

A Visit to the Japanese Relocation Center at Granada, Colorado

On November 10th and 11th a group consisting of Mrs. ^{W.}Lewis Abbot, Mrs. Gordon Parker, the Misses Patricia Leigh and Mabel and Ruth Parker visited the Granada Relocation Project in the southeastern part of the state about seventeen miles from ^{the} LaJara. This is a beet raising and sheep growing part of the state in the Arkansas Valley. Trees were few on the almost level plains and houses widely scattered. *Sandy.*

The general aspect of the Center as we approached it was that of a Great Wood Landscape, bleak with a monotonous repetition of the long squat peaked army barracks as far as the eye could see. The barren sandy soil was unrelieved by trees, plants or grass, but next year it is planned to landscape the camp. A friendly sentinel at the entrance examined our pass, confirmed the official notice that cameras were not allowed beyond the gate, and directed us to the administration building. There we met the assistant project director, Mr. Donald E. Harbison, who acted the part of a friendly host. Like all the personnel whom we met, he seemed a human, friendly type, willing to let us see everything and to answer all our questions. He supplied us with a young Japanese guide who wore ^a sleeve bands marked "Warden", he conducted us about until lunch time after which we made our way alone, or with a teacher through the school rooms, a nurse in the hospital, or a wife of one of the Japanese physicians, Mrs. Takeyama. All through our tour of the project we had the utmost freedom for investigation. Both Japanese and Caucasians answered our questions, let us see the various buildings and talked freely of conditions in the Camp. We had our lunch in the Caucasian cafeteria, cooked and served by Japanese.

The Camp is guarded by 120 army men, who were very little in evidence. The only group of soldiers whom we saw were lined up to salute the flag when lowered at sunset. There were in residence 7600 evacuees who came from California via the Mercer and Anita centers. Nearly two thirds came from rural areas, one third from Los Angeles. These latter had been mostly small shopkeepers with some

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Amacha

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Soldiers

Evacuees
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professional people. Almost all of the evacuees are highschool graduates, some college graduates. We did not learn the number of those whose education had been interrupted by the evacuation. Seventy-five percent are American-born.

The barracks, built by army engineers of standard military composition board, consisted, for the living quarters, of rooms of three sizes, - 16 X 20 ft., 20 X 20 ft. and 20 X 24 ft., assigned to families of three, five, seven or more persons. There are no partitions in these rooms, except those made by the occupants who had ^{hung} drapes, bed spreads, ^{or} curtains to separate their living quarters from sleeping quarters. For many this lack of privacy is one of the most galling difficulties in life at the Center. One electric light hangs from the ceiling. There is no plumbing in these apartments. Windows allow of good cross circulation. Each apartment is supplied with an army cot, with springs, for each occupant, a cotton mattress, two blankets apiece, a broom and a pail. Heat is supplied by a cylindrical stove. Other furnishings are supplied by the evacuees who ^{have been} permitted to send for furnishings left in government storehouses in California. In the crisis of evacuation many of the Japanese parted with many of these possessions at a great sacrifice. The Center also supplies scrap lumber out of which furniture may be made - closets, shelves, chairs and tables, benches, etc.

Living quarters
Drapes
P. 11

Each block of barracks, accomodating about 250 people, has a wash house (for men and one for women. These contain washstands, toilets, showers and a very few bath tubs, none of which allow of any privacy whatsoever. A Caucasian dietician told us that this was contrary to a Colorado law, and we saw that crude brackets had been nailed up over some doors for curtains. Our young guide remarked that these crude arrangements were particularly hard on the elder people, and we added the comment to ourselves that they must have been equally difficult and perhaps more demoralizing for the younger.

Lack of privacy

In the center of each block is a cafeteria or a community dining hall for which Japanese cooks are employed. We were told by a white dietician that the meals were not balanced and that there is no provision made for special diet for children, ^{meals conform strictly to ration regulations} that the milk is so dirty that no one would drink it. Frozen fish has

Dining hall

been provided, but since there are no facilities for keeping it frozen it has become slightly tainted causing an epidemic of diarrhea. "The people are awfully tired of fish anyway," said our guide. From the current number of the local paper received since we returned, we infer that these unfortunate conditions have been remedied. We went into one of the cafeterias during the lunch hours and saw the people seated on crude benches before the long tables. Their plates were piled high with meat, rice, and a vegetable salad. There were also bread and coffee and possibly other dishes we did not see. It is almost impossible for families to keep together in such cafeterias. indeed the whole set-up, planned as it had to be for army life, makes it well nigh impossible to maintain normal family life. We had our lunch (at fifty cents) in the Caucasian mess and teaching staff for the clerical staff, served by Japanese girls.- good food. *Juvenile delinquency.*

Food

Wm. P. 10
Recreational needs

A barrack in each block has been planned for recreational use, but since there are no recreational directors as yet, and no equipment these apartments are now being used for storage. As the group remarked, with the crowded living quarters and the general abnormal and unhappy lives of the evacuees ^{of} ~~recreational~~ opportunities must be urgently needed. There is plenty of space for ball fields, tennis, etc., but meagre equipment. A pitifully small library and reading room ^{series} for further contributions of books. We saw in the local paper the announcement of a dance.

The evacuees are running true to form in their interest in education. Like the Japanese and Chinese in the Orient, they consider schools of primary importance. From preschool to high school, classes are in session, supplemented by university extension courses and adult education classes. The teachers ~~(Caucasian)~~ and principals, all of whom are apparently Caucasian, are of high type, all with state certificates. The school buildings are not yet built, so that classes are meeting in the barracks provided with desks and seats, but lacking adequate supplies of text books, laboratory equipment, ~~text-books~~ paper, pencils, etc. Because of lack of material ^{few} no handicrafts can now be taught, a serious omission in such a group of artistic ^{where} ~~and~~ ^{where} ~~endowed~~ people. There are 513 students in high school, 676 in elementary grades, 106 kindergarten, and 125 in pre-school classes, *total of over 1400 pupils*

Schools

513
676
106
125
1420

As to medical care there is a large medical unit consisting of seventeen

buildings all connected by a covered corridor, and heated by steam. The chief medical officer is a Caucasian with a staff of five Japanese doctors. It was said that eight are needed properly to staff the hospital. There are seven dentists. Clinics are held as follows:- pre-natal, well baby, the sick, venereal. Venereal tests are given for all food-handlers in the Center. There is a low incidence for venereal diseases.

Hospital

We were conducted through the hospital by the head nurse, a Caucasian, who told us that classes are being held for Japanese nurses' aids. The hospital when completed ^{has} will accommodate ^{150 beds} over a hundred patients and will contain the following wards:- for men, for women, contagious cases, detention ward, maternity ward with obstetrical and delivery rooms, children's ward, operating rooms, power house, laundry, laboratory, out-patients' department, ambulance, pharmacy, doctors' quarters, nurses' home, administrative offices. At present only three buildings are completed and in operation. Cases for which there is at present no provision are taken to a hospital in Lamar. All medical and ~~ess~~ental services are free, including hospitalization.

There are in the Center Japanese ministers of various denominations- Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Holiness, and other denominations, and also ~~one Roman~~ ^{have} Catholic priest and two Buddhist priests. The Methodists are said to be the largest representatives. Lacking as yet any church buildings, Sunday services including a large Protestant Sunday school of about 375 pupils, are held in the barracks. (Materials for this school are greatly needed.) There is a newly formed federation called The Granada Christian Church, the president of which we met. Union services are held, and the ministerial council sends a spokesman, or contact, to meet with the Administration of the Center. this council meets daily for prayer and weekly for a business meeting. Already plans are under way for a Christmas celebration. There are ten committees of the Granada Christian Church as follows:- English Division, Religious Education, Evangelism, Finance, Women's Division, Social Welfare, Music, Public Relations, Publicity, and General Arrangements. Nisei (Nisei are At a recent symposium ^{Protestant} native-born Americans), there was a discussion of the subject, "How Have the Past Six Months Affected my Christian Faith," and at another meeting for young people, there was a forum discussion of "My Ideas of Making the Most of Relocation". The first of this month was issued the first number of "The Granada Church

Religion

News" from which much of the information given above is taken. The Sunday program is as follows:- Sunday school 8.45 A.M., English Service 10.45 A.M., Issei Service 10.45 A.M. (Issei are native-born Japanese), Young Peoples' Service 8.00 P.M., Sunrise Prayer Meeting 6.15 A.M. Some of the young people's groups in Lamar are holding group meetings with similar aged groups at the Center.

As to legal protection, the Government is guarding the property of the evacuees left in California in charge of the Federal Loan Bank. Free legal advice and protection are provided. Banking in Lamar is permitted.

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Shopping
Lamar Attitude

There are opportunities for shopping. Montgomery Ward has opened an order department at the Center, and the evacuees have themselves organized a cooperative clothing store for which shares have been sold. There are a beauty parlor, a newspaper office, which we visited, a power house and a fire department. We saw a group of girls from the camp evidently on a shopping trip in Lamar. The cashier at the coffee shop where we dined had some interesting information to tell us about the adjustment of the town to the Center. It seems that when the evacuees first arrived some merchants put up signs in their shop windows, "No Japs Wanted." Then the Chamber of Commerce called a meeting attended by some of the Japanese leaders who said that they had not come to the Center of their own free will, that they were putting up with many hardships and inconveniences, They understood that these arrangements were necessary and they were trying to make the best of it. They said they could order their purchases through mail order houses and really did not need to come to Lamar except to break the monotony of camp life. Then a citizen of Lamar rose and said that after ^{all} Lamar had asked for the Center and that he thought they should make things as easy and natural for these people as possible. So they all voted to allow the evacuees to come into stores and hotels and eating places. It was further said, by the cashier, that there was no criticism whatsoever of the conduct of the evacuees in town.

self-govt.

The government is encouraging organization for self-government, and each block is now electing representatives to serve on a central committee. Native-born Japanese are prohibited by the Government from participating in these meetings. A women's

federation, just now being organized promises to make a big contribution to the life of the Center. A ^{German} weekly mimeographed sheet, "The Granada Pioneer" supplies local news. It is in English, except for two or three pages giving summaries of the news in Japanese. Cartoons are supplied by a youth who has worked in Walt Disney's shop.

Wages -
Wages for the evacuees who work in the Center range from twelve to nineteen dollars monthly. The clerks and stenographers who work in the offices, the doctors and other professional men and women receive nineteen dollars. We met in the administration building a very charming receptionist who we learned has been an opera singer of note, who studied in Germany before the war, has sung over the National Broadcasting System, has appeared in many concert programs on the Pacific coast and in Chicago and elsewhere, and counts ~~Ms.~~ Mrs. Shumann-Heink, and other nationally known artists among her friends.

The Government has provided specifications for Nisei men to join the army. Through the courtesy of our Japanese guide ~~was~~ a delightful person graduated from an American college for women, we were taken to call on a non-English speaking lady who served us delicious tea and wafers. She apologized to our guide because she was unable to do it in better form, but as we sat on the improvised seats made of soap boxes covered with cushions and sipped our tea from tiny cups set on a card table, we felt we were being treated with rare and gracious hospitality. Our guide told us afterwards that the green tea had ~~not~~ ~~been~~ ~~so~~ ~~good~~. ~~Anyone who has been in the orient knows how great was the treat given to us.~~

Needs
When we asked what needs in the center we might be able to meet, the following suggestions were made:- Articles may be sent directly to Rev. Yuzura Yamaka, Anasche, Colorado, Care War Relocation Authority. Any portiere or material suitable for curtaining off the apartments, drapes scraps for quilts, materials for children's dresses, sewing materials, yarn, kn knitting and crochet needles, darning cotton, embroidery silks, needles, thread, scissors, ect., material for craft work, paper, paints, crayons, brushes, pictures, prints, ~~the~~ scrap books, or for hanging on the wall, especially for the

children's ward in the hospital, books, magazines, reading matter, magazines to
out up for pictures, all kinds of material for the Sunday school, maps, record
books, charts, pictures, Bibles, quarterlies, etc., rugs or pieces of carpet
to put on the brick floors. The Caucasian home craft director made a special re-
quest for old copies of the "American Home Magazine" and "Homes and Gardens."

To summarize our impressions, we felt that the Government did a great
job in record time. The unfortunate element that was conspicuous all along
the line was the fact that the evacuees arrived long before preparations to
receive them were complete, to their very serious discomfort. Such hardships
have apparently been accepted in a fine spirit by the evacuees but they undoubt-
edly greatly increased the terrible strain of the abnormalities of camp life
which at best must present the gravest physical and psychological problems in
adjustment. Of course they are well aware that no such treatment has been
meted out to the German and Italian nationals within our border, not to men-
tion the American born of these "enemy countries." In the minds of many Americans
we are in the way of creating another festering sore in our democracy which the
rest of the world may well criticize. What future can these evacuees look forward
to? There is hope indeed that since the Government is encouraging them to leave
these Centers as soon as they can secure outside employment many will be rehabilit-
ed. It would be a patriotic service on our part to find employment for as many as
possible. Everyone leaving the center is certified as a loyal American by the
FBI. Let us all do what we can for these people, who, after all, are our fellow-
Americans.

Gift made
by Mrs.
Cloward

Summary