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**WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY  
Colorado River Relocation Center  
Poston, Arizona**

**FINAL REPORT  
Community Activities Section  
November 16, 1945**

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## **ORGANIZED RECREATION IN POSTON**

### **I. ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION**

The Colorado River Relocation Center was established by the Office of Indian Affairs in agreement with the War Relocation Authority, which was charged with the general responsibility for the care of people of Japanese ancestry removed from the Pacific Coast in the spring and summer of 1942. This center was administered by the Indian Office but in accordance with the general policies established by the War Relocation Authority. An unavoidable result of this dual authority was a certain amount of confusion and occasional conflict in policy and administration. In particular instances the application of Indian Office policies and administration permitted a freedom of action that was not possible at other relocation centers. The dual authority did not, however, have much direct influence on the development of Community Activities as the Indian Office did not have so long an established program of community recreation as it had in the fields of education and health. In general the Community Activities Section looked to the War Relocation Authority for guidance on policy. On January 1, 1944, Poston became solely responsible to the War Relocation Authority. A certain independence of action continued to characterize the center as a result of the unique division into three units and the former division of responsibility between government agencies.

Since Poston had been established under Indian Service there was a certain variation in nomenclature from that established by WRA. For simplicity the names of project organization subdivisions will be given according to those used at the time of writing this report.

The Colorado River Relocation Center was administered by the project director. Directly responsible to him were a number of Division chiefs, varying in number, but finally stabilized at six: Administrative Management Operations: Community Management: Relocation: Reports: Legal. The first three were the main operating divisions. Community Management, or Community Services as it was first and more accurately known, was

administered by a division chief who was responsible for the work of the subordinate sections. From May 1942 until July 1943, these comprised: Education, Family Welfare, Education, Health, and Community Activities. At a later time Internal Security (police), Community Analysis, Community Enterprises, and Community Government were transferred to the division.

The Community Management Division was, in general, charged with the administration of various welfare and service agencies that ordinarily form part of a modern municipal government. It should not be thought that this quasi-logical organization of services and administration was fully developed prior to the opening of the center. A relatively few people who had been detailed by Indian Service or recruited from private or public agencies were charged with very general responsibilities for developing various aspects of project life as they could be foreseen. The actual elaboration of the organization and determination of the program went on during the months of intake of residents and there was a consequent fluidity of structure that falsified any organization chart before it could be duplicated and distributed. In general organization developed as needs were made apparent and as personnel were found.

### **A. ORGANIZATION OF THE SECTION**

The organization of the Community Activities Section, or Recreation Department, as it was first known, followed the pattern sketched for the project and division as a whole. Approximately coincidental with the arrival of the first evacuees, a representative of the WRA San Francisco Regional office was detailed to Poston to establish a recreation and adult education program. He was Dr. John W. Powell, who had had a number of years experience in adult education programs in and near San Francisco, California. He found on his arrival that there was no problem of stimulating interest in a recreation program. Already there were many bewildered people with nothing constructive to do who were frantically anxious to reconstitute the familiar patterns of clubs, sports, churches, and schools as they had known them in their California homes. What occurred can best be described in Dr. Powell's own words taken from a private letter he wrote soon after coming to the center.

“I got here on a Saturday morning. On the next Saturday I wanted to have the recreation force and program in skeleton form at least, but complete within that form. I got sick on Thursday and didn't get up until Sunday.; my deadline was more than met by the workers. We had taken all applicants as they came - and they came fast, hoping that we would be an easy assignment, or else having real experience and training in one or another field of recreation or group work that they wanted to put to use.

“By Wednesday, I had some thirty workers - in team sports, club work, group work, pre-school, toy and craft music, art, and religious activity (which like library and education is regarded here as recreational.....)

“We had started on classification and organization of our staff when I went down and when I got up, it was done: a very good and thorough organization into sub-groups and functions, with leaders, the leaders forming a boys' staff and a girls' staff (adults included), and together making a staff group that meets with me daily and also with their own workers; and most of them have the programs started. I finagle the administrators - the engineers, and such, and got levelers to pry out my ball fields and got trucks for us to raid the warehouses; and in return sent the boys down to fill mattresses or whatever seemed hard at the moment.

“Team activities are starting - soft ball, volley ball, badminton, players are getting their places ready or using what they find. Girls' club work is well started, and M. is holding a mother's meeting tonight..... Next to her is H.....who has a fine sensitive grasp of action. Directly under and around each is a half dozen superior younger people on a sort of probation as team managers, recreation hall supervisors, and errand runners. Other older and younger (35 is old in this group) are forming interest groups and teaching groups - wrestling, boxing, judo, ballroom dancing, and sewing....

“So now I'm starting on adult education, which no one has heard much about - and those who have, seldom understand.”

The problem of the supervisor was to bring into some orderly structure the various interests already existing and to assist them in obtaining the necessary space and equipment in which to operate.

## **1. Intra-section organization**

A problem that never ceased to vex the section was that of combining a functional organization with a geographical separation into three units relatively isolated in space and composed of persons of widely differing habits, and expectations. Each unit was organized on a functional basis. A Community Activities Office was established under the direction of a coordinator (evacuee) who supervised the office and acted as chairman of the department heads of the working units.

### **a. Office Staff**

Each unit office contained, in addition to the coordinator at least one secretary who was responsible for time and employment records, section files, and who prepared memos and letters needed by the coordinator. After the acquisition of a public address system for each unit the PA crew chief and the head of the movie crew in Unit I were in the coordinator's office. There was usually one person responsible for the procurement of supplies and equipment.

In the autumn of 1942 a coordinator of Issei activities was appointed in Unit I. It was felt desirable to establish this position as the Nisei coordinator was not well enough equipped in the Japanese language to deal effectively with the Issei.

### **b. Operating Units**

The subheadings under which the working units are grouped are descriptive and do not represent lines of authority which ran directly from the coordinator to the working units.

#### **(1) Organizations and group work**

Evacuee leaders were responsible for the development of boys' and girls' club work including boy scouts, girl scouts, YWCA, and YWCA.

The Christian and Buddhist churches were united in an inter-faith council of the ministers of both groups. An American Red Cross Chapter was established under evacuee leadership.

#### **(2) Cultural Arts and Recreation**

Under this heading can be grouped music, fine arts, wood carving, toy making, drama, and sewing.

#### **(3) Adult Education**

An extensive program of adult education was projected in the summer of 1942. This was designed to provide cultural and vocational outlets to the Japanese speaking adults, collegiate and vocational opportunities for out of school nisei, and pre-school centers for young children.

#### **(4) Services**

The operation of public address systems, the movie projector and library service were each under the direction of an evacuee responsible to the coordinator.

## **2. Relation to other sections**

### **a. Education**

The Community Activities Section was established prior to the Education Section, but with the opening of schools in October 1942, cooperative arrangements were set up.

An elementary teacher was assigned to the direction of pre-school work. The pre-school teachers were retained on the Activities payroll until the spring of 1943, but the training of the leaders and the operation of the program was placed in the hands of the Education Section.

At the same time the school librarian assumed responsibility for the technical supervision of the public library staff. The supervisor of arts and crafts also acted as advisor to the similar interest groups.

A less formal but very close cooperative relationship was maintained between the Activities athletic staff and the school physical education program. Personnel and equipment were freely loaned and it was frequently difficult to determine whether a particular event was sponsored by Education or Community Activities.

In general, it may be said that the Education Section and Community Activities shared equipment, personnel and facilities wherever possible in order to avoid duplication of effort and expense. This is particularly true of Unit I where for more than a year the schools did not have a separate school plant.

It was true, of course, that occasional conflict in use or program occurred but these problems never became of major importance. The contact was maintained by frequent personal contact between the heads of the section, the principals and coordinators, and among those in face to face relationship in programs affecting school age groups.

### **b. Other Sections of Community Management**

Cooperation with other sections of the division such as Health, Welfare, and Community Analysis, was less close as the programs did not parallel each other to the same degree. The Activities supervisor endeavored to keep himself constantly informed on the program of the other sections and where possible to cooperate in their completion by providing personnel and equipment or by undertaking complementary programs as in the use of public health material in adult English classes and in the Infantile Paralysis campaigns. The Red Cross Chapter at all times maintained very close connections with the health and welfare programs, as it carried on work that duplicated or extended the programs of those two sections.

### **c. Other Divisions**

The section maintained close contact with the relocation program through the person of the supervisor. In 1942-3 student relocation advising was actually a part of the adult education program. After that work was transferred to the Relocation Division and the Education Section, the section continued to assist by arranging forums and discussion of relocation problems and by showing relocation movies. The evacuee personnel of the Activities Section felt, however, that they did not wish to be too closely identified with the relocation program as they were afraid that this would impair the confidence which the community had in their work. This should not be taken to mean that the leaders in the activities work were opposed to the relocation program. They were not and many were among the first to take advantage of the leave program, but they did feel that with the considerable amount of passive resistance to relocation pressures, a too ardent support would cause mistrust and misunderstanding.

The section had little contact with Operations or Administrative Management in connection with the development of their activities program. The successful operation of the program required the cooperation

of these two divisions in budgeting, property accounting, and construction and maintenance of facilities. In general it may be said that the individuals with whom it was necessary to deal were personally interested when they understood the purposes of the activities work, but that when this understanding was lacking or other center operations seemed more urgent, there were delays and misunderstandings. In many cases this arose from the necessity of applying general government procedures to a situation where they were not well adapted and to people to whom government regulations were unfamiliar and appeared arbitrary.

### **3. Relations to Evacuee Groups**

No evacuee advisory board for community activities was ever established at Poston. It was generally true in Unit I that the activities program operated directly with interest groups. Cooperation or collision with evacuee groups occurred at sporadic intervals over particular problems. When these occurred, the evacuee population was generally represented by members of the local community council.

In Units II and III more regular and harmonious relations with the local councils prevailed. The reasons for this fall in the general field of community organization and administration and cannot be discussed here. As a result, however, the coordinators regularly met with the council and unit administrative staffs for discussion of problems and development of program. When a special program of community wide interest was undertaken, it was usually directed by a joint group of which the activities supervisor was an important but not usually the dominant member.

Certain of the particular programs had their own advisory boards or committees. This was true of the public library, the Japanese Drama, Japanese sports, Churches, Red Cross Chapter, and YWCA. The last had an advisory board of interested evacuee and non-evacuee women.

## **B. PERSONNEL**

All center employment was divided into two categories, appointed and evacuee. The former were non-Japanese appointed to supervisory positions with regular civil service grade and salary. The evacuee workers were recruited from the center residents and were non-civil service and were paid on a scale varying from \$12 to \$19 per month. The positions filled by appointed personnel were, for the most part, those which required training and experience not found among the residents or which because of the special nature of their duties, were thought unsuitable for evacuees. All other project work was performed by evacuee personnel including many positions that also required training in finance, engineering, law, medicine, and teaching, and which involved the supervision of considerable numbers of workers.

### **1. Appointed Personnel in Community Activities**

In practice there was never more than one appointed staff member in the Community Activities Section, Dr. John W. Powell directed the work of the section from May 1942 to June 1943. He had had a number of years of experience in college teaching and in adult education work in California. He first joined the staff of WRA as an education specialist attached to the San Francisco Regional Office. He was detailed to Poston and arrived at the center on May 16, 1942. In the course of the summer he was transferred to the center staff. Following his promotion to chief of Community Services and subsequently to Assistant Project Director in charge of Community Management, he retained a direct personal interest in the Community Activities program and continued to advise on policy and other problems. During the period from October 1944 to March 1945, he again assumed direct responsibility for the section in the absence of a supervisor.

On June 8, 1943 Dr. Walter Balderston was appointed Supervisor of Community Activities. He had come to the center on October 1, 1942, as a volunteer detailed by the American Friends Service Committee to assist

where possible in the adult education program. He served as supervisor from June 1943 to October 1944, at which time he was detailed to work with Family Welfare, and transferred to the Relocation Division in January 1945.

A new supervisor was appointed in March 1946. She was Miss Ruth Green, who had considerable experience in group work in Washington, D. C. She transferred from the War Manpower Commission. In June 1945, she returned to New York City for personal reasons and later transferred to the district office of the Relocation Division in that city.

From July 1945, until the close of the Community Activities program, various members of the Education Section assumed the position of acting supervisor.

Members of the appointed staff served as volunteer leaders for interest groups. In the summer of 1944 three positions were authorized in the Education Section for summer activity leaders. These were filled by college graduates. Volunteers, supported by outside agencies, did similar work in the summer of 1945.

## **2. Evacuee Personnel in Community Activities**

### **a. Recruitment**

Evacuee workers were recruited from two sources, those with previous training and experience, and those who were inexperienced but were interested. Those with training fall in turn into two groups. First there were the young people, college graduates for the most part, who had had experience with directing group work or training in art and music. They were the persons on whom the leadership of the section depended during 1942. As they were above the average in training and experience, they were also among the first to resettle when the relocation program began operating on a large scale in 1943. A considerable number of them had earlier joined the education staff in the fall of 1942 to serve as school teachers. The second group of trained personnel were Issei who had had training in various Japanese cultural activities such as flower arranging, music, drama, or art. Most had been professional teachers in the Japanese community before evacuation. Others had followed these arts as avocations while earning their living as professional men, storekeepers, farmers or migratory laborers. In the enforced leisure of the center they found time and opportunity to pursue their interests more continuously.

The turnover among evacuee personnel, especially the Nisei group, was always very high. The employment figures of the section reached their maximum in the late summer of 1942. During that summer the recreation program offered employment to all interested as it did not depend upon the creation of specialized equipment and the establishment of expensive and extensive programs. With the establishment of the schools in October and the beginning of relocation with seasonal employment and student relocation, the young people changed positions frequently. Another factor affecting the turnover was the peculiar situation within the center. As there was no very significant wage differential, dissatisfactions with a particular job could be met only by changing to one that offered more congenial employment. As many of the young people were relatively unskilled and inexperienced, they frequently shopped around for one position or section to another until they found a place or job they liked.

Recruitment in the section remained on an informal basis. At no time did it prove satisfactory to depend upon the Employment Division to supply workers. It was always necessary to seek out workers. In most instances when a worker terminated, he or she suggested a successor. This occasionally gave rise to personality conflicts. When these occurred they were usually settled through transfer or voluntary resignation rather than through dismissal. The system did tend to perpetuate certain geographical peculiarities by which certain work groups tended to come from the same area in California.

After 1943 the problem of recruitment became increasingly severe as army service and relocation took a larger and larger number of the young people. It was necessary to drop activities for which no leader could be obtained or to be content with younger and even less experienced workers. A considerable number of school students were employed on a part-time basis.

#### **b. In-service training**

One of the problems of personnel policy that was never adequately solved was that of in-service training for evacuee workers. Three factors contributed to this problem. Until the arrival of Miss Green, the supervisor had not had training himself in the recreational field. Secondly, the geographical separation of the three units made not insuperable but very considerable barriers to regular meetings of personnel of all three units. Lastly, the rapid turnover in personnel throughout much of the life of the center also made it difficult to arrange and carry through such a program. In any similar situation a regular program of continuous training should form an important part of the activities program.

In the spring of 1945 Miss Green organized the Poston Youth Conference. For a week leaders from national organizations such as the YWCA, YMCA, USO, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts came to the center and presented leadership techniques and discussions to leaders of youth groups and to the groups themselves.

Throughout the more than three years of center life specialized leadership training programs were undertaken. Representatives of the National Boards of YMCA and YWCA visited the center on visits of from one to two weeks duration and met with club leaders to strengthen their program. American Red Cross instructors gave several short courses in water safety to the life guards.

The YWCA at the center also made it possible for a few club leaders to attend summer camps and conferences. A representative of the Poston YMCA spent more than a week in Phoenix, Arizona, observing the techniques in that city for dealing with young people and their their problems.

One source of new ideas and suggestions was by visits of members of activities staffs from other centers and visits paid by Poston personnel to some centers. Exchanges of this type were usually limited by transportation and financial conditions, but whenever contacts were made, it resulted in a better understanding of the program and in a greater awareness that the obstacles that seemed insuperable at Poston had been met and overcome elsewhere or at least existed in other centers and were a common problem.

A regional conference of Community Activities and Community Management heads was held in San Francisco in November, 1942, and in Denver in May, 1944. In either case no evacuees attended. The stimulation gained by the appointed personnel from these meetings was of great value. The absence of any evacuee representation at these meetings deprived them of much of their potential value as the effect of the discussion reached the actual participants in the activities programs of the centers second hand at best.

The Supervisor of Community activities from the Washington office of WRA assisted as best he could by providing written suggestions as to program and procedure and by rare personal visits. The personal visits were much more significant in assisting the training and supervision of the problem as they gave both the visitor and his hosts an opportunity to discuss concrete local problems and to work out possible solutions on the spot.

#### **c. Employment Policies**

At the opening of the center no attempt was made to define in any regular fashion the job to be done or the person to do it. As needs developed, positions were established to provide the necessary personnel. This came from the very nature of the center as has already been described. In addition, it was felt necessary to

expand the recreation program as widely and rapidly as possible during the initial months to provide some outlet for interests until other project operations were under way. The figure for the maximum employment in Community Activities is not available. The number seems to have been between 750 and 1,000 in September, 1942. This number began to decline with the opening of school on October 5 of that year and with the recruiting of workers for seasonal employment in the mountain states that occurred simultaneously. It was an unfortunate result of the policy of unlimited expansion that many among the appointed personnel and evacuees alike regarded the recreation program as an elaborate WPA from which workers could and should be obtained.

At the time of the Poston strike in late November, 1942, when all employment policies in Unit I were reconsidered, the supervisor recommended an employment of 400 workers in that unit and approximately 132 in Unit II and 162 in Unit III. At the same time that the quotas were set job descriptions of all positions were written as a guide in supervision and recruiting. At this time the only instructions from the Washington WRA office concerning evacuee employment in Community Activities concerned religious workers. It was forbidden to pay wages to persons engaged in religious work.

In the spring of 1943 the Washington WRA office undertook a general examination of project employment policies to obtain greater uniformity among the centers and to increase the general work efficiency of the evacuee labor force. This culminated in orders issued in June, 1943, that all projects should reduce their project employment 30% before the end of the three-month period beginning July 1. Simultaneously, following Congressional and press agitation concerning administration of the centers, instructions were issued that not more than one person might be employed in each Japanese-style activity in each center. In the case of Poston, this meant each Unit.

Consequently, there was a general examination of the personnel quotas. The order to reduce the Japanese-style activities resulted in the termination of a considerable number of Issei and some Nisei, mainly Judo instructors. The restriction on Japanese-style activities was felt by many residents to be an attack on their political reliability and on their cultural patterns and desires. The orders were accepted however, but not without protest and counter suggestions.

In Judo one instructor was retained on the payroll. The others were terminated, but continued to volunteer their services and may have been compensated from fees collected from the students. The letter rather than the spirit of the regulation was observed by the Japanese drama group by establishing the more important members as instructors in new activities that permitted them to work with the Shibai.

By the reduction in the Japanese-style activities, the initial 10% cut was met and the additional reduction was made by leaving vacant positions vacated by relocating evacuees.

The next major reduction in personnel came in March, 1944. At this time the Washington office issued standard job titles and descriptions with quotas for each such position authorized. This was a much more stringent requirement than the previous allocation of project quotas. A certain amount of trouble was encountered in meeting the new quotas as the numbers authorized did not always make adequate provision for the necessary duplication of positions in the three units. With the exception of the movie crew, it was not possible to establish positions that would serve all three units.

At this time, arrangements were finally completed for the transfer of adult education to the school system. Adult English instructors, sewing instructors some arts and crafts instructors, and music teachers were transferred to the Education Section. It was also necessary to terminate all but four workers in Issei activities in each unit. It was the judgment of the persons involved that those activities necessary for the Shibai should be maintained and the other Japanese cultural activities should be placed on a purely volunteer basis.

The disposition of the sewing schools provided another difficult problem. The sewing schools, particularly in Unit I had always combined a certain amount of production work with their instruction in sewing and tailoring,



This activity was ardently supported by the community, including the local Unit I Council which felt that in the absence of adequate facilities for the purchase of ready-made clothes and the difficulties of home sewing, some form of sewing production was necessary. Attempts had been made to separate the two functions and to reduce the number of sewing workers carried on the Activities payroll, and the number on the staff had already been considerably reduced. On April 1, the ten employed transferred to Adult Education and the remainder terminated.

After the reduction to 150 workers had been effected, no further radical change in Activities staff occurred except for a gradual drop in employment caused by relocation. In the summer of 1944, the variegated array of position titles and job descriptions was simplified by grouping all positions under four titles. These were Assistant Community Activities Supervisor, Group Activities Leader, Club Adviser, and Technical Assistant. No change in function was created by this new nomenclature. If the change had been made earlier in the life of the center, it might have prevented some problems. The use of specific position titles tended to create a rigidity of organization which made it difficult to transfer duties and to reassign personnel to meet new needs. The use of the more generalized titles might have been of psychological advantage in making changes in responsibilities in the section.

#### **d. Pay Scales**

At the opening of the center the WRA pay scales of \$12.00, \$16.00 and \$19.00 were put into effect. The \$12.00 category was soon eliminated in Community Activities. The ordinary workers were paid \$16.00 a month and positions of supervisory nature or requiring an unusual amount of training or experience were classified at \$19.00. No fixed rules existed for determination of the number of \$19.00 positions and there was an inevitable tendency for the number of higher paid positions to increase by upgrading.

In the opening months of the center the Nisei leaders in the section felt embarrassed at accepting a higher pay scale than others of similar age and experience. They would have preferred to have a single scale since wages seemed to be token payments rather than real wages.

This reluctance to accept the higher scale gradually disappeared and a considerable amount of pressure was exerted from time to time for reclassifying positions at the higher level and to resist a down-grading. An initial lack of uniformity in classification in the three units was hard to overcome as the responsibilities in similar jobs were not always equivalent.

The problem was finally settled when all positions were given one of the four titles described above in which the Assistant Community Activities Supervisor was paid \$19.00 and the other three \$16.00.

The pay was universally felt to be inadequate. On this basis some workers felt justified in giving what they considered to be \$16.00 worth of work a month rather than working at maximum capacity. Where the workers were given real responsibility for the program and their imaginations were captured by its potentialities, they performed in a manner that would have been commendable in any job.

One inevitable result of the wage levels was a widespread practice of supplementing the government wages by gifts when a worker performed a special service. For this reason teachers of Japanese cultural activities and the crews operating the public address systems and movie projectors were informally rewarded by gifts of cigarettes or small cash presents. There seems to have been a strongly felt obligation on the part of the Issei to make some token of appreciation for services performed. The Issei had always expected to pay for their entertainment and recreation and were uncomfortable if they did not at least make some gesture of this sort at the center. When the evacuees had not been accustomed to paying for services in their home communities, it was not usually done at the center either. There is no evidence that club leaders and scoutmasters, for example, were given donations or presents at the center.

## **II. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

### **A. PHYSICAL FACILITIES**

#### **1. WRA provided buildings and other facilities.**

##### **a. Recreation Halls**

In the construction of the center each residence block was provided with one barrack that was called a recreation hall. This building was at the corner of the block and faced the mess hall. It was separated from the first residence barrack by a space double that between the other barracks. These recreation halls were unfurnished rooms, 100' by 30', without partitions, ceiling, heating or other facilities.

##### **(1) Unit I**

When Unit I was populated, the recreation halls were the only buildings in which indoor recreation could take place. They were taken over as centers by the various activity interest groups as they were organized and soon drama groups, sports headquarters, churches, and pre-school centers were established in recreation halls over the blocks. Each group had to furnish its own equipment from scrap materials, loans from individuals or groups, or requisitions from WRA warehouses. The buildings were hot and dusty in the summer and cold and drafty in winter.

A conflict soon developed between the organized activities of the center and residents of the individual blocks over the control and use of the recreation hall. Violent dispossession occasionally occurred and argument and protest was continuous. Unfortunately when a block was given a hall or part of one, they did not usually have equipment or leadership sufficient to develop its use and the space remained vacant or used only in a desultory fashion.

The problem was further complicated by the encroachment of other project offices into recreation halls as space in the official Administration buildings proved to be insufficient or inconvenient. By September, 1942, six halls in Unit I were already in use by other sections. At the same time, it became necessary to use most of the remainder for school class rooms as the only available space for school rooms was in the recreation halls.

This meant that only 30 recreation halls remained in whole or in part for all community activities use. Of the available ones, several were occupied by such organizations as the boys and girls clubs, athletic headquarters, public library, Red Cross Chapter, this leaving practically no space for social groups to gather. This situation quieted the conflict between blocks and the activities section for the time as there was very little space for either.

Insofar as possible, multiple use was made of what space there was. The halls had been divided into thirds by removable wooden partitions reaching only to the rafters. This made it possible for the same building to be used for classes on week days and for church or other groups after hours or over week ends. It is not surprising, however, that no one found the situation a satisfactory one. The Education Section lost minor equipment and supplies and found their rooms in disorder when opening school in the morning. The out-of-school groups had to accommodate themselves to school furniture and equipment and could not install decorations or furniture of their own. It should be said that the school authorities, however, showed great patience and forbearance in what was in any case a very disagreeable situation, and the community generally acquiesced in giving the schools priority of use.

The recreation halls cannot be called a desirable solution to the needs for recreation space for a community such as Poston. Their principal advantage was in decentralizing the available space, but this was overbalanced by the resulting difficulty in supervising and directing the program. Furthermore, the halls were usually too large or too small for the groups trying to use them. Partitions were put in, but they were not soundproof. Only when extensive remodeling had been done to install ceilings, wallboards, and linoleum floors were the buildings suitable as offices or club centers, and they never provided adequate space for gatherings of much size.

When the school plants were finally completed, halls were gradually released for recreational use. One more the question arose over who was to determine the use of the space. In 1944, the supervisor entered into an agreement with the local council and block managers by which a committee under evacuee leadership was established that would pass on applications for permanent use of the recreation halls. This worked in a fairly satisfactory manner, but the problem cannot ever have been said to have reached a final determination. For one reason, the particular blocks still wanted to use the space themselves or else determine who else could. On one occasion a major conflict arose when the local council tried to arrange a complicated series of moves by which a diet kitchen for persons requiring special diets could be established. In the end the kitchen was not established, at least one block had protested vigorously and a permanent rift occurred between the Issei Coordinator of Activities, who was also on the council, and several work units under his direction.

## **(2) Units II and III**

Exactly similar recreation halls were constructed one to a block in Units II and III as in Unit I. There was the same problem of who was to use them and how they could be adapted to the needs of those who had to occupy the space. Nevertheless, the problems were never so acute as in Unit I.

The Units themselves were only half the size of Unit I and this meant it was easier to get around the place. Supervision and use were therefore much easier. The two units were not filled so full of people as Unit I and it was possible therefore to house the administrative offices and the schools in vacant blocks and other space rather than the recreation halls themselves. For this reason no special arrangements for assigning use were set up within these units and there seems to have been less controversy on the whole. It was not necessary to insist on multiple use to the extent required in Unit I. Churches, for example, were assigned exclusive use of certain halls from the beginning.

On the other hand, the recreation halls were not partitioned for at least a year after the center was established and this kept small groups from using the space effectively.

## **b. Other Block Structures**

In all three units use was made of empty residence barracks, ironing rooms, and mess halls within the blocks. In each case, it was necessary to reach an agreement with the block manager, and the chef in case of mess halls. The blocks were usually loath to admit activities into empty apartments within the blocks as this interfered greatly with the privacy of the neighbors. In some instances whole residence barracks were assigned to an activities group. In Unit I, the art department, the Block 21 sewing school, the judo club, and one of the Buddhist churches occupied barracks. Some groups were able to use space in the ironing rooms for storage or as work shops.

The mess halls were, of course, used only after meal hours. Adult education classes, dances, and evening forums, were commonly held in mess halls. The blocks themselves used the mess halls for meetings and entertainment places, as seating and cooking facilities were already in place. The opportunity to use the mess hall varied with the temperament of the individual chef and the reputation of the requesting group. Some

mess halls would not admit outsiders under any circumstances, others were more liberal. In any case the mess hall was a makeshift since the already bad acoustics were not improved by the clatter of dishes, and the feelings of the kitchen crew was not soothed by forays into the ice boxes by irresponsible adolescents. Until the completion of the school assembly halls, the mess halls were in general the only places where dances and entertainments requiring the serving of food could be conveniently held. In the mess halls used in this way should be included the personnel mess in Unit I which was made available for parties and meetings. These were usually affairs in which some member of the appointed staff had a particular interest or responsibility.

### **c. School Buildings**

When schools opened in October, 1942, no permanent school buildings had yet been constructed. The rooms that were used for school rooms were made available to the activities groups when possible. When the adobe school plants were completed in 1943 and 1944, the old school rooms were in part assigned to adult education and other groups. The new school rooms were also used for scout meetings and other club groups, adult education classes, summer activities groups, and the like.

A further advance occurred with the completion of school assembly halls in Units I and III. The elementary auditorium was completed in December, 1943. This building contained a stage and an auditorium capable of seating about 500 persons. There was also a projection booth, but it was too far from the stage to be used by project projectors. Community Activity use of this auditorium began even before the Education Section had an opportunity to dedicate the building. A rally and talent show to start the Infantile Paralysis drive preceded the official dedication by one night. From that time on, activities use of the building was very heavy. The Christian Church held its Sunday evening service there, dances, special movies for which admission was charged were held there, craft and flower arrangement exhibitions were put on there.

In order to schedule the use of the building, a committee representing the Education Section and the Activities Section was appointed. It scarcely ever functioned, however, and the scheduling of programs was carried on by the evacuee assistant superintendent of Education. The Education Section generously allowed full use of the building at times when it was not required by school programs. Other activities were treated on a first-come- first-served basis. It was inevitable that occasional misunderstandings through inadequate clearance or misadventure occurred, but from the point of view of the activities program, the completion of the assembly hall was one of the most useful contributions made by WRA to the program.

A larger auditorium at Unit III was completed in the early summer of 1944 and the high school auditorium in Unit I, twice the size of the elementary school auditorium, was dedicated in the fall of 1944. As these were in existence only a relatively short time, the use of them was not so heavy. The high school auditorium was too large for many functions and was located at one edge of the Unit rather than at the center.

## **2. Evacuee-Initiated Structures**

As soon as the evacuees arrived at the center, they set to work to improvise recreational facilities. In most instances the completion involved a considerable amount of assistance from center personnel in arranging for the use of equipment and in the provision of a limited amount of equipment and supplies.

### **a. Athletic Fields**

One of the first facilities to be created after the arrival of the evacuees was space for soft-ball games. Each block fronted on one or more firebreaks that provided open ground large enough for soft-ball diamonds. At first the leveling of the bare ground was sufficient. A little later backstops were improvised out of logs, or scrap lumber and chicken wire. In Unit II split cottonwood logs made rather attractive back-stops. The soft-

ball fields were never seeded and presented a problem of dust control. This was met in part by sprinkling with water. Sprinkler trucks were used to sprinkle the center roads and these could be borrowed to prepare the fields. During the summer of 1942 maintenance crews of the Activities Section kept up the fields, but after that the work was done by volunteers, either team members or block residents who had a particular interest in one of the fields near their block.

Basketball courts were erected in much the same fashion in the fall of 1942. Many blocks made basketball courts in the open area within the block which was used by the block team and usually could be called on for league competition. Some were erected in the firebreaks. The floor of the court was always dirt, or rather, the native clay dampened and pounded. The baskets were erected on a framework of cottonwood poles or scrap lumber. The poles were obtained from trees growing near the river about three miles away and project trucks were used either by permission or secretly to bring back the heavy uprights. Six courts in Unit I and at least one each in Unit II and III were wired for night play. In most cases the poles for the lights were cottonwood poles with homemade reflectors made from empty food cans attached to the top. The power was taken from the block electrical circuit which involved the tacit approval of the Operations Division, although the latter did not regard the lighted courts with enthusiasm, as the lighting circuits were already overloaded with the requirements for domestic use.

Golf courses were laid out in open areas adjoining each unit and golf enthusiasts practiced their game in the evenings and on weekends. The greens were simply leveled areas, but it provided a place for sport.

Two Asphalt tennis courts were laid out in the winter of 1944 in Unit I. Unfortunately, no back stop for the one to be used by evacuees was constructed so that it was not in much demand. By the time the court had been laid down, most of the tennis fans had already relocated. A dirt court was laid out in Block 6 in the space where two barracks burned and this one was used by a number of the young men although there was no formal tennis organization.

## **b. Swimming Pools**

### **(1) Unit I**

The intense summer heat in the Colorado River Valley made swimming facilities one of the prime necessities. As soon as the main irrigation ditch was brought into Unit I, steps were taken to use it for swimming. Two centrally located places along the ditch were widened to form ovals approximately 100 by 30 feet. The bottom remained that of the dirt of the ditch and no shades or other facilities were constructed. Heavy recreational use resulted, however, and during the winter of 1942-3 the life guards devoted their efforts to improvising the two sites. The bottoms were dredged to a maximum depth of about 12 feet and gravel was brought in for the shallower portions. Sections of telephone poles were laid along the banks as a protection and a shade of poles and branches was erected along the west side to provide shade for the swimmers and the life guards. In the main ditch channel in the center of each pool wooden platforms were erected for divided platforms and to break the flow of water in order to make it more satisfactory for swimming. No dressing rooms nor sanitary facilities were constructed. Lights were put in to allow for night swimming.

### **(2) Unit II**

Following the inspiration of Unit I, the Unit II appointed personnel administrator with evacuee leaders drew up plans for a pool in Unit II to be constructed in the main ditch in the center of the Unit. This provided for two wading areas, a deep main section for swimming, and a large ramada or shade. The irrigation ditch was not completed until the spring of 1943, but the pool was in constant use after that date during the warm months. The material employed was green poles gathered from trees by the river. In this

pool, as in Unit I, the use of irrigation water was not satisfactory as its purity was generally in question and the water was always somewhat dirty and full of water weeds.

### **(3) Unit III**

The main irrigation ditch was never completed to Unit III. For this reason, it was necessary to make other plans. A swimming pool was projected as part of the Poston Square Garden project in the center of the Unit near the Shibai stage. This pool was constructed of masonry and was filled from the domestic drinking water supply of the Unit. Supplementary chlorination was obtained by adding chemicals to the pool after it was filled. The pool was surrounded by a concrete walk and wire fences and at the entrance toilets and dressing rooms were constructed. A high diving platform was constructed at the deep end. The pool measured 151 feet by 62 feet and varied in depth from 4 feet to 12 feet. The water was replaced by draining and refilling. The walls were scrubbed down when the pool was dry. This was done about every ten days.

### **(4) Colorado River**

One of the first discoveries of the residents on their arrival at the center was that the Colorado River was only about three miles from each unit. Paths were soon made by which persons could walk to the river and a rough automobile road permitted access by some trucks. Little was done to improve the swimming conditions and the river remained a source of considerable danger as it was swift and deep. Nevertheless, large numbers of persons hiked to the river for picnics, swimming, and overnight camps. No safe water supply existed and water and other provisions as well as sleeping equipment had to be carried or transported. As many as several hundred would hike from each unit to the river on a Sunday. During the first months, life guards were maintained at the river, but following the completion of the Unit pools, these were removed.

## **c. Outdoor Stages**

### **(1) Unit I**

On the arrival of the residents at the center there was no place at which outdoor entertainments or meetings could easily be held. The group interested in the presentation of the Japanese dramas quickly went to work to construct an outdoor stage. This was made of scrap lumber and some material supplied by the Operations Division. The stage had a framework of 2 feet by 4 feet from which scenery could be suspended, and a runway extended from the left of the stage as required by the Japanese classical dramas. The area under the stage was used for storage of properties and as rehearsal rooms. Electric wiring was provided for night performances.

Improvements went on constantly. A roof and walls of board were constructed, and a costume room of adobe brick was added. A linoleum floor was placed on the rough board stage. The materials involved were, in general, bought from funds donated by the residents, but some, including used lumber, came by legitimate or other means from project supplies. No seats were provided for the audience who either brought their own seats or else stood at the back. On special gala occasions school chairs were borrowed to provide seats for special guests.

The stage was used not only by the Shibai Society, but also for showing movies once a week, for school assemblies and commencement mass meetings and forum discussions and other project-wide functions to which a large audience was expected to come. The generally clear weather of the center made outdoor meetings possible throughout the year, but the chill of winter nights and spring dust storms were discomforts to be endured.

A second and smaller stage was built in Block 59 at the opposite end of the Unit from the Shibai stage. This stage was never more than a platform with a skeleton from which ourtains and scenery could be held. Movies, Shibai, and occasional meetings were held at this stage. The area would accommodate an audience of only a few hundred and since it was located within the residence block, any activity at the stage disrupted the activities of the block. For these reasons it received relatively little use.

## **(2) Unit II**

A similar stage was constructed in Unit II in the fall of 1942. It was located at the northwest corner of the Unit in a natural depression with a few large cottonwood trees that gave it the name of "Cottonwood Bowl". This stage followed the same plan as that of Unit I and was used by the same groups. As no school auditorium was ever built in the unit, the stage was used for all community functions of any size until its destruction by fire in the summer of 1945.

## **(3) Unit III**

A small stage was built in the center of Block 310, the block set aside for offices. This stage was small but was used for community meetings and dramatic performances. In 1944 a large stage of adobe bricks and plasterboard was constructed near the swimming pool. It again followed the general plan of the stages of the other two units. The audience area was surrounded with an adobe wall about 5 feet high to protect the audience from the wind and to control the spectators. The stages was used for movies and other activities commanding a large audience.

### **d. Parks and Picnic Places**

The mesquite which covers the Colorado River Valley was cleared from the land on which the center itself was located, but the trees remained around the boundaries of the residence area. The residents of Unit I, especially those in the adjoining blocks, created a natural park along the northern edge of the Unit where a sluggish stream wound its way. The undergrowth was cleared out and a few benches were constructed so that the area became a favorite place for informal picnics. The area was named Wade Head Park, after the Project Director. During the summer of 1943, a simple amphitheatre was constructed with an earthen stage for church services of the Christian church in the evenings.

## **B. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

It was early announced that the WRA would not supply funds to finance the recreation and adult education programs except for the provision of personnel. This decision seems to have been based on a conviction that funds for these programs would be attacked by interests unfavorable to the general program of the Authority and that as little cause for offense should be given as possible. The rigor of this policy was later modified and some equipment was provided from government funds. Another factor in the situation was the limited supply of recreational material that was available in the open market.

### **1. Government Equipment and Supplies**

The major items of equipment for the section that were provided out of government funds were as follows:

- a. Two motion picture projectors. These were utility type, 16 mm. sound projectors. They were used nearly every night of the week and it is surprising that they survived the three years in any useful form. The machines required a considerable amount of repair and during the last year had become very inferior, especially the sound. Larger and heavier machines would have been better.

- b. Three public address systems with record player. These systems were obtained in December, 1942, and were used constantly outdoors and inside for the next three years. They performed quite adequately and were in constant use. No groups of any size could have been held without them.
- c. Portable sewing machines. These were machines that had been used in WPA sewing centers and were transferred to the center. Some of these were assigned for school use. The remainder were assigned to sewing schools or were distributed among the blocks for use by the residents. There were never enough machines to meet the demand for sewing and the property records and maintenance took the full time of one man, but the center would have been crippled without them. Over 200 were assigned to the center.
- d. Office furniture and minor equipment. A few desks, files, tables, and minor office equipment were supplied to the section, Most of the activities supplied their own typewriters and made their own desks and tables. Office Services was drawn upon for supplies of paper, carbons, mimeograph supplies and the like.
- e. Other supplies. One unexpected and important item was the provision of ice during the hot weather. The excessive heat made the provision of cooled water essential to any continuous operation during the hot weather and ice was delivered daily to activity centers as well as other project operations. When available, other supplies such as paint, linoleum, plaster board, electric wiring and the like were obtained by requisition or arrangement with the section having such supplies.

## **2. Non-Governmental Equipment and Supplies**

No attempt can be made to list the materials and equipment which were supplied by evacuees. These varied from mimeograph machines and public address systems, to lapidary machines and Shibai costumes. Six pianos were brought to the center as loans by private individuals who had stored them in a church in Los Angeles. In general, great generosity was shown and unselfish willingness to contribute private possessions to public use.

## **III. PROGRAM OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES SECTION**

### **A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM**

A picture of the birth of the Community Activities Program at Poston has been given in Section I-A of this report in describing the initial organization of the Section. At all times the organization has been subordinated to the program itself and grew out of it. No general instructions from the Washington office were issued until the appearance of Administrative Instruction No. 73, dated December 26, 1942.

In this Instruction it was stated that the Community Activities program "includes the whole range of formal and informal associations and leisure-time pursuits in which residents of the projects take part. In general, the community activities should be initiated by the evacuees themselves and should be under their direction." It was further urged that while no bar to traditional Japanese activities that are not political in aspect should be interposed, the identification of evacuees with groups typically American in concept should be encouraged. Maximum participation of the residents in the activities program was encouraged.

The general precepts just quoted characterize the administration of the program at Poston. The supervisor conceived it as his responsibility to coordinate and facilitate interest groups, but there was relatively little attempt to crusade for the establishment of activities simply because they were customary elsewhere.

By the autumn of 1942 the general pattern of the activities program was already established. An outline of this structure has already been given in Section I-A-1. The particular programs of the individual will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections. It will be seen that the program covered a large field and reached



most of the major elements in the population to a greater or less degree. The fundamental distinctions between programs in which the residents actively participated were based on age groups, and in this community, the consequent differences of language and cultural interest.

The groups in which persons over thirty-five took part were these which fell under the heading of Japanese-style activities. Japanese games such as go-shogi, music, drama, flower arrangement were almost exclusively interests of the Issei part of the community. Adult English belonged to the Issei women, but was carried on as part of the adult education program. Sewing was another interest of the elder women that was not specifically Japanese in content.

The interests of the Nisei were American sports, American-style social clubs, American music and entertainment including social dancing, and a certain amount of vocational training that would lead to technical careers. In the first year of the center the leadership in these activities came from highly Americanized Nisei who were ignorant of their parents' culture and could not accommodate themselves to the old-world patterns that the latter followed. One group of Nisei that could not easily be fitted into the pattern of activities were young people who were from families and communities in which the Japanese cultural element was strong and therefore did not fit in easily into the activities of their own age group. In many of these emotions aroused by the evacuation process produced a resentment against too active Americanism which seemed to parrot phrases on democracy and constitutional rights when those rights had just proved all too hollow. There remained, therefore, a group, mainly of out-of-school young men, for whom no adequate recreational provision was ever made except for those who participated in the sport program.

The pattern thus established of Nisei and Issei activities remained throughout the life of the center. But relocation centers, like other communities, are subject to fads and fashions as well as more fundamental movements in behavior. The polishing of mesquite and ironwood which occupied the leisure time of many in 1942-3 was replaced by an enthusiasm for manufacturing lapel ornaments patterned after colored plates of birds and the arts and crafts exhibitions of 1944-5 contained whole aviaries of brightly colored wooden birds.

More fundamental in its effect was the relocation process itself. It was inevitable that the pioneers in resettlement were the most aggressive and Americanized of the young people. The leadership of club and athletic programs was progressively placed in less and less experienced hands and more and more the old patterns of activity were perpetuated except when there was outside stimulus from the appointed personnel or from outside agencies. In time the membership of the most American groups declined also and the out-of-school Nisei groups that had formerly been members of the YMCA and other young adult groups vanished. Nisei activities became school activities in fact if not in name and the separation of the Issei and Nisei realms in the field of recreation widened. This left the Kibei and less Americanized Nisei even further adrift than they had been in the first year of the center.

In the final year of the center a significant change occurred in the young people's organizations. The national organizations which in 1942 had been identified with evacuation and rejection by the country now represented the return to normal living for which the young people now wished to return. As a result there was a trend for unaffiliated block clubs to become scout troops or Girl Reserve clubs, The young people of school age worried about their adjustment to an outside community and felt that through scouting, for example, they could make the transition more easily.

The policy of limiting project employment of persons engaged in Japanese activities established by the WRA from 1943 on did not significantly reduce the interest or participation of the Issei in such groups. Where leaders or instructors were dropped from the payroll, they continued their work and were recompensed by their students. In this the pattern that had existed in the home communities in California was re-established. Judo and Sumo declined markedly in importance after the summer of 1943. In the case of Judo a considerable number of the instructors and students were among those who went to the segregation center in October, 1943,

After that date the Judo classes were mainly young school boys. It may be surmised that some, at least, went to Judo classes in obedience to parental suggestions.

The changing fads in handicraft activities has been mentioned above. There does not seem to have been a significant change in the percentage of the community engaged in craft activity. An amazing number of the Issei continued to do one or another form of handicraft as long as they remained in the center. In general this work was imitative rather than creative, but a generally high level of technical accomplishment was always noticeable. The participation in handicrafts may be partially explained by the fact that the ordinary Issei had only a limited education in Japan, but he had usually worked with his hands and found local materials here with which to work. In the first year of the center there seems to have been a compulsive aspect to handwork as if the individual found an emotional and nervous release in keeping his hands busy and his mind occupied. This was especially noticeable among the young girls who took up knitting. Later the knitting work seemed to assume a more normal function and the work was done less universally and with a diminished sense of urgency. In the same way artificial flower making in 1942 represents, in part, an attempt to overcome the sterile and barren physical environment. When the first flower gardens began to bloom, artificial flowers continued to be made but in a much smaller amount. Another factor in making handwork popular was the usefulness of the objects created in serving as the medium of exchange in meeting social obligations. Birds, polished stones, and artificial flowers were all used as gifts and small presents among evacuees and from them to members of the appointed personnel and outsiders.

The adult education program was a part of the program of Community Activities until April 1, 1944, although in September, 1943, the vocational training had been transferred to the education section. As a result of this amalgamation with the rest of the section, no clear line was drawn between adult education and other recreational activities. At the core of the program was the adult English program and the classes for Nisei in technical and cultural subjects. The adult English classes had in general the greatest vitality. The classes were composed almost entirely of women who had leisure to try to learn English. The instructors were generally evacuees with some volunteer help from the appointed personnel. The methods employed were various and the end result dubious. If the program were being started again, it should have expert direction from the start and qualified teachers. There were never at the center persons with sufficient time or training to undertake a mass education in English for which the need was great. This would have far exceeded the bounds of any formal classes and should have pervaded all project life. As a matter of fact, the women who took the classes did not increase their facility or their confidence enough to enable them to deal independently with members of the appointed personnel.

An elaborate scheme of adult education for the Nisei was started in the summer and fall of 1942. Dr. Powell had just come from a program of adult education which had used study groups which read and discussed certain provocative books as a means to understanding social and individual problems. The project had the interest of St. John's College and other private groups and several groups were started in the fall of the first year. The program soon proved to be unworkable in the form in which it had been projected.

The Nisei of college age proved to be too unsettled by their insecurity arising out of evacuation and their minority position to understand or desire theoretical discussions of social problems. They were also filled, in general, with a desire to obtain technical training and competence as a key to future economic and social security. Nevertheless at least three groups were started and met regularly during the autumn months. The final blow to the program was administered by the relocation process. One of the basic assumptions in undertaking the program in the first place was the stability of the evacuees in the center. As soon as the opportunity to resettle came, it was clear that it was those who were members of the study groups who should and would resettle first. The project was accordingly abandoned in the spring of 1943.

Courses in various fields of science, mathematics, and law were offered and attended throughout the spring of 1943. At first it had been hoped to obtain college credit for work done, but the practical difficulties and the

general lack of sustained study made the effort impracticable. Some individuals did carry on extension courses through arrangements with outside universities and completed the work with satisfactory grades.

In the realm of what may be termed commercial amusements, the center had relatively little to offer. The weekly program of movies was financed by Community Enterprises and put on by the Activities staff. Admission was free and the audiences were always very large. It was usually unwise to schedule other social events for nights when the movies would be shown. There were not, however, facilities or opportunities for informal group recreation of the type represented by the bowling alley, soda bar, and dance hall. Dances were held, to be sure, but they were events arranged for ahead of time and sponsored by a particular group. For many, therefore, recreation after dark was to be found either at home, which was frequently unsatisfactory or else was sought for in restless wanderings with kindred spirits around the center. Groups such as the school teachers and professional workers were accustomed to bridge and other forms of home amusement and could find some outlet to their desires. The older teen age boy, on the other hand, had few resources within himself and usually found home life restrictive and uncongenial.

In conclusion it may be said that the Issei found in the Activities program considerable satisfaction through the various cultural and craft groups they established. The Nisei, on the other hand, had no such simple solution. Those of high school age or younger were offered club and other activities either through the schools or the activities program which gave them some scope for participation and even leadership. The Nisei above twenty-five were limited in number and usually had their own families. They had already, in many cases, made their own adjustment to recreational problems before coming to the center and were able to restore some of the same elements here.

It was the young boy or girl between eighteen and twenty-five for whom the center offered little. There were sports, but they were limited by conditions of daylight and weather. There were some dances but these were at irregular intervals and often were limited in those who were invited. As the pressure of idle boys to "crash" such entertainments grew, the effort to exclude them also increased. These young people had left the school age group and found themselves frequently homeless in both a figurative and also a more literal sense. These young people have also gone out on seasonal work and on terminal leave to such cities as Denver and Chicago where they find many of the same frustrations, but the center did little to make the adjustment more successful. Some of the problems might have been avoided by a greater awareness on the part of those in charge of young people's programs of the extent of the problem. It would have taken a much more comprehensive program with much more in the way of physical facilities to have solved it.

## **B. INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS**

### **1. Athletics**

#### **a. Men's Sports**

##### **(1) Team Sports**

The major part of the men's athletic program was devoted to team sports. Soft-ball teams were organized as soon as evacuees arrived on the center. In some cases these represented preevacuation groups such as boys' clubs and other local organizations that had played in competition among themselves in California. Other teams were organized. Some of these new teams started out as groups of young men from the same California locality and they adopted such names as Bakerfield Pilers and Orange County or Delano. Others were organized from residents of a particular block. Under the direction of the Activities Section, the teams were grouped into leagues according to age and general achievement and schedules of play were worked out. For a time referees were provided by the Section but later the teams were required to find their own officials. The rules followed were generally those currently recognized in the sport with

local ground rules to fit the peculiar Poston circumstances. After 1942 the names of teams came to mean little as players relocated and substitutes were recruited wherever they could be found. The governing authority in the league play was the meeting of team captains and managers who agreed on rules and other conditions of play.

During 1942-3 the major interest lay in the AA League which was composed of players who had played baseball at least as amateurs before coming to the center. The other leagues were made up of school age players. It was an inevitable trend that the athletic program came to be dominated more and more by school students. By 1944 players were grouped into leagues according to their demonstrated ability rather than by any categorical considerations of age.

The soft-ball season lasted from approximately April through September and continued throughout the hottest weather. During the mid-summer the late evenings permitted games to be played after the dinner hour; otherwise they had to be restricted to Saturday afternoon and Sunday. As a result occasional complaint was registered by church groups when games were played during the hours of church services.

A similar program was developed in basketball for the winter months. Leagues were organized and teams from nearly every block and neighborhood entered competition. The smaller number of players involved permitted a greater elaboration of teams and it was estimated in 1944 that at one time about 100 teams were entered in leagues in Unit I.

Hard ball was developed as a substitute for soft ball in Unit II and III, although it never replaced the former entirely. The advantage of soft ball lay in the relatively smaller amount of equipment required.

Football, both touch and tackle, was attempted, but it was never popular. The larger fields did not fit easily into the available areas for firebreaks and the equipment required was either unavailable or too expensive. When games were tried, there were frequent injuries and the sport was dropped by the general consent of all concerned.

Variety in the team competition was obtained by series between league champions of the three Units. A constant struggle was required because of the difficulties of transportation. In general, such playoffs were held and excited considerable interest, but they were subject to unexpected cancellation. Arrangements for such competition were made through the directors of the activities athletic program in the three units. The net effect of this competition was very beneficial, especially in the smaller units as it introduced new faces and new achievements.

In time competition between the units tended to lose some of its attractions and efforts were made from time to time to bring in teams from the outside or from other centers. This proved to be very difficult to arrange because of the prevailing state of public opinion in Arizona and the difficulties of transportation. In July, 1944, a competition in hard ball was arranged with the Gila Center at the latter place.

In the spring of 1945 a basketball team selected by inter-camp competition went to Phoenix where games were arranged through the YMCA and the Industrial USO. The team performed very creditably, although they had not played on wooden courts for three years. The friendly reception given to the team encouraged those who went concerning relocation and the general effect was very good.

## **(2) Other American Sports**

The major athletic interests in the center were the team sports. Boxing, wrestling, tennis, and pingpong were played at sporadic intervals. Occasional competitions were organized, but the participation was limited. Golf attracted the interest of the older Nisei, especially the professional men such as lawyers and doctors, and competitions were held at intervals in 1944 and 45.

### **(3) Judo and Sumo**

Judo had been one of the sports promoted by the Issei in their home communities in California. The schools were sponsored by groups of Issei leaders and the instructors were mostly Kibei who had been trained in Japan. It was inevitable that Judo groups should be established in each unit soon after they were occupied. It was felt that the physical and moral discipline claimed for the sport was beneficial to young men and there was considerable interest in 1942 and 43. The Unit I Judo group found itself the object of some official curiosity in November, 1942, when one of the instructors was involved in the strike. In the subsequent shake-up in project employment, he and some of his friends left the Judo group and the leadership passed to other kibei who do not seem to have taken an active part in center politics, although they were definitely oriented toward Japan. From July 1, 1943, only one paid supervisor was retained in Judo in each Unit and the number of students dwindled to about 100, mostly school age boys. Similar organizations existed in Units II and III. In Unit III the Judo instructors also held classes for members of the police force and their general orientation was more American. As an example may be cited the fact that the records of the Unit I school were written in Japanese while in other units they were kept in English.

An attempt was made in December and January, 1943, to unify the Judo and Sumo groups with the boxing, and wrestling into a school of self-defense which would have the school director of physical education and a member of the appointed Internal Security as advisors. The general purpose was to set up a commando school in which the possible political influences of the Judo group would be kept to a minimum. The latter group was suspicious of the motives of the police and the plan did not come to anything. It was probably impossible of accomplishment as the suggestion involved too radical a break with the existing patterns and no one in the community saw much point to the suggestion.

The Sumo groups were organized in a manner similar to the Judo groups. Exhibitions were held in 1942, but interest declined sharply and instructors were no longer paid after 1943. In general, Sumo seems to have had less of an ideology behind it than Judo and was carried on more as a block activity. It carried with it, however, certain ritualistic attitudes.

Kendo was never carried on in an organized form at Poston. Certain members of the Judo school asked if they might start a Kendo group, but they were told that the administration would not be willing to put Kendo instructors on the payroll and they were advised against starting a private group in view of the widespread suspicion of Kendo that existed in California. The former council chairman, a Nisei, advised them strongly to stop the idea as it was too politically dangerous.

#### **b. Girls' Sports**

Girls sports followed much the same pattern as those of the boys. Soft-ball teams and basketball teams were organized in similar fashion and engaged in league and tournament competition. The number of girls teams was not nearly so large as the number of men's teams, and they commanded a less important place in the mind of the community.

Ping pong and volley ball were also girls' sports. It appears that the interest of the girls was somewhat greater than it was among the men. As far as is known, there was no feminine equivalent of Judo and Sumo, although one class for girls was conducted in Unit I as part of the Judo school.

## **2. Clubs and Organisations**

### **a. Groups Affiliated with National Organizations.**

It was the policy of the WRA to encourage the development of local branches of national organizations. The actual amount of encouragement at the center varied considerably depending on the interest of the evacuees and the amount of attention paid by the national groups themselves.

#### **(1) Boy Scouts of America**

The Boy Scout organization first developed in Unit II where James Hirokawa, coordinator of Community Activities, and James Crawford, the Unit Administrator were personally very much interested in the Scout program. By November 1, 1942, troops had been organized under the Arrowhead (California) Council with headquarters at San Bernardino. James Crawford was the District Commissioner and a relatively complete Scout organization was established in Unit II with over 240 boys enrolled in Scout and club groups. Unit III had 25 organized into two troops and Unit I had no scout organization as yet. Subsequently, three troops were organized in Unit I.

The Scouts attempted to follow as closely as possible the general scout program with occasional assistance from the District Commissioner in San Bernardino and the National Director of Inter-racial Scouting. Regular troop and patrol meetings were held, courts of honor were held at which merit badges and other honors were awarded. The Scouts also acted as color Guards at campwide meetings and celebrations and acted as ushers at send-offs for volunteers. It was not possible to arrange for the Scouts to attend summer camps, although this was attempted in the summer of 1945.

The Boy Scouts put on several paper drives in 1944-45 in which they cooperated with the Parker Scouts.

#### **(2) Girl Scouts of America**

The Girl Scouts were organized also in 1942 with Unit II taking the lead. By December 12, 1942, twelve troops were active. Eventually, four troops were established in Unit III and eleven in Unit I. Eighteen leaders and ten other adults, both evacuee and appointed personnel volunteered work with the Girl Scout groups.

The Girl Scouts of Poston were affiliated with the Regional Girl Scout Headquarters in Palo Alto, California. Miss Vaal Stark, Regional Director of Girl Scouts, visited the center on at least one occasion and a Girl Scout representative took part in the Youth Conference in April, 1945. She worked directly with the leaders and troops and provided a very much needed stimulus.

#### **(3) Young Women's Christian Association**

The center was fortunate in having among its evacuee leaders Maki Ichiyasu who had been secretary of the Japanese YWCA in Los Angeles. She brought with her records of the Los Angeles group as well as leadership material, typewriters, and file cabinets. A YWCA Advisory Board was organized under Mrs. Ralph Gelvin of mixed evacuee and non-evacuee membership and several girl reserve clubs were organized.

Miss Ethel Briesemeister and Miss Betty Lyle visited the center for extended visits during 1942-3 and Mrs. Winona Chambers spent two weeks at the center in May, 1944. Other YWCA representatives took part in the Poston Youth Conference in April, 1945. The national board assisted by financial contributions in helping furnish YWCA centers in Units I and III and offered to pay the salary of a full-time evacuee leader in each unit. Unfortunately, no qualified person could be found for this work. Financial assistance

was also given to help send representatives to regional conferences and Girl Reserve Camps.

The support of the national office was probably the most understanding of any of the national organizations which had local chapters. It was the decision of the Center group, concurred in by Miss Briesemeister not to start a YWCA group in Unit II as the Girl Scouts were already very strong and it was thought wise not to set up a competing organization.

The original Advisory Board became inactive in 1943 because of the relocation of nearly all of its members. A new Board with an evacuee president and a mixed membership functioned from May, 1944, to the close of the center when it liquidated.

The program the final year of the center was concentrated on preparation for relocation. Two representatives, evacuee, were sent to the Regional YWCA Conference held at Little Rock, Arkansas, in the spring of 1944, and two Girl Reserves were sent to the GR Camp near Denver, Colorado, in the summer. In the summer of 1945 the Board decided to use its funds to assist girls to attend YWCA and other summer camps. A total of twelve individuals attended summer camps and reported that they were cordially received and that there was considerable interest in the problems of girls at the centers.

The YWCA program consisted mainly of Girl Reserve Clubs led by volunteers, principally teachers. In the spring of 1945 an attempt was made to organize a Junior Women's Club, but relocation caused the disbandment of the club before it became fully organized.

It must be said that in spite of the excellent program established by the national office, the local advisory board did not entirely accomplish its purpose. The club groups gained the reputation in Unit I of being exclusive and rather snobbish as compared with the Girl Scout program. This is probably the result of the changing club leadership in the center which prevented the club members from obtaining an entirely adequate picture of the YWCA program.

#### **(4) Young Men's Christian Association**

Several of the leaders of the Activities program in Unit I had been active in YMCA groups before their evacuation. Attempts were made to establish an effective YMCA program at the center. An active group under evacuee leadership and with help from the Los Angeles and national offices meet regularly in the spring and summer of 1943, but the members of it were mainly former college students and they all relocated or found other interests.

One evacuee, James Kasai, spent considerable effort in the winter of 1943-4 in trying to revive the YMCA program. He visited Phoenix to see what was being done there, but he was unable to find sufficient leadership to establish active groups once more at the center. At least one Hi-Y club of school age boys was carried on in 1943-4 under the leadership of an evacuee teacher.

#### **(5) American Red Cross**

A full account of the Poston Chapter of the American Red Cross would require a book. The Chapter was by far the most effective of all the community organizations in obtaining the support of the community for its program.

The Chapter was organized in the late summer of 1942 under the Pacific Area Office in San Francisco. A predominantly Issei staff and leadership aggressively set about the organization of the Junior Red Cross, Disaster Relief, Water Safety, Message Services to Japan, Assistance to Families of Service Men, handled in addition a multitude of local problems of a social or welfare nature. A nearly 100% response of the residents was made to the annual appeal for funds.

The Chapter interested itself in nearly every activity and situation that affected the residents and as a result was frequently at cross purposes with such sections as Health, Education and Family Welfare. The Chapter often acted as a go-between for residents in dealing with the administration or took it upon itself to act independently in obtaining aid. By 1944 most of the major problems had reached some sort of compromise or settlement by which the Chapter restricted itself in part to certain activities. The principal value of the Chapter's work arose from its identification with the residents whose interests it desired to serve. There was less understanding of the significance of the National Red Cross program and relatively little interest in it.

## **b. Non-Affiliated Organizations**

### **(1) Local Clubs for Young People**

An undetermined number of formal and informal clubs were formed among the residents. For the most part these had a block membership and the block would act aside a room for their use. The program suffered from the lack of a definite program and skilled leadership, and the tendency for some of them to become affiliated with national organizations has been noted.

One development outside of the Community Activities program was the appearance of Seinenkai in the spring of 1943. These were young men's organizations modeled on similar organizations in Japan of an uplift and social nature. The motivation behind their establishment seems to have been the desire to keep the young men in attitudes and habits that were regarded by the more conservative Issei as proper and to keep them from the more specifically Occidental type of clubs which had programs and customs of which the old people did not approve. As far as is known, these groups were never of great importance and were little heard of after 1943.

### **(2) Religious Groups**

#### **(a) Buddhist Church**

The Buddhist Church in California had divided into sects that had little cooperation with each other. They were staffed with missionaries sent out from Japan and the priests were non-English speaking. A beginning had been made in the training of Nisei priests and one such, trained in Japan, resided in Unit III.

On arrival at the center, the whole basis of the Buddhist Church had been destroyed. It was decided, therefore, to establish a united Buddhist Church. This was done and the resident priests formed one body divided up the center on a parochial basis for services. The priests were first paid by the project, but in the autumn this was forbidden and other arrangements had to be made. Some of the priests took positions with community government that permitted them to carry on their parochial duties and others were classified as janitors. Later on they received their support from the church treasury.

The unified church did not work entirely smoothly. The preponderance of the Shinahu sect and priests of that group was not entirely satisfactory to the followers of other groups and there was a tendency for independent services to be held. On occasions such as funerals, priests of sects not represented at the center, such as Zen, would come from other centers to conduct the service.

The church services were held in recreation halls in the three units except for special services for which the school assembly halls were used.



The religious services consisted generally of Sunday school and Issei Service in the morning and a Nisei service in the evening.

The young people's organization was known as the Young Buddhist Association or YBA, as they called themselves. This group had no sect lines and has a national organization with headquarters in the Central Utah Relocation Center. The group had a large and active membership. Its general program was devotional and social. The leadership was rather aggressive. The YBA was characterized by an inclination to keep their mental horizon that of the center boundaries and its concerns were more specifically local than the Christian groups. The membership tended to be from the rural areas of California such as the Imperial Valley, Orange County, and San Benito Counties. The Association took an active leadership in sponsoring certain activities, especially the Infantile Paralysis Campaign in 1944.

### **(b) Christian Church**

This term at Poston was used for the United Protestant Church. The church was formed early in June, 1942, with ministers of all denominations taking part. Each Unit was divided into parishes and services were held at a recreation hall in each. Where possible, ordained Nisei or theological students were established as young people's ministers. The program of services was similar to that of the Buddhist with Sunday School, Issei Services, and young people's services. The number of Christians was estimated at about 3,000.

The maintaining of a united church was made possible by a very tactful moderator, Reverend Sohei Kowta, of the Presbyterian Church, and the fact that relations with the outside denominations was centralized in one commission representing the interested churches. Salaries were paid to the ministers by their own denominations except in a few cases in which the local church took responsibility.

The contact with the outside denominations was of great importance to the Christian group at the center. It was these groups who had taken the most outspoken stand on the evacuation problem and who represented to the center residents the only evidence in 1942 that they were not totally rejected by America. This relationship was dramatized by the program undertaken at Christmas time of each year by which Christmas presents were sent to the children of the center from outside individuals and churches. The local church was very dubious each year of the success of the venture and was overwhelmed on each occasion by the flood of gifts.

The influence of the outside contacts may also be seen in the relocation program. The active leaders of the Christian groups were among the first to leave for college or for jobs. In many cases they found financial and other assistance from church organizations. For the same reason Christian Issei tended to relocate faster than non-Nisei. By 1944 the Nisei pastors had relocated to finish their studies or to work in the middle western cities among the resettlers.

Within the center the Christian group did not wield a very great influence. They were not important in community government or in the center political activities.

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The Poston Christian Church was evangelical and conservative in its religious and social philosophy. This was reinforced by the fact that the major contacts between the center and outside religious groups was carried on by representatives of foreign and home mission bodies. Most of the visiting ministers were former missionaries to Japan. Their ability to speak to the

Issei was an advantage, but their ability to reach the young people was sometimes less obvious.

Members of the appointed personnel volunteered as leaders of Sunday school classes and other activities and a considerable number attended the young people's services on Sunday evening. No other protestant services were held on the center.

#### **(c) Roman Catholic**

The Roman Catholic congregation numbering a few hundred was cared for by priests of the Maryknoll Fathers. The priest lived in Parker, but spent considerable time at the project. He frequently made himself useful to the evacuees in driving them to Los Angeles, if they had a permit to travel, or to Gila Relocation Center which he also served. A chapel was established in each of the Units and regular services were held. There were young people's organizations as part of the program.

#### **(d) Other Religious Groups**

The major Christian group not represented in the Poston Christian Church was the Seventh Day Adventist group. They held separate services and did not participate in the Christian Church organization. The group numbered less than 100, but their significance in the eyes of the administration arose from the fact that many of the medical staff belonged to this group. They were in a position to make their needs and desires known effectively to the appointed personnel.

As far as is known, there was no Shinto activity and Tenrikyo merged imperceptibly with the Buddhist group. Seichone Iye, a relatively informal group, held occasional meetings.

#### **(3) Women's Club**

The Women's Club, or Fujinkai, was active in Unit I. It was organized on a block basis with quad representatives to an executive committee. The leaders were generally Christian and this resulted in a certain amount of dislike of them and their program. The Club concerned itself with cultural activities such as flower arrangement and made statements on problems of housing, recreation, and welfare at various times. The Club was somewhat more receptive to relocation ideas than the project as a whole and conducted a series of luncheons in the spring of 1944 which were designed to demonstrate table manners and etiquette to persons about to relocate.

#### **(4) U. S. O.**

The organization known as the U. S. O. in Poston was never actually affiliated with the National United Service Organization. Stimulated by the return of a number of soldiers on furloughs to the center and the departure of a large number of the young men to the Army, a number of center groups felt the need of providing some sort of social and service program. Centers were established in each Unit in which a certain amount of social recreation for soldiers were carried on. The interest of families of service men was enlisted and organizations of these parents were formed. Certain members of the administrative staff were much interested in programs for service men and tended to push the evacuees into programs that they were not ready to carry on themselves.

### **3. Issei Activities**

This title is not inclusive of all activities in which Issei took part. It was used at the center to describe cultural and recreational activities of a specifically Japanese character and content. Go-Shogi groups were established among the men and during the first year paid instructors were on the Activities staff.

Issei Activities centered around the Shibai group and its related musical arts. The Shibai concentrated on the presentation of Japanese classical dramas or Kabuki, but informal turns and skits of a topical nature formed part of the ordinary program. By the winter of 1942-3 the groups in each Unit had obtained the use of costumes and had built stages on which the drama could be presented. Each group planned on performances about once each month and then traded performances between units so that it was possible to see some sort of a performance nearly every week. The audiences were large, numbering several thousand, mostly Issei with some Kibei and Nisei among them. The Americanised Nisei tended to stand around the outskirts and made jeering or disrespectful remarks.

The artistic level of the performances tended to improve steadily with experience and training. The performers were all ages and a number of dramas were presented by child actors. On gala occasions members of the appointed personnel were given special invitations and special seats at the front were provided for them.

The subsidiary arts of Odori, Utai, Shigin, and instrument playing were organized separately but students and instructors took part in the Shibai performances.

Another Issei interest group was that concerned with Japanese poetry which met weekly to compose poems in the traditional Japanese styles. The leader, until his relocation in 1944, was very conscious of the possible therapeutic value of the activity in releasing emotions created by the war and the evacuation experience. They published a periodical which contained the poems written by members. In 1944-5 this group was directed by some of the leaders in the community government and expanded its publication to a more comprehensive literary journal by including prose articles in addition to poetry.

### **4. Crafts and Craft Production**

Interest groups in various forms of woodworking, artificial flower making, and sewing developed as soon as the center began to be populated. The reason for the interest has been discussed above. In addition to the creative urge was the impulse to provide articles which would be useful or ornamental in the barren environment of the center and which were not provided commercially. For this reason, production for sale was undertaken by a number of the groups. The policy of prices was to charge for the actual cost of materials and equipment and not for the labor.

#### **a. Craft Groups**

Under this general heading can be included toy making, gem polishing, wood carving, and paper flower making. The leaders were Issei with training in handwork. They bought their own tools and recompensed themselves from charges for products. In addition, classes for students were provided. The number interested in this work varied. As was stated in the general disoussion of the program, interest in particular craft objects varied and the center was swept by fads from time to time. The number of Issei who engaged in some form of handcraft was very large and occasional exhibits of the work were held and widely attended.

Some of the artists and craftsmen found outside markets for their work and sold their products to outside concerns. In the spring of 1944, at the instigation of the Women's Club, an attempt was made to form some sort of regular outlet for handwork through the Community Enterprises organization. The plan never received Washington approval and was finally dropped. The motivation behind the suggestion lay in the opportunity to

provide families with some cash for relocation to supplement the limited WRA funds and to establish contacts and outlets that would be useful to them in doing similar work after resettlement.

#### **b. Sewing**

This activity engaged a major part of the activities personnel until April 1, 1944. Five sewing schools were established in Unit I and one each in Units II and III each headed by a woman who had had some training and experience prior to evacuation. The five schools were formed into an uneasy union in Unit I in which the aggressive personality of the Nisei head of the largest school frequently clashed with the Issei heads of the other schools and with the men at the head of the community government.

The sewing schools gave instruction in pattern drafting and sewing. The classes were very popular and Nisei and Issei women alike took part. Those who could make their own patterns and clothes, but the sewing schools did a flourishing business in making clothes to order. As the only other source for clothes was by mail order or through the Community Enterprises Canteen, neither of which was regarded as satisfactory, the demand for dressmaking was heavy and irresistible. It was felt that it was wiser to allow the sewing schools to continue production work rather than have the individual seamstresses continue their activity without supervision.

In spite of vigorous protests on the part of the sewing schools the number employed was reduced to about 80 in the three units by the winter of 1943-4. In March, 1944, final orders were given to transfer ten to the Adult Education Department of the Education Section. The remainder were terminated.

Negotiations were undertaken to have a dressmaking shop started by Community Enterprises, but the experience of other centers was not encouraging and personality difficulties between some of the key persons involved prevented the working out of the suggestion. In Units II and III the sewing classes carried on under adult education became the sole source of sewing instruction and production ceased. In Unit I a committee of the Local Council undertook to sponsor a sewing enterprise in which the girls would be paid out of their earnings and control of the prices and funds would be in the council.

### **5. Adult Education**

The Adult Education program has already been discussed in connection with the general Activities program. Because of its inclusion in the section, the term was never sharply defined and as used here includes a number of groups of an adult education nature that were never organized into a single group.

For the issei women flower arrangement classes always occupied an important place. The students were mostly members of the Women's Club and the instructor of the arrangement classes for the last two years of the center was also president of the Club. The classes were held in various mess halls and semi-annual exhibitions of work were held.

Music, drama, and art groups existed for Nisei. The last two never were able to attract and held a very large following. The Nisei drama group, after trying for a year to put on a musical show about Poston, dissolved after their theater burned in April, 1943, and the leaders went to Tule Lake in October. The leaders of the group had had experience in Hollywood, but had very little understanding of the possibilities of using the community to make its own plays. A beginning was made in Unit II with the presentation of a Christmas pageant in December, 1942, but the leader of this group volunteered for Army service and the group disintegrated.

The same situation may be said to have existed in regard to art in Unit I. In Unit II, however, one artist, Gene Sogioka, established an active class in watercolors and aroused the interest of two young artists, Gus Nakagawa and Harry Yoshizumi. These two young men worked enthusiastically at classes and in improving their own work and did a great many excellent water colors. They worked closely with the other adult

education groups and an interest in painting continued active until the summer of 1945. The two artists sold their paintings for nominal sums to cover the cost of materials. The paintings were eagerly bought by members of the appointed personnel who wanted them as souvenirs. In the spring of 1945 a number of the paintings were sold for a somewhat larger amount of money to raise money for the three Unit college scholarship funds.

In Unit III, craft and art work was entirely in the hands of the Industries Sections.

The Music instruction was carried on by young women who had had some training and experience, mostly in the piano, and consisted of lessons to young people who desired to learn these instruments.

An attempt was made at a community music program in 1942-3 under the aggressive leadership of a young Nisei man who stimulated the development of a symphony orchestra, put on a choir program at Christmas time, 1942, and got a dance orchestra started in each Unit. The difficulties of obtaining instruments, finding a place to rehearse and perform, and of finding transportation between the units added to the difficulties of his task. Following his entry in the army in the spring of 1943, no comprehensive music program for the community continued except for summer concerts of popular and classical music from records.

Classes in ballroom dancing as well as other forms of the dance such as acrobatic, and folk dancing were given in 1942-3. The instrutors worked in part through the boys and girls clubs.

The academic and adult English program has already been discussed in section III-A under the general program.

## **6. Service Organizations**

The section administered three service programs, the public library, the movie program, and the Public Address System.

### **a. Public Libraries**

One of the first projects to be established at the center was a public library which took over a recreation hall in Unit I. Similar locations were later found in the other two Units. At first the staff had neither books nor library facilities. The major stock which eventually totalled nearly 18,000 volumes, came from donations by church groups, individuals, and libraries and schools in California. Shelves and tables were established and a free lending library was established. Funds totaling a few hundred dollars were allocated by the local councils from Community Enterprises allcoations and from other community funds. A rental shelf of new books was established. When a book had been paid for by rentals, it was moved to the free shelf and a new book purchased.

From October, 1942, the school librarian gave technical training and advice to the public library staff. In general, the results of this cooperative arrangement were successful, but the divided authority gave rise to problems over the final authority and the suggestions of the school librarian were not always accepted by the library staff.

The libraries carried on as much as possible as a public library in a normal community. Reading contests, special displays, story hours, and other special features were held from time to time, especially during the summer. Throughout 1942 the public libraries served in large measure as school libraries until the latter could be adequately housed and equipped.

## **b. Movie Program**

In the summer of 1942 two 16mm. sound projectors of the utility type were acquired by the project and were assigned to the Community Activities Section. The Community Enterprises entered into a contract with distributing houses for weekly movies, including one feature and assorted short subjects. The features were generally somewhat antequated, but as the years went by, this became of somewhat less importance as the community had not seen them when they first were issued. The movie crew showed the movie three times in Unit I at three locations, the most important being the Shibai stage to which the largest audience, numbering several thousand, went and once a week in Units II and III. The movies were shown out of doors and the audience provided its own seats. No charge was made for attending. The total attendance at the movies was very large and included nearly all able bodied Nisei in the center. On big movie nights it was most unwise to schedule other events. The movies were held throughout the winter. The only cancellations of showings came from equipment failure or from rain or high wind. Cold alone was not sufficient cause, although the audiences naturally dwindled.

From 1943 to 1945 various clubs occasionally made arrangements for special feature films which were shown in the school auditoriums and for which a charge was made to raise money for the particular group. Japanese films were also shown on occasion. These were silent films that circulated around the various centers and aroused considerable interest on the part of the Issei. Relocation movies when sent to the center were usually fitted into the regular showings where possible, but the movie crew felt there was considerable doubt about their entertainment value and did not like to inject what they considered propaganda into the regular program.

Until 1944 the movie crew also was called on to show movies as part of visual education activities in the schools. This led to a certain amount of friction as the crew considered that its primary responsibility lay with the community and the school demands were occasionally at conflict with this.

A certain amount of difficulty arose over the scheduling and choice of movies. The crew attempted to follow the desires of the Nisei group as far as they could, but this was not always possible. In the fall of 1944 a movie committee of the Community Council and Community Activities was formed to act as a directing body for the movie program and to control the showing of movies for which admission was charged.

## **c. Public Address Systems**

Partly as a result of habits formed in California, and partly as a result of project conditions, there was an enormous demand for public address systems at nearly all social and other functions that involved an audience of more than fifty. For outdoor meetings of any sort an amplifying system was an absolute necessity and for indoor meetings in mess halls and recreation halls the acoustics were usually such that a public address system was very desirable. Since there was not usually a dance orchestra available, the system was also used to play dance music and other music at any entertainment.

Until December, 1942, the only public address systems were relatively small ones that belonged to clubs or private individuals. It soon became apparent that this was inadequate to the needs of the center and a system was bought by the project for each unit. This set was scheduled in the Community Activity office in each unit and during the most active part of the year the set and its crew would be in use nearly every night for entertainments, meetings, and the like. The system was also used for public meetings of the evacuees and of the appointed personnel.

As the crew needed a truck to transport their equipment, they were frequently called on to do jobs of hauling and maintenance for the sections.

## **7. Special Observances and Programs**

The section participated in a number of special observances and programs. The most important were programs and activities connected with Army service. From the summer of 1943 on special programs were held to honor young men departing for active Army duty. The section did not have primary responsibility for the arrangements, but the provision of the public address system and the participation of organizations such as Boy Scouts involved the cooperation of the section.

Other special programs included such activities as a program of the combined church choirs in December, 1942.

## **IV. FINANCING**

### **A. GOVERNMENT FUNDS**

The information on the extent and nature of the funds expended for the Community Activities Section by the WRA are not available at the time that this report is written. In general, it may be said that a very large percentage of the funds allocated to the Section were spent for personal services of the supervisor and the evacuee staff as it was announced at the beginning of the WRA program that no other funds would be allocated to the recreation and adult education programs.

This decision was made in response to what was considered public opinion adverse to provision of "luxuries" to the residents of relocation centers. The policy was later relaxed to provide for the provision of initial equipment, but it remained a fundamental part of WRA policy to require the evacuee community to finance its own recreation. This argument was generally supported by the analogy of a normal self-supporting city in which the inhabitants commonly pay for their own amusement.

Whatever may have been the justification for the decision, the result was unfortunate in its effect on the centers. The residents had just suffered a catastrophic economic upheaval that left most of them without funds or very little. They were facing a future of unknown nature in which what savings that had been salvaged might be required for support of life. At the time the group was plunged into a new situation in which none of the resources that a normal community acquires in the course of decades were provided and were told to finance their own recreation and adult education program.

It did not result that recreation ceased or that the evacuees failed in their support. The observer should not be surprised to learn, however, that those interests which received the greatest amount of financial support from the residents were generally those of traditional Japanese nature for which the Issei felt the most attachment. The educational and recreational activities that suffered the most were those which the WRA announced it regarded as most important—those of peculiarly American concept and nature, and the WRA put itself in the damaging position of urging programs of Americanization while announcing that it was unwilling to give any financial support. It would seem that a more successful approach would have been to regard the centers as similar to Army camps and to see that adequate recreational and educational programs were provided.

It should not be surprising to learn, on the other hand, that many evacuees regarded the WRA as having broken promises made in the initial stages of organization and to have taken the attitude that they were morally justified in wangling whatever they could by fair means or foul in the way of equipment, supplies, or other assistance. This attitude was reinforced by the nature of the camps in which nearly all means of acquiring or providing anything depended on the use of government funds or equipment in one way or another. There were few who would choose to do without a highly desired and if only a government regulation stood in the way.

## **B. EVACUEE FUNDS**

The records of the section are not such as to permit a detailed or statistical report of the nature, extent, and disposition of evacuee funds used in the activities program. Wherever possible, the Supervisor attempted to make this matter as regular as possible but he did not feel called upon to insist on a certain procedure or method when this did not meet with general community support. It was their money that was being spent.

In Unit I most of the funds used in the activities program were held in a bank account controlled by evacuees in a local bank. The sources of these funds were various. Some money was received from donations from outside agencies. Others were donated by the Community Enterprises out of their net profits before the patronage dividend procedure was put into effect. After that was established, the section placed boxes by each cash register of the canteens in which receipts could be dropped to assist in the program. The various clubs raised money by holding benefit movies and other entertainments. The Shibai group took up regular collections from the blocks to support its program. For crafts and athletics the participants bought their own supplies.

In Units II and III the same sources of funds were drawn upon. The money was held by the local council which kept the accounts and disbursed the funds. In all three units the Council had a certain control over money-making activities. When these involved organizations, it could make its control effective, but neither it nor any other agency was able to prevent private enterprise by individuals, if they were willing to take on themselves the accusations of profiteering. In general, public opinion had as little effect on the local black markets as it had outside.

## **V. CENTER CLOSING**

The activities section did not take an active part in the closing program of the center. The lack of continuous leadership and the distractions of impending relocation prevented the development of a coherent program in the closing months of the center. No great need for such a program was evident in any case, as the residents' attention was more and more fixed on the solution of their personal problems. The section and its personnel melted away during the summer months, as did the rest of the center program that concerned itself with the residents. The Activities personnel were terminated several weeks before each Unit closed and the program came peacefully to its anticipated end.

## **VI. COLOPHON**

The writer of this report, after the manner of medieval scribes, cannot refrain from adding a postscript. The reader who reaches this point is warned not to be deceived by the air of certitude that may pervade the foregoing sections. What have here been pinned down on paper are only the bare bones of a once vital body with infinite variety resulting from the interaction of some score of thousands of individuals each with his own hopes, fears and aspirations. The variegated life which animated the groups here so briefly sketched and which gave them their real significance has successfully made its escape.

For the writer the composition of this paper has been a remembrance of things past. He assembled the scattered records of the program and found that they presented no accurate or coherent picture of the Activities program or its organization. Having done this, he then turned to his typewriter and drew on his own memory. What has been put on paper is, therefore, the knowledge of one person, but a knowledge which it is hoped is not too inaccurate or deficient.

The writer cannot presume to know what significances this report may have to those who read it. For himself he is able to supply the emotional and other overtones that colored the program and many instances exercised a decisive influence. This the stranger cannot do. But if a guide post is what is sought, the reader is advised



to consider well the desires, preconceptions and traditions that are brought along by any group with whom he works. In many and often subtle ways the residents of Poston directed or wrenched the work of the Community Activities Section into paths that met their needs even if this involved rather disturbing departures from the instructions and suggestions supplied by those in authority. He is also warned against the danger of making policy decisions on the basis of a seeming but false analogy, such as comparing Poston to a normal community. But if he is patient and not easily surprised, he will find that many useful and surprising things will spring up even in the most barren field.

But there is one lesson, above all else, that can be learned from Relocation Centers. It is—DON'T TRY IT AGAIN.