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6 of 66

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CENTRAL UTAH PROJECT

TOPAZ, UTAH

TOPAZ HOUSING SITUATION

by

Toshio Mori

July 9, 1943

PROJECT REPORTS DIVISION

HISTORICAL SECTION

Chief, R. A. Bankson

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HOUSING SITUATION IN TOPAZ

As adequate housing is one of the basic needs of the people, Topaz' "overnight" community came under pressure from the outset. The barracks were not quite ready for the inductees but contingents after contingents arrived on schedule. Beginning on September 11, 1942 and ending with the 16th contingent's arrival on October 15, there was no let-up for the Housing Section.

With the exception of the first contingent comprised of volunteer workers, an average of 500 persons per day passed the gate expecting immediate assignment to barracks suitable to their taste and convenience. The resultant difficulty was met bravely by a small group of hard pressed workers who day and night was assigning and adjusting alternately until the last of the inductees was fairly satisfied. However, the problems arising in relation to housing are always of the day to day adjustment and therefore never ending.

One of the results from the hasty assignment and lack of completed barracks at the time of induction, was the Housing Section's "headache" the lack of an appropriate housing space for the right individuals at the right time. This was to hound the Section endlessly with its expediting plans still in the process.

As of July 7, 1943, 34 blocks are being used as residential quarters. Among the above blocks, two one-half

block spaces are being loaned to the elementary schools. With the exception of four blocks all of the above blocks have uniform apartment sizes: A & F - 20' x 16'; C & D - 20' x 20'; B & E - 20' x 24'. The exceptions are the Blocks 33, 34, 40 and 41 which have C & D rooms of 20 x 8 and the rest of quarters all of size 20 x 16. Much of this irregularity was due to the demand for small rooms for the couples.

The latest induction of the center was the 235 Hawaiians who arrived in Topaz on March 14, 1943. A comprehensive report on the induction process was documented and submitted under the title "Hawaiian Interlude." Here, it should be noted that the induction process was one of the smoothest accomplishments of the Housing Section in coordination with the Community Welfare and many divisions. It is one of the concrete examples of what preparations and adequate facilities can accomplish. Also, the past experiences in handling inductees and their problems were invaluable to the staff in charge for the reception.

The greatest number of complaints come from the bachelor quarters. Here, with many individualistic old bachelors, the problems are acute. The constant shifting of room sharers complicates the entire housing plans. A dormitory housing all the bachelors would undoubtedly help in solving some of the "gripes" of the bachelors and the rest of the residents alike. The principal complaint is lack of privacy. However, from the social standpoint such contemplation would not be desirable.

The Hawaiians, as a whole, present little trouble.

They were assigned to one block and since then very few of their group have moved to other blocks. Their object has always been to join their friends and relatives. It is apparent that they are fairly satisfied for the present.

With the constant shifting of residents for outside jobs, the general housing plan is on the temporary basis. Large families in the overcrowded apartments were offered ample housing space. This accommodation was extended with the understanding that such additional quarters would be forfeited when an acute stage was reached in the matters of housing. Generally, the residents refused to accept larger quarters unless an adjoining apartment was available. Also, these families were not attracted to the idea of moving to other blocks for additional space.

The housing problems within the framework of adjustment to the individual taste are varied and never-ending. A family with six adults would naturally demand and expect privacy ^{from} each other. Each member would claim a portion of the quarters, leaving very little space for the "general" room. A family with the same number but with four small children would be satisfied with the standardized space of 20 x 24. The distribution of space within the quarters would be in the control of the parents.

With the past results in mind, the residents, as a whole, are cooperative. With a reasonable explanation of a given situation, they fall into the plan quite readily. At worst, 50% of the residents would cooperate with the orders coming from the Housing Section.

Here in Topaz, the visitors from other centers and outside present no housing problems. They are almost always offered living quarters by their relatives and friends. The soldier visitors are charged 20¢ per meal and 20¢ a day for the quarters; the general visitors must pay the regular rate of 25¢ per meal and 25¢ per day for the room. One of the complaints arising from this arrangement is when a student-relative comes in to visit his family and is charged for room and board. The individual and his family feel that a student without adequate resources ought not be taxed further when visiting his parents on a vacation.

The transfers from other relocation centers are accepted as a matter of course. No difficulties are met in this category. The transfers are usually given to those who wish to join their families or relatives. These transferees are given the benefit of choosing their future quarters at the time of transfer issue and again at the arrival in the center.

The Housing Section has much hope for assistance through the relocation program. However, thus far, there has been little change in the matter of greater available space. The individuals leaving on indefinite leaves are usually persons who leave their families behind. They have in mind first establishing themselves before calling their families, so much time must be given before some results come into this particular section. The only immediate effect would result when the entire family members leave

on the indefinite, leaving an empty apartment for availability.

The seasonal leave does not help any. The workers' allotted housing space is reserved for their return when the harvest is over. The principal group among the seasonal leave contingents are the older bachelors. They leave and return to the overhoused apartments. The latter condition is due to their transient habits both within and outside the center.

Inasmuch as one-third of the seasonal workers eventually end up as applicants for the indefinite clearance, the section is unable to benefit in housing space until long afterwards. The potential indefinite leave applicants cannot be predetermined. A successful relocation progress, naturally, is the greatest source of hope as far as the housing matters are concerned.

The so-called Rest Home for the aged will help relieve much complaints from the chronically ill persons and the aged, if not in space. The proposed home is now in the making. The vacant wings of the hospital proper are being contemplated as an ideal location for these people.

The army volunteers organization of Topaz has requested that special privileges be considered for their families. Any request coming from this source will be favorably handled by the Section. When the man of the house leaves for the army his family, no matter how small, is not moved unless requested by such family.

In conclusion, there are several supplemental materials

invaluable for the files. First of all there are suggestions to be made. The Housing Section's efficiency would be greatly increased if some of the projected activities of the Washington headquarters in relations to movements of large contingents could be disseminated to the local office.

In this way the Section could be fully prepared to undertake immediate action on specific cases. For an example, the coming segregation. The Housing Section would like to know the policy on segregation. The Section is not concerned about the "why" but "when and "how many". With such information on hand, the problems confronting the new arrivals and the administration would be largely alleviated.

The Housing Section is not expecting greater housing space through the eventual segregation program.

One of the most pertinent requisitions from this section is for materials in the partitioning program. By partitioning certain apartments and barracks, the housing space would be more evenly distributed to the individual needs. This partitioning program was seriously considered during the early part of the year but was abandoned due to the shortage such as lumber and sheetrock or its facsimile. Both small and large apartments are necessary, depending on the requests sent in at the time.

The housing situation in Topaz may be regarded as in the favorable stage, pending, of course, on further movements from without rather than within the center. Mass

block movement will not come for a long time, since the prospective relocatees are scattered throughout the center and a single block is not very seriously affected. However, if a mass exodus of family indefinite leaves come to being, then the Housing Section can empty three blocks by juggling.

Supplemental Statistics of interest:

The following information was released from the Housing Section on January 13, 1943:

According to an analysis report conducted on March 23, 1943, the total number of evacuee families as to size was as follows:

885 single males, 774 of whom are living in bachelor quarters; 166 unattached females, 75 of whom live in single women's quarters; 544 families of 2; 483 families of 3; 394 families of 4; 244 families of 5; 133 families of 6; 74 families of 7 and 59 families of over 7.

- 1) Number of families on Project 1871
- 2) Single people not in family units 759
- 3) Apartments constructed originally for dwelling use 2592
- 4) Apartments occupied by evacuees 2302
- 5) Now vacant 2
- 6) Apartments used for other than Housing 292
- 7) Occupants in other than living quarters none
- 8) Number of families occupying one apartment 152
- 9) Families occupying two or more apartments 189
- 10) Instances where family shares apartment 227
- 11) Dimensions of apartments now occupied: 20x16, 20x20, 20x24, and 20x28.
- 12) Occupants in each dimensional groups:
 20x16 -- 10 apartments housing one; 406 housing 2; 392 housing three, 42 housing four, 2 housing five;
 20x20 -- 3 housing one, 18 housing two, 142 housing three, 370 housing four, 115 housing five, 34 housing six, 2 housing seven, 20x24 -- 2 housing one, 16 housing two, 52 housing three, 245 housing four, 246 housing five, 121 housing six, 2 housing seven, 20x28 -- three housing one, two housing two, 8 housing three, 27 housing four, 29 housing five, 11 housing six, 2 housing seven.

On April 6, 1943 a survey graph analysis was compiled to ascertain the average square feet occupied per person in the family units. The averages are 114 sq. ft. per person for family units, 224 sq. ft. for single women, 141 sq. ft. for single men. This high average is attributed to the large number of family members and single residents leaving the Project.

Of much interest to the Housing Section the latest figures as of June 30, 1943 were compiled:

STATISTICS:

- A. Adjustments - number of re-assignments made -- 239; (includes cancellations -- 25; Pending -- 6) Requests for adjustments received -- 94. Total pending to date -- 37. Additional requests for later considerations -- 12.
- B. Clearances -- Clearances were made for 356 Indefinite Leaves and 423 Seasonal Leaves.
- C. Inductions -- New Inductions -- 92. Re-inductions -- 21.
- D. Requisitions for Crating Material and Boxes -- 54. For lumber for apartment use -- 39.
- E. Transfers -- Transfers approved -- 25. Total pending -- 10.
- F. Vacancies -- 29.