquired some feeling of security in their group entity and some



understanding of what they expected to be doing. The result was a conference on May 15 with the head of the Family Relations Service, which was sponsored by the Block Leaders rather than by the Family Relations Office. The Head of the latter service attended by invitation, and discussion centered around a division of labor between the two organizations.

It was decided that the Family Relations Service should continue to do what it had been doing in the past. Its Head assured the Block Leaders that her workers would keep in close touch with them and would discuss each case of any importance with them. Also, the Family Relations Service would be grateful for whatever information and advice the Block Leaders could pass on. With the then Chairman in charge, the Head anticipated future difficulties in working out the cooperative plan.

#### D Lost and Found Department

The day the Information Center opened its service, it instituted a Lost and Found Department. The first duty of the Lost and Found Department was to acquaint the public with its existence. The second was to get the fullest cooperation from the residents in bringing in the articles they found. As articles were turned in, the Lost and Found developed ways and means of getting owners to claim them. Valuable things, including documents such as passports and birth certificates, found their places in the accumulation along with watches, jewelry, fountain pens, hats, leather jackets, sweaters, gloves, bags, purses, keys, and what not. The custodians soon became worried lest thieves break in and help themselves to their unguarded treasure. It was with



a sigh of relief that the ~~Department~~, on May 2, greeted the arrival of a cabinet with lock and key into which they could deposit their articles for safe-keeping. By that date, some 59 different pieces were tabulated for storage. A month earlier 49 pieces were reported to have passed from finder to owner through the good offices of the Department.

Yet the hoard steadily grew as people failed to recognize the existence of the service. Periodically, the Lost and Found published notices in the Free Press to the effect that all lost articles in the department should be claimed or they would be otherwise disposed of. In the June 6th issue of the newspaper, mention was made of 66 articles which were on deposit and for which no claimants had shown up.

✓ The work of the Lost and Found Department was a routine matter. As the Information Center slowly lost its functions and duties, the Lost and Found service continued. When the Information Center finally lost its identity as a unit, the Lost and Found Department was taken over by the Block Leaders with headquarters at Town Hall. By July 7, the transfer was complete. A note ~~in~~ the Free Press announced that Block Leaders' offices would thenceforth act as sub-stations to receive all articles lost in the blocks. The turned-in staff would be kept for two weeks in the Block Office after which all that remained unclaimed would be turned over to Town Hall and held another two months. Then, it would be sold at auction.