

L7.00:25

25 of 28

Final Report - Evacuee
Property

* National Archives:
Reel 55, Folder 101

67114
C

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

GRANADA PROJECT

EVACUEE PROPERTY SECTION--FINAL REPORT

by

Herbert J. Vatcher

History and Personnel

During the early period of the Granada Project, evacuee property was handled by the Legal Division and Project Property Unit. Most of the work involved investigating complaints and inquiries about West Coast property, gathering information, assisting in obtaining leases, rentals, in making sales, etc.

After the Relocation program was well on its way, a separate section was established. Mr. Russell T. Robinson, head of the department at San Francisco, had all procedure worked out within 30 days. On July 1, 1943, Mr. Mark W. Radcliffe was appointed Evacuee Property Officer for the Granada Project, new files were set up, and the section organized. Mr. Radcliffe served until March 1944 when Mr. Paul Fischer became the Evacuee Property Officer until September 1, 1944. During part of the time, the Evacuee Property section was merged with the Project Property Unit. On September 16, 1944, Mr. Herbert J. Vatcher from the WRA center at Poston was transferred to the Granada Project and remained as Evacuee Property Officer until the close of the center.

In June 1945, the evacuee property section was made part of the Relocation Division. The responsibility of shipping the evacuees' goods back to the West Coast and other points of relocation was then the chief concern of the section, and as the closing date of the center drew near, it became a greater and heavier task. On July 15, Mrs. Doris Hinman was detailed from the Education Section to act as secretary to Mr. Vatcher and on September 1, Mr. Donald A. Brown was assigned as Junior Evacuee Property Officer.

Functions and Policies

Among the functions of the Evacuee Property Section as set up by Executive Order #9012 was the duty of "assisting evacuees in preserving and protecting their assets." As stated above, this had previously been taken care of by the Project Attorney, who

investigated complaints (with the aid of WRA officers of the West Coast area), and helped to bring together evacuee owners and prospective buyers, renters, and lessees.

It was the policy of the office to act only in an investigational, informational, and advisory capacity and as an intermediary between the evacuees and whomever they should choose to act for them. After accumulating facts, furnishing information, and giving advice (but only when requested), the Evacuee Property Officer left the owner to decide for himself what should be done about his property. The WRA officer was ready at all times to assist in making inquiries, handling problems of management, operation, and disposition of real and commercial property and in settling claims brought by evacuees. Some of the special functions were as follows:

1. Sale and leasing real property, commercial, residential and agricultural.
2. Financing and refinancing loans on agricultural and urban property.
3. Settling disputes and other problems connected with the management of real property, agricultural, and commercial and residential, wherein the evacuee seeks assistance and advice.
4. Selling every type of personal property from auto and farm equipment to valuable stocks of merchandise.
5. Advising and obtaining managers and inspecting all types of real property.
6. Obtaining insurance for real and personal property of all types and settling insurance losses.
7. Investigating government Income Tax and State Tax liens.
8. Obtaining and analyzing audits of going businesses and arranging for fees of auditors.
9. Obtaining possession of personal property from bailees and custodians and disputed agreements.
10. Selling houses erected upon real property belonging to others where no contract and agreement exists.
11. Investigating acts of vandalism, theft, fires, and general condition of real and personal property.
12. Collecting bills, notes, mortgages and moneys due under all types of written and oral contracts.
13. Establishing contracts and agreeable relations with Brokers, Bankers, Real Estate Boards, Attorney, Title Companies, Auto Dealers and many other individuals in the area.

When the evacuees relocated, it was the duty of the Evacuee Property Officer to ship their belongings to their new homes from the center or from storage places.

In other words, the Evacuee Property Officer acted as a

counselor to the evacuees concerning their property problems and assisted them in the renting, selling, leasing, storing, or transferring of their personal belongings real estate or commercial property.

At the time of evacuation, many had little confidence in the United States government--in its ability or inclination to take care of their property or personal effects. In the hurried preparations following the exclusion orders, many of these would not put their things in government storage but placed them in such places as churches, roofs of barns, cellars, etc. Some put money in false bottoms of trunks, in mattresses, and like hiding places. Much of this property was lost, destroyed, or stolen. A group of three or four evacuee families who had hidden their money in a building in Los Angeles lost \$40,000 cash in this way, which was never recovered. After the pilfering of such places as the Nichiren Temple and the Compton Mission of Los Angeles, requests for the removal of property to the center and to government warehouses increased greatly. The Evacuee Property Office provided transportation, made shipping arrangements, furnished material for crating and boxing of personal and household goods on relocation, and in every way attempted to assist the evacuees in "preserving and protecting their assets."

Relations with Other Divisions

From the beginning, the Evacuee Property Office worked closely with the Legal Division. All matters involving litigation were referred to the Project Attorney, who also took care of the assets of deceased residents. The San Francisco and other field officers were most co-operative in assisting with property problems, in obtaining information, and in investigating complaints referred to them. The Engineering Department was of great assistance in providing lumber for crating and boxing. Toward the close of the center, requisitions for lumber and boxes became so numerous that the evacuee property section could not handle them. Evacuee help for the most part had terminated by relocation so that the situation was critical. Project Director James G. Lindley came to the rescue, called a meeting of the appointed personnel, and gave evacuee property priority for help. By the first of September, all evacuee help had relocated and volunteers among the appointed personnel worked overtime to get shipments out. In this, as in other tight spots, Mr. Lindley, like a "Second Solomon," foresaw difficulties and moved to straighten them out before they became overwhelming. Much credit must be given to the volunteers who worked long hours, Sundays, and evenings, handling heavy boxes and crates, driving trucks, cutting lumber, and loading cars--manual labor that was decidedly out of their own line of work.

Special Problems and Activities

Transfer to Center and Government Storage

A great deal of personal property and household goods left in private storage on the West Coast was lost or stolen. Much of the trouble was caused by the trust that many evacuees reposed in Caucasians who were supposed to be their friends and with whom they had left most of their possessions in many cases, only to find out later that these supposed "friends" had either sold the same, appropriated it to their own use, or negligently allowed it to become lost or stolen. In most of these cases negligible results were secured on investigation, due chiefly to the apparent lack of interest on the part of law enforcement authorities in California, who apparently made little or no effort to recover the property or to arrest those who had stolen it. The WRA offices on the coast, although most co-operative, were not able to show any appreciable results in recovering any of this property. Evacuees were urged to remove belongings stored in this manner and in other unsafe places, as churches, cellars, and barns, etc. to government warehouses as soon as possible. Notices were received from private storage plants requesting removal of all evacuee property, also. Evacuee Property handled these cases satisfactorily as requests came in. A few complaints were received that property was being badly handled in shipments from private storage--not crated according to specifications--but this was straightened out with the assistance of the West Coast offices.

Contraband

The Evacuee Property Section handled many requests for cameras and radios when the contraband orders on these items were lifted.

Segregation

Evacuee Property assisted in the segregation program by interviewing and instructing repatriates who were leaving for Japan on the Gripsholm, September 1943, concerning the crating and shipping of their personal effects. The segregants who left Amache for Tule Lake had two carloads of freight handled through the Evacuee Property Section. Approximately 300,000 pounds of freight and baggage (8 freight cars and 4 baggage cars) belonging to those who came to Amache from Tule Lake at this time were handled by the Evacuee Property Section.

Jerome Transferees

When the Jerome center was closed in June 1944, Amache Evacuee Property Section took care of the 9 carloads of freight and 4 baggage carloads smoothly and quickly.

Closing Procedure and Problems

Employees

Since the evacuees were handling their own property in this section, there was never any difficulty in obtaining sufficient and capable help, as they felt they were doing something to help themselves. However, when relocation took its toll of all evacuee helpers, appointed personnel took over and worked overtime, as stated above, trying to get the job done. At the close of the center on October 15, 1945, there were still approximately 25 carloads of evacuee property to move--chiefly household goods consigned to the coast.

Crating and shipping

In helping to get shipments ready during the last few months of the center, meetings with block managers proved to be very effective as they co-operated one hundred percent with the office and assisted in the crating and handling of freight and express. Most of the evacuees did their own crating except those who were too old or crippled. A survey was made to ascertain the number of boxes and crates each family needed. As requisitions for these came in, the Engineering section delivered lumber already cut for assembling. All the evacuees needed to do was to knock it together.

During the latter part of September, a number of families returning to Cortez, Livingston, and Walnut Grove, organized as a group, made boxes and crates, completed all preliminary measures themselves, and loaded several freight cars with their goods, assuming all responsibility, which was greatly appreciated at a time when the section was most busy. (Samples of requisition slips, administrative notices, and other office memoranda used in the closing shipping program are attached to this report.)

Arrangements with Santa Fe and other Agencies

Satisfactory arrangements were made with the Santa Fe Railroad through the agent at Granada for shipping goods from the Amache center. WRA trucks took care of freight going to Denver. Since the Santa Fe would not make any house deliveries in cities, arrangements were made with the Universal Carloading & Distributing Company for deliveries in eastern cities, with the Lyons Van and Storage Company for the delivery of carload lots in Southern California, and with the Bekins Van and Storage Company for delivery of carload lots in the Central and Northern area. These arrangements proved very satisfactory. A contract was made with Cornelius Transfer and Storage Company, Lamar, Colorado, to haul freight and express to Granada for shipment. This contract to be completed by December 15th, 1945.

Difficulties and Problems

Bills of Lading--The failure on the part of evacuees to retain their bills of lading in a safe place, although repeatedly reminded by the Evacuee Property personnel and through notices in the project paper, caused a great deal of confusion and time lost in writing back and forth, making duplicates, etc.

Requisitions for picking up Freight and Express--Evacuees persisted in wanting their things picked up immediately upon request. Since the department was short-handed and extremely busy, those who were leaving the center were asked to give 72-hours' notice for picking up their goods. In a good many cases this was disregarded and notices were often given the day before departure or even in some cases a few hours previous. Naturally this caused some dissatisfaction and delay.

Tabulation of boxes and crates--A number of evacuees made out Form WRA-156 (as attached) showing the number of boxes and crates they wanted shipped and then returned a day later perhaps to add several more. This likewise was annoying and caused some delay.

Changing transportation orders and addresses--Sometimes arrangements were all completed for a shipment to the East and then the office would be notified to send it to California or elsewhere. Many times, after all procedure had been completed, even after freight had been placed in cars, a forwarding address would be changed.

Express and freight mix-ups--Although the 500 pounds of free expressage was supposed to contain only clothing, bedding, and kitchen utensils, evacuees were constantly bringing in other things that were not acceptable and which had to be re-assigned as freight. These were some of the problems that slowed down and created some confusion during the last busy weeks.

Lack of car space--At one time there was some difficulty in getting sufficient number of cars for freight, but Mr. Lindley took the matter up with the railroad authorities and this was straightened out quickly. During the month of September 33 car load lots were moved from the center.

Temporary housing--Temporary housing on the West Coast for some of the later departees caused some confusion and extra handling of property. It was necessary to send out letters to former residents who were living in temporary housing units asking them to get in touch with WRA officers in order to get their property out of the center and into government warehouses on the Coast. "Please do not ship evacuee property to WRA warehouse or to evacuees in temporary housing such as hostels, hotels, FPHA trailers, or military installations operated by FPHA, without

prior approval from this office. At present our warehouses are full and additional space cannot be obtained. This teletype being sent as result of discussion with Dillion Myer who advises that Administrative Notice 316 is being amended accordingly"-- teletype received November 2, 1945 from the WRA office in Los Angeles.

Fire damage--The goods of 13 families returning to California from the Granada Project were totally destroyed when a fire broke out in a freight car near Canyon Diablo, Arizona. The case is now in the hands of the legal department of the WRA office at Los Angeles. Latest investigation shows that the fire appears to have started within the car.

Shipping of pets--Cats and dogs took up a great deal of valuable time in the process of being crated, weighed and billed out on separate GB/L.

The minor difficulties listed above were (with the exception of the freight car fire) probably not peculiar to this center alone and they did not prevent the closing operations of the Evacuee Property Section from running smoothly and efficiently. Letters from former residents to the Evacuee Property Officer express their appreciation of the work done--a few of which are quoted in the appendix attached hereto. Data on the closing operations, statistics covering the entire period of establishment, and types of samples of forms used are also attached.

Extracts from Letters.

"Many thanks for your kind attention. The express and freight shipment from Granada arrived safely last week and they were in good condition.

"Here in Seattle every day our people coming back from the Minidoka WRA project in Idaho they are finding very hard to find living quarters but fortunately WRA arranged to use the Government housing project near Seattle that relieved some congestion.

"I have my own house to come back and now settled, looking back these days in the Center I have nothing but praise for the Administration's kind and painstaking acts, and peaceful time I spent there.

"Now I hope and pray that you and all others who worked so hard for our behalf will have good rest and good luck in your future."

"Our express finally arrived! All our worry and anxiety are over now as everything came in good shape.

"Thank you for all the trouble you went thru for our cause. Someday we hope we can return your kindness. Until then, goodbye, and many, many thanks."

"I am writing to ask you about our freight boxes. Weather has become very cold and everything is covered with snow in Utah. The children need their warm winter clothes badly and they are mostly in these boxes.

"Would you please look into having these boxes sent out right away, if it hasn't been shipped out of camp yet. I will appreciate it very much."

"Please check up and see if my property has been shipped out. I need them badly now, particularly the extra clothing and beddings which are in the express packages. I suppose I am to receive a copy of B.L. as soon as you ship them out."

"I wonder if you're supposed to have a government bill of lading for freight. I didn't get mine as yet.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

MONTHLY REPORT

EVACUEE PROPERTY

FINAL REPORT

FOR MONTH OF _____, 194__

CENTER GRANADA

PROPERTY CASES

	NO. CASES AT BEGINNING OF MONTH	NEW CASES RECEIVED DURING MONTH	CASES CLOSED DURING MONTH	CASES PENDING AT END OF MONTH	AMOUNT COLLECTED (CURRENT ACCOUNTS)
--	---------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--

SALES:

REAL ESTATE

FARM LAND	_____	_____	_____	_____	\$15,000
HOTELS & APARTMENTS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
RESIDENCES	_____	_____	_____	_____	2,000
STORES & SHOPS	_____	_____	_____	_____	600
INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
OTHER	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

PERSONAL PROPERTY

FARM MACHINERY	_____	_____	_____	_____	3,000
AUTOMOBILES	_____	_____	_____	_____	1,550
TRUCKS	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
STORE FIXTURES & EQUIPMENT	_____	_____	_____	_____	800
HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE	_____	_____	_____	_____	250.50
OTHER	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

LEASES: REAL ESTATE

FARM LAND	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
HOTELS & APARTMENTS	_____	_____	_____	_____	20
RESIDENCES	_____	_____	_____	_____	130
STORES & SHOPS	_____	_____	_____	_____	130.10
INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
OTHER	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

TOTAL (EACH COLUMN)

These figures are only estimates of business matters over a
period of two years.

DEBT ADJUSTMENTS _____

COLLECTIONS (OLD ACCOUNTS) _____

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES (SPECIFY)

Letters of inquiries and answers increased during the closing days of the Center.
Teletypes and telegrams became too numerous to keep an accurate account. Much of
the office time was devoted to giving personal aid to departing evacuees in the
form of clearing up old business matters, contraband papers, shipping of personal
property, pets, and in helping some of the older people in getting papers and
correct forms kept safely until needed.

NUMBER CASES REFERRED TO

LOS ANGELES AREA OFFICE _____
SAN FRANCISCO AREA OFF. _____
SEATTLE AREA OFFICE _____

MISCELLANEOUS

TOTAL OF DAILY INTERVIEWS _____
NUMBER OF GROUP MEETINGS ATTENDED _____
NUMBER OF NEWS ITEMS PREPARED _____

TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

FORMS SUBMITTED

FORM WRA-155, FOR STORAGE IN THE EVACUATED AREA
 IN WAREHOUSES UNDER SAN FRANCISCO AREA OFFICE _____
 IN WAREHOUSES UNDER SEATTLE AREA OFFICE _____
 IN WAREHOUSES UNDER LOS ANGELES AREA OFFICE _____

FORM WRA-156
 FROM EVACUATED AREA TO PROJECT _____
 FROM EVACUATED AREA TO RELOCATION POINT _____
 FROM PROJECT TO RELOCATION POINT _____
 FOR SHIPMENT - COMMERCIAL PROPERTY AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE TO RELOCATION POINT _____
 FOR SHIPMENT - COMMERCIAL PROPERTY AT EVACUEE EXPENSE TO RELOCATION POINT _____

FORM WRA-223, FOR STORAGE IN PROJECT WAREHOUSE _____

WAREHOUSE ACTIVITY

NO. FAMILY LOTS RECEIVED AT PROJECT _____
 NO. FAMILY LOTS SHIPPED FROM PROJECT TO RELOCATION POINT _____
 NO. FAMILY LOTS SHIPPED FROM PROJECT TO OTHER PROJECTS _____

CONTRABAND

NO. CASES REQUEST FOR RETURN OF CONTRABAND _____
 NO. INDIVIDUAL SHIPMENT, CONTRABAND RECEIVED AT THE PROJECT _____

NARRATIVE REPORT: (SUBMIT A NARRATIVE REPORT ON PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVACUEE PROPERTY PROGRAM AT THE CENTER; PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED; COMPLAINTS RECEIVED; SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.)

We were fortunate in having an evacuee clerk-typist remain in our department until October 13th. She was able to help in many a situation that might have proved difficult by being able to speak Japanese.

A table of comparison is given below:

Month	1945	Lbs. shipped out of the Center
May		164,029
June		343,417
July		269,636
August		392,590
September		1,161,382

Harold J. ...

Amache, Colorado

Date _____

This is to certify that I have no property in storage
in a WRA warehouse on the West Coast.

Name _____

Family No. _____

A property clearance form that had to be signed before
receiving a grant. Began using this form the first of Sept-
ember.

Amache, Colorado

Date _____

This is to certify that Mr. _____

Family No. _____ has properly executed

WRA Forms 156 for shipment of his property from

the Center and also from storage on the West Coast.

A property clearance form that had to be signed before receiving a grant. Began using this form the first of September.

Form letter sent to each person having storage at the
Center. A request for shipping instructions.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

Granada Relocation Center
Amache, Colorado

GR:RP:ELJ

At the time you relocated you executed WRA forms 223, for Storage, or WRA-156, Request for Transportation of Property, or both. This registered letter is sent you for the purpose of notifying you that your personal property, now in storage at this Center, will be shipped 15 (fifteen) days from date to the above mentioned address, unless we receive other instructions from you.

It is necessary that all evacuee personal property be removed from the Center on or before November 15, 1945. As you know, this Center closed on October 15th.

An early reply will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Herbert J. Vatcher
Evacuee Property Officer

Form letter sent to each person having storage in the Center. These persons were unable to ship freight at the time of relocation due to inadequate storage space at FPHA project housing centers.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
War Relocation Authority
Granada Relocation Center
Amache, Colorado

R:EP:HJV

The following information is taken from Administrative Notice No. 316 under date of October 4, 1945:

With reference to your personal property now stored in this center, it will be necessary for you to make application to the Relocation Officer nearest you for storage of this property in your area. He will submit your application to the Area Supervisor for approval or disapproval. In the event your application is approved, this center will be advised to ship your property to the WRA warehouse nearest the destination you designate.

For your information the name and address of your nearest Relocation Officer is

Your immediate attention should be given to this matter.

Yours very truly,

Herbert J. Vaucher
Evacuee Property Officer

Form letter sent with each U. S. Government Bill of
Lading mailed from Granada Relocation Center.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
War Relocation Authority
Granada Relocation Center
Amache, Colorado

GR:EP:HJV

Enclosed is Government Bill of Lading No. _____
to receive shipment of your property which were shipped under the date of _____.

Please execute the Consignee's Certificate of Delivery at the bottom of the Bill of Lading and present to the freight agent when notified upon the arrival of your goods.

Very truly yours,

Herbert J. Vatcher
Evacuee Property Officer

Enclosure

Mimeographed sheet used by the pick-up crew for
express and freight shipments.

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
GRANADA PROJECT

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Date:

To: Pickup Crew
From: Evacuee Property Office
Subject: Outgoing

<u>NO. OF PIECES</u>	<u>ARTICLES</u>	<u>WEIGHT</u>
1 of		-----
2 of		-----
3 of		-----
4 of		-----
5 of		-----
6 of		-----
7 of		-----
8 of		-----
9 of		-----
10 of		-----
11 of		-----
12 of		-----
13 of		-----
14 of		-----
15 of		-----
16 of		-----
17 of		-----
18 of		-----
19 of		-----
20 of		-----

TOTAL WEIGHT.....-----

DONALD A. BROWN
JUNIOR EVACUEE PROPERTY OFFICER