

R E L O C A T I O N C E N T E R S

The Relocation Centers that were originally called Reception Centers, were constructed to provide Japanese evacuees with more than housing and feeding. They were intentionally designed and constructed to provide facilities necessary for community health, education, recreation, employment, religious activities and all of the other essential services and desirable functions of community life.

The War Relocation Authority was the agency responsible for the selection of Relocation Project sites, subject to approval by the War Department. The acquisition of Relocation Project sites after selection by W.R.A., was a function of the War Department.

Large sites were selected to provide insulation from exterior activities and offer opportunities for farming projects.

Ten sites were acquired and utilized for Relocation Centers. Eight of them after selection by the War Relocation Authority. The other two had already been selected and obtained by the Army for use as Reception Centers. The Manzanar site in California and the Colorado River site in Arizona were the two exceptions to selection by the War Relocation Authority. Manzanar was actually used as an Assembly Center until June 1, 1942 and then transferred to the W.R.A. to be operated as a Relocation Center for the remaining period of Japanese internment. Colorado River was acquired by the Army from the Secretary of Interior for use as a Reception Center, to be used for the duration. The Wartime Civil Control Administration who administered the Assembly Centers, never operated Colorado River because Director Eisenhower of the War Relocation Authority agreed with the W.C.C.A. Director to staff and operate it from the beginning. When Director Eisenhower encountered difficulties in his effort to assemble an operations staff, he turned over the management to the Indian Service. Thus Colorado River Relocation Center was the one Relocation Center not operated by the War Relocation Authority.

This Relocation Center received nearly 12,000 Japanese evacuees that were interned there directly from their homes and did not spend their initial internment in Assembly Centers.

The initial facilities at Relocation Centers were built by the War Department and the first construction began at Manzanar on March 10, 1942, only 22 days after President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing the Secretary of War to institute civil