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The Price of Prejudice

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No.25 - 1962

THE PRICE OF PREJUDICE

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON

FACULTY HONOR LECTURE

NO. 25

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THE PRINCE OF
REJUDICE

米采國

Note: The arresting cover was designed by LeRuth Tyau. The shield on the back cover, symbolically encircled, is a graphic representation of the age-distribution of the population of Topaz. From the small of the middle to the spire, the Issei are represented; most of the Nisei are in the continuously expanding lower branches and trunk. This "tree of the people," designed as a substitute for the lack of trees at the camp, was drawn up as the official shield of Topaz in January 1943.

The frontispiece was drawn by Mrs. Tyau and the center map by Richard Bird. The study was supported in part by Utah State University Research funds.

TWENTY-FIFTH FACULTY HONOR LECTURE

THE PRICE OF PREJUDICE

The Japanese-American Relocation Center
in Utah during World War II

by

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON

Professor of Economics

THE FACULTY ASSOCIATION
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
LOGAN UTAH 1962



CENTRAL UTAH RELOCATION CENTER
Millard County, Utah, 1942-1945

The Price of Prejudice

The Japanese-American Relocation Center in Utah
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THE JAPANESE IN AMERICA

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, about 127,000 persons of Japanese descent were living in the United States, of whom more than 112,000 were on the Pacific Coast. These could be conveniently divided into three groups: the Issei or immigrants born in Japan; the Nisei or American-born, American-educated children of the Issei; and the Kibei, who were born in America but received some of their education in Japan.

Permanently excluded from becoming American citizens by United States law, and seriously limited in their ability to acquire agricultural and residential property by alien land laws, the 40,000 Issei had nevertheless lived here for more than twenty-five years, had raised their children and achieved a recognized position in the retail and wholesale distribution of fruits and vegetables in California, and displayed every intention of remaining here with their children to live out their days in peace and comfort.

The 70,000 Nisei, on the other hand, were predominantly teenagers and young adults, and in speech, dress, and manner, as well as in ideals and attitudes, were indistinguishable from other Americans of the same age. Twenty thousand of the Nisei had been to Japan at some time or other, mostly as youngsters for brief childhood visits or a little schooling. Less than 9,000, however, were Kibei who had received three or more years of education and "indoctrination" in Japan after the age of 13. While most of these passionately and totally rejected Japanese civilization, a few consciously and defiantly identified themselves with it, leading some American authorities to believe that their primary allegiance was not to America but to the emperor of Japan.

As the United States awoke to the devastating reality of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a series of measures were taken which affected these persons of Japanese ancestry. Some 1,500 "enemy aliens" who were thought to have connections with Japan were immediately rounded up and interned by the Department of Justice; their busi-

nesses were closed and their bank accounts "blocked." The remainder, both citizens and aliens, were required to register and carry identification cards and to turn over to local police all "contraband"—cameras, radios, binoculars, and firearms. They were also "frozen" to within a five-mile radius of their homes and required to be in their homes between the hours of 8 p. m. and 6 a. m.

In succeeding weeks, as Japan launched successful assaults against the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore, the American public became increasingly suspicious of persons of Japanese ancestry in the United States. Indeed, despite a traditional belief in tolerance and fair play, Americans—particularly Californians—had never regarded Japanese immigrants with special favor. Some individuals had long encouraged the view that the Japanese could not be assimilated, that they represented a racially undesirable element in American life, and that they imperiled the nation by their biological fertility.

Of particular influence in the formulation of public attitudes were the widely publicized but completely unsubstantiated rumors of sabotage and fifth-column activity in Hawaii in connection with the Pearl Harbor attack. Reports of enemy submarine activity off the coast of California added to the mounting sense of panic. Fearful of an invasion of the continent, and increasingly conscious of the dangers of resident Japanese sabotage, citizens on the West Coast demanded strong precautionary measures.

That even the most conscientious Americans were vulnerable to the growing hysteria is illustrated by a column written from San Francisco by Walter Lippmann:

. . . the Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and from without. . . It is [true] . . . that since the outbreak of the Japanese war there has been no important sabotage on the Pacific coast. From what we know about the fifth-column in Europe, this is not, as some have liked to think, a sign that there is nothing to be feared. It is a sign that the blow is well organized and that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum effect. . . I am sure I understand fully and appreciate thoroughly the unwillingness of Washington to adopt a policy of mass evacuation and interment [sic] of all those who are technically enemy aliens. But I submit that Washington is not defining the problem on the Pacific coast correctly. . . The Pacific coast is officially a combat zone: some part of it may at any moment be a battlefield. Nobody's constitutional rights include the right to reside and do business on a battlefield. And nobody ought to be on a battlefield who has no good reason for being there.¹

On the day after this column appeared seven members of Congress from the Pacific Coast states addressed a letter to President Roosevelt recommending the "immediate evacuation of all persons of Japanese lineage" and other "dangerous" persons from California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. At the same time, Lieutenant General John L.

¹ "Washington fails to cope with western fifth column," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 20, 1942.

DeWitt, commanding general of the Western Defense Command in San Francisco, wrote an urgent letter to the War Department with similar recommendations.

THE MILITARY EXCLUSION ORDER

At the height of the popular suspicion, distrust, and fear, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt acquiesced in signing the unprecedented Executive Order 9066, under which the Army was given blanket power to deal with the enemy alien problem. General DeWitt then issued Public Proclamation No. 1 designating the entire western half of California, Oregon, and Washington as a "military area," and announced that all persons of Japanese ancestry would eventually be removed from that area "as a matter of military necessity." For the supervision of the evacuation the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA) was established.

What did General DeWitt mean by military necessity? "Essentially, military necessity," his report stated, "required only that the Japanese population be removed from the coastal area and dispersed to the interior, where the danger of action in concert during any attempted enemy raids along the coast, or in advance thereof as preparation for a full scale attack, would be eliminated." He then advanced as "reasons" for this unprecedented order that West Coast Japanese constituted a "large, unassimilated, tightly-knit racial group bound to an enemy nation by strong ties of race, culture, custom, and religion;" that the group had settled "along a frontier vulnerable to attack," and "virtually always" near vital shore installations and war plants; that there was evidence of suspicious signaling between unidentified persons on the West Coast and the Japanese forces at sea; and that there existed "no ready means" for determining the loyal from the disloyal.

In the more relaxed atmosphere of the postwar years, scholars who have studied the evidence of the times have almost universally concluded the precise opposite; namely, that the Japanese immigrants and their families had shown a remarkable willingness and ability to adapt themselves to American ways of life and habits of thought; that the basic loyalty of the overwhelming majority was to America; that the construction of the vital defense installations and facilities (airfields, dams, bridges, power lines, oil fields, and railways) had come after the immigrants had settled on available farming land near West Coast cities; and that there was and has been no reliable evidence of any communication between any of these residents and the Japanese forces at sea. As for the separation of the loyal from the disloyal, no one could possibly have believed that it would have cost more to have had the FBI individually investigate them and segregate the potentially

disloyal than it cost the government to feed, clothe, house, and guard all 110,000 of them in detention camps for the duration of the war.²

A more probable explanation of General DeWitt's action is indicated by his statement that "a Jap is a Jap. . . . It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not; he is still a Japanese. . . . The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many . . . have become 'Americanized,' the racial strains are undiluted. . . . Sabotage and espionage will make problems as long as he is allowed in this area." The General was so certain that a race of such enemy blood strain must commit sabotage that he stated, "The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken."³

Americans have often been regarded as materialistic, but here is an instance in which they permitted military officers, influenced by anti-oriental pressure groups and unscrupulous competitors, to convert an industrious, productive group, with an annual agricultural and industrial production in excess of \$250 million into "wards of the government and guests of the treasury" at a time when the nation could ill afford to forego the skilled manpower they could supply.⁴

But all this is reasoning after the event. At a time when the nation was deeply absorbed with some of the gravest and most perilous problems in its history, the phrase "military necessity" was sufficient, not only to salve our consciences about action directed at a group solely on grounds of racial ancestry, but also to allay our deep-seated revulsion against the destruction of personal liberties and deprivation of constitutional rights on so broad a scale. The reaction of the ordinary citizen seems to have been that there had to be something seriously wrong with these people or the Army would not have ordered the blanket evacuation.

Paradoxically, no action was taken to evacuate or intern more than a handful of Hawaiian Japanese, although the Japanese numbered a third more than those on the mainland and comprised 37 percent of the population of that vulnerable territory. Nor was any comparable move made against citizens or aliens of German and Italian ancestry.

² It is estimated that the cost of constructing the assembly centers and ten relocation centers was approximately \$70 million, with virtually no salvage value. The estimated cost of maintaining the evacuees during the three years of detention was \$150 million. The entire direct cost of the evacuation, not counting the loss to the evacuees or the loss to the country of the productive activities in which they would otherwise have engaged, was on the order of \$350 million.

³ See the commentary in the decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth District, August 26, 1949, which declared invalid the renunciations of American citizenship by residents of the Tule Lake Segregation Center; also "Belated justice," *Christian Century*, September 28, 1949, p. 1128.

⁴ The government's authority to detain alien evacuees was unassailable, but the detention of American citizens was more complex. In the opinion of the solicitor general, this could be done "to whatever extent is reasonably necessary to the national safety in wartime." With respect to a program which singled out Japanese-Americans for detention the solicitor wrote that it was legal provided the discrimination can be shown to be related to a genuine war need and does not, under the guise of national defense, discriminate for a purpose unrelated to the national war effort.

E V A C U A T I O N

At first the evacuation was voluntary; Nisei and Kibei were instructed to move out of strategic areas on their own. Almost five thousand did move, principally to Utah and Colorado, but the growing suspicion and the general public antagonism in the interior presented many difficulties. General DeWitt and his staff made no effort to prepare the interior states for the voluntary migration which he had encouraged, or to explain why people of Japanese descent were regarded as a hazard in the coastal zone but not in the interior. As a consequence, the Nisei who responded to the General's urging ran into all kinds of trouble. Some were turned back by Arizona border guards; others were met by armed posses in Nevada; still others were held "on suspicion" by panicky local peace officers. Many were greeted by "No Japs wanted" signs or were threatened by nuclei of angry citizens.

The reaction in Utah, where more than 2,000 persons of Japanese ancestry lived, and to which another 1,500 refugees moved during this period of voluntary evacuation, was not as hysterical as that of her neighboring states; but even here the sentiment was such as to discourage settlement.⁶ Governor Herbert B. Maw, for example, publicly expressed his opposition to their settlement in the Wasatch Front area. "If the federal officials think they are dangerous on the coast," he said, "they would be here." He convened a meeting of county representatives to determine those which would welcome the evacuees and found that all but two were opposed to receiving them. Some of the conferees spoke of the danger of sabotage; others were fearful that the Japanese would get control of Utah's already limited acreage of good farm land. One outspoken commissioner minced no words in saying that his county wanted no Japanese, and intimated that the people there were considering adopting their own means of keeping them out. "If they are thrust on us we want them in concentration camps," he declared. Resolutions protesting the resettlement of Japanese in the Salt Lake area "unless properly supervised" were subsequently adopted by units of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and similar patriotic groups. Alien evacuation from the coast, the resolutions declared, "had already created a serious menace to the welfare of the people of the state of Utah."

Faced with almost universal expressions of antagonism in the interior, the vast majority of Pacific Coast Japanese-Americans simply

⁶ The largest number settled in a "Japanese town" in Salt Lake City called "Nihonmachi." One of the first groups to move to Utah was composed of 130 Nisei from the Oakland area under the leadership of produce dealer Fred Wada. They leased the 4,000-acre George A. Fisher ranch in Keetley, Wasatch County, and raised vegetables and other produce. They lived in a large two-story apartment building originally erected for miners, and more recently used by summer tourists. Intensely patriotic, they adopted the motto, "Go East, young man, and raise food for freedom," and erected "Food for Freedom" billboards along the highway. Another group of migrants to Utah worked on a cooperative basis for the Chipman Livestock Company of Nounan, Idaho.

stayed put. On March 27, 1942, voluntary evacuation was halted and the army took the unprecedented step of activating a program of compulsory evacuation.

The Japanese response to this order requiring the uprooting of over a tenth of a million people was unbelievably restrained, and there was no serious protest or resistance. While many were stunned and bewildered by the arbitrary action, the overwhelming majority followed the principle of *shikataganai* — “realistic resignation.” The Nisei, in particular, chose to regard the decision as one of the vagaries of American democracy. Realizing that their future status in the United States depended on their response in this critical hour, they resolved to prove their worth as American citizens beyond all possibility of reasonable doubt. The clearest and most influential expression of the dominant attitude was given in February 1942 by Mike Masaoka, a former Salt Laker, who was secretary of the national Japanese-American Citizens League:

If, in the judgment of military and federal authorities, evacuation of Japanese residents from the west coast is a primary step toward assuring the safety of this Nation, we will have no hesitation in complying with the necessities implicit in that judgment. But, if, on the other hand, such evacuation is primarily a measure whose surface urgency cloaks the desires of political and other pressure groups who want us to leave merely from motives of self interest, we feel we have every right to protest and to demand equitable judgment on our merits as American citizens.⁶

One of the unfortunate effects of the expulsion order was the inadequate protection of evacuee property rights. It is estimated that the families affected by the evacuation order had equities in more than \$200 million in property of various kinds. This included about 250,000 acres of lush farming land, some 20,000 automobiles, several thousand businesses, and of course homes, furniture, art works, bank accounts, and other forms of property built up at great sacrifice over a period of many years. By and large, the evacuees were expected to dispose of this property quickly and individually. Each person was permitted to take with him only what he could carry in his hands, and the government agreed to provide for the storage of property only at the risk of the owner.⁷

Before the evacuation, many were victimized by the unscrupulous. Junk and second hand dealers often followed on the heels of notifying officers, stating that the government intended to seize Japanese household belongings. Furnishings valued at hundreds of dollars were purchased for four and five dollars. Real estate men, threatening to report Japanese registrants to the FBI if they refused to sell, purchased

⁶ *National Defense Migration*. Fourth interim Report of the Select Committee . . . , 77th Congress, 2d Session, House Report 2124, Washington, 1942.

⁷ In 1948 a remorseful Congress decided that it had a moral obligation to reimburse the evacuees for some of their property losses. Within the following ten years, more than 26,000 claims were settled, totalling more than \$36 million — about one-third the value of the lost property.

homes and farms for a fraction of their true value. Ultimately, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco was assigned the responsibility of storing personal property, the Office of Alien Property Custodian managed their businesses, and the Farm Security Administration supervised the management and disposal of their farms. However, these measures did not counteract initial losses and were inadequate to prevent further losses during the period of exile. By the end of the war, the number of Japanese-owned or Japanese-leased farms had dropped from 7,000 to 2,000, and total income and property losses of all American-Japanese attributed to the evacuation is estimated at \$350 million.

THE WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Upon the issuance of the evacuation order on March 27, 1942, the military began the construction of fifteen "assembly centers" at racetracks, fairgrounds, and livestock exhibition halls near the principal settlements. Between March and June 1942, all citizens and aliens of Japanese descent were transferred to hastily-built barracks at these centers and surrounded by Caucasian military police and barbed wire fences.

Life at these centers was full of the characteristic irritations of military camp life: frequent roll calls, wholesale vaccinations, censorship of mail, lack of privacy, and long lines awaiting service in mess halls, movies, laundry, post office, and latrines. There were also special restrictions on the use of the Japanese language, and on visitors, and periodic inspection of quarters for such "contraband" as saws, safety razors, radios, liquor, cameras, Japanese phonograph records and literature (including Bibles and other religious works), and firearms. Nevertheless, the tension was relieved by such activities as the repair and landscaping of quarters, planting of victory gardens, and an extensive WCCA recreation program. There were daytime and evening classes, craft and hobby shows, carnivals and concerts, talent shows and dances.

For permanent supervision of the evacuees, President Roosevelt, in an Executive Order dated March 18, 1942, had established the civilian-controlled War Relocation Authority (WRA), with the responsibility of making arrangements to feed the residents, provide the sick with medical care, educate the children, and put the adults to work on useful projects. Anxious to be relieved of the responsibility of caring for the evacuees, the WCCA transferred the 110,000 residents of the assembly centers, during the summer and fall of 1942, to ten newly-constructed barracks cities, known as "relocation centers," in far-removed places in seven states. These were administered by WRA.

Milton Eisenhower, coordinator of land use programs in the Department of Agriculture and brother of the General, was selected to

WAR RELOCATION CENTERS FOR JAPANESE-AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II
(Listed in order of their establishment)

<u>NAME OF CENTER</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OPENING DATE</u>	<u>CLOSING DATE</u>	<u>PEAK RESIDENT POPULATION</u>
Manzanar	Manzanar, Inyo County, California	March 21, 1942	November 21, 1945	10,046
Colorado River	Poston, Yuma County, Arizona	May 8, 1942	November 28, 1945	17,814
Tule Lake	Newell, Modoc County, California	May 27, 1942	March 20, 1946	18,789
Gila River	Rivers, Pinal County, Arizona	July 20, 1942	November 10, 1945	13,348
Minidoka	Hunt, Jerome County, Idaho	August 10, 1942	October 28, 1945	9,397
Heart Mountain	Heart Mountain, Park County, Wyoming	August 12, 1942	November 10, 1945	10,767
Granada	Amache, Prowers County, Colorado	August 27, 1942	October 15, 1945	7,318
Central Utah	Topaz, Millard County, Utah	September 11, 1942	October 31, 1945	8,130
Rohwer	McGehee, Desha County, Arkansas	September 18, 1942	November 30, 1945	8,475
Jerome	Denson, Drew and Chicot Counties, Arkansas	October 6, 1942	June 30, 1944	8,497

Source: United States Department of Interior, *WRA: A story of human conservation*, Washington, D.C., 1946, p. 197 *et passim*. The War Relocation Authority also maintained, during the first four months of 1943, a temporary isolation center near Moab, Utah, and between April and October, 1943, the Leupp Isolation Center, Winslow, Arizona. From March 1944 to 1946 it also operated the emergency shelter for 1,000 European war refugees at Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York.

be the first director of WRA. Dr. Eisenhower soon moved on to another assignment and was succeeded, on June 17, 1942, by Dillon S. Myer, assistant administrator of the Agricultural Conservation and Adjustment Administration, who remained in charge of the program from that time until its conclusion. Nearly all of the central and field staff of WRA came from the Department of Agriculture.

The ten barracks camps to which Japanese-Americans were taken by the WCCA were widely scattered. Two were chosen by military authorities in February and March 1942, and turned over to WRA in June. One of these, Manzanar, was located in the Owens Valley of east-central California on land controlled by the City of Los Angeles as protection for its municipal water supply. The other, Colorado River, was on 72,000 acres of unused Indian reservation lands in the extreme western part of Arizona.

Of the remaining eight chosen by WRA, three were on undeveloped portions of federal reclamation projects: Tule Lake in the Klamath Falls basin of extreme northern California, Minidoka in the Gooding Reclamation Project of south-central Idaho, and Heart Mountain in the reclamation project of the same name in northwestern Wyoming. Two (Rohwer and Jerome) were located on lands controlled by the Farm Security Administration and purchased originally for the rehabilitation of low-income farm families; one (Gila River) was on sagebrush Indian reservation lands; the Granada center in southeastern Colorado was on privately-owned land purchased for WRA by the Army; and the Central Utah center consisted of a mixture of public domain land, a number of tracts which had reverted to the county during the 'thirties for nonpayment of taxes, and several privately-owned parcels, including some which had been acquired by a New York syndicate during the Depression for failure to pay interest.⁸

In the selection of sites, four considerations were paramount:

1. WRA, interested in a large-scale work program, wanted sites which offered possibilities for extensive agricultural development or for year-round employment opportunities of other types.

2. The Army, concerned with national security and deeply distrustful of the evacuated people, insisted that all sites be located on "wide open" terrain from which escape would be difficult, and "at a safe distance" from strategic installations. The Army also required that all centers be planned for an evacuee population of at least 5,000, so as to minimize the manpower required to guard them.

3. For fiscal reasons, it was desirable to locate the centers on lands which were in federal ownership, or available for federal purchase, so that improvements made at federal expense would not be used to increase the value of private property.

⁸ There were 19,800 acres in the Utah project, of which 1,400 acres were public domain, 8,840 were owned by Millard County, and 9,560 acres were owned privately. The government paid \$1.00 per acre for the Millard County land. Although the site of the Central Utah camp was not chosen until the latter part of June 1942, a report in the *Salt Lake Tribune* indicates that agents of the War and Justice Departments investigated possible locations as early as February 6, 1942, well before the exclusion order was issued.

4. The centers had to be located within a reasonable distance of a railhead, with access to a dependable and economical supply of water and electric power.

All of the sites were chosen after appropriate negotiations with state and local officials and acquired by the United States Corps of Engineers for WRA.

TOPAZ: "JEWEL OF THE DESERT"

The Central Utah Relocation Center was located in the vicinity of Abraham, Millard County, on a bed of the ancient Lake Bonneville — a lake formed in Pleistocene times and connected with Great Salt Lake. On the older maps it was called "Sevier Desert," but the Paiutes, who had inhabited it for many centuries, called it "Pahvant," meaning "abundance of water." Apparently, before the "white" men diverted the water of the Sevier River for irrigation, there was plenty of water in the stream and many lakes spread over the big greasewood flat.

The first "white" persons to visit the bleak and windy plain, Fathers Dominguez and Escalante in 1776, called the area "Valle Solado," or Valley of Salt. This was an apt designation, for even today the Great Pahvant Valley is often referred to as the "Big Alkali Flat." During the intensive search for settlement sites after the Utah War of 1857-1858, a "company" of Mormon pioneers constructed a canal and settled part of the valley, but later abandoned it. Another group returned in the 1870's and 1880's, and even formed a corporation to settle the area later selected for the relocation site. But repeated irrigation "turned the soil to alkali," cost-price relationships became unfavorable, and most of the area was once again abandoned to its natural cover of greasewood and saltgrass. The surrounding area was so desolate in aspect that many visitors remarked that the site must have been chosen to prevent the inhabitants from maintaining contact with the outer world.

The name given to Utah's remote new barbed-wire city came from Topaz Mountain, nine miles northwest of the center. The desert town was sixteen miles northwest of the Union Pacific railhead town of Delta (population 1,500), and about 140 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. Surrounded on all four sides by mountains, the barren valley in which it was located is 4,600 feet above sea level. The climate ranges from a boiling 106 degrees in summer to a frigid 30 degrees below zero in winter. The rainfall averages between 7 and 8 inches per year. One characteristic of the area is the wind, which keeps up a seldom interrupted whirl of dust. Another is the nonabsorbent soil which, after a rain, is a gummy muck, ideal as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Constructed between July 1942 and January 1943 by a California firm (Daley Brothers) under a contract let by the Salt Lake District of the Mountain Division of the United States Corps of Engineers, the center cost \$3,929,000. More than 800 men labored on the project building row after row of low, black barracks of frame and tar paper construction. An estimated \$1 million was subsequently spent by WRA for additional structures.

While the entire project covered 19,800 acres, the "city" — designed to house 9,000 persons — was a mile square, and was divided into areas for evacuee residents, administrative personnel, and military police. The evacuee area consisted of forty-two checkerboard blocks, of which thirty-four were living quarters or residential blocks. Each block was uniformly constructed to house and service 250 to 300 persons, and had twelve single-story resident barracks buildings, a central mess or dining hall, a recreation hall, a combination washroom-toilet-laundry building, outdoor clotheslines, and an office for the block manager. Each barrack was divided into six single rooms, ranging from 16 by 20 feet to 20 by 25 feet in size. Each room was "home for the duration" for a family with several children or for four or five unrelated individuals. During the early weeks when the housing was still uncompleted the rooms often held two families or up to eight bachelors. To many Japanese, the most objectionable aspect of the entire arrangement was the denial of individual and family privacy.

From Army stores WRA furnished pot-bellied stoves, cots, sacks or mattress covers, and blankets, but there was seldom enough bedding. The evacuees were required to make their own partitions, chairs, benches, tables, shelves, closets, storage chests, and other furniture. This was done by "borrowing" the 400,000 board feet of scrap lumber left over from the construction. Additional wood was obtained from scrap lumber of the newly-constructed Remington Arms plant in Salt Lake City. There were no washing, bathing, or toilet facilities in the barracks; a central building in each block had to be used for these purposes. Even so, there were only four bathtubs for all the women on each block, and the same number of showers for the men; and even these were lacking for several weeks. All meals were taken in the central dining hall.

In the center of the residential area were a community auditorium, gymnasium, canteens, schools, libraries, churches, post office, and fire station. A number of athletic fields were south of the city, and there was also a fifteen-acre community garden plot. An evacuee cemetery was located southeast of the city but was never used; all of the 144 persons who died at Topaz during the three-year period were sent to Salt Lake City and their ashes held for burial until the return to the San Francisco Bay region after the war.

The administrative area consisted of eight blocks of one-story office buildings, barracks apartments, dormitories with modern conveniences, and a recreation center. In this area was also located a hospital, and a number of maintenance and construction sheds. Approximately 200 Caucasians supervised and staffed the various administrative divisions, half of them from nearby towns. The total cost of operating the center was approximately \$5 million per year, of which \$1.75 million was for personal services, \$2.5 million for supplies and materials, and \$1 million for additional construction, utilities, and clothing grants.

In one corner of the square, behind a barbed-wire fence, was a twenty-acre area with the barracks and headquarters of the Military Police, about a hundred of whom arrived just ahead of the first detachment of evacuees. During most of the history of the center there were from three to five officers and from 85 to 150 men. Guard houses were built at each entrance to the city, and the military police checked the papers and credentials of every person going and coming. Both the city and the entire project area were surrounded by tall, strong barbed-wire fences, with watchtower guard houses equipped with searchlights every quarter of a mile manned by patrols of armed guards.

All told, there were 623 buildings, all of uniformly somber aspect except the hospital and administrative buildings, which were painted white. Water for the project came from three deep-drilled wells at the east side of the area which were capable of supplying 1,300,000 gallons daily. The water was stored in four elevated redwood water tanks — said to constitute the largest wooden water tank in the world — with a total capacity of 500,000 gallons. All reports indicate that the water was almost undrinkable.

All of the housing and administrative areas, civic center, and athletic fields were completed and landscaped by the summer of 1943; i. e., nine months after the residents had arrived. From the Forestry Department of Utah State Agricultural College 75 large trees and 7,500 small trees, principally Siberian elms, Utah juniper, Russian olives, and black locusts, were obtained to beautify the center. There were also 10,000 cuttings of tamarisk shrubs, willows, and wild currants. Nearly all the trees and shrubbery died; the alkaline soil, heat, and wind foiled efforts to get grass and flowers to grow.

At the time of occupancy Topaz was only two-thirds completed. There were drafty buildings, crowded barracks, and open trenches, and many suffered until the housing and hospital construction crews could finish their work. In the first months of blowing dust and rain, when the houses had neither ceilings nor inside walls, the people had to sleep and work with faces covered by towels. Several hundred volunteer evacuees assisted in the weather proofing of the buildings. Much of the work was held up by shortages of tools and equipment.

ARRIVAL OF EVACUEES

The first contingent of evacuees arrived in Topaz on September 11, 1942, and consisted of 214 Nisei volunteer workers. They were immediately assigned to the hospital, kitchen, and transportation crews to prepare for the main influx the following week. The first train load of "regular" evacuees, with 502 aboard, arrived September 16, in a suffocating cloud of dust which hovered over the camp all day. Thereafter, trainloads of 500 or more arrived almost daily until October 15, when the last group arrived. Each busload of new arrivals was greeted by an improvised drum and bugle corps.

All told, 8,255 persons were transferred from WCCA custody to the Central Utah camp in the fall of 1942. These included 7,673 from the Tanforan Assembly Center, San Bruno, California, and 577 from the Santa Anita Center in southern California. With a handful of exceptions, all of the Topaz exiles were from areas fronting on the San Francisco Bay. Sixty-five percent of the population had been born in the United States, which is a higher proportion than in many Utah cities during the nineteenth century. For three years these imported residents comprised the fifth most populous city in Utah.

The director of the Topaz center was Charles F. Ernst, a native of Boston and graduate of Harvard, who had been director of Washington State's program of unemployment relief from 1933 to 1941. He was assistant to the vice chairman of the American Red Cross in San Francisco immediately before the Topaz assignment. He resigned the Topaz appointment in June 1944 to go with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and was replaced by Luther T. Hoffman, assistant chief of the WRA relocation division in Washington, who served until the closing of the camp in October 1945. Many Utahans who have since attained prominence — too many to name here — were among those assisting in the administration.

Among the evacuee residents were many interesting and distinguished people. They included Frank Takeuchi, one of the world's great Judo artists and a major attraction in vaudeville; Kantaishi Nishimura, colorful leader of Utah mining unions during World War I; Nick Iyoya, gentleman bartender and darling of the Bay Region elite, who had mixed drinks and exchanged conversation with greats of five continents; Joseph Ito, carnival man and leading concessionaire of the Barnum and Bailey circus; Toshio Asaeda, photographer, ichthyologist, ornithologist, botanist, and adventurer, who had spent a lifetime sketching and photographing the flora and fauna of the South Seas; Yonezo Kamishita, whose exciting career with the United States Navy and Coast Guard had been the subject of several articles in the Sunday supplements; and Chiura Obata, professor of art at the University of California, whose landscapes had delighted a whole generation

of art lovers. There was the gardener who laid out the grounds of the Hollywood homes of Shirley Temple and Charles Boyer, and owner of the Golden Gate Tea Gardens, the chief surgeon of the Los Angeles County Hospital, and the director of a Protestant missionary crusade.

Most difficult to forget, perhaps, was Mine' Okubo. At the outbreak of the war in Europe she had won the University of California's highest art honor — a travelling scholarship to Europe. She had hiked and bicycled through a dozen nations before advancing German panzers isolated her in Hungary. Escaping to Switzerland, she worked on a farm until she could borrow enough money to return to the United States, and reached California in time to assist Diego Rivera with murals for the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. Her first one-man show was held at the San Francisco Museum of Art just before the evacuation. In Topaz she was staff illustrator for the little homespun magazine, *Trek*, and made more than a thousand black-and-white drawings of life in Topaz from which she chose the illustrations for her engaging personal documentary, *Citizen 13660*.

The activities of the Topazans during the first few weeks were much like those of the Mormon pioneers who preceded them. The first evening after the advance group and director arrived, there was a mass meeting of residents and administrative personnel in the community hall. In giving the invocation, the Reverend Taro Goto dedicated the center "to the glory of almighty God and to the uplifting of His Kingdom." Thereafter, meetings were held once or twice a day to arrange work schedules and work out solutions to the many problems. Artists, small businessmen, majordomos, schoolboys, and gardeners were all engaged in digging ditches, clearing the land of grease-wood, constructing sheds, planting shrubs, and making furniture for the schools. There were optimism, resourcefulness, good organization, and ambitious plans for the future. "We will survive," said Professor Obata, "if we forget the sands at our feet and look to the mountains for inspiration." Within a week Topaz had established a cooperative general store, a mimeographed newspaper, and reported its first birth, death, appendectomy, dance, religious service, and election. It is clear from all the records that the evacuees, as with early Mormon colonizers, were determined to build a city in this lonely desert region that America would be proud of.

CONFINEMENT VS. RESETTLEMENT

What was perhaps the most important single decision made by WRA during the war was reached even before the Topaz center was established. It concerned the degree to which the evacuees would be permitted freedom of movement outside the camps. On the one hand, WRA was understandably reluctant to keep them all confined and un-

der heavy guard; on the other hand, public opinion and the military would not permit it to open the gates without strict supervision and control of the evacuees in its charge.

The latter point of view was underscored by the governing officials of the Western States at an exploratory conference held by WRA on April 7, 1942, in Salt Lake City. The WRA director expressed to the conference his deep concern about the civil liberties of the evacuees and the problem of making effective use of the manpower they represented, and then outlined WRA's plans for the establishment of hundreds of small work camps over the country, with evacuee participation in local and national programs of public works and agricultural and industrial production. The vast majority of state officials, however, insisted on rigorous confinement in some kind of concentration camp, with workers farmed out, if at all, under armed guards. Control over evacuees, they felt, should be on the same basis as that of Japanese citizens and aliens still remaining on the Coast. Almost unanimously, they demanded complete assurance that the internees would be removed from their states at the end of the war.⁹

In the meantime, however, other pressures were forcing a reappraisal. There was considerable support for a program which would allow Nisei students at coastal universities to transfer to inland colleges without interruption of their schooling; and, with foreign sources of sugar cut off and a shortage of rural manpower at home, sugar beet companies pressed for the use of the highly-skilled Japanese labor. Remembering the unhappy experience of some of the voluntary evacuees, WCCA and WRA bravely softened the absolute prohibition of movement from the assembly centers by permitting the relocation of a limited number of students and by granting permission to sugar companies to recruit evacuee labor.

About 75 Nisei students were transferred in the spring of 1942 from California universities to universities in the interior. Even this was not simple to arrange; many colleges and universities were unwilling to accept Nisei evacuees who wanted to enroll. A minute from the meeting of the Board of Trustees in March 1942 indicates that Utah State Agricultural College was one of those that turned down such applications. With one of the largest training centers in Western America, giving elementary and advanced classes in radio technology to a

⁹ In March 1943 the Utah Legislature passed by overwhelming majority a bill barring aliens ineligible for United States citizenship (e.g., Japanese) from purchasing or leasing real property in the state. Designed to prevent Topaz evacuees from competing for Utah farm lands and becoming permanent residents, the bill was vetoed by Governor Maw on the grounds that it would prevent such other aliens as Chinese and Filipinos from acquiring land in the state, and would also deprive Utah farmers of the help of the alien evacuees at Topaz. The pressure to veto the bill, it was said, came from representatives of sugar companies, canning factories, poultry producers, and other processors in the state who had learned that national authorities would refuse to allow alien Japanese to work outside the center if the Act became law. Later in the same month a milder law was passed and signed which prohibited Japanese from owning or making long-term leases of lands in Utah, but specifically permitted farmers to employ them for a cash fee or share of the crop, or to lease land to them for a period of one year. The Act was repealed in 1947 without a dissenting vote.

large number of naval trainees, officials felt there was no place for the Nisei. Moreover, "if anything should happen to any of the college buildings or the large amount of equipment used in the war training," said President Elmer G. Peterson, "it would be easy to blame the Japanese."¹⁰ In the late stages of the war, however, both Utah State Agricultural College and the University of Utah accepted Nisei students.

About 10,000 evacuees left the assembly and relocation centers in 1942 to do seasonal agricultural work, principally in Utah, Idaho, and Colorado. Employers were required to pay prevailing wages, provide adequate living quarters at no expense to the evacuee, provide transportation from the center to the place of employment and back, and give assurance that employment of the evacuees would not result in displacement of local labor. State and local officials were required to give evidence that law and order would be maintained. The recruited workers were forbidden to leave the designated area without specific permission from WRA. Many of them had occasional unpleasant experiences because of the widespread public misapprehensions about their status, but none reported suffering physical harm. It was estimated that they saved enough beets to make nearly 300 million pounds of sugar.

The smooth and successful movement into the beet fields, the obvious waste of manpower in the centers, and the danger in having thousands of American youngsters grow up in an environment that was a fundamental negation of American democracy, led WRA to announce, even before the majority of the evacuees had been moved into the WRA centers, that one of the major policies of WRA would be relocation outside the centers.¹¹ The program of "outside" employment applied to Issei and Nisei alike, and included short-term leave, seasonal agricultural leave, student relocation, and "indefinite furlough" for normal residence in any community outside the exclusion zone.

Since Utah was one of the agricultural states with a labor shortage, it is not surprising to find that state officials and farmers made particularly fervent appeals for evacuee workmen. At the time when the Utah center was opened, Governor Maw proposed that all able-bodied evacuees be conscripted into the army and assigned to farm work at military salaries. WRA would not accede to this, of course, but in late September 1942 it did permit the Amalgamated, Utah-Idaho, and Franklin

¹⁰ Utah State Agricultural College was one of thirteen colleges in the Western United States — and the only one in Utah — which was classified by the Defense Department as "important to the war effort." In August 1944 the Board of Trustees passed a motion to the effect that Japanese students would be accepted for the coming year, but because of the full program for Army and Navy men, and perhaps for other reasons, few were admitted. On one occasion, Governor Maw also advised the University of Utah not to admit Japanese students.

¹¹ The essential abnormality of life in the evacuee community, and the anomaly of a large segment of America's population being kept in forced confinement in the midst of a war dedicated to the preservation of democratic principles, is perhaps best illustrated in the Topaz story of a small boy who said to his parents: "I don't like it here. When are we going back to America?" Taro Katayama, "Beyond the gate," *Trek*, February 1943, p. 2.

County sugar companies to recruit some 230 laborers for work in northern Utah and southern Idaho. Approximately 300 others were employed during the same fall in apple, carrot, and potato picking, in turkey feather plucking, and in other work of like character. Some 130 Topaz residents were engaged to do construction work and domestic and industrial labor, and a few were called to teach in the Army Language School at Boulder, Colorado.

After the return of the seasonal workers in January 1943, a questionnaire was circulated among them asking what kind of a reception they found in the communities and on the farms in Utah and southern Idaho. Approximately 85 percent indicated they had a "good" — as compared with 12 percent "fair" and 3 percent "poor" — reception. Since Topazans were preponderantly urban and industrial in origin and background, their chief complaint was that there were not more diversified economic opportunities.

REGISTRATION AND SEGREGATION

Within the Utah center the vast majority of evacuees were either younger Nisei enthusiastically building a model city or older Issei exhibiting the patient stoicism and silent resignation characteristic of their philosophy. A few of both groups were persistent and chronic troublemakers. Where these could be spotted they were picked up by the internal security police and sent to an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps camp near Moab, Utah, which was set up in January 1943 as a temporary "isolation center" for all the camps. A more permanent detention center was later established at an unoccupied Indian boarding school near Leupp, Arizona, and the malcontents were transferred from Moab to Leupp in late April 1943. Topaz sent eleven incorrigibles, principally Kibei, to Leupp in July 1943, all of whom had testified and signed statements that they were not only disloyal to the United States, but would also commit sabotage if opportunity presented. Small contingents of "agitators" were sent to the Leupp center until late in 1943, when it was closed and its remaining inmates moved to the Tule Lake Segregation Center.

Perhaps the gravest emotional test for the residents of Topaz was the Army's loyalty registration and recruitment program of February 1943. All evacuees over the age of 17 were asked to register and respond to a series of questions. The key question — the so-called loyalty question — was as follows:

Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

Since this country had denied them citizenship, the Issei felt that by forswearing allegiance to Japan they would become people without

a country — without a protecting power. Even the Nisei, resenting the implication that their loyalty was in doubt, felt that the question was unfair, and in Topaz almost a fifth of all male registrants answered in the negative. Agreeing that there was justice in the complaint against the wording, WRA induced the Army to change it to:

Will you swear to abide by the laws of the United States and to take no action which would in any way interfere with the war effort of the United States?

This change was too late to affect the unfavorable impression which the original wording had produced, however, and many refused to answer. There were intense feelings on the issue and emotions were stirred to unprecedented levels. Several pro-administration leaders were assaulted or received threatening letters, and jars of odorous material were thrown through the apartment windows of eight families.

Both Nisei and Kibei were also concerned with Question 27: "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?" The Nisei responded at first with a resolution to the Secretary of War suggesting that they would be glad to volunteer for Army service if their civil rights were restored. The War Department's reply to this manifestly reasonable request was as follows:

It is only by mutual confidence and cooperation that the loyal Japanese-Americans can be restored to their civil rights. The present program is not complete rehabilitation but is the first step in that direction. The United States government has evidenced its faith in the loyal Japanese-Americans by giving them the opportunity to serve their country. This is their opportunity to demonstrate to the American people that they have faith in America.

When the objectives of the program became clearly understood, the strong resistance to registration collapsed. Some 5,364 Topaz registrants gave a direct or qualified "yes" answer to the loyalty question, and there were 790 direct or qualified "no" answers. About one-third of the "no" votes were later reversed. However, in consequence of the turbulent registration episode there was a suprisingly large number of repatriation and expatriation requests. Soon after the registration these totaled 447, of which 201 were from draft-age male citizens (159 Kibei and 42 Nisei) and only 84 from aliens. By September, when the segregation program was nearly complete, such requests had nearly doubled. Only 36 of these actually left Topaz to board an exchange ship for Japan.

Just before the mass registration, the War Department had announced that evacuee volunteers from all the centers would be accepted for a Japanese-American combat team.¹² Although many

¹² Fully 5,000 Nisei were in uniform at the time, having been drafted prior to Pearl Harbor. After that, Selective Service refused to accept them.

Nisei regarded the War Department's action as an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the land of their birth, the registration tended to crystallize the opposition to volunteering. The Topazans who opposed it emphasized the anomaly of asking for volunteers from a group the Army had confined in a relocation center, the injustice of a segregated unit of Japanese-Americans, and the uncertainty of the future of the dependents of the volunteers. Once again, volunteers and their families were threatened.

By March 3 only 58 Nisei had volunteered, and the disappointed Army team turned the recruiting over to the project administration. The Topaz evacuees then set up a Volunteers for Victory organization and adopted a patriotic creed that received favorable recognition nationally:

We believe in democracy and dedicate ourselves to the furtherance of its principles. To uphold these principles, we must destroy every form of tyranny, oppression, and violation of human rights. We place our faith in America and base our hope in the future on that faith. Therefore, we believe that our volunteering in the armed forces of this country is a step towards the realization of these ends, and a positive manifestation of our loyalty to the United States of America.

A public campaign was staged, rallies were held, and booklets distributed. The Community Council was induced to cooperate to the extent of urging young men to be aware of their war duty. The result of the campaign was that opposition to Army service became negligible and there were 112 volunteers — 7 percent of those eligible — of whom 80 passed the physical examinations and other tests and were accepted for service. All of these received regular soldier pay and their wives and children received full dependency pay.¹³

One event that occurred during the Topaz registration campaign served to weaken the evacuee faith in WRA. In October 1942 the Western Defense Command had decreed that no noncitizen Japanese were to be allowed within a distance of one mile of the outside boundaries of the center. An inevitable result of this ruling was the fatal shooting, on April 11, 1943, of an elderly Issei resident (James Hatsuki Wakasa) by an MP sentry, who gave as explanation that Mr. Wakasa was attempting to cross the inner boundary fence and failed to obey the challenge to halt. There was a general clamor for protection against soldiers with guns, a moving memorial service was held for the victim, and there were work stoppages that lasted for two weeks until the administration promised that no incident of this kind would reoccur.¹⁴ All of the guards but one were later removed to the outer fence. Nevertheless, the morale of the camp suffered for

¹³ There were at various times recruiters for the WAC in Topaz and 116 WACs of Japanese ancestry served during the war, but it seems doubtful that any of these were from Topaz.

¹⁴ The sentry was arrested and underwent a court-martial trial at Fort Douglas, which held that his action was completely justified under the orders he had received.

more than a year as the result of this unfortunate episode. There was a "blow-up" at the hospital, a strike in the garage repair shop, a plumbing crew sit-down, complaints about the quality of food, and other incidents of a like character which reflected the widespread lack of trust in the camp administration.

The principal consequence of the mass registration was the segregation of the "loyals" from the "disloyals." The project director had recommended that the actively discordant and openly pro-Fascist elements in the camp be separated from the others. (Indeed, he had gone even farther and recommended that the older Issei be separated from the younger Nisei, but this further step was not permitted by WRA.) Tule Lake, which had the largest proportion of the potential segregants already in residence, was chosen as the segregation center, and 1,447 residents of Topaz were moved there in September and October 1943. In exchange, 1,489 residents of Tule Lake who had declared their loyalty to the United States were moved to Topaz. Of the Topazans transferred to Tule Lake, 859 had asked for repatriation or expatriation, 259 had answered "no" to the loyalty question, 325 were voluntarily accompanying relatives, and 4 were unspecified. Some 385 of the Topaz segregants were Japanese aliens and 1,062 were American citizens.¹⁵

EVACUEE EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION

Milton Eisenhower's emphasis on providing suitable work projects was based on the pressing need for skilled manpower, the need to keep the evacuees busy and maintain their connections with the American scene, and the need for the Japanese to prove, by constructive deeds, that they were loyal Americans.

The inducements which WRA could provide for its work projects, however, were sharply limited by political pressures and public opinion. Indeed, the national director was compelled to assure Congress that the maximum rate of pay for evacuees working on public projects would not under any circumstances exceed the minimum rate of pay of the American private fighting his country's battles overseas. At the time of the evacuation this was \$21 a month. When Congress raised the soldier's minimum pay from \$21 to \$50, WRA did not see fit to increase its own pay scale, for it had by this time determined to make relocation its most important objective and was inclined to reject any change which might keep the residents tied to the centers.

After considering a plan for the inauguration of profit-making enterprises at the centers, WRA found it ultimately necessary to

¹⁵ Many of the Topaz renunciants who expressed a desire to go voluntarily to Japan were ultimately sent on exchange ships.

institute a program of straight compensation for work actually performed under WRA direction. Unskilled labor and persons taking vocational training were paid \$12 a month; skilled labor and the more responsible clerical and community service jobs, \$16 a month; and highly-skilled, highly-responsible, and professional employees, \$19 a month. Food, shelter, medical care, and education were furnished without charge to all evacuees except those who were temporarily employed outside the centers.

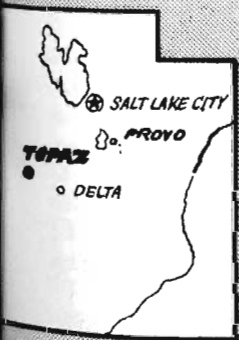
The policy also provided for cash allowances at rates varying from \$2.25 for children to \$3.75 a month for persons over 16 to cover costs of clothing for each employed evacuee and each of his dependents. WRA also was able to obtain G.I. clothes left over from World War I to distribute to the workmen. Monthly unemployment compensation payments of \$3.25 for each adult, \$2.75 for a wife, and \$1.50 for a child were made to each employable evacuee (and dependents) who was out of work through no fault of his own.¹⁶ Evacuees working for prevailing wages in seasonal and short-term employment outside the centers received only the standard center rates and the balance paid by the employer was deposited in a trust fund to be administered for the benefit of the whole community.

Within a week after the arrival of the 8,000 residents at Topaz, 2,827 persons (2,199 men, 628 women) were on the payroll under these stipulations. The breakdown in employment was as follows:

Dining hall operations	1,023	Transportation and supplies	132
Maintenance and construction	634	Community services and activities	113
Project administration	284	Agriculture	106
Employment placement & housing	166	Fire department	50
Health and sanitation	146	Education	41
Police department	132		

Of the total, 2,586, or 91 percent, were in the \$16 group, and 241, or 9 percent, in the \$19 class. The latter included doctors, engineers, dentists, certified teachers, qualified social workers, fire captains, and editors. At the peak, in June 1943, some 3,300 persons were employed in the Topaz center — about 75 percent of the able-bodied residents of working age. All the labor was voluntary, and a 44-hour work week was followed. This was at a time when the Caucasian carpenters working on the construction of the project, and other American citizens serving in the camp administration or outside in equivalent positions in civilian jobs, were being paid from \$150 to \$250 per month. It is surprising that there was not more envy and resentment at the grossly discriminatory treatment.

¹⁶ The provisions for unemployment compensation carried the implication that WRA was obligated to provide jobs for all able-bodied adult evacuee residents who expressed a desire to work. Unquestionably, for several months there was overstaffing, the creation of hoodlum positions, and encouragement of slack working habits. In the late spring of 1943, when work opportunities for evacuees were developing in most sections of the country and the resettlement program began moving into high gear, WRA eliminated unemployment compensation (except for evacuees who had actually been assigned to jobs and were unable to report for work because of illness), and tightened up on its employment procedures.



SKETCHES
OF CAMP
LIFE - BY
MINE
OKUBO,
FROM
TREK

The Topaz administrator reported that most of the workers took intense personal pride in their accomplishments and worked hard regardless of monetary rewards. Nevertheless, despite the Japanese reputation for energy and efficiency, these were not always carried over into the economically-constricted environment of the center. One factor, of course, was the conflict in objectives. On the one hand, WRA strove for the greatest possible economy, efficiency, and community service; on the other hand, it encouraged the most energetic, most skillful, and best adjusted evacuees to leave the centers and resettle in ordinary American communities. At Topaz, such conflicts were almost invariably resolved in favor of relocation.

COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT

WRA intended from the beginning that evacuees should play an active and influential part in shaping community life in the various centers. Some form of democratic self-government was essential, not only as a matter of human decency, but as the most practical way of insuring cooperation and mutual understanding between administrators and administered. Above all, WRA was determined that life within the centers should be as far from the concentration camp pattern as possible. For most of the residents it was not only the first all-Japanese city in which they had lived, but also the first experience for them in running, even in a limited way, their own city and government.

The basic unit for political action in Topaz was the residential block, whose 250 to 300 people had more or less common interests, close associations, and a feeling of unity. In charge of each block was a salaried manager (\$16 a month) appointed by the administration. His functions were to listen to complaints and see that the everyday physical needs of the residents were met as fully and promptly as possible; to supervise the general maintenance of the block's grounds and structures; and to bring to the attention of the residents the official announcements and regulations issued by the administration. Most of the block managers were Issei.

The central governing body was the Community Council consisting of one elected representative from each residential block. The councilmen were not paid, but each was given a full-time paid executive secretary. The term of office was six months. Within the framework of WRA regulations and a locally-drafted constitution, the Community Council determined over-all policies and procedures, and adopted and enforced ordinances and regulations in the interest of community welfare and security. The Topaz Council, for example, dealt with labor relations, the hospital, food supplies, leave clearance, segregation movements, enlistment in the Army, resettlement planning, community ceremonies, and center liquidation.

The voting privilege was given to all residents 18 and over, and the holding of elective office was restricted to those who were American citizens over 21. The latter provision was incorporated because of the feeling that the citizenship of the Nisei was valueless unless it gave them this recognition, and also because the decisions taken by the Nisei would almost certainly be more in keeping with American institutions and practices. However, the Issei were eligible for appointive positions. Early in 1943, when many of the capable and reliable Nisei leaders began to leave the centers for relocation, the policy on community government was broadened to permit Issei membership on the Council. This change lessened the cleavage between the Issei and the Nisei and introduced a leaven of maturity and seasoned judgment into the Council. It also tended to place responsibility in the hands of many who were critical of the basic resettlement aims of WRA and less sensitive to the exacting demands of American public opinion.

Despite the fact that the evacuee people were living in a highly abnormal, highly-charged atmosphere, there was less crime than in ordinary American communities of the same size.¹⁷ According to one survey made in 1944, the law was broken three times as frequently in ordinary cities as in relocation centers. In the Utah center, for example, the worst crimes in three years of existence, with an average of almost 8,000 people, were 2 cases of aggravated assault, 2 of grand larceny, and 1 of destroying government property. There were no murders or rapes, only 6 cases of drunkenness, 10 of gambling, a number of cases of burglary and minor theft, and 272 parking violations.¹⁸

A G R I C U L T U R E

It was the original objective of WRA that each center be as nearly self-sufficient as possible, that a surplus of certain products be produced to supply other centers where the production of such items was insufficient, and that, where possible, additional supplies of food be produced for the Food-for-Freedom program. This goal of self-sufficiency was steadily revised downward as the emphasis of WRA's program shifted from detention to relocation.

¹⁷ Utah's Justice James H. Wolfe, of the State Supreme Court, on the occasion of inducting newly-elected councilmen at Topaz, remarked: "It is almost unbelievable that a whole people could be uprooted from their homes, from their businesses, suffer interruption to their family life, come to an entirely strange place, in a place of isolation and many discomforts, and yet for a period of over two years have no serious outbreak of disorder. It speaks well for your restraint, your patience, your courage, your citizenship. You have kept alive democratic principles among yourselves." *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 14, 1945.

¹⁸ The chief of the internal security section did report one interesting difficulty: It took a long time to get police patrol cars repaired quickly in the motor pool. Apparently, mechanics reasoned that if the patrol car was in the motor pool, other cars and drivers were safe from traffic tickets. Reports indicate several instances in which cars were taken to the motor pool with minor repairs and held on one excuse or other for several weeks or months.

For purposes of agricultural production at Topaz the government had purchased 20,000 shares of water in the Abraham, Delta, and Deseret Canal companies, and thirteen farmsteads, comprising 18,840 acres. Only 20 percent of the land was cultivated — mostly in alfalfa; the remainder was about half rangeland and half non-cropland. About 35 percent of the land had once been cultivated but had since been abandoned. The evacuees were able to bring an additional 5,000 acres into production, including 1,020 acres which previously had been classified as non-cropland. The government also provided initial starts of 1,700 poults, 13,000 baby chicks, 200 brood sows and over 2,000 other swine, and 1,800 head of beef.

Despite the urban background of the residents — there were less than 250 farmers in the entire camp — the evacuees were able to produce more than \$500,000 worth of agricultural products.¹⁹ These included:

	<i>Contemporary value</i>
1,400,000 pounds of vegetables	\$ 33,000
3,000,000 pounds of field crops — alfalfa and grain	165,000
1,200 turkeys	6,500
83,000 dozen eggs	35,000
9,200 chickens	9,500
3,000 hogs	97,000
1,800 head of live beef	165,000
Total	\$511,000

This production provided most of their vegetables, beef, and pork, about 75 percent of their eggs, and nearly all the feed needed for their livestock. Topaz also supplied 288 head of beef to the Minidoka Relocation Center. The agricultural supervisor had originally hoped to grow sugar beets but this plan was abandoned because most of the workers were needed outside the centers at harvest time. Many families planted victory gardens, and organized bucket brigades to take water from the laundries to the land, but these did not flourish, nor was the production of fruit practical. No agricultural program was planned for 1945 because of the imminent closing of the center; the land and water were cash-leased to eleven local farmers. All told, local production provided about 10 percent of the value of all food consumed in the center.

The first and most important activity of the agricultural workers was to build fences, canals and ditches, corrals, swine sheds, and poultry houses. Throughout the life of the project it is estimated that more than half of the time of agricultural workers was devoted to such construction work. Much additional time was required in making and repairing agricultural equipment. Not until the close of

¹⁹ WRA policies prohibited the establishment of dairies at the centers. Reasons for this were the lack of experience on the part of the evacuees, the indefinite period of center occupation, and the difficulty of complying with state and local sanitary regulations.

1944 could the agricultural supervisor say that the farm was relatively well-equipped and the enterprises well-organized, but then it was near time to close the camp.

As the Mormon pioneers had found out before them, the climate proved to be particularly hazardous. In 1943 a frost on June 4 killed many of the newly-planted vegetables. The next year, the last spring frost was May 4, but the first killing frost in the fall was September 16, and this destroyed many of the tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers, cantaloupes, and squash. The cool evening breezes of the summer were pleasant for the residents but kept plants from growing rapidly, and often the wind blew hard with damage to some of the crops. Meanwhile, the flaming skies of summer baked the soil, and a good stand of carrots was virtually impossible. In the spring of 1944, it stormed 59 days between January and June, delaying much of the field work. Irrigation also proved to be a problem. The quality of the soil was such that, either the farmers irrigated too much and had poor drainage, or irrigated too little with insufficient moisture for growth.²⁰ Nevertheless, their vegetables won many prizes at the Millard County Fair, and at the annual harvest festival in September 1944, representatives of the Utah State Agricultural College "expressed amazement at the food produced on the project's submarginal land."

Other problems were related to the location of the farming lands. The residential area was three miles from the poultry houses, five miles from the swine ranch and vegetable lands, and six miles from the beef headquarters. Much time was wasted walking back and forth or waiting for a single truck to carry workers to and from the camp. Added to this was the military police requirement that Caucasian escorts must accompany all persons going to the farms. It was not until the spring of 1944, a year and a half after the camp was settled, that administrators got clearance to establish a central field kitchen with lunches and dinners for the workers.

INDUSTRY AND TRADE

As with agriculture, the early staff members of WRA intended the centers to enter heavily into the production of industrial goods, but found this goal conflicted sharply with the early decision to make relocation outside the centers the first order of business.

During the early months WRA explored a wide range of potential manufacturing enterprises for the centers, including the possibility of taking contracts to produce camouflage nets, cartridge belts, tents, and optical lenses. All were items needed by the Armed Forces, and involved much labor with skills the Japanese had an aptitude for, and

²⁰ The agricultural supervisor somewhat jokingly reported that half of the alfalfa was killed by over-irrigation and the other half by under-irrigation!

were the kind of industries that would provide an opportunity for them to show their loyalty. The problem in all of these boiled down to the matter of pay — how could the evacuees be paid an incentive wage which would not upset the standard pay scale adopted for the work in the centers? After some experience with privately-operated factories in some of the centers, WRA issued a directive stipulating that all industries must be operated as WRA projects; the establishment of evacuee-sponsored production enterprises was prohibited. It was also specified that all industrial workers would be paid at the standard WRA rates.

Most enterprises actually established were designed to meet the needs of community management or of individual center residents, rather than to produce goods for other centers or the outside market. Thus, the principal Utah enterprise was the furniture factory, which turned out furniture for community buildings. An adobe brick unit made tens of thousands of bricks, and a sheet metal manufacturing unit made roof jacks. Topaz also had an ice cream freezer, a bean sprout plant which produced \$7,000 worth of bean sprouts, and a soy-bean cake and milk plant which produced \$25,000 worth of tofu.

As with industrial enterprises, WRA found it necessary to forbid the establishment of retail shops and services by individuals and insisted that they be on a consumer cooperative basis. WRA set up standards of organization and membership participation, and laid down general instructions on merchandising, pricing, the distribution of dividends, and auditing. Some direction and control by the administrator were necessary because a few of the residents felt that the cooperative stood in the way of getting more free services from the government.²¹

With a membership of more than 5,000, the Topaz Consumer Cooperative Enterprises, Inc., operated a network of individual enterprises, ranging from single-employee watch repair shops to moderate-sized department stores stocking a wide variety of merchandise and employing many dozens of persons. Its branches included four canteens or general stores handling drugs, tobacco, hardware, food, and soft drinks at various barracks within the camp; and, in addition, a dry goods store, shoe and clothing store, fish market, bank, barber shop, beauty parlor, photo studio, two movie theaters, three laundry and dry cleaning establishments, shoe and electrical repair shops, optical shop, and mail order service. Employment and work experience were provided for more than 500 residents. Gross sales averaged in excess of \$40,000 per month, sufficient to enable the cooperative to reimburse WRA for all salaries and allowances paid to employees, and to pay rent for the WRA building space and equipment. Nor was it necessary for

²¹ Some of the older residents suggested that the Topaz cooperative bankrupt itself by selling below cost and thus force the government to assume a greater responsibility for the welfare of the residents!

WRA to extend the cooperative credit since it successfully negotiated a number of loans from the Bank of Nephi.

An audit of its books for September 1944 showed total assets of about \$150,000, of which members' equities amounted to \$85,000. Fixed assets were only \$10,000, but there was a merchandise inventory of \$50,000, and cash in a bank in Nephi amounting to \$70,000. The cooperative held monthly meetings, published a weekly bulletin, and achieved representative management by having 34 block assemblies of 24 members each, a cooperative congress of 60 members, and a board of directors of 15 members. All profits, of course, were distributed among the evacuee customers.²²

M E S S O P E R A T I O N S

From a perusal of letters to editors and the speeches of congressmen during the war it is apparent that a large number of people came to believe that practically all of the food problems and shortages of nearby areas were caused by WRA "pampering" of evacuees. These fears were partly the result of unfounded rumor and partly of deliberate misrepresentation. WRA policy was that the evacuees were entitled to the same treatment as other American citizens and residents of non-Japanese descent — no more, no less.

The project director at Topaz aimed at a diet which would cost less than "reduced" Army rations; i. e., menus based on a ration costing 42 cents per person per day. "Fancy grades" of food were specifically prohibited, but special diets, as prescribed by the medical staff, were permitted for pregnant and nursing women. In the case of food which was rationed to the whole American people, this was to be made available to Topazans in the same ratio as to the general public. One of the problems was to please both the Issei, who wanted Japanese-style meals, and the Nisei who demanded American-style.

The food in each of the thirty-four dining halls was served cafeteria style; family-style eating was tried, but proved to be unsatisfactory. When a person was ill, members of his family were permitted to take food to his room. There were two meatless meals per week, fish was available two meals per week, fowl was served on Sundays, rice was cooked every day, and records indicate that there was lots of stew. Residents were permitted only one cup of coffee and two cups of tea per day. Milk was restricted to children, invalids, and the aged.

Throughout most of the period, staples not produced in the center were obtained from the Utah General Depot in Ogden; vegetables, eggs, cheese, and poultry from the Quartermaster Market Center in

²² After the first year of tense guard, "block shopping" was introduced whereby an evacuee wishing to make a trip to Delta would obtain special permission to shop for other residents in the block. There was, of course, strict military inspection of those leaving and returning to the center.

Salt Lake City; meat from the Quartermaster Market Center in Denver; and fish from the Quartermaster Market Center in Los Angeles. Most of the perishables came from Salt Lake or California; milk was purchased in Millard, Weber, and Salt Lake Counties.

OTHER PHASES OF CENTER ACTIVITY

Perhaps the most significant activity of the center, in terms of long-range goals, was education. Almost 3,000 students passed through the Topaz school system, and more than 1,000 eventually emerged as high school graduates. The center school system was accredited by the Utah State Board of Education, and the pupils were able to transfer without loss of credit to schools outside the center. The full and varied curriculum included agriculture, art, mechanic arts, and commerce, as well as the traditional "core." Four pre-school nurseries had an average enrollment of 180, two elementary schools (Desert View and Mountain View) had an average enrollment of 675, and a combined junior-senior high school averaged more than 1,200 enrolled. There was an average of 90 fully-certified teachers, about half of whom were evacuees and half Caucasians. Evacuee teachers, of course, received the standard camp wages of \$16 or \$19 per month. With their straight-backed benches and monitors, the buildings resembled those constructed by Utah's pioneers, and the 2,000 students took their turns at stoking the smoky coal stoves.

An even larger proportion of the camp was served by the 150 classes in adult education. More than 3,000 residents were enrolled in Americanization and such other classes as civics, basic English, auto mechanics, carpentry, radio repair, music, art, sewing, and flower arrangement. Frequent lectures and art and hobby shows drew much interest. Topaz had the finest public library of all the centers, drawing an average weekly patronage of 2,500. It also had the most extensive collection of Japanese language books and literature.

Medical care was furnished without cost to all evacuees in a 128-bed hospital which was directed by Caucasians, but staffed largely by evacuee doctors, dentists, and nurses. In general, despite the crowded living conditions and community kitchen, the health record was comparable with that in normal communities of similar size. There was an influenza epidemic in the winter of 1943-1944, when more than 1,100 patients were treated, but there were no deaths on this or any other occasion from communicable diseases. There was, however, a high incidence of peptic ulcers, attributed to the extreme nervous tension and frustrated and unsettled state of evacuee minds.

Welfare services were provided for residents without adequate means of support, for the physically handicapped, and for orphaned children. Particular problems were the "prisoner" frame of mind,

characterized by an absence of self-reliance, and family counseling. Many families were divided, with the parents wanting to apply for repatriation to Japan, and the children wanting no part of Japan. Where the children found it in their consciences to disobey their parents, there were guilt feelings, and their minds were often in a state of torment. The parents, on the other hand, repudiated by their children, were equally disturbed.

Improbable as it might seem, the Pahvant encampment was the headquarters of the Buddhist Church in America during the war — its headquarters having been transferred to Topaz from San Francisco. Comprising 40 percent of the residents, the Buddhists joined with the Christians, who represented another 40 percent, to form an inter-faith council. It was said to be the only merging of these two faiths in the world. In addition to two Buddhist and four Protestant "churches," with separate services in English and Japanese, there was also a "church" shared by the Seventh Day Adventists and the Roman Catholics. The administration permitted complete freedom of religious worship except for the practice of State Shinto, the one sect which involved worship of the Emperor and provided the doctrinal justification for Japan's aggressive expansion.

All of the centers had community newspapers published in both English and Japanese. The mimeographed **Topaz Times** was produced by evacuee staffs with a minimum of supervision and no overt exercise of censorship.

The community activities program, embracing the recreational, athletic, and other organized leisure-time activities of residents, was programmed purposefully to emphasize identification of the residents with the larger American community. By the summer of 1943 evacuees had completed and landscaped a golf course, baseball diamond, softball grounds, football field, and tennis and volley ball courts. Athletic events were staged regularly, and Topaz school teams won many victories on the fields of Millard County. The American-style organizations in Topaz included the YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, Campfire Girls, USO, and various social clubs and organizations. As with other American communities in wartime, there were scrap-paper, scrap-metal, and clothing drives, war bond sales, Red Cross drives, blood donations, and such other neighborhood and community projects as talent shows and summer theater. In many of these activities, particularly in the later stages of the war, Topaz was invited to join with Delta, Hinckley, and other neighboring towns.

The recreation program became increasingly important and diversified in 1944 and 1945 as relocation was stepped-up and the production program declined. Residents went fishing, hunted arrowheads and trilobites, practiced the traditional calligraphy, built rock gardens, decorated entrances of bare buildings with arches and hand-hewn stair-

ways, polished stones, made artificial flowers and flower arrangements, embroidered and made dolls and doll clothing. Two evacuee walking companions found the Drum Mountains meteorite, "about the size of a bag of potatoes" but weighing 1,500 pounds, which was the ninth largest meteorite found in the United States and the largest ever found in Utah. It was purchased by the Smithsonian Institution for \$700.

Other evacuees graced their lives during the long months of confinement by creating works of enduring beauty. One of the thriving industries of the last months was the manufacture of miniature shell jewelry — lapel ornaments, brooches, and necklaces. Of the most delicate workmanship, they were made of infinitesimal mussel and snail shells which were harvested from the ancient bottom of Lake Bonneville. At times a mile-long stretch of toilers could be seen at dawn making its way to the desert location where the best of these shells were found. Patient workers sifted the sands for the tiny shells much as placer miners searched for gold in California. Preserved in the alkali soil for thousands of years, they were washed, bleached, sorted, and tinted before being made into delicate ornaments of extraordinary beauty.

THE STRUGGLE FOR STATUS

When the evacuees moved into Topaz in 1942, they had reached the lowest status ever experienced by a comparable group of Americans. They had been forcibly removed from their homes, herded into the nearest approximation to a concentration camp America has ever had, and prohibited from moving about or engaging in the occupational pursuits of their choice. They were not even permitted to join the Army and fight for their country.

To counteract the suspicion, uneasiness, and unreasoning prejudice which had produced this state of affairs, WRA sought to give other Americans the opportunity of observing and mingling with Nisei in the ordinary pursuits of life, and to offer the Nisei the opportunity of serving in the Armed Forces.

The student relocatees, of whom there were 105 from Topaz studying in 43 different colleges and universities, were particularly effective in reminding Americans of the plight of the Nisei. Articulate and thoroughly Americanized, they made good impressions wherever they went, and the reports they sent back to the centers indicated their treatment was far different from that to which they had been accustomed on the Coast. One girl wrote of finding the head of the school waiting in the rain for her when she reached the station at three o'clock in the morning. Another mentioned that she and the other Japanese

students were guests at a special welcome dinner given by the college president and his wife.²³ The instructions given to the students by a Topaz advisor were one reason for their effective "missionary" work:

It won't do you or your family and friends much good to dwell on what you consider injustices when you are questioned about evacuation. Rather, stress the contributions of these people to the nation's war effort. Mention the great number of Nisei in the United States Army, the way the Manzanar Boy Scouts protected the American flag from a pro-Axis mob, how the evacuees are engaging in wartime agriculture, and you will do the Japanese in this country more good than talking about discrimination.²⁴

More spectacular were the achievements of two Japanese-American troop units. The first of these, the 100th Infantry Battalion, was composed mainly of Nisei volunteers from Hawaii. A leading participant in the slow, bloody march up the peninsula of Italy, the 100th spent many months in the thick of combat, suffered 300 killed and 650 wounded out of a total of 1,000 men, and won the praises of practically all officers and men associated with it. It was followed by the 442 Regimental Combat Team which had been formed in 1943 from the volunteers from Topaz and other relocation centers and from Hawaii. All observers classed the performance of this "Go for broke" unit as heroic, ranking with the best in the European Theater. With a normal complement of around 5,000, it suffered a total of 4,430 casualties (including 569 killed in action), and received so many unit and individual citations and awards that it is often referred to as "the most decorated unit in United States military history."²⁵

By January 20, 1944, the War Department was so deeply impressed with the spirit and determination of these troops that it had decided to begin recruiting Nisei for the Army through regular Selective Service procedures. This news was favorably received at the Utah center, because it indicated national approval of the fighting heroism of the Japanese-American combat team and because it represented a significant step forward in the restoration of their rights as American citizens. By that time Topaz had 400 service stars representing that many young men who had volunteered for service. The Topaz Community Council endorsed the draft, a local branch of the County Selective Service Board was opened, and the first group of 25 Topaz draftees reported at Fort Douglas on March 1 for pre-induction physical examinations. All told, 451 residents of Topaz were in the Armed Services, including the "original" 80 volunteers. Fifteen were killed in action and many were wounded.

²³ Taro Katayama. "Beyond the gate." *Trek*, February 1943, p. 11.

²⁴ Lillian Ota, "Campus report." *Trek*, February 1943, p. 34.

²⁵ The commander of the 36th division, whose "Lost Battalion" of Texans had been cut off by German advance and was rescued by the 442nd, said: "No finer fighting, no finer soldierly qualities have ever been witnessed by the U.S. Army in its long history."

THE RELOCATION MOVEMENT

Although Topaz administrators had set forth relocation as their main objective soon after the camp was established, the actual movement of evacuees out of the center to take up residence in normal communities did not take on significant proportions until the spring of 1943. One reason for this was that each application for indefinite leave had been processed elaborately, leisurely, and individually, both in Topaz and in the WRA office in Washington, D. C. By March 1943, only 461 evacuees had left Topaz, of which 9 were in the Armed Services, 49 on educational leave, 173 on general "permanent" leave, and 230 on short-term and seasonal agricultural leave.

To speed up the movement out of the center WRA authorized the Topaz director to issue permits for relocation in certain communities regardless of whether the applicant had a specific job prospect, and in advance of leave clearance. In addition, several limited and carefully-controlled forms of financial assistance were granted. Transportation was provided from Topaz to the point of relocation, grants of \$3.00 per day were made to cover cost of subsistence while traveling, and \$25.00 in cash was given to each needy evacuee to tide him over the period he was getting settled. As the result of these measures, adopted in the spring of 1943, 887 evacuees had left Topaz by July to establish residence outside, and another 412 were on seasonal leave. Nearly all of the latter, and some of the former, were employed in Utah on sugar beet, fruit, and livestock farms, and in canneries and meat-packing plants.

The largest number on employment leave were in Utah County. When the \$200 million steel plant was built at Geneva (1943), many farmers with small acreages left their crops, and those with larger farms found it difficult to compete in hiring Caucasian labor. Recognizing the role Topaz could play in relieving the local manpower shortage, camp officials established a supervised "branch" at Provo. With the assistance of the Farm Security Administration, a "tent city" was built to house 400 workers. (A similar branch was built in Ogden.) Shower rooms, laundry, day nursery, recreation hall, medical clinic, and other facilities were provided. Approximately 700 Topazans were employed during part or all of the summer in this area.

Early in October 1943, at the height of the harvest, five local "white" youths drove by the camp on at least three occasions, hurling insults and rocks. On the third occasion, at an hour when most of the workers were in the community hall enjoying a social, some 15 to 18 shots were fired into the lighted buildings. Three of the workers were hit, though none seriously. The terrorized Nisei delayed going out to work for at least a day until firm pledges of protection were made by city and county officials. During the next night, armed guards were

stationed around the camp. At a hastily-called meeting of town and county leaders, resolutions were adopted requesting full enforcement of the law, punishment of the offending youths, "acceptance of the Japanese situation in the spirit of American tolerance," and asking persons in the area to "discourage all displays of racial antagonism and discrimination." The youths were subsequently apprehended, confessed, and given short jail sentences.

In general, there was complete satisfaction with the work of the evacuees in Utah, and the communities in the state received them well. A typical comment from a Nisei girl in Salt Lake City reported that the people were "openly sympathetic," and that the "very friendly atmosphere" was "undoubtedly influenced by the Mormons."

During 1943 and 1944 almost 2,000 evacuees left Topaz on "permanent" leave. They went to 98 different cities in 21 states. Four percent entered professional activity, 4 percent clerical, 14 percent agricultural, 24 percent joined the ranks of skilled and semi-skilled labor, and 32 percent went into the service trades. The most popular area of relocation nationally was Chicago, because it had millions of people, abundant employment opportunities, and a noticeable absence of anti-oriental feelings.²⁶

Although many Topazans also settled in the Chicago area the local favorite was the Wasatch Front, where a small but reasonably well-established Japanese population had existed since before the war, and where many voluntary evacuees had located. Additionally, the evacuees and relocation field officers were convinced that Mormons, perhaps because of their own turbulent history, were disposed to be tolerant of persecuted minorities.²⁷ Many of the evacuees who went out on seasonal leave to beet fields during 1942 and 1943 eventually gravitated into Salt Lake City and found year-round jobs. Some 250 residents of the various centers were also recruited to work at Utah's Tooele Ordnance Depot, and 150 from Topaz were sent to the Sioux Ordnance Depot at Sidney, Nebraska. All of these were instructed to take their families and become integral members of the communities.

All together, within the first year of relocation, 1,700 Nisei from Topaz and other centers entered the mainstream of American life in Utah. During the entire period of exclusion (1942-1946), 5,641 evacuees relocated in Utah. Of these, 2,002 settled in Salt Lake City, 900

²⁶ WRA directors reversed Horace Greeley's maxim and advised: "Go East, young man, go East."

²⁷ In August 1942, before the opening of the Topaz center and during the period when extensive agricultural leaves were being granted, WRA asked the Western Institute of Public Opinion in Los Angeles to make a public opinion survey in Utah on "the Japanese question." In a poll of 5,000 Utahans, 66 percent expressed approval of a policy permitting citizen-Japanese to leave the relocation centers and accept outside employment. Only 18 percent approved of alien-Japanese being permitted to work outside the centers. Of those who favored permitting Nisei to work outside the centers, only 52 percent favored having them in the immediate vicinity where the interview took place.

Unfortunately, there is no way to compare this with the attitude elsewhere, since no similar survey was taken in other states. Various WRA administrators, however, expressed the conviction that the reception in Utah would be and was relatively friendly.

in Ogden, 351 in Brigham City, 278 in Clearfield, and 241 in Tooele. Considering the 2,210 who were living in Utah at the outbreak of the war, the relocatees hiked Utah's resident population of persons of Japanese descent to 7,851. Many of these left the state in the years after the war as brighter employment opportunities developed elsewhere. By 1950 there were only 4,452 persons of Japanese ancestry in Utah. The 1960 census showed 4,371.

Despite the various inducements and aids the center offered to relocatees, one of the administration's main problems was to persuade the evacuees to leave. By the end of January 1945, for example, only 495 families, representing about a thousand persons, had been completely relocated from Topaz. Approximately two-thirds of those evacuated to Topaz appeared to be unwilling to try a new life in another part of the country than their West Coast homeland. The Topaz Community Council, increasingly dominated by Issei "standpatters," was the focus of this resistance to relocation. While the council was not ultimately opposed to armed service recruitment or selective service, it obdurately refused to encourage persons to leave the center for resettlement. The opposition was particularly strong among those middle-aged and elderly people who had always lived in the Bay area's "Little Tokyo." Those who were without capital and had never had experience in anything but small self-operated enterprises were terrified at the mere thought of working out their problems in a new setting. They did not look forward to working as paid employees in another man's business, nor did they want to establish their business in any other region than the West Coast.

L I Q U I D A T I O N

Three years after Pearl Harbor, on Sunday, December 17, 1944, while General MacArthur's troops were advancing on Manila, the Western Defense Command lifted the mass exclusion order effective January 2, 1945.²⁸ The following day, WRA announced its decision to close all the relocation centers within six to twelve months. At the same time WRA ordered the termination of all seasonal agricultural leases, the liquidation of farming operations at all centers except Colorado River and Gila River where winter vegetables were still in the ground, and the closing of all relocation center schools at the end of the spring term.

The Topaz evacuees were obviously happy over being allowed to return to their former homes, but they were at the same time

²⁸ If there was any justification for the mass expulsion and incarceration, it no longer existed after June 1942, for when the Japanese fleet was decisively defeated in the Battle of Midway the possibility of an invasion of Hawaii or the United States was effectively eliminated. Thus, even before any of the evacuees came to Utah the reason for their relocation had disappeared. The lifting of the order should have come at least two years earlier than it did.

apprehensive. There was fear of violence and boycott on the West Coast, and of being unable to find employment and housing. Some of the residents said they would sit tight until WRA adopted a more liberal policy of relocation assistance, including long-term, low-interest loans to businessmen and farmers to re-establish themselves. Others declared they would remain until the war was over, insisting they had been evacuated for "the duration" plus six months.

To resolve their own policy, the Topaz Community Council sponsored an all-center conference, held in Salt Lake City in February, with council representatives from all centers except Manzanar and Tule Lake. The conference ended with a plea for more extensive relocation assistance. Overlooking the deadening effects of the institutional life of the centers, and stressing the difficulties which would be confronted by the older Issei upon their return, the delegates raised serious questions as to the fundamental wisdom and morality of closing the centers. It was cruel of WRA, they declared, to force these people to return without substantial help. WRA took a firm stand, however, and quietly insisted that the centers would be closed.

There were about 6,000 evacuees in Topaz at the time, and many meetings were held to explain WRA policy. An Army recruiting team interviewed the residents of questionable loyalty and recommended 250 of them for individual exclusion orders or further investigation and possible internment. All of the remainder were cleared, on January 20, 1945, for free movement anywhere in the United States. Nevertheless, only 134 residents were relocated in January 1945, compared to 126 in the same month of 1944 — and only 38 of the 134 returned to California. There was a definite increase in the medical cases due to worry over the closing of the center.

Topaz officials, however, went doggedly ahead with their plans to close the center. The first reserved trains left for Chicago on May 14, and others followed in a regular schedule. As a step in liquidating the agricultural section, bids were issued for leasing the surplus farm lands until such time as the center would close, and the surplus farm equipment was sold at an auction at which more than a hundred certified dealers were in attendance. The educational program was ended with commencement exercises in June, and the teachers were discharged or transferred to other work. The classes in adult education and vocational training were terminated in July.

One problem which concerned the administration was the tendency for the evacuees to want to put off relocation until the last few days before closing. Since the war in Europe was about over, troops were being redeployed to the Pacific, straining transportation facilities to the utmost. It was conceded that there was little likelihood WRA would be able to commandeer the trains to transport the entire evacuee population to their desired location in one grand last-minute rush.

To encourage moving, therefore, the national office announced in June that all centers except Tule Lake would be closed between October 15 and December 15, 1945. Each project director was instructed to establish weekly quotas for relocation in order to meet the goal of depopulation by the closing date. These quotas were to be filled, as far as possible, by volunteers; but if the quota could not be filled in this manner, the director was authorized to complete the lot by assignment. Those assigned a departure date were given the option of selecting the place where they wished to relocate. Individuals refusing to make a selection were to be given a rail ticket to the community from which they were originally evacuated. Those who refused to pack their belongings were to have their property packed for them, and they were to be escorted to the train — if necessary, by the internal security police. This threat of physical force was regarded as the only feasible alternative to an indefinite extension of the entire center program.

The scheduling notice was issued just two weeks before V-J day and was actually announced to the evacuees only a few days before that event. This fortunate timing (entirely unpremeditated!) broke down the last real vestiges of evacuee resistance to the schedules. Even the most rabid diehards were now convinced that a return to private life was inevitable. The first train carrying Topaz evacuees to the West Coast left Delta on August 15 — just five days after V-J day — and the final closing date was announced to be October 31.

The speed of the evacuation now depended on the availability of housing. The Public Housing Authority operated under instructions to provide housing only for returning veterans, but WRA field offices were eventually able to arrange for some surplus Army facilities and trailers in the vicinity of Los Angeles and San Francisco. In addition, the Buddhist Church of Topaz directed an aggressive program of relocation and housing assistance for members of that faith. By September, the outward movement was in earnest. There was a breakdown in work morale, a letdown in productive work, and a lack of concern for maintaining center activities. In October the last meeting of the Community Council was held, the block managers' organization was dissolved, and a farewell banquet was held in Delta. The last special train left on October 26, with 325 aboard. Five days later, the center closed on schedule with the project director "locking" the gate behind the last busload of evacuees at 1 p.m. The final exodus consisted of thirty-two persons, mostly evacuee families from Hawaii who had to remain until sailing arrangements were completed.

Of the total of 9,408 evacuees relocated from Topaz during the period the wartime city existed, nearly 6,000 were relocated in 1945, and more than 4,000 after August 15. Only 44 percent returned to the West Coast — 43 percent to California, and 1 percent to Oregon and Washington.

After the property at Topaz had been inventoried, cleared out of the barracks and mess halls, and disposed of or stored, the center was turned over to the government liquidating agency, on February 9, 1946. The land eventually was sold by the Federal Land Bank of Berkeley (on behalf of the Federal Farm Mortgage Corporation) for a dollar an acre. The buildings, appraised at \$4.5 million, were taken to the Branch Agricultural College and other schools, or were purchased at nominal prices by farmers for chicken coops and tool sheds. Other supplies and equipment were sold to the Utah State Agricultural College, elementary and secondary schools, and to businessmen and farmers throughout the state. All that remains today of Topaz is the smokestack of a laundry boiler and a few concrete foundations. Emptied of its human components, Topaz has been reclaimed by the barrenness from which it emerged.

A F T E R M A T H

The reception given the returnees was mixed. Many of those who returned to California were deprived of their rural homes under an "escheat law" passed in 1943. The charge was that the property had been purchased or leased by alien parents in the name of citizen children and that this practice was in violation of the law. The statute has since been repealed. In some areas (e.g., Ogden and Layton, Utah) local officials refused to issue business licenses to persons of Japanese ancestry. In all such cases where the refusals were contested, they were overruled by the courts. A number of labor unions declined to accept Japanese-Americans as union members. Happily, almost all such instances of discrimination were short-lived.

In Utah, the reception given returnees was conditioned by the attitude of the dominant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A number of the evacuees had become members of the church during their residency at Topaz, and they were given special relocation assistance by a Church Newcomers Committee established for the purpose early in 1945. While the chief authorities of the church (and most sub-authorities) taught and practiced tolerance, a few local leaders opposed relocation. In a town in the Upper Snake River Valley, where a number of Nisei and Issei families joined the large number already there, a member of the local "stake presidency" took the lead in organizing a group opposed to the sale of real estate to Japanese. This group brought sufficient pressure to bear on real estate agents that in some cases where the sale of property was in process the money was refunded to the buyer. To counteract this form of discrimination on the part of local leaders the general authorities of the L.D.S. Church, on December 4, 1945, issued a policy statement published in the church-owned *Deseret News* decrying "these foolish prejudices."

Reports coming to this office [the editorial said] declare that in outlying districts these Japanese-Americans find a lack of warmth that is not evident in the more urban communities. In some sections, protests have been registered against leasing land to Japanese or those of Japanese ancestry. From another section came the report that the ranchers needed labor this fall, and were willing to have Japanese labor imported, but they did not want the Japanese boys and girls attending the schools where their own children were students.

The prejudices went even farther than that, however. In one community efforts were being made to raise money necessary to buy more books for the library and much difficulty was being experienced in getting the necessary funds. Finally someone thought of going to two or three Japanese families to solicit them for funds, and the response of these people was so generous that the solicitors decided there must be something crooked in it and reported the generous donations to the sheriff. . . .

Americans who are loyal are good Americans whether their ancestors came from Great Britain or Japan, the Scandinavian countries or Germany. Let us, therefore, endeavor to banish these foolish prejudices from our natures and let us attempt to see that all good and loyal Americans are treated as such.

Today, twenty years after the evacuation, 60 percent of the persons of Japanese ancestry in the continental United States live in California, compared with 75 percent in 1942. Illinois, which had only a few hundred in 1942, has 15,000, and many other states in the East and Midwest show similar increases. The congested "Little Tokyos" have been dispersed, and the Japanese people have shown a greater spirit of independence in moving out of their own circles. On the Coast there are still some segregated churches and communities with their own clubs and social life, but they are rare and becoming rarer. Persons of Japanese descent have found friendliness, hospitality, more freedom of occupation, and few hindrances to integration into the greater American community. There is little evidence of anti-Japanese sentiment.

Many "Japanese" today are grateful for the evacuation experience. By uprooting them from the West Coast, it paved the way for their residence and acceptance in the interior. Many lawyers, doctors, business executives, and university professors now attribute their rise out of "second-class citizenship," at least in part, to the forced relocation from California. Bitter and bewildering as it was, the evacuation is now sometimes referred to as a "blessing in disguise."

Other Americans may also be grateful for the humility which this disturbing outgrowth of war hysteria has induced. There now seems to be general acceptance of Franklin Roosevelt's memorable aphorism that "Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry." If the memory of this protracted and unnecessary mass incarceration can help us to ward off other such episodes, the physical and psychological sufferings and economic losses of our fellow citizens of Japanese ancestry may not have been in vain. We may even have fulfilled the hope of John Milton:

Yea even that which mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.

Appendix
 STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF THE CENTRAL UTAH
 RELOCATION CENTER

Number of persons

The residents of Topaz came from the following places:

1.	Initial shipments to Topaz		
	Tanforan Assembly Center, San Bruno, California		7,676
	Santa Anita Assembly Center, Arcadia, California		577
	Fresno Assembly Center, Fresno, California		5
	Total		8,258
2.	Subsequent additions to the Center population		
	Voluntary residents admitted to the Center		43
	Seasonal workers released from assembly centers		115
	Direct evacuation from Hawaii		228
	Transfers from Tule Lake and other relocation centers	2,069	
	Births		384
	Parolees from Department of Justice internment camps		76
	From hospitals		36
	From penal institutions		3
	Total		2,954
	Grand total admitted to the Center		11,212

The residents of Topaz were dispersed in the following manner:

1.	Departure on indefinite leave		
	Educational leaves		105
	Armed Forces		178
	"Outside" employment		2,283
	Penal institutions		8
	Mental institutions		13
	Hospitals		16
	Left to join or accompany families		714
	Repatriated to Japan on September 2, 1943		18
	Interned by Department of Justice		85
	Total		3,420
2.	Transferred to Tule Lake Segregation Center		1,491
3.	Transferred to other centers		144
4.	Deaths		139
5.	Transported to location of choice after exclusion order lifted on January 2, 1945		6,018
	Grand total dispersed from Center		11,212

The peak population of Topaz was reached April 1, 1943, when there were 8,316 residents. The average evacuee population was as follows: 1942, 7,473 persons; 1943, 7,936 persons; 1944, 6,812 persons; 1945 (until October 31), 4,784 persons.

The age distribution of Topaz, as of January 30, 1943, was: 0-2 years, 358; 3-4 years, 222; 5-6 years, 179; 7-12 years, 651; 13-15 years, 484; 16-18 years, 708; 19-21 years, 779; 22-25 years, 781; 26-30 years, 779; 31-35 years, 358; 41-45 years, 522; 46-50 years, 475; 51-55 years, 549; 56-60 years, 499; 61-65 years, 352; 66-70 years, 195; 86-90 years, 1.

Source: Compiled from War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Description* (Washington, 1946), Tables 3, 4, and 8, and from *Topaz Times*, January 30, 1943.

NOTE ON THE SOURCES

Books and Documents

The best single source on the evacuation of Japanese-Americans during World War II is WRA: *A story of human conservation*, Washington, D. C., 1946. Written by staff members of the War Relocation Authority, this is a brief but comprehensive and interpretive history of the activities of WRA. In giving the background of WRA activities, I have borrowed from it freely and copiously, even to the extent of using some of its phrasing. Also published by WRA in 1946 are the following studies which treat particular phases of its activities in greater detail:

Administrative highlights of the WRA program

Community government in war relocation centers

The evacuated peoples: A quantitative description

Impounded people — Story of life in the relocation centers

Legal and constitutional phases of the WRA program

The relocation program

Token shipments: The story of America's war refugee shelter

Wartime exile — The exclusion of the Japanese Americans from the West Coast

Wartime handling of evacuee property

People in motion: The postwar adjustment of the evacuated Japanese Americans.

The Army's role in the evacuation movement is described in *Final Report. Japanese evacuation from the West Coast*, of the Western Defense Command, Washington, 1943. The evacuation is also reported in *National defense migration*, 77th Congress 2nd session, Report of the Select Committee investigating National Defense Migration, House Report 1911, Washington, 1942; and *National defense migration*, 77th Congress, 2nd session, House Report 2124, Washington, 1942.

Outstanding studies of the national movement include:

Bloom, Leonard, and Ruth Riemer. *Removal and return: The socio-economic effects of the war on Japanese-Americans.* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1949.

Eaton, Allen H. *Beauty behind barbed wire: The arts of the Japanese in our war relocation camps.* New York, Harper and Brothers, 1952.

Grodzins, Mortin. *Americans betrayed: Politics and the Japanese evacuation.* Chicago, Ill., The University of Chicago Press, 1949.

Leighton, Alexander H. *The governing of men: General principles and recommendations based on experience at a Japanese relocation camp.* Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1945.

Lind, Andrew W. *Hawaii's Japanese.* Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1946.

McWilliams, Carey. *Prejudice — Japanese-Americans: Symbol of racial intolerance.* Boston, Mass., Little, Brown and Company, 1944.

Smith, Bradford. *Americans from Japan.* Philadelphia, Pa., Lippincott, 1948.

The University of California Press has published three studies under the general title *Japanese American evacuation and resettlement.*

Thomas, Dorothy S., and Richard S. Nishimoto. *The spoilage.* 1926.

Thomas, Dorothy S., Charles Kikuchi, and James Sakoda. *The salvage.* 1952.

tenBroek, Jacobus, Edward N. Barnhart, and Floyd Matson. *Prejudice, war, and the constitution.* 1953.

A complete documentary record of the activities of WRA is found in the National Archives and in the University of California Library at Berkeley. The latter, which was used by the writer, includes general manuscript histories of the various divisions, reports, center newspapers and magazines, scrapbooks, and other material from the general office of WRA and from each of the ten relocation centers. The material at Berkeley is catalogued in *Japanese American evacuation and resettlement: Catalog of material in the General Library*, by Edward N. Barnhart, published by the University of California Press in 1958. Some personal papers (diaries, letters, etc.) are catalogued but are not available to the researcher.

Other material which specifically bears on the Central Utah Relocation Center at Topaz includes:

Hardy, Douglas W. "Caucasian attitudes toward Japanese in metropolitan Salt Lake City." Salt Lake City, University of Utah, M. A. thesis. 1947.

Okubo, Mine. *Citizen 13660*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1946.

Peterson, Erma, and Callie O. Morley. "History of Topaz" in *Milestones of Millard: A century of history of Millard County, 1851-1951*, by Daughters of Utah Pioneers of Millard County. Springville, Utah, Art City Publishing Company, 1951. pp. 610-619.

Smith, Elmer R. "Japanese relocation study of Utah" (preliminary report) University of California Library, April 1944. (mimeo.) Berkeley.

"Welcome to Topaz." Topaz, Utah, September, 1943. (mimeo.) (in possession of the writer.)

Periodicals and Newspapers

A complete set of the *Topaz Times* (September 17, 1942 - August 31, 1945) is available in the University of California Library at Berkeley, as are the three numbers of *Trek*, an art and literary magazine published by the Topaz evacuees. Articles from these publications, as well as from the *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune* (Salt Lake City) and *Millard County Chronicle* (Delta), have been used extensively in preparing this lecture. Many articles have been published in national magazines dealing with the subject. Among the most useful have been:

Ballif, Ariel S. "Reactions to laborers from relocation centers." *Sociology and Social Research* 29: 40-45. September-October 1944.

Barnhart, Edward N. "The individual exclusion of Japanese Americans in World War II." *Pacific Historical Review* 229: 111-130. May 1960.

"Belated justice." *Christian Century*, September 28, 1949, p. 1128.

"Disguised blessing." *Newsweek* 52: 23. December 29, 1958.

Fisher, Galen M. "Japanese colony: Success story." *Survey Graphic* 32: 41-43. February 1943.

"Issei, Nisei, Kibei." *Fortune* 29: 8 ff. April 1944.

Iwata, Masakazu. "The Japanese immigrants in California agriculture." *Agricultural History* 36: 25-37. January 1962.

McEvoy, J.M. "Our 110,000 new boarders." *Readers Digest* 42: 65-68. March 1943.

The Pacific Citizen, various issues. Published weekly in Salt Lake City and Los Angeles by the Japanese American Citizens' League.

Rostow, Eugene V. "Our worst wartime mistake." *Harper's Magazine* 191: 193-201. September 1945.

Smith, Elmer R. "The 'Japanese' in Utah." *Utah Humanities Review* 2: 129-144, 208-230. April, July 1948.

Tani, Henry. "The Nisei since Pearl Harbor." *The Pacific Spectator* 1: 203-213. Spring 1947.

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