

McLaren
Unit II
Colorado River Relocation Center
Poston, Arizona
Community Analysis Section

COMMUNITY ANALYST TREND REPORT FROM
MAY 7 to 13, 1945

Relocation--Departures

The number of terminal departures was 27 less than during the previous week. 75 left in the week ending May 12; 30 of these returned to California, an increase in three over the previous week. San Diego County, Monterey County, Orange County, and a few other areas that have received practically no Poston evacuees were among the destinations of those leaving. Clearfield and other farming areas of Utah were still receiving a number of evacuees during the week. Japanese farmers living in that area have been visiting the center and writing to friends here requesting that they go to Utah now; a serious labor shortage exists there.

Army Clearance

On May 12, a meeting of representatives of the Security Command (MP's), Relocation Statistics, and Internal Security discussed departures from the center. Several matters were decided: all work passes will be subject to Army clearance. Passes for people departing from the center will be submitted to the Army, and if the evacuee is free to leave, the pass will be so stamped. The extra clearance performed by a soldier at the departure station will be eliminated henceforth.

Evacuee Committees

With the choosing of the Camp III member of the over-all relocation committee at the beginning of the week, the committee was filled. Camp III also chose three men who will constitute a local committee. It is planned that some of the members of the over-all committee will be paid; an office was arranged for the committee in the relocation building in Camp I. Committee members and Community Council members were hoping that the office could be in the main administration building, but there simply was not space for this.

Fresno Incidents

News reached Poston through several Los Angeles newspapers that shots had been fired into the home in Fresno of an ex-resident of Camp II. This occurred on May 8. More discussion among evacuees has arisen out of this incident than in the case of some of the others that have occurred in California for the following reasons: Mr. S. G. Sakamoto, the owner of the property, was a well-known figure in Poston; and, Sakamoto, on returning to Poston recently, had given a definitely favorable report on conditions in Fresno--the incident seems to contradict his report. Naturally, Camp II people are more concerned than those in the other two camps.

A Los Angeles newspaper also reports that on May 9, a rock was thrown through the window of a building that had been occupied before evacuation by another prominent Camp II resident. This was a more trivial affair, and no great attention has been paid to it.

Parker Incidents

During the past several weeks there have been at least three incidents in Parker involving evacuees. The most recent two were on May 7 and May 8. It is reported that both of these consisted of unprovoked attacks on Nisei on the streets of Parker.

Considering the fact that many Parker residents are decent people, and considering the fact that the businessmen there desire the trade of both appointed personnel and of the evacuees from Poston, it seems logical that members of the Parker community would work out a system for controlling the more fascist-minded residents. There was some indication at the end of the week that efforts were being made to do that. There was also the possibility that the men responsible for the incidents will be prosecuted.

Combining of Mess Halls

Discussions have occurred sporadically since the beginning of this year on the question of the combining of mess halls. When the mess hall in Block 221 was ordered closed, and the people were told to eat in Block 222, many evacuee leaders in Camp II felt that a mistake had been made. There had been no previous consultation with the people in the blocks concerned.¹ It happened that the population of Block 221 was smaller than that of Block 222; however, the Block 221 mess hall was the more centrally located of the two. After the 221 kitchen was closed on April 24, some of the people of that block have had to walk two blocks to eat.

Leaders in Camp II have requested that when Block 222 reaches 150, its mess halls be closed and 221, the central one, be reopened. This is acceptable to mess operations--the 221 kitchen has not been dismantled.

Because of the feeling that the closing of mess hall is a matter for prior discussion among the people affected, advance preparations are being made by evacuees in anticipation of further closings. Meetings have been held in two quads in Camp II, and the mess halls that can best be closed have been designated by the people. Notices of the decisions of these meetings have been sent to appointed members of the administration; when the anticipated drop in population occurs in certain

¹The Project Steward explains that the population of 222 was still above 150; hence, it could not have been closed, and consultations would have resulted in the same decision.

blocks, suggestions as to the mess halls to be closed or combined will already have been made, and the people will be prepared for the change.

Closing of Schools

A group of 20 Christian ministers and Buddhist priests, constituting the Federation of Religious Organizations in Poston, wrote to Dillon Myer during the week concerning the schools in the center. They stated that they uphold the program of WRA, but in view of the fact that there will still be people here next fall, they requested that schools be kept open until the center is closed.

V-E Day

V-E Day, and the days preceding and succeeding it, were quiet in Poston. The schools held programs appropriate to the event. There was some hope among evacuees that a half-holiday would be declared, as has been the case on certain other special days, but this was contrary to the instructions that had been received from Washington.

Families and friends of Nisei soldiers were particularly happy about the news.

A number of evacuees have predicted, as they have been predicting since it became clear that Germany would be defeated soon, that public opinion toward American Japanese would become less favorable. They reason that with the concentration of effort in the Pacific, there will also come an intensification of anti-Japanese propaganda. This, they believe, will lead to an increase of hatred toward American Japanese.

Suicide

A bachelor in Block 15 hanged himself on the night of May 11. He was found on May 12. His reasons for this act seems to have been personal ones--there does not seem to have been any connection between his death and the coming closing of the center. Evacuees are saying, however, as they have said before, that there will be many more suicides before the centers are closed.

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