

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. E. R. Smith, Project Director

FROM: Morton J. Gaba

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION report
July 21-August 31, 1942

The work of the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION in the first five and one half weeks of the Gila River Relocation Center centered about the following three major aspects:

1. The selection and development of the staff.
2. The designing, building, and equipping recreation halls and play-fields, and
3. The planning and initial development of a program.

Staff Selection and Organization

The first staff appointments were made from residents who had been employed in the recreation department of the Turlock Assembly Center. All appointments, it was announced, were temporary, pending the filling up of the Project. All appointments, in addition, were made without regard to specific assignments, and workers were appointed in all branches of the program without regard to previous Assembly Center experience. This was done both because the initial program called for all-around workers, and because in some instances the Assembly Center occupational classifications was not acceptable.

As members of the White Zone began to enter the Project, additional workers were recruited from among these applicants.

At the present time, 42 persons comprise the staff of the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION. These consist in addition to activity workers: carpenters, poster artists, office staff, janitor, Red Cross and Boy Scout leaders, librarian, needle-work leaders, and messengers. Thirty-six of these people comprise the staff of the Canal Camp and six of the Butte Camp. In addition, nine workers have been on the staff but no longer so remain, due to termination of employment both voluntary and involuntary.

Within the last week more definite job classifications have been made because of the development of the activity program and better knowledge of the Activity workers' capabilities. The staff of the Canal Camp is now virtually completed with the possible exception of the addition of a qualified Issei (Japanese born) workers, and the addition of such craft, sports, and playground instructors as the expanding program may demand. The work of selecting and organizing the Butte Camp staff is now under way.

Mr. Takeo Tada, a Fresno State graduate and former Japanese Chamber of Commerce

executive secretary has been named Assistant Supervisor of Community Activities for the Canal Camp.

Recreation Halls and Play Fields

The development of the use of recreation halls and the building of play fields has been extremely handicapped by the physical crowding of the Canal Camp. For over two weeks not a single recreation hall was available to the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION, all of them being used for housing. It is only within the last week that the Housing Department has been able to turn the recreation halls back to the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION.

Due to the unevenness of the terrain, the play areas could not be used until they were leveled. Accordingly the soft ball and other field game programs had to be postponed until leveling machinery was available. This week the leveling equipment was made available by the Farm Management Department and five soft ball fields have now been leveled, and bases and backstops made and put in position.

The following club houses have been adapted for Activity use:

1. The Go-Shogi Club. The Go-Shogi Club uses Recreation Hall 23. This hall has been completely equipped with benches, tables, screens, desks, and chairs by the Go-Shogi enthusiasts. Practically all of the lumber was secured from the scrap pile, but approximately \$10.00 was raised from among the members for the purchase of additional supplies.

2. Buddhist Church. Recreation 4 was turned over to the Buddhists for the use as a church. Benches seating over 400 were built by members out of scrap lumber and additional wood for an altar was purchased for the church at a cost of \$17.00.

3. Young People's Club. Tables, benches, card tables, chesterfields, and lounge chairs are being built by the Community Activities carpenters for the Young People's Club which will occupy Recreation Hall 8 as soon as the present housing shortage is alleviated.

4. Judo Club. The Judo Club occupies Recreation Hall 25. Mattresses and Tarpaulins requisitioned from the warehouse have been utilized to make a number of Judo mats.

5. Library. Due to the shortage of scrap lumber, the building of library shelves and receiving desk is proceeding slowly. Detailed plans have been drawn, however, and lumber supplies requisitioned.

As soon as lumber is available, detailed plans will be put into effect to develop a boys' club, women's club, men's club, several social halls and the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION office and equipment room.

As has been mentioned above, six soft ball fields have been built complete with backstops and are in daily use; horizontal bars and rings have been built; swimming pool is in the process of being developed; basketball backstops are being built by the section carpenters; and a survey for a nine-hole miniature golf course is being carried on.

Program

The staff of the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION feels that much of the leisure time program of the Project should stem from the recreation halls. The lack of adequate housing makes the use of recreation halls as substitute living rooms imperative. For this reason plans have been developed so that each age and interest group in the Project can have the use of a recreation hall which they can regard as their own, and to which they can invite their friends for social gatherings and informal entertainment.

To this end a boys' club room is being adapted to provide space for the meeting of boys' clubs and for the development of boys' crafts programs. Already a Boy Scout Troop has been organized which will undertake as its initial project the equipping of this club room. Similarly a model airplane club comprised of 45 members plan to utilize the craft section of this club room.

To date the girls' club room has not been utilized due to the fact that the residents are still living in this allotted recreation hall, but plans have been drawn up which call for the development of a girls' club room, the building of a model living room and a kitchen so that girls who live in the Project will be able to maintain their former domestic skills in other than classroom surroundings. Similarly, girls' crafts will be stressed.

What is hoped will be one of the most successful of the club room projects is the as yet unnamed Young People's Club. This club is designed to provide lounge facilities for young people between the ages of 18 and 35. A representative committee has been formed and plans are under way to transform the club into a typical lounge which will provide for the young people a place where they can escape the typically drab living conditions of the project. Thus, they plan to equip the club with carpets, sofas, curtains, lamps, and other symbols of civilized living. Much, if not all, of the furniture is being made by the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION carpenters but the profits from the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION dances are used to purchase materials that cannot be made locally. This club room--a name contest of which is being currently held--will also be used for informal discussion groups, music appreciation hours, etc. It is hoped that one end can be partitioned off so that informal recitals and entertainments can be given.

Go and Shogi represent two of the most popular of the Japanese table games. They are played usually by the ¹ssais. The Go-Shogi Club which is practically completed is already heavily used by at least 100 members daily. No formal publicity has been released, however, and it is expected that several hundred persons will use the club within the next several weeks. The development of this club has taken the interests and energies of a sizeable number of men who otherwise might not be assimilated into the normal camp activities.

Several meetings of the Women's Club have been held, and at the start of this week informal classes in the knitting arts got under way in the Women's Club building. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION leaders in knitting, sewing, and crocheting will be in charge of approximately 300 needle workers and regularly scheduled eight hour daily events are in progress. Within a short time groups in flower arrangement will be added to the Women's Club activity program.

The COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION has endeavored to assist the development of religious life in the Project, and a staff worker has been assigned to the purpose to facilitate the religious groups in their programming. A Young People's Christian Council and a Gila Young Buddhists Association are two of the new religious groups which have been organized within the last month. The latter group has a membership of 471. Three Christian services have been held with Caucasian ministers from nearby communities participating. The Buddhist Church was officially opened on August 30.

A number of entertainments and social events have been sponsored by the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION. Community dances have been held weekly with the exception of the Saturday night of August 22, and at the last dance over 500 paid admissions--a charge of five cents per person has been in effect in all but the first dance--were recorded. Intermission numbers were provided by the camp's 10 piece orchestra. Considerable opposition was encountered in the use of mess halls and accordingly, the dance for the evening of August 29 is being scheduled in two recreation halls. Detailed plans for an outdoor dance pavilion have been developed and it is hoped that it will be built within the next several weeks. In spite of a lack of a public address system and outdoor lighting, a community sing was held which attracted over 1700 persons of a total of approximately 6000 people. The facilities of the section office were afforded several blocks in the development of block entertainments and this type of programming will be extended. Similarly, a boys' rally consisting of skits and gymnastic events attracted approximately 1500 spectators. Several meetings of the Drama Group composed of 40 members have been held and detailed plans for an outdoor stage have been submitted to this office. The group is particularly interested in the development of Japanese theater arts.

Two soft ball leagues are at present in operation, a total of 24 teams in all--each representing 16 players. Two nightly games are played. Boys' and girls' self ball leagues are in the process of formation.

The Judo Club composed of over 100 members have arranged three daily sessions. Under the direction of COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION'S several Judo instructors, beginners, intermediates, and "Black Belts" develop their art.

Utilizing water which flows into the canal from an overflow pipe, the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION has called upon a number of volunteers to construct a swimming pool. At the present time a warden who is a qualified life saver is in attendance at the pool at all hours and approximately 30 youngsters use the pool daily. As soon as cement can be secured, the pool will be drained, enlarged, and cemented, so that it can be used by the whole community.

Five issues of the Gila Activities News have been released by this section with an average of 1250 copies of each issue. The paper covers only activities sponsored by this section, and is not intended to be a camp-wide paper. In the absence of a staff member assigned to information work, the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION is about to undertake a twice weekly Project-wide newspaper, and twelve newspaper workers have been recruited--several of them with wide professional newspaper experience. The first issue of this paper will be released September 9. During the first week of the camp's operation schools for children between the ages

of three and nine were organized, headed by nursery and play school teachers who had had experience at the Turlock Assembly Center. Over 100 children were in attendance for several weeks until crowded housing forced the closing of the schools. These schools were turned over to the Education Department for operation.

A number of contacts have been made by the COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION supervisor in Phoenix, Arizona. Discussions with the YMCA, Boy Scouts, several church leaders, and the Red Cross have resulted in not only a development of activities at this Project, but in a promise of donations of recreational supplies. One piano, the only one at the Canal Camp, was secured with the cooperation of the YMCA executive secretary.

Chronology of Events

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Name of Activity</u> | <u>Number Present</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| July 29 | Dance Band Practice | 18 |
| August 1 | Get-Acquainted Dance | 200 |
| 4 | Dance Band Practice | 10 |
| 4 | Planning Committee (Young People) | 18 |
| 5 | Older men's meeting | 15 |
| 7 | Planning Committee | 17 |
| 8 | Benefit Dance | 280 |
| 8 | Women's Club Committee | 24 |
| 9 | Judo Club | 60 |
| 10 | Dance Band Practice | 19 |
| 11 | Judo Club (Black Belts) | 15 |
| 11 | Women's Club Committee | 13 |
| 14 | Drama Club | 40 |
| 15 | Drama Cabinet | 5 |
| 15 | Community Dance | 500 |
| 18 | Boys' Peanut League Meeting | 40 |
| 19 | Community Sing and Talent Show | 1700 |
| 19 | Softball League Rally | 33 |
| 21 | Softball League Meeting | 36 |
| 23 | Talent Show | 350 |
| 24 | Softball League Game | 400 |
| 24 | Softball League Game | 700 |
| 25 | Women's Club Committee | 13 |
| 25 | Softball League Game | 200 |
| 26 | Softball League Game | 300 |
| 26 | Softball League Game | 76 |
| 26 | Miniature Model Airplane Club | 25 |
| 27 | Softball League Game | 250 |
| 27 | Softball League Game | 100 |
| 27 | Boy Scout Organization Meeting | 12 |
| 28 | Softball League Game | 125 |
| 28 | Softball League Game | 200 |
| 29 | Midget Model Airplane Club | 30 |
| 29 | Community Dance | 450 |
| 29 | Softball League Game | 150 |
| 29 | Softball League Game | 75 |
| 30 | Softball League Meeting | 31 |
| 30 | Boys' Rally | 1000 |
| 31 | Softball League Game | 500 |
| 31 | Softball League Game | 80 |
| 31 | Girls' Softball Game | 130 |
| 31 | Talent Show | 430 |
| 31 | Women's Club Signup | 250 |

Total participants in COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
SECTION program to date

8942

Respectfully submitted,

Morton J. Gaba