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FINAL REPORT  
Project Attorney's Office

United States Department of the Interior  
War Relocation Authority  
Granada Relocation Center  
Alamosa, Colorado



The Project Attorney's office was established under the provisions of Section 50.4 of the WRA Administrative Manual with the duties and directions therein contained, which are in brief, "to furnish legal advice and services to the appointed staff and to the evacuees." This office began its functions in the latter part of October, 1942, with Donald T. Horn, formerly a practicing attorney of Lamar, Colorado, as the first Project Attorney; although prior to that time Masao Igasaki and Chiyoko Sakamoto, two evacuee attorneys from Los Angeles, California, had been conducting a legal aid bureau for the evacuees.

Inasmuch as the writer has been with WRA only since June, 1945, and at this project since July of that year, most of the facts herein contained have been gleaned from the weekly reports prepared by Mr. Horn and by those who served as Acting Project Attorneys after his resignation. We have also had the benefit of a very short summary which was prepared by Mr. Horn prior to his departure.

Since the establishment of the Project Attorney's office, the following persons have been employed therein:

#### Project Attorneys

Donald T. Horn	9/25/42 - 3/31/45
L. J. Hamman	7/11/45 - to date

#### Acting Project Attorneys

Jack Curtis  
John Meaney  
Maurice Silverman  
Mina Pollit

#### Evacuees

Frank Kito	11/9/42 - 1/25/43
Masao Igasaki	11/1/42 - 12/1/42
Chiyoko Takahashi nee Sakamoto	11/1/42 - 4/1/43
D. Kiyowara (Insurance)	7/1/43 - 12/15/44
Kosaku Tamura	5/21/43 - 10/1/43

#### Evacuee Secretaries

Amy Yagi	11/27/42 - 3/3/43
Kay Fujisaka	11/1/42 - 3/30/43
Jaine Oi	12/9/42 - 5/17/43
Mrs. Ruby Sakai	11/1/42 - 1/25/43
Fumiko Fukuyama	3/4/43 - 5/7/43
Toshie Yamasaki	5/17/43 - 12/1/43
Grace Nozawa	5/17/43 - 9/23/43
Toshiko Hatamiya	9/18/43 - 7/30/45
Lois Yoshinaga	5/24/44 - 10/15/44
Alice Yamasaki	12/25/44 - 5/11/45
Betty Watanabe	6/27/45 - 7/21/45
Hamiko Ota	8/6/45 - 8/25/45

#### Appointed Secretary

Marcia Strong	8/21/45 - to date
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Of the individuals listed above, Masao Igasaki, Chiyoko Sakamoto, Frank E. Kito, and Kozaku Tamura were duly licensed and qualified lawyers in the State of California at the time of evacuation, and the services rendered by them in the Project Attorney's office were valuable because of the fact that they were familiar with California law and procedure and were also well posted on the questions concerning immigration, naturalization, citizenship, and procedure under the Foreign Funds Control. As shown by the above periods of employment, none of these attorneys stayed in the Center any length of time, but while they were here they rendered invaluable services both to the evacuees and to the administration. Mr. D. Kiyomura had attended law school for a considerable period but had not graduated. He had, however, had extensive experience as an insurance man and also in business affairs, and his services in the office were as advisor in insurance and business matters.

Adequate office facilities were provided by the administration for this office, and due to the fact that Mr. Horn had been engaged in the practice of law in Lamar with his father and had an excellent law library in that city, the lack of such library at the Project was not felt. It appears, however, that the only books which were government owned were a set of the Colorado Annotated Statutes; and in addition thereto, a set of California Statutes, which was owned by one of the evacuee attorneys, was used as was a form book which belonged to one of them. Since the writer came to this Project, we have received a three volume set of the California Statutes. Since a great part of the services rendered through this office were more or less of a routine nature and any unusual cases were referred to the Solicitor's Office for decision, the absence of adequate library facilities did not constitute any great handicap. However, should it have been necessary for the Project Attorney to rely on his own research on matters which arose, the absence of a suitable library would have been very keenly felt.

In many ways the functions of this office were similar to the functions of any small town or country law office, particularly insofar as the services rendered the evacuees were concerned. In addition to the services furnished the evacuees, legal assistance was rendered the Cooperative, the Community Government, and the Project Staff.

As mentioned above, the attorneys office furnished practically the same assistance that one could receive in any small town law office. There were, however, a few notable differences. In the first place, there were few, if any, motor vehicles in the Center and for that reason there were few traffic violations or traffic accidents. There were very few estate proceedings, and this was due to the fact that the elderly evacuees for the most part had assigned, transferred and delivered their personal property to the younger members of the family. There were not nearly the law and order violations in the Center that there would be in a normal community. This is due to the fact that sale of intoxicating liquors was prohibited and due also to the fact that evacuees were







naturally law abiding. Since no privately owned commercial establishments were permitted in the Center, business disputes and litigations did not arise in the Center; but the legal services required in this Center, insofar as evacuees were concerned, pertained practically altogether to property matters and business affairs in the localities of their residence at the time of the evacuation.

It is impossible to prepare any statistical record of the business handled through this office as no such record was maintained except for a file of index cards showing the name of the person for whom certain work was done. However, no record was made where an evacuee merely wished a power of attorney drawn or a will or lease prepared, but only where property matters, insurance cases, collections, banking problems and like matters were handled. Neither does this file indicate the number of interviews which were had with the evacuees on these matters, nor the number of separate matters which were handled for each of these individuals. It does indicate, however, that 935 evacuees were served in matters of this nature.

It appears from the various records of the office that some of the problems and difficulties which arose were in connection with the matters set forth below, and it is realized that any comments made by the writer are based upon the advantage of hindsight and are not intended as any criticism of those who had to solve them without the benefit of precedent to guide them.

During November and December, 1942, the office was occupied in assisting in the formation of the Community Government and in the preparation of a charter for the community. It appears that very excellent cooperation was received from the committee of evacuees which was formed for the purpose of drawing up a charter, although apparently some disappointment was felt over the rejection of the first one proposed. However, the proposed charter was approved by the Washington office and was adopted by a vote of the evacuees on January 20, 1943, and the first permanent council elected thereunder was sworn in on February 22, 1943. Unless the drafting of the charter and the work of organization was intended as a practical demonstration of the processes of democracy, much time and effort could probably have been saved had a uniform form of charter been established by WRA for the government of the community with suitable provision contained therein for amendments which might be proposed by the evacuees and adopted by the community, subject, of course, to the approval of such amendments by the WRA. I doubt that this would have caused any more disappointment or dissatisfaction than did the rejection of a charter proposed by them.

During this period also the organization of the Cooperative or Apache Consumer Enterprises, Inc., occupied considerable time in this office, and the final Articles of Incorporation were filed in February, 1943. Considering the amount of work done in this matter and also in







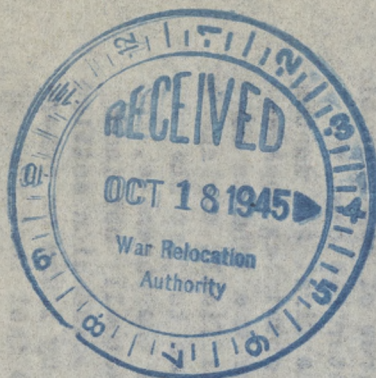
subsequent handling of tax problems, patronage refunds, rental questions, establishment of purchasing agents, etc. for such organization, it would appear again that much effort and confusion might have been avoided had an organization similar to the Army Exchange Service been set up to furnish necessary items for sale to the evacuees, which items would be sold at a very small margin above cost, and any profits therefrom would be devoted to recreational or other purposes on behalf of the residents of the Center. However, here again, it is possible that the morale value of allowing the evacuees to organize and operate their own organization may possibly have overbalanced the drawbacks of such a system.

Also during November and December problems relating to life insurance held by the evacuees and questions as to their rights to unemployment compensation under the California law were of major interest.

In January, 1943, a bill was introduced in the Colorado Legislature proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to bar aliens from owning real estate in this state. This proposal, however, was defeated by the voters at the election held in November, 1944. This, while not of vital importance due to the few Japanese who reside within the state, was an indication of the antagonism existing toward them, not only in this state but also in many parts of the country. In this connection, Mr. Horn was consistently pointing out the need for favorable newspaper publicity which would bring the true facts before the public and thus offset much of the prejudice caused by misinformation as to the evacuees themselves, and the program of WRA. It appears from his reports that the publicity received was quite unfavorable during the early days of the organization and that the paper most unfavorable to the evacuees in this part of the country was The Denver Post. However, it appears that this situation improved greatly along in July and August, 1943, but in February and March, 1944, it again appears to have become less favorable due partly, in his opinion, to the reaction of the Nisei to being included in the draft. Due to Mr. Horn's wide acquaintances in this locality, he was able to, and did, do much toward spreading the facts in regard to the WRA program among public officials and influential citizens of this part of the state.

Another problem which appears to have been a source of considerable difficulty throughout most of the existence of this Center has been the farm land which was purchased by the government. In the first six months or more, the office was occupied with the questions of obtaining possession of the farm lands thus purchased and the removal of the tenants occupying them. It also appears to have been extremely difficult during that time to obtain definite information from the ARMY as to just what improvements, fixtures, and personalty were included in the purchase, and it appears that a definite list of such items was not actually obtained until April, 1943. No sooner were the questions as to possession settled then they were faced with the necessity of disposition by lease or otherwise of a considerable portion of such land, due to the fact that the Center was unable to properly farm all of the land acquired. Mr. Horn's







reports at this time call attention to the fact that severe criticism would be leveled at this organization should they allow any of such land to lie idle after having forced off the tenants who had been farming the same. It is possible that this situation was due more to the fact that the plans in regard to leave had been changed so as to allow evacuees to accept outside employment on short term leave, thus causing a relative shortage of manpower in the Center, rather than to any error in the estimate in the amount of land which could have been farmed by the population which it was anticipated would be in this Center. This manpower shortage apparently continued during the life of the Center, but due to the leasing of a great part of the farm land, practically none of it was allowed to lie idle.

During the spring months of 1943 the volume of work coming into the office made it impossible to handle matters as promptly as Mr. Horn would have desired. During this same period the refusal of the California Employment Commission to pay unemployment compensation to the evacuees was a source of much irritation among them.

Another problem which arose early in the camp and continued until its closing days was the difficulties of the evacuees in regard to property which they had left in private storage in California, and which, subsequent to the evacuation, was stolen or otherwise lost. It appears that much of this trouble was caused by the trust which they reposed in Caucasians who were supposedly their friends and with whom they had, in many cases, left most of their possessions, only to learn later that these "supposed friends" had either sold the same, appropriated it to their own use, or negligently allowed it to become lost or stolen. In these cases negligible results were secured by this office, due in large part to the apparent lack of interest on the part of law enforcement authorities in California, who apparently made little or no effort either to recover the property or to arrest those who had stolen it. Neither have our own West Coast offices been able to show any appreciable results in recovering any of this property.

The difficulty in obtaining insurance on property owned by evacuees first appears in the summer of 1943, and has been an intermittent source of difficulty from then up to the present time.

During the latter part of the summer and early fall of 1943, Segregation and Leave Clearance hearings occupied a great deal of time of the attorney's office, and this work, particularly in the matter of Leave Clearance, extended on into the spring of 1944.

There was apparently some tendency on the part of the Washington office to criticize the Project for handling a large part of its criminal cases in the local court in Lamar, rather than before the Judicial Commission here at the Project. However, this system apparently worked very successfully, and I think that this tendency was due perhaps to a lack of conviction on the part of the project staff in the legality of any punishment that might have been imposed by the Judicial Commission especially







in the matters of imprisonment or fine; and the writer, personally, is still inclined to agree with such view and to doubt whether a quasi-judicial tribunal, such as the Judicial Commission, actually has such authority and whether an attempt to enforce its judgments might not subject the responsible project official to suit for false arrest. I might add that my doubts in this matter also extend to the issuance of warrants, search warrants, and subpoenas by the Project Director. I therefore feel that it was a very wise decision to try any case of major importance in a tribunal of unquestioned jurisdiction.

In February, 1944, a payment in lieu of tax was made to Prowers County thus settling a question which had been a matter of many discussions between the Project and the county officials for many months. Also in this month we find considerable excitement and protest over the drafting of Nisei unless and until all restrictions were lifted and they were again given all of the rights of other American citizens. In this connection, it should be noted that this dissatisfaction was short-lived and that these men went forward to write one of the most glorious records of any American Combat Unit when they became part of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Combat Team. The writer, himself, while not having served overseas and not having seen these men in combat, did serve with them both at Fort Custer, Michigan and Camp Blanding, Florida, and personally knows that they were among the finest of American soldiers.

It appears from the records that the bulk of the law and order cases involved more or less minor disorders and petty thefts on the part of young boys. From this we perhaps would be justified in drawing the conclusion that an insufficient emphasis was placed on organized youth work and that they were not provided with sufficient activities to direct their natural spirits along the proper lines.

Since the writer came to this Center, after its liquidation had started, the problems have been very much routine dealing largely with securing possession of housing owned by the evacuees so that they might occupy the same upon their return; the handling of bank claims; advice to dependents of service men; and miscellaneous items of like nature. I do, however, wish to state that I have at all times found the evacuees to be most cooperative and to be deeply appreciative of the least effort in their behalf.

This report would be incomplete if it did not include an expression of appreciation for the splendid assistance and cooperation of the Solicitor's Office in Washington, of the Office of the Principal Attorney in San Francisco, and of the friendly spirit which has prevailed throughout the entire legal division.







