

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No.1024-0018

Granada Relocation Center

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Granada Relocation Center

Other Name/Site Number: Camp Amache; Amache/ 5PW48

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 23900 County Road FF

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Granada

Vicinity: X

State: Colorado County: Prowers

Code: 099

Zip Code: 81041

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: \_\_\_
Public-Local: X
Public-State: \_\_\_
Public-Federal: \_\_\_

Category of: Property

Building(s): \_\_\_
District: \_\_\_
Site: X
Structure: \_\_\_
Object: \_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
1
1
2
4

Noncontributing
1 buildings
sites
3 structures
1 objects
5 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 3

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ Entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ Removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ Other (explain):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic:	DOMESTIC FUNERARY	Sub: Institutional Housing Sub: Cemetery
Current:	VACANT FUNERARY	Sub: Cemetery

**7. DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification: No Style

## Materials:

Foundation: Concrete  
Walls: Brick  
Roof: Metal  
Other:

**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.****Introduction**

The Granada Relocation Center site is located in an arid, generally treeless prairie dominated by sagebrush, sunflowers, and prickly pear cactus, just as it was when the wartime War Relocation Authority selected the site in 1942 as one of ten relocation centers to house Japanese Americans removed from the West Coast under the provisions of the Executive Order 9066. The proposed landmark consists of a single 593 acre site containing the core of the center's developed area, including intact foundations and roadways in the evacuee housing, administrative, military police, warehouse, and support areas, as well as the center cemetery. The site also contains three additional contributing resources: a small brick building adjacent to the cemetery, a concrete water reservoir, and a concrete block well house. There are five non-contributing resources: a small rodeo arena constructed immediately after the war and reconstructed in 1999; two water storage tanks used by the town of Granada, one built in the late 1960s and now abandoned and its replacement constructed in 2000; a small tool shed dating from 2001; and a white stone memorial installed in the cemetery area in 1983. The Granada Relocation Center is commonly called Camp Amache, or simply Amache, by former internees. The term Amache is used throughout the course of this nomination.

Although all of the hastily built temporary buildings were removed or demolished after Amache closed in 1945, the surviving historic road network and the substantial concrete building foundations give an unusually clear picture of the original layout and design of the center. The grid street pattern is still discernable and many of the gravel roads are drivable. The functional divisions of the center, including administration, residential, recreational, and security, are also evident. Virtually all of the foundations for structures related to these divisions still exist. The poured concrete foundations of barracks, mess halls, and other building types can be easily identified. An archeological survey conducted in June 2003 located the foundations of the six military police watchtowers next to the barbed wire fence surrounding the developed area. A 1945 granite memorial dedicated to those who died at Amache is located in a small brick building adjacent to the cemetery.

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**The Setting**

Amache is located in the Arkansas River Valley in extreme southeastern Colorado, 140 miles east of Pueblo. The historic site is 16 miles east of the town of Lamar and 15 miles west of the Kansas border. The relocation center's official name was derived from the small town of Granada, less than a mile distant. The general topography of the historic site consists of windswept prairie sloping gently northward to the Arkansas River. Geologically, the region is underlain by Mesozoic sedimentary rocks capped by Tertiary sediments derived mainly from the Rocky Mountains. The region exhibits a steppe type of semiarid vegetation comprised of a short grass prairie. Elevations extend from a low of about 3,350 feet above sea level along the Arkansas River at the Kansas state line to a high of 3,660 feet. Except for a few areas where the terrain is broken, elevated and partly conifer-covered, southeastern Colorado is generally a treeless, high plain.

Most relocation centers were built on existing public lands, but the newly-formed War Relocation Authority (WRA) acquired land needed for Amache from private landowners through outright purchase or condemnation. All told, the WRA acquired 10,500 acres from private agricultural interests, including the former company town of Koen, owned by the American Crystal Sugar Company, as well as the XY Ranch. A crew of nearly 1,000 hired workers and 50 evacuee volunteers began construction of the center on 12 June 1942. Three months later the camp began operation, reaching a maximum population of 7,318 by October. Evacuees arrived from the Merced and Santa Anita Assembly Centers in California. Although Amache received the smallest population of the ten relocation centers, at the time it was the tenth largest city in Colorado.

Following the war, the agricultural lands reverted to private farming and ranching, while the camp buildings were demolished or removed. Today, the site of the Amache is overgrown with sagebrush, sunflowers, and Chinese elm and cottonwood trees planted by the evacuees. While none of the modified Theater of Operations frame buildings (a temporary, military type of construction) remain, the camp's road network, cemetery, and the concrete foundations of buildings are extant and provide a clear sense of the extent and layout of the relocation center. Both the surrounding area and the remains of the site are a strong reminder of the time of its occupancy, and provide a vivid testament to the desolation of this camp.

**Integrity**

The National Park Service National Historic Landmark theme study *Japanese Americans in World War II* (hereafter referred to as the "theme study") includes a detailed discussion of integrity, specifically in terms of the relocation centers and other places associated with the wartime exclusion, relocation, and detention of Japanese Americans and with Japanese American military service.<sup>1</sup> This discussion acknowledges that no intact relocation center survives, but concludes that important features still exist at many of the centers. These features, taken together, tell a great deal about what life in a wartime relocation center was like. Amache meets the standards for integrity established in the theme study, due in large measure to the intact, visible layout of the center, which still gives a strong sense of the size and strict, military regimentation of the site, to the absence of significant changes since its abandonment immediately after World War II, and to the continued remoteness of the setting. The following discussion addresses each of the seven aspects or qualities that the National Historic Landmarks Survey recognizes as guides to evaluating integrity.

**Location:** Amache is still located in the original area of its construction. Built in a desolate, rural area in southeastern Colorado, the location of this historic site reflects the government's intention to isolate this ethnic

<sup>1</sup>Jeffery F. Burton, Mary M. Farrell, Florence B. Lord, Richard W. Lord and S. Curtis Breckenridge, "Japanese Americans in World War II National Historic Landmark Theme Study" draft (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, February 2005).

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population from the rest of American society during World War II.

**Design:** The theme study stresses the importance of the ability of a relocation center site to testify to its original planned layout in assessing integrity of design. While none of the temporary, modified Theatre of Operations frame buildings constructed at Amache remains today, the camp's road network, cemetery, and the unusually intact concrete foundations of buildings are extant and provide a clear sense of the layout and design of the complex. The foundation design at Amache differed from that used at the other nine centers. Instead of post-and-pier foundations, barracks were supported by concrete slab foundations or concrete perimeter foundations with brick floors. The fact that Amache was occupied during some of the wettest years on record led to this modification of the usual construction techniques.

**Setting:** The settings of the relocation centers were characterized by isolation and a harsh physical landscape. These factors still exist at Amache. The area of southeastern Colorado and the historic site of the relocation center remain largely undeveloped, sparsely settled, very remote, and rural in character.

**Materials:** Although almost all of the buildings at Amache were removed or destroyed when the camp was closed, the remaining concrete slab and perimeter foundations at the site preserve their easily identifiable footprints. Trees and other landscaping planted by the internees are visible on the USGS topographic map and stand out on this otherwise treeless plain. The concrete used by the evacuees to build *koi* garden pools also survives. Underground utilities at Amache are also still intact and roads delineate the original blocks.

**Workmanship:** Workmanship can be illustrated by features constructed by the evacuees to modify the harshness and regimentation of the center landscapes. At Amache, three *koi* ponds and garden borders have been identified and recorded. Many of the Chinese elms and cottonwoods introduced into the camp to provide shade and to soften the bleak center landscape have also survived. Within the cemetery area is small brick structure constructed by internees, apparently for use as a columbarium.

**Feeling:** Amache retains a strong sense of feeling that dramatically conveys the historic character of the property. If the planned removal of Amache's buildings is considered part of the history of the relocation center, as it should be, the camp and the surrounding landscape remain essentially unchanged from the end of its period of significance in 1947.

**Association:** The theme study defines association as the direct link between the historic theme and a place. The historic place must be the accurate location of the event and must remain sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. The location of the historic site has been verified through historic research and archeological survey. Amache has already been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Amache can still convey its strong historical association with the relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II.

### **Historic Appearance<sup>2</sup>**

The central or developed section of Amache was located on a low bluff overlooking the flood plain of the Arkansas River, encompassing about one square mile or one entire section of land. Like most of the relocation centers, buildings and streets followed a north-south grid plan. The camp buildings and structures numbered 569 and nearly all were of modified Theater of Operations construction. This type of military construction was modified by the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA) in consultation with the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command and the Office of the Chief of Engineers. The bulk of the project's 10,500 acres

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<sup>2</sup>Excerpted from Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, "Granada Relocation Center (Prowers County, Colorado)," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1994).

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included irrigated bottomlands along the Arkansas River that were used for a variety of agricultural undertakings. The main entrance to the camp was near the center of the north end of the developed area, approximately one-half mile south of U.S. Highway 50. The developed area was surrounded by a four-strand barbed wire fence, with six watch towers positioned along the perimeter. As in most of the relocation centers, military police staffed the watch towers, which at Amache reflected a unique octagonal design.

Administrative and Support Area: The northern quarter of the fenced area (north of 6th Street) was devoted to administrative, storage, hospital, and other support functions. The access road from U.S. Highway 50, a half mile to the north, entered the main gate of the camp at the centerline of Section 14 and became G Street inside the camp. Some buildings in this part of the camp were of more substantial construction than structures in the evacuee housing area; for example, a few buildings were clad in wooden drop siding rather than tarpaper over sheathing. The interiors of some of the more substantial buildings had wooden floors, forced air heating, and bath and toilet facilities inside living and working quarters, rather than in separate buildings.

Administration and Staff Quarters Area: On the west side of G Street, primarily between 3rd and 4th Streets, was the Administration Area for civilian workers of the WRA and their evacuee assistants. This portion of the camp contained four administration buildings, the post office, an administrative warehouse, a store and post exchange/mess, a recreation building, and two lavatories. An administrative garage and a staff mess lay south of this area across 4th Street. The staff quarters area for administrative workers was located just to the southwest between 4th and 6th Streets at the western edge of the camp. This area included four dormitories and ten staff quarters buildings. The archeological survey identified a distinctive limestone sidewalk located at the front and east sides of the post exchange, the only such sidewalk identified in the camp.

Military Police Compound: East of G Street and north of 4th Street was the Military Police Area. A small gatehouse stood just inside the camp boundary within this area. The MP compound, which was surrounded by barbed wire fencing, also contained an administration building, a guardhouse, four barracks buildings, a bachelor officers' quarters building, the staff mess, two recreation buildings, a dispensary, the post exchange, a garage, storage house, and a tool house. The camp flagpole was located between the MP administration building and G Street. In the later stages of the camp's operation when the MP detachment was greatly reduced in size, the WRA used some of the buildings in this area for staff quarters and administrative offices.

Motor Pool/Support Area: South of the Administration Area at the southwest corner of 4th and G streets was the camp fire station. In the same area to the south were various water supply facilities: a 200,000 gallon reservoir, pump station, and well house. Other well houses were located at the western edge of the camp at the southwest corner of the administration staff quarters area and just west of the hospital area. The Visitor's Center was located at the southeast corner of 4th and G streets. Further south was the motor pool area, which included a garage and repair shop building, a gasoline station, two storage buildings, a blacksmith shop, and the motor pool office.

Warehouse Area: West of the Administration Area at the extreme northwest corner of the camp was the Warehouse Area. Fifteen large warehouses were located along 2nd and 3rd streets. Two smaller refrigerated warehouses, one refrigerated storage building, and two smaller warehouses were also situated in this part of the camp. Three shop buildings, a storage building, and the lumber yard were located south of the warehouses and north of 4th Street.

Hospital Area: In the northeastern corner of the camp at the northeast corner of 6th and K Streets was the Hospital Area. The sprawling 17-building complex was linked by covered and/or enclosed walkways and included the following: an administration building, doctors' quarters, nurses' quarters, an outpatient building, a children's ward, a surgery, an obstetrical ward, a mess hall, two warehouses, four standard ward buildings, a morgue and

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disinfecting building, an isolation ward, a laundry, and a boiler house. Clad in white asbestos shingles, the hospital contrasted with the tarpaper exteriors of most of the other evacuee buildings. The hospital buildings were of more substantial construction and possessed steam heat and an automatic sprinkler system. Floors were of wood and interior walls were finished with wallboard.

Other Facilities: A number of additional camp facilities were located west of the warehouse area, between the inner boundary fence and the western edge of Section 14. A root cellar was in this area, while further to the southwest was the sewage disposal plant, which discharged effluent into an open ditch draining westward to Wolf Creek, and the camp dump. Between the sewage plant and the camp proper was a 1,350 foot long coal storage area. The camp cemetery and columbarium were located outside the fenced area of the camp in the extreme southwest corner of Section 14.

Evacuee Living Area: The southern three-quarters of the secured area, south of 6th Street, included the living quarters for evacuees and was separated from the administrative area by a 300 foot wide open strip. The southern portion of the camp contained 29 residential blocks that housed evacuees. Panoramic photographs taken during the 1940s of the evacuee living area reveal substantial landscaping improvements made by evacuees, including gardens, clotheslines, and transplanted trees.

Blocks in the residential area were designated by a number and letter combination (such as 6-E or 11-H) which reflected the street intersection at the block's northwest corner. Each block followed a similar layout: two columns of six rectangular evacuee barracks along the eastern and western edges; a mess hall and an H-shaped combination laundry, bath, and latrine building in the center; and a recreation building at the end of one of the columns of barracks. Within a block, the barracks were numbered one through 12, with apartments within a barracks designated by letters, A through F. Evacuee barracks were of modified Theater of Operations construction. Standard Theater of Operations barracks, designed for short-term use by young, unmarried, male troops, were considered too primitive for the task at hand. Such buildings were generally unheated, had no floors, and relied on pit latrines for toilets. The modified design resulted in temporary buildings that were inexpensive, avoided the use of critical war materials, and could be assembled quickly.<sup>3</sup> Newspaperman Bill Hosokawa concluded that the camps "provided only for the most Spartan type of living."<sup>4</sup>

Evacuee Barracks: The most common buildings constructed at Amache were evacuee barracks; 348 of the buildings were built and used for residential purposes.<sup>5</sup> Measuring 20 by 120 feet, each gable-roofed building was divided into six "apartments": two, 16 by 20 feet; two, 20 by 20 feet; and two, 24 by 20 feet. Each building had three vestibule entries on one of its long sides with each vestibule providing access to two apartments. The interior walls were lined with insulation board. Evacuee housing at other relocation centers had wooden flooring, but Amache's floors were composed of bricks laid over a sand or dirt bed due to the damp climate.

The interior furnishings supplied by the government for evacuee housing were meager: a single bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling; a coal-fired heater; a partially-completed closet; and steel cots with two blankets. It was

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<sup>3</sup>U.S. War Department, *Final Report: Japanese Relocation from the West Coast* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 264.

<sup>4</sup>Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1969), 343.

<sup>5</sup>Another 12 barracks were built in Block 8-H but were used for classroom purposes.

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left to each "family's ingenuity to build furniture and shelves from scrap lumber, arrange for the privacy of its members and make these bleak little boxes livable."<sup>6</sup>

**Mess Halls:** The mess hall and kitchen located between the columns of evacuee apartments in each block was 40 by 100 feet in size with a shallow gambrel roof and a concrete slab floor. Each rectangular building could accommodate 250 persons for meals, seated at long wooden tables with benches. The buildings contained a serving counter, coal-fired ranges, and a hot water heater. Following initial construction, lean-to additions were added to the rear of the mess halls for storage. The mess halls were the social centers of the blocks. They were used for functions that the smaller recreation buildings could not accommodate. The evacuees decorated their interiors with curtains and bright paint.

**Laundry and Bath Buildings:** The laundry and bath building, also in the center of each block, was an H-shaped structure on a concrete slab foundation, composed of two 20 by 100 foot legs and a 20 by 20 foot crosspiece. One side of the building served as the laundry and contained a 20 by 82 foot room with 18 two-compartment laundry trays and space for ironing boards. The laundry side also contained an 18 by 20 foot office area, where information notices were posted and where the Block Manager could be contacted. The bath side of the building contained separate men's and women's bath and toilet areas. The middle portion of the building contained a connecting corridor and a 15 by 20 foot heater room with two 720-gallon, coal burning hot water heaters.

**Recreation Buildings:** Each block contained a 20 by 100 foot recreation building, located in the northeast or southeast corner of a block. The buildings housed such activities as ping pong, table games (such as the Japanese game, *go*), and reading facilities. Several of the recreation buildings were used for various special purposes. By block, such uses included: 6-E and 7-E, silk screening shops; 6-F, Red Cross; 6-G, YMCA Hospitality House; 6-H, Town Hall and Block Managers' Office; 7-F, Catholic Church; 7-G and 12-G, Buddhist Church; 7-H and 10-H, Christian Church; 8-F, Recreation Office; 10-E, Boy Scouts; and 11-G, Blue Star Service.<sup>7</sup>

**Special Function Blocks** Several blocks in the evacuee area had special functions and departed from the typical layout described above. Block 10-G contained the Amache High School, the largest building at the center, as well as two separate classroom buildings. Completed in early 1943, Amache High School was comprised of a U-shaped classroom building connected to an auditorium-gymnasium by a covered arcade. The main portion of the school was 328 feet wide with two 184-foot wings. The building was of frame construction on cinder block and concrete foundations. The school contained offices and 21 classrooms, including special function rooms for science, homemaking, and industrial arts. Floors were composed of pine boards and interior walls were lined with wallboard.<sup>8</sup>

The auditorium-gymnasium was known as Terry Hall, after Paul J. Terry, the first superintendent of schools at the camp. The 68 by 144 foot building was somewhat taller than other camp structures and had a shallow, bow roof. The interior was taken up with a large assembly room, which was used for community-wide functions and possessed a stage, balcony, and projection booth. Unique to the camp, the building contained a basement with locker rooms and a boiler room. The total cost of \$136,886 for the high school-auditorium complex made it the most expensive building project ever constructed in Prowers County at that time.

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<sup>6</sup>Hosokawa, 342.

<sup>7</sup>"Amache Relocation Center, 1942-1945," (n.p.: Amache Reunion, 1978), map; and Robert C.L. George, "The Granada (Colorado) Relocation Center Secondary School," Master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1944, 117.

<sup>8</sup>*Lamar Daily News*, 22 January 1943.

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Immediately west of the high school, Block 10-F remained open as an athletic field, while Block 9-G, to the north, was also vacant. In Block 8-H the standard evacuee housing structures were converted to classrooms for elementary and junior high school use.

Block 9-F, northwest of the high school, contained the Amache Co-op Store, a warehouse, the internal security office, and an office building. The U-shaped co-op store in Block 9-F, constructed in 1943 at a cost of \$35,000, was the second largest building at the camp. The gabled structure was composed of a 40 by 180 foot main section and two 40 by 60 foot wings. The co-op contained a dry goods store, variety store, shoe store, canteen, beauty shop, barber shop, shoe repair shop, watch repair shop, cleaning and pressing agency, a radio repair shop, an optometry dispensary, and a newspaper department.<sup>9</sup> Near the center of the west exterior wall of the co-op foundation stood a small building with no windows and a small door opening, possibly used as a storage vault.

Guard Towers: Six guard towers were placed just outside the perimeter of the evacuee housing area, at the corners and along the sides. The guard towers were approximately three stories in height, with the bottom of the lookout enclosure 16 feet off the ground. The octagonal design of the lookout enclosures was distinctive to Amache. The seven foot square wooden tower base was composed of six by six inch timbers, with access afforded by means of wooden ladders. The towers were equipped with searchlights and manned by Military Police guards armed with machine guns. The evacuee housing area was surrounded by a fence of four strand double barbed wire on native fir posts placed ten feet apart.

Water Tower The water tower with a 25,000 gallon tank was located in the southeast corner of the camp, just east of block 12-K. Water was pumped from the reservoir in the administration area to the tower, where it was distributed by gravity. The orange and white checkerboard design on the water tower provided one of the few splashes of color in the camp landscape. The 72 foot tower was the tallest structure at Amache and was utilized by camp photographers as a vantage point for panoramas of the center.

Outlying Agricultural Areas: The agricultural areas to the north and east of the developed area of the camp were all located south of the Arkansas River, extending three miles west, four miles east, and two miles north of the Town of Granada in Townships 22 and 23 and Ranges 43 and 44, 6th Principal Meridian. Aside from the built-up area described earlier, the remaining 8,860 acres of the center were intended for use in raising a variety of farm crops and livestock.

Prior to federal occupation, much of the lands had been in private ownership and used for irrigated agricultural pursuits and grazing. The substantial XY Ranch acreage incorporated into the center had long been involved in cattle production. The large tract owned by the American Crystal Sugar Company included the abandoned town of Koen, associated with sugar beet agriculture. Existing agricultural facilities were incorporated into the center's farm program and the hotel at Koen was used as a mess hall for farm workers. The farm program included the raising of vegetables, feed crops, beef cattle, poultry, dairy cattle, and hogs. Vocational agriculture students at the center's high school operated a 500-acre parcel on the farm tract.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>U.S. War Relocation Authority, "Amache" (Amache, CO: U.S. War Relocation Authority, 1944), 33; U.S. War Relocation Authority, "Granada, Colo." (Amache, CO: U.S. War Relocation Authority, 1945), 2. The first publication was a brochure describing the camp in some detail, while the latter was a camp directory listing all evacuees and appointed staff and containing some historical background.

<sup>10</sup>Amache Historical Society, "Historical Report: Operations Division--Agricultural Section, Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado," edited copy of U.S. War Relocation Authority final report (Torrance, California: Amache Historical Society, 1978).

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**Present Appearance**

**Foundations:** Virtually all of the concrete foundations of Amache's buildings are still present. When the wooden buildings were demolished or sold after World War II, the frame superstructures were unbolted, leaving the underlying concrete foundations in place. Some foundations along the northern and western edges of Amache were reportedly broken up and used as rip-rap in area canals, and, in other locations, trees have sprouted in foundation cracks or adjacent to foundation walls. Concrete foundations in the south central portion of the camp are in generally better condition than those in the northern and western areas. The concrete block foundations of the high school and co-op building, erected after the initial phase of center construction, are partially extant and their footprints are clearly evident today. The walls of a concrete vault, located within the co-op's footprint, are still present.

The existing foundations are visible on recent aerial photographs of the site and the different foundation types are readily identifiable.<sup>11</sup> Although somewhat obscured by vegetation at ground level, the columns of evacuee barracks foundations rise about two feet above grade and are still visible. Mess halls in the evacuee housing areas are recognized by their solid, rectangular slab foundations, while laundry/latrine foundations can be identified by their H-shaped, solid slab construction.

**Roads:** Although a few minor washouts are present, the original graded roadways of the center are clearly visible and drivable, except for a few segments in the north central portion of the site near what was the main gate. Few changes in the original alignment of center roads have occurred. The original access to the cemetery was a curving road approaching from the north and forming a loop around the burial ground. The cemetery is now reached by a narrow east-west road from Block 12-E, the southwest corner of the evacuee housing area. This road was re-graded in 1998.

**Cemetery Area:** In addition to the small fenced cemetery, this area, in the southwestern corner of Section 14, contains a small brick building housing a granite slab memorial, a modern wooden tool shed, and a ten foot tall, white stone monument. The cemetery has nine marked burial sites. The current grave markers follow a common design and were added in recent years, including one marker bearing the inscription "Evacuees Unknown." According to WRA records, 106 deaths occurred at Amache during the war. A number of deaths were handled by cremation and other burials were removed to new resting places after the war. Benches, perimeter chain link fencing, an irrigation system, sod, and trees were installed between 1998-2003.

The front gable brick building adjacent to the cemetery on the west was built by internees, possibly as a columbarium for cremated remains.<sup>12</sup> A polished granite memorial marker inside this small building, which honors those who died at Amache, is dated September 1945. Engraved in Japanese, the English translation reads, "Memorial tower established in Showa 20 (1945) by the Japanese at Amache Relocation Center"<sup>13</sup> The roof on this structure was recently replaced with one more characteristic of the Japanese style, under supervision of the Denver Central Optimist Club.

<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, aerial photographs G14-4b and H14-1a, T. 23 S., R. 44 W., Section 14, Prowers, County, Colorado, supplied by the field office in Lamar, Colorado.

<sup>12</sup>See Denver Central Optimist Club, "Amache Remembered, 1942-1945" (Denver, Colorado: Denver Central Optimist Club, 1983). A September 1944 WRA map of the center shows a columbarium (a structure for storing cremated remains) in the approximate location of the brick structure.

<sup>13</sup> Jeffery F. Burton, Mary M. Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard W. Lord, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese Relocation Sites*, Western Archeological and Conservation Center Publication 74 (Tucson, AZ: National Park Service, 1999), 120.

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The *ireito* monument was dedicated in September 1983, with the inscription "Amache Remembered" at its top. The memorial is dedicated to "the 31 patriotic Japanese Americans who volunteered from Amache and dutifully gave their lives in World War II, to the approximately 7,000 persons who were relocated at Amache, and to the 120 who died there during this period of relocation, August 27, 1942, October 15, 1945."<sup>14</sup>

In 2001 a small wooden tool shed, with a metal roof, was built by students of the Amache Preservation Society. Measuring 8 feet by 12 feet, the shed is painted burgundy and stands adjacent to the small front gable brick structure in the cemetery.

Archeology: An archeological survey conducted in 2003 resulted in the location and documentation of a substantial and diverse assemblage of artifacts and features. Over 1,600 artifacts were uncovered, including medicine bottles, porcelain bowl fragments with Japanese design elements, cosmetic bottles, condiment, spice, juice and ketchup bottles, over 600 food cans, coffee cans, metal cans modified for use as strainer/sieves, canning jars, Fiesta ware fragments, ink bottles, tea bowl fragments, and rubber shoe soles. Other objects included toys such as marbles, a toy teacup, a child-sized costume jewelry ring, and a small wagon. Remnants of numerous *sake* jugs were found, including one complete jug. The presence of *sake* bottles is intriguing, given that the official policy for the camps forbade the internees from having alcohol.<sup>15</sup>

The survey also revealed remnants of garden borders; a limestone sidewalk on the south side of the Post Office, and an irregularly shaped pond feature at the southwest corner of MP-1, the block containing housing for the Military Police. Two manholes were located within the Administrative (AD-2) block, one constructed of brick, and one of brick and stucco. Concrete footings representing the remains of the guard towers were also identified. The housing area contained three large *koi* ponds, and a concrete foundation pedestal with the names "Aki, Yami, Hwack, Swede" written into the concrete. The bathhouse block also contained names written into the finish coat on the heater base. The names "Mario Sato, Jimmy Takamura, and N. Kagayama" match known Amache internees.<sup>16</sup>

After the relocation center closed in 1945, the land was leased or sold and the buildings were demolished or moved. The Town of Granada bought the built up section of the site in 1948, using the center's deep wells for the town water supply and the western part of the site as the town dump. In 1968, the area originally occupied by the relocation center hospital, in the northeastern area of Section 14, was cleared of existing remains for the construction of the Hillcrest Homes housing complex for migrant farm workers, which is now private farm labor housing.<sup>17</sup> In the late 1960s, a cylindrical, metal water tank was installed in the southeastern portion of the site. Used as part of the town's water system for several years, it is currently abandoned.

In 1999, the Town of Granada reconstructed the End of the Line Stadium Arena, a small rodeo arena originally built in the years immediately following World War II. Measuring 400 feet long by 130 feet wide, it is equipped with cattle pens, a loading chute, bucking chutes, a small section of bleachers, a mobile speaker

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<sup>14</sup>Denver Central Optimist Club, "Amache Remembered."

<sup>15</sup> Carrillo, Richard, David Killam, Wade Broadhead, and Michelle Slaughter, "Camp Amache (5PW48): A Class III Cultural Resource Intensive Field Survey of the Granada Relocation Center," (Granada, CO), Vol. 1, 90-91.

<sup>16</sup> According to Carillo and Killam, the exact function of the pond feature is unknown. The largest of the *koi* ponds has been excavated by the Amache Preservation Society, under the supervision of John Hopper.

<sup>17</sup> The boundary for the proposed Granada Relocation Center National Historic Landmark excludes this area.

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platform, and a small mobile office. Surrounded by an electric fence, the rodeo arena sits in the northern part of the site, directly west of the former Hillcrest Homes housing complex.

In 2000, a new metal water storage tank was built by the Town of Granada. Located south of the End of the Line Stadium Arena, the tank is currently used by the town as its water source. During 2000-2001, upgrading of the town's water system involved ground disturbance at the site in three different areas: 1) the existing ground level water storage tank and new piping; 2) a new water storage tank and yard piping; and 3) a 3 inch diameter water line from the newly constructed water tower to the Amache cemetery.<sup>18</sup>

Access to the relocation center site is restricted, but visitors can obtain a key from the Granada Town Hall. Mr. John Hopper, a local Granada high school history instructor, and his students, with assistance from the Denver Central Optimist Club, are responsible for maintaining the site (i.e., watering the cemetery lawn and trees, patrolling, etc.). They have identified the locations of key buildings (i.e., post office, high school, newspaper, etc.) and have installed interpretive signs throughout the camp. At the site entrance, an interpretive sign displays a map of Amache based on a drawing by an Amache High School student, Eddie Kubota, at the time of internment. Mr. Hopper and his students have also played a key role in the development of the Amache/Granada/Trails Museum that commemorates both the history of Amache and the Town of Granada.

Some historic barracks moved to other locations upon the camps closure have been identified and assessed for the feasibility of relocating them to the Amache site. A number of these buildings maintain a high degree of structural integrity, and current owners have expressed a desire to donate them to the site.

**Contributing Resources** (see site map):

- 1) The historic site itself, with its intact road system and foundations, is the primary contributing resource at the Granada Relocation Center, or Amache. Within that site are three additional contributing resources;
- 2) the historic reservoir, located on the west side of "G" Street, east of the staff housing area, currently used by the Town of Granada;
- 3) the historic well house located near the reservoir, also used by the town; and
- 4) the small building adjacent to the cemetery constructed by the evacuees, possibly as a columbarium.

**Non-contributing Resources:**

- 1) the End of the Line Stadium arena;
- 2) the water storage tank installed in 2000, located diagonally across from the rodeo arena, which currently serves as the Town of Granada's water source;
- 3) the water tank at the northeastern corner of K and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets constructed in the late 1960s, but now abandoned;
- 4) the ten-foot-tall white stone *ireito* memorial, installed in the cemetery area in 1983; and
- 5) the small tool shed built by the Amache Preservation Society in 2001 in the cemetery area.

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<sup>18</sup>Cuartejeo HP Associates, Inc., provided archeological monitoring during this upgrade. The majority of the work occurred within the street portions of the former camp site and no cultural resources were encountered in the three areas monitored during the water line construction.



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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.****INTRODUCTION**

The Granada Relocation Center, commonly known as Amache, is an exemplary site of national significance as one of the ten relocation centers that incarcerated Japanese Americans during World War II following their forced removal by military authorities from the West Coast. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on 19 February 1942, authorizing the U.S. military to create military zones from which “any and all persons” could be excluded. Based on E. O. 9066, the military removed over 110,000 Japanese Americans living on the West Coast, both immigrants and U.S. citizens, from their homes and businesses. Although not charged with any crimes and without benefit of judicial hearings, Japanese Americans as a group were uprooted and taken under armed guard to hastily created assembly and relocation centers. These actions were taken in the months following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, and justified on the basis of “military necessity” and the military’s professed inability to gauge the loyalty of individual Japanese Americans to the United States. This decision was also greatly influenced by racist sentiment, combined with wartime hysteria and an intense fear that Japanese would commit acts of terrorism or espionage against the United States.

Amache is nationally significant as an outstanding example of a World War II relocation center. More than 10,000 people passed through the center, which operated from August 1942 to October 1945. At its peak, Amache housed 7,318 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were United States citizens, in tarpaper covered barracks surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers manned by military policemen armed with machine guns. All of the temporary “Theater of Operations” buildings built at Amache by the wartime War Relocation Authority were removed immediately after the war, as they were at all of the relocation centers. The proposed landmark consists of a single 593 acre site containing the foundations of the center’s housing, administrative, military police, warehouse, and support areas, as well as one of only three surviving relocation center cemeteries.<sup>19</sup>

The surviving road system and the unusually intact foundations of barracks and communal latrine/laundry buildings and mess halls at Amache clearly illustrate the historic layout of the center’s evacuee housing area, particularly in comparison with the other relocation centers. Barracks at the other centers were supported only by rows of small concrete block piers, but at Amache solid concrete perimeter foundations or continuous concrete slabs were required because of dampness. There are no substantial remains in the residential areas at Heart Mountain, Jerome, Minidoka, Poston, Rohwer, or Tule Lake. At Gila River many of the surviving communal latrine/laundry building foundations have been broken open, although the roads are still passable and many of the concrete barracks piers remain. In the case of Manzanar, most of the piers in the barracks area are gone and some of the roads are no longer visible. At Topaz, foundations for latrine/laundry buildings and mess halls survive and roads are still evident, but scattered building materials and other debris are all that remain of the barracks.<sup>20</sup>

The original dirt and gravel roads at Amache are intact, many of them drivable. Their rigid orthogonal grid still reflects the military regimentation imposed on the residents. Many of the Chinese elms and cottonwoods planted by the evacuees to relieve this rigidity have also survived. The original 29 residential blocks delineated

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<sup>19</sup> The others are at Manzanar and Rohwer.

<sup>20</sup> Burton, et al. *Confinement and Ethnicity*, 6, 73-74, 173, 266, 269.

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by the roads occupy an area of about 200 acres, reflecting the size of the center; Amache was the tenth largest city in Colorado during the war.

Almost all of the barracks foundations in the evacuee housing area at Amache survive. Many of these foundations rise two feet or more above the ground and are easily visible. Combined with the characteristic slabs for the latrine/laundry buildings and mess halls, which also survive, these foundations clearly reveal the layout of the standard blocks in which the evacuees carried on their day-to-day lives (see Figure 1). The relationship between the barracks and the communal latrines and mess halls also testifies to the lack of privacy that evacuees remember as one of the most oppressive aspects of the relocation. Of all of the centers, Amache probably best conveys the regimentation, crowding, and lack of privacy that characterized the Japanese American wartime relocation.

Amache is also nationally significant for its association with the unusually sympathetic reception Japanese Americans received from the Governor of Colorado. At an April, 1942, meeting between WRA officials and the representatives of ten western states, Governor Ralph L. Carr, a Republican, was the only governor to indicate that evacuees would be welcome in his state. In spite of intense anti-Japanese hostility expressed by other Colorado politicians and many of the state's leading newspapers, Carr urged understanding for Japanese Americans. His principled stance probably contributed to the defeat of his bid for the U.S. Senate in 1942 and the end of his political career.

Finally, the Granada Relocation Center is nationally significant for its ability to avoid the conflict and violence that characterized many of the other centers, largely through the efforts of James G. Lindley, the project director for Amache throughout its history. Acknowledging the difficulties facing the evacuees, Lindley worked to ameliorate them whenever he could. One historian concluded that, "As a result of his humane policies and sympathetic attitude toward the internees' plight, Amache was considered by many government officials and internees themselves to be the least discordant of all of the camps in the country."<sup>21</sup>

The period of significance extends from 1942, the year that the War Relocation Authority selected the site for the relocation center was selected by the Wartime Relocation Authority, to 1947, when the War Assets Administration disposed of the last of the buildings.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND<sup>22</sup>**

### **The Relocation Decision and Its Implementation**

The crippling of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet and the attendant loss of American lives at Pearl Harbor galvanized American public opinion against Japan and unleashed long-simmering prejudices against the West Coast Japanese American population. In the immediate aftermath of the 7 December 1941 attack and the United States' declaration of war, the Department of Justice took into custody more than 1,500 Japanese American community leaders who had been previously identified as possible threats to national security in the event of war. While no criminal charges were pressed against these individuals, they were removed to internment camps.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup>George Lurie, "A Legacy of Shame: The Story of Colorado's Camp Amache" (n.p., G. Lurie, 1990), 47.

<sup>22</sup>Excerpted from Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, "Granada Relocation Center" National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, with changes and additions by Rocky Mountain Regional Office staff.

<sup>23</sup>Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 148; Raymond Y. Okamura, "Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II," in California Department of Parks and

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While supporting targeted detentions, both U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle and Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover opposed the wholesale removal of Japanese Americans. However, West Coast politicians, pressure groups, and the public, especially in California, agitated for stronger steps against resident Japanese, including U.S. citizens. Prejudice and discriminatory practices against Japanese and others of Asian descent had long been an element of California society.<sup>24</sup> Politicians raised the specter of sabotage and fifth column activities by Japanese Americans and on 13 February 1942, the West Coast congressional delegation asked that all persons of Japanese descent be removed from the region.

In response, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order Number 9066 on 19 February 1942, authorizing the military to designate areas from which "any or all persons might be excluded." General John L. DeWitt, commander of the Western Defense Command, designated the western portions of California, Oregon, and Washington and the southern part of Arizona as Military Area Number One on 2 March 1942. Any enemy alien and "any person of Japanese ancestry" was required to inform authorities of changes in his address. General DeWitt informed the press that these groups would soon be excluded from the designated area and advised voluntary relocation. DeWitt later told a congressional committee that "A Jap's a Jap. They are a dangerous element. . . . There is no possible way to determine their loyalty. . . . It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen; theoretically he is still a Japanese and you can't change him . . . by giving him a piece of paper."<sup>25</sup>

While a few thousand Japanese attempted to relocate voluntarily, the growing hostility from the public and authorities of inland states led federal authorities to adopt an organized, mandatory removal. On 11 March 1942, the military created the Wartime Civilian Control Administration (WCCA) to establish temporary facilities where those removed from designated areas could be held. The WCCA created 15 assembly centers for evacuees in California, Oregon, and Washington on former racetracks and fairgrounds.<sup>26</sup> On 18 March 1942 the civilian War Relocation Authority was established within the Department of the Interior to create and administer a system of more permanent relocation centers. The evacuees remained in the assembly centers for a period of six weeks to six months, while the ten relocation camps in seven (mostly western) states were constructed: Gila River and Poston in Arizona; Jerome and Rohwer in Arkansas; Manzanar and Tule Lake in California; Granada in Colorado; Minidoka in Idaho; Topaz in Utah; and Heart Mountain in Wyoming. By the end of 1942, almost 120,000 persons of Japanese descent had been removed from the Pacific Coast and placed in the camps.

### **Social and Personal Impacts of the Relocation**

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Recreation, *Five Views: An Ethnic Site Survey for California* (Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, 1988), 174.

<sup>24</sup>See Isami A. Waugh and Alex Yamato, "A History of Japanese Americans in California," 170-73, in California Department of Parks and Recreation, *Five Views*.

<sup>25</sup>U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Relocation Program* (New York: AMS Press, 1975; originally published Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 1 and George Lurie, "Return to Amache," *Denver Magazine* (May 1982):36.

<sup>26</sup>This nomination uses the terms "evacuees" and "relocation centers," which reflects the terminology of the U.S. War Relocation Authority. The government also used "residents" or "colonists" and "wartime communities." Given the nature of and underlying motives for the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast, the terms "internees" or "detainees" and "concentration camps" may be more descriptive and have been used by several writers on the subject. See Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis, *The Great Betrayal: The Evacuation of the Japanese-Americans During World War II* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1969), 237-38.

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Forced to vacate their homes, farms, and businesses on short notice, Japanese Americans who sold their assets were unable to obtain fair market value and suffered an aggregate economic loss estimated at \$400 million in 1942 dollars. Typically, "neighbors, like scavengers, swooped down on the Japanese communities and offered outrageously low prices for homes, businesses, cars, and other personal property."<sup>27</sup>

Amache resident Harry Shironaka recalled buying a new \$800 automobile just before the exclusion order, which he had to sell for \$250. Frank Torizawa, who spent roughly two years at Amache, stated "We lost everything we had in Los Angeles when they shipped us off to the camps. . . . And I've been working like hell ever since to get to where I am today." Upon his release from the center, Torizawa established the Granada Market in the adjacent town and operated it for two years before relocating to Denver. The establishment functioned as a successful grocery store and fish market in the Sakura Square area of downtown Denver for several years.<sup>28</sup>

While the cases challenging the constitutionality of the internment worked their way up through the courts, the possibility of lifting the West Coast exclusion orders was also considered as victory over Japan became more likely. Influenced by these factors, WRA officials initiated a resettlement program and began to gradually release internees from camp. From the relocation centers, evacuees pursued jobs or higher education in parts of the nation away from the West Coast. In early 1945 the exclusion from the Pacific Coast states was lifted. While a portion of the Japanese American community returned to the West Coast, others found opportunities in other regions of the United States

The relocation was a psychologically damaging event for the evacuees, who experienced "the embarrassment and humiliation of being regarded as traitors to their country, and the inescapable fear that their ancestry rather than their actions would always determine how they would be treated." Many former evacuees avoided discussing their experiences during the war for many years. One former Manzanar resident, whose daughter was born there, explained "There was a sense of being considered a second-class citizen, and it has taken a long time to get over that."<sup>29</sup>

Some who have written on the relocation have pointed to what journalist Bill Hosokawa refers to as "silver lining" aspects of the ordeal. The forced removal of the Japanese population from the West Coast broke up prewar "Little Tokyos," segregated ethnic enclaves typically located in lower-income and run-down areas of the city, and contributed to the geographic dispersion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast after the war. While this experience may have hastened the acculturation of *Nisei* into the broader context of American society and "showed them what the true America really looked like," it also destroyed independent and successful ethnic communities.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> John Tateishi, *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1984), xix.

<sup>28</sup> David McQuay, "Amache Remembered," *The Denver Post*, 4 August 1985, 11; Lurie, "Return to Amache," 38. In 1948, Torizawa received \$300 in compensation from the federal government for relocation losses that he estimated at \$5,000.

<sup>29</sup> Donald Pike and Roger Olmstead, "The Japanese in California," in Maisie and Richard Conrat, *Executive Order 9066: The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), 23; Linda M. Rancourt, "Remembering Manzanar," *National Parks* (May/June 1993): 33. See also, Don T. Nakanishi, "Surviving Democracy's 'Mistake': Japanese Americans and the Enduring Legacy of Executive Order 9066," *Amerasia Journal* 19 (1993): 9-13.

<sup>30</sup> Lurie, "Return to Amache," 37; Nash, 151.

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The relocation had a profound impact on the social life of Japanese Americans, in terms of family structure, assimilation into American life, and geographic distribution. Today it continues to receive extensive legal and academic study.

**Constitutional Challenges and Redress**

In a summary of the relocation program, the War Relocation Authority observed that "never before in the history of the United States had military decision dictated the exclusion of a largely citizen minority from a section of the country."<sup>31</sup> Legal challenges to various aspects of the exclusion and relocation emerged during the war. In *Korematsu v. United States*, 323 U.S. 214 (1944), a six to three majority of the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the exclusion of Japanese Americans as a "military imperative," stating that "we cannot reject as unfounded the judgment of military authorities and of Congress that there were disloyal members of that population. . . [who] could not readily be isolated and separately dealt with." In a strong dissent, Justice Frank Murphy found that "no reasonable relation to an 'immediate, imminent, and impending' public danger is evident to support this racial restriction which is one of the most sweeping and complete deprivations of constitutional rights in the history of this nation in the absence of martial law."

Justice Robert H. Jackson, also dissenting, argued that the Court's sanctioning of the exclusion order was more dangerous than the exclusion itself: "The Court for all time has validated the principle of racial discrimination in criminal procedure and transplanting American citizens. The principle then lies about like a loaded weapon ready for the hand of any authority that can bring forward a plausible claim of an urgent need." A 1945 *Yale Law Journal* article characterized the Supreme Court's handling of the Japanese American case as "a disaster." In assessing the 1942 decision to relocate Japanese Americans, John Tateishi concludes that "emotion, political expediency, and economic greed prevailed, and the Constitution was grossly violated. All three branches—the executive, legislative, and judicial—failed the trust reposed in them and embraced West Coast prejudices that were infused with racist assumptions."<sup>32</sup>

In 1982, the Congressional Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians rejected the rationale that the relocation was based on military necessity and concluded that the "broad historical causes that shaped the decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." The commission was established by the U.S. Congress in 1980 to study the impact of the relocation and to propose remedial action. While a handful of individuals still defend the relocation decision, the commission concluded that "the personal injustice of excluding, removing, and detaining loyal American citizens is manifest. Such events are extraordinary and unique in American history. For every citizen and for American public life, they pose haunting questions about our country and its past."<sup>33</sup>

In August 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation providing \$20,000 in tax free reparations to each of 60,000 surviving Japanese American evacuees. The bill included a formal apology, a review of convictions, and pardons for those who did not cooperate with the relocation. The President observed that "this bill has less to do with property than with honor. For here we admit a wrong." Former Amache resident Emory Namura,

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<sup>31</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Relocation Program*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Tateishi, xxvii.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 1982), 35; Nakanishi, 8. For an example of the minority who defend the relocation program, see Lillian Baker, *The Concentration Camp Conspiracy--A Second Pearl Harbor* (Lawndale, CA: AFHA Publications, 1981).

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whose parents died in the camp, concurred: "It's more of a symbol and an apology than a financial gain for us."<sup>34</sup>

**Site Selection and Land Acquisition**

Facing hostility from states and localities over plans for many small evacuee camps, the War Relocation Authority opted for a few large camps, where evacuees could be efficiently guarded by small military detachments. Criteria for selecting relocation center sites were formulated by the WRA: they should be on federal government or other public land; they should be a safe distance from strategic war facilities; they should be large enough to accommodate at least 5,000 persons; they should be capable of providing year-round work opportunities for evacuees; and they should have good transportation accessibility.<sup>35</sup>

In the spring of 1942, the WRA began an active search for possible relocation center sites and asked Democratic U.S. Senator Edwin Johnson, the senior member of the Colorado congressional delegation, to submit a list of potential project locations within Colorado. Johnson supplied a list of 14 possible sites to the WRA. Some localities, such as Alamosa, recognized the economic benefits that such a facility could bring and actively sought a relocation center.<sup>36</sup>

On 3 June 1942, General DeWitt of the Army's Western Defense Command informed Governor Ralph L. Carr that a site near the southeastern Colorado town of Granada had been selected for a relocation center. The lands of the center covered approximately 10,500 acres south of the Arkansas River, and extended three miles west and four miles east of Granada, a town with a population of 342 in 1940. The nearest town of any size was Lamar with 4,445 residents, 17 miles to the west. Colorado's principal cities of the period were far removed from the relocation center: Denver lay 203 miles to the northwest, while Pueblo was 119 miles to the west.

The site selected for the portion of the center that would contain evacuee quarters was covered with wild grass, sagebrush and Russian thistle and gently sloped from south to north toward the Arkansas River, some 2.75 miles to the north. *The Denver Post* commented that the camp location was "probably as bleak a spot as one can find on the western plains."<sup>37</sup>

Land for Amache was acquired from private owners by the U.S. Army for the War Relocation Authority through outright purchase or by condemnation. This fact distinguished the Amache site from other relocation centers, which were generally situated on existing federal landholdings. All or part of 18 farms or ranches were bought by the government, but the bulk of the project area was composed of two large tracts: the XY Ranch, established in 1889 by Fred Harvey, and a parcel owned by the American Crystal Sugar Company containing the abandoned town of Koen. In addition to securing land, water rights in the Lamar Canal and Irrigation Company and the XY Irrigation Ditch Company were purchased for the planned agricultural program at the center.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Rancourt, 34; *Rocky Mountain News*, 11 August 1988, 2.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, *WRA: A Story of Human Conservation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1975), 20.

<sup>36</sup> Peter W. Mitchell, "Japanese Relocation in Colorado, 1942-1945," master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1960, 17-19 and 26.

<sup>37</sup> Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps USA: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1972), 96.

<sup>38</sup> U.S. War Department, 250.

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Displacing established local farmers and ranchers to house Japanese American evacuees caused substantial bitterness locally. The headline in the *Bent County Democrat*, in nearby Las Animas, read: "Uncle Sam Will Buy Good Farms in Prowers County for Jap Camp." Affected farm owners were reportedly "worried and grieved" over what they viewed as the unnecessary taking of their property. A 1973 centennial history of Granada noted that "feelings ran high in the valley over these dealings."<sup>39</sup>

**Construction of the Camp**

Construction of Amache began 29 June 1942 with site preparation work by the U.S. Corps of Engineers. An initial party of engineers had arrived in Lamar 19 June under the command of Lt. William Curtis to undertake surveying tasks. The Corps was responsible for clearing, grubbing, and leveling the land. The general contractor for the project was Lambie, Moss, Little, and James of Amarillo, Texas, and Charles Lambie arrived in Lamar 1 July to oversee the work. A number of subcontractors were engaged by the government for specific tasks: P&E Construction of Houston, Texas, water and sewer systems; Foley Electric Company, Dodge City, Kansas, wiring and electrical systems; List and Clark Construction Company and the San Ore Construction Company, Pryor, Oklahoma, construction of road system; and E.F. Gobatti of Pueblo, water well drilling. Equipment problems resulted in the replacement of the latter firm by the Hollow Drilling Company of Kansas, which used oil drilling equipment to drill three, deep water wells at the site. Electrical power to the site was supplied by the Southeastern Colorado Power Association.<sup>40</sup>

Five hundred men were working on the project by the latter part of July and, by late August, the figure had risen to 1,000 workers. Most of the workforce for Amache consisted of out-of-state construction workers who followed war work from site to site. Dozens of truckers from Oklahoma, Texas, and western Kansas worked on the project transporting lumber and other building materials from the railroad in Granada to the construction site. The *Lamar Daily News* reported that "a large percentage of the common labor on the job is being done by Indians and Negroes, wheat harvest and sugar beet thinning just completed." Some local residents also worked on the project, including rancher Robert Fritz, who was paid a dollar an hour. He recalled that "at that time . . . it was more money than I had ever seen." Granada enjoyed a brief boom, as trailers and tents were brought in to house construction workers. Fifty evacuees were reportedly working on project construction in early September.<sup>41</sup>

To supply the extensive concrete required for building footings and foundations, a concrete mixing plant was set up by Fountain Sand and Gravel of Pueblo at the construction site. The plant had a capacity of 200 cubic yards per day. Workers assembled foundation forms for laundry and bath buildings. A mill and machine shop was established by contractors near the railroad in Granada. Wall and roof sections of camp buildings were prefabricated there and then hauled to the center and bolted together on foundations.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Bent County Democrat*, 17 July 1942; Granada Centennial Committee, *An Historical Record of Granada, Colorado* (Lamar, Colorado, Robinson Printing, 1973).

<sup>40</sup> *Lamar Daily News*, 22 July 1942; M. Paul Holsinger, "Amache: The Story of Japanese Relocation in Colorado," (Denver, CO: Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1960), 37-42.

<sup>41</sup> *Lamar Daily News*, 22 July 1942 and 8 September 1942; *Bent County Democrat*, 17 July 1942; Rodney Hoffman, "Amache," *Kansas Territorial* 3 (January-February 1983); Holsinger, 43 and 45.

<sup>42</sup> *Lamar Daily News*, 13 July 1942; *Bent County Democrat*, 17 July 1942.

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The initial phase of camp construction was not completed until November 1942, some three months after the center began receiving evacuees. Additional construction, including the high school and cooperative store building and modifications to existing buildings, was undertaken beginning in late 1942 and extending through 1943. The total cost of land acquisition and construction at Amache was approximately \$4.5 million.<sup>43</sup>

**Arrival of Evacuees**

The military pressed the WRA for early occupancy at all the centers, so that evacuees could be transferred out of the assembly centers. On 20 August, Lt. William Curtis of the Engineer Corps estimated that the camp was 40 percent finished but anticipated completion by 1 September. Apparently recognizing the impossibility of that assessment, WRA Project Director James G. Lindley attempted to delay opening the center, but was overruled by the Western Defense Command. Ninety men of the 130 man military police detachment arrived at the center 20 August from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, under the command of Lt. C.O. Johnson. The first group of 212 evacuees arrived at Amache 27 August 1942. This vanguard was selected for special skills necessary for preparing the camp for the arrival of subsequent evacuees. It consisted of laborers, truck drivers, food preparation workers, medical personnel, and clerical personnel.<sup>44</sup>

Evacuees were transported from the assembly centers to the relocation centers in special trains, accompanied by an armed military escort. The evacuee trains had low priorities and often took several days to reach Granada from the West Coast. The mainline of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad passed through Granada, a mile northeast of the camp. Rather than constructing a rail spur, evacuees were off-loaded at Granada and then taken to the center by busses or trucks equipped with benches. At Amache, evacuees were registered, given a brief medical examination, and assigned to barracks/apartments.

On 3 September, the second trainload of 557 evacuees from the Merced Assembly Center arrived. Between 5 and 17 September, Merced was emptied by the following movements of evacuees to Amache: 5 September, 550 and 556 persons; 7 September, 553; 9 September, 527; 16 September, 529 and 527; 17 September, 481. Transfers then followed from the large Santa Anita Assembly Center near Los Angeles, beginning 19 September with a trainload of 495 evacuees. Five additional transfers to Amache from Santa Anita occurred during the remainder of September: 21 September, 524; 24 September, 514; 25 September, 500; 27 September, 452; and 29 September, 457. A final 120 evacuees from Santa Anita arrived on 29 October 1942.<sup>45</sup>

The center was far from complete when it began receiving regular trainloads of evacuees and construction could not keep up with the pace of arrivals. Some evacuees slept in laundry rooms or recreation buildings for some nights after their arrival. One WRA staff member remembered evacuees moving into one end of a barracks while carpenters finished the other end. The chaotic early days of the center were described by Project Director Lindley in his Final Report of 1945: "Trains arrived, usually at night; lighting facilities were extremely sketchy, and families stumbled around in the dark, individuals often falling into excavations when being led to their quarters." Lack of functioning utility systems resulted in the use of candles for lighting, the hauling in of water by truck from Granada, and the use of wooden privies for sanitation. While all barracks had been erected by the end of September, mess halls were operating in only 19 blocks and plumbing had been installed in just

<sup>43</sup> U.S. War Assets Administration, "Fixed Asset Inventory."

<sup>44</sup> *Lamar Daily News*, 17 August 1942; U.S. War Department, 288.

<sup>45</sup> U.S. War Department, 283-84.

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12. To accommodate all residents, meals were served in shifts in the mess halls. The camp was not completed with functioning utility systems until early November.<sup>46</sup>

Amache was the smallest of the ten relocation camps with a capacity of 8,000 residents. The capacities of the other centers ranged from 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. According to WRA records, the peak population of the Amache center was 7,318, recorded 1 February 1943.<sup>47</sup> By the fall of 1942, Amache was the largest community in southeastern Colorado and the tenth largest "city" in the state based on 1940 population counts. Given the size of the relocation center, a separate postal designation was required and the name Amache was selected. The name was suggested by Lamar Mayor R.L. Christy in honor of the Cheyenne wife of John Prowers, a 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneer cattleman of the area for whom Prowers County was named.<sup>48</sup>

One resident related her impression of Amache's prairie location as "so barren, with no trees. Just ugly barracks on a hillside." Since the center site had been bulldozed of all vegetation prior to construction, any wind stirred clouds of dust across the buildings. Adjustment to the camp's setting also required dealing with the rattlesnakes common to the area. An evacuee recalled that "the men would have to go out and beat the bush for rattlesnakes. And every day, they'd come back with a dozen or so." Rattles were sold as souvenirs for \$1.00 or \$1.50 each.<sup>49</sup>

**Backgrounds of Evacuees**

Virtually all of the original evacuees (99.3 percent) transferred to Amache in the late summer and fall of 1942 had lived in California prior to their relocation. Nearly two-thirds (65.3 percent) of initial camp residents were U.S. citizens. Reflecting national patterns, there was a distinct difference in the age composition of American born (*Nisei*) and foreign born (*Issei*) evacuees at the Amache center. Nearly fifty-eight percent of *Nisei* in the camp were under twenty years of age; by contrast, 58.9 percent of *Issei* were fifty years old or older.<sup>50</sup>

The center population was a mixture of individuals from rural and urban areas, representing diverse occupational backgrounds. The rural contingent came from the Merced and Stockton areas and from counties along the California coast north of San Francisco. This group of evacuees was more likely to have been engaged in agriculture and was described by one WRA staff member as having had less contact with Caucasians. These evacuees, who constituted approximately 60 percent of Amache's original population, came to Colorado from the Merced Assembly Center. The urban-oriented evacuees at Amache came from Los Angeles County in southern California. The occupations represented in this group were more diverse than those of Merced and included merchants, salesmen and clerks, artisans, and professionals. This group comprised roughly 40 percent of Amache's initial population and came to the center from the Santa Anita Assembly Center.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Holsinger, 49-50; Mitchell, 29; Joseph McClelland, U.S. War Relocation Authority Reports Officer, Granada Relocation Center, interview by Louise Bashford, tape recording, 8 April 1981, (Fort Collins, Colorado, Auraria Library Archives and Special Collections, Denver, CO).

<sup>47</sup>If evacuees on temporary leave are included, the peak population for Amache was 7,656, recorded 1 January 1943. U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Description* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1975), 17-18.

<sup>48</sup> Holsinger, 51. Amache was the daughter of Onichee, a Cheyenne Chief killed at Sand Creek in 1864.

<sup>49</sup> Lurie, "Return to Amache," 38; Johnson, 5.

<sup>50</sup> The information in this section is drawn from U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People*, 61 and 101; and U.S. War Department, Map Insert III.

<sup>51</sup>McClelland; U.S. War Department, Map Insert III.

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**Project Director James G. Lindley and the Administrative Structure of the Camp**

The War Relocation Authority was charged with the administration of Amache. James G. Lindley, an engineer, was the Project Director for the camp throughout its existence. During the 1930s, Lindley had worked closely with the chief of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Washington, D.C. on important conservation projects carried out by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Immediately prior to his WRA appointment, he served as the chief engineer of the Southwest division of the SCS. George Lurie, in his study of Amache, described Lindley as "a liberal and sympathetic to the plight of the Japanese." According to Joseph McClelland, the center's Reports Officer during the war, Lindley was "much more conscious of their [evacuees'] feelings and trying to do things to help them from the standpoint of living in these unusual conditions." In his Final Report on Amache, Lindley characterized Amache as "this piece of wartime folly."<sup>52</sup>

Lindley was involved in much that went on at Amache, in addition to his unsuccessful attempts to have the evacuees' arrival delayed until the center could be completed. He was reportedly especially proud of the successful camp agricultural program. When the head of the WRA Employment Office visited in January 1943, he reported that Amache was far ahead of the other centers in releasing evacuees on temporary or indefinite leave, allowing them to pursue higher education, employment, or permanent resettlement away from the West Coast. By April of that year, almost 800 evacuees had obtained indefinite leave while another 110 had left the center for outside employment. In 1945, as the WRA moved towards closing the center, Lindley encouraged the evacuees to leave in an open letter in the camp newspaper:

Do not let resentment, inertia or a sense of frustration blind you to the fact that the closing of the centers is a consummation devoutly to be wished! The Center, any center, is not a good place to live; I know it and you know it.

In his memoirs, written shortly after the war, Lindley wrote about the people he had worked with at the center:

I have a lasting and deep regard for the Japanese people. It is hard for one to visualize any other people who would be so well behaved under similar conditions. In close contact with them for over three years, I can only admire their cheerful acceptance of unfair treatment; their overcoming of fear, resentment and frustration; their willingness to give of their time and efforts to make Amache work.<sup>53</sup>

According to George Lurie, who has written extensively on Amache, "As a result of [Lindley's] humane policies and sympathetic attitude toward the internees' plight, Amache was considered by many government officials and internees themselves to be the least discordant of all of the camps in the country." When Amache residents were asked to answer the extremely controversial loyalty questionnaire that the WRA created to determine who should be given indefinite leave, 99.8 percent answered positively, the highest percentage of all of the relocation centers. Almost 10 percent of young evacuees eligible for the draft were inducted, again, the highest percentage for any of the centers.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Douglas Helms, "The Civilian Conservation Corps: Demonstrating the Value of Soil Conservation," *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 40 (March-April 1985), 184-188; McClelland; Lurie, "Return to Amache," 36.

<sup>53</sup> "Amache" (Amache, CO: War Relocation Authority, 1944) available on the Colorado State Archives website [www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/wwcod/granada](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/wwcod/granada); quotations cited in Holsinger, 107, and Lurie, "Legacy of Shame," 56-57.

<sup>54</sup> Lurie, "Legacy of Shame," 47; "Granada," Japanese American National Museum website [www.janm.org/projects/clasc/granada.htm](http://www.janm.org/projects/clasc/granada.htm), July 27, 2006.

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In addition to the director, there were approximately 150 Caucasian or appointed WRA personnel at Amache. The WRA civil servants headed sections within the administrative structure and were assisted in the actual operation of the camp by evacuee workers. There were eight administrative divisions for the operation of the center, including relocation planning, relocation assistance, reports, employment, agriculture and engineering, community services, and administrative management. WRA staff lived at the center in quarters located between the administrative area and the evacuee housing blocks. The Military Police unit of 130 men lived in a separate, fenced compound southeast of the main gate. Their role included manning the guard towers, controlling the main gate, checking passes, and inspecting packages for contraband. The MPs had no role in the internal policing of the camp, which was handled by the evacuee police force.

A structure of self-government by evacuees was established soon after the arrival of the initial groups. A 19-member Community Council was created consisting of one representative from each block. Each resident 18 years or older was eligible to vote. In addition, a Block Manager was appointed for each block and facilitated communication between the WRA administration and the residents.

**Life at Amache**

The evacuees had been brought to Amache under military guard and they were detained behind a barbed wire fence under armed guard. Although never accused or convicted of any crime, they had been removed from their homes and businesses by their own government and held without judicial hearing. Residents experienced a loss of privacy and a loss of family control in the regimented, communal life of the camp. One Amache resident, awaiting permission for leave to attend college, reflected on the situation at the center during the fall of 1942: "This is taking on more and more of a concentration camp atmosphere. Spotlights will start glaring soon . . . a fence is being built . . . closer and closer the net winds. And we sit speechless . . . either in astonishment or from lack of interest, or from lack of any direction to the voices raised here and there."<sup>55</sup>

Amache resident True Yasui recalled the hardships of the first winter at the camp: "The first winter we spent there was bitter cold. It was really miserable because none of us had ever seen snow and no one had any heavy clothing. It was one room per family and the living was cramped at best. Everything was made of flimsy clapboard that looked like it would collapse at any moment." Each family of seven or fewer members was allotted one 20 by 24 foot living unit and "allowed to make it as homelike as possible." Interiors were painted, the women ordered curtain material from the Sears catalogue, and the men made shelves, partitions, and crude furniture from scrap wood.<sup>56</sup>

M. Paul Holsinger, who wrote a 1960 Master's thesis on Amache, concluded that by April 1943 the evacuees had "settled down to a slow, monotonous life." During the slightly more than three years it operated, 10,331 persons passed through the center. Amache recorded 415 births, 106 deaths, 164 marriages, and no divorces. According to the WRA, "every possible attempt was made to make [the relocation centers] approximate the American small town," but the agency conceded that in practice "they could never bear more than superficial resemblance to normal free communities."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Thomas James, *Exile Within: The Schooling of Japanese-Americans, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), 115.

<sup>56</sup> Lurie, "Return to Amache," 38; Mei T. Nakano, *Japanese American Women: Three Generations, 1890-1990* (Berkeley, CA: Mina Press Publishing, 1990), 143.

<sup>57</sup> Holsinger, 61; U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People*, 138, 145, and 154; U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Relocation Program*, 8.

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Community Services: Community services comparable to those found in a city of similar size were established at Amache. The center had full-time police and fire departments, headed by WRA men but staffed by evacuees. Given the camp's wood and tarpaper construction, coal-fired heating and cooking stoves, and frequent high winds, fire was a constant concern. Despite this, Amache recorded only one serious fire, which damaged one of the mess halls. While some petty crimes (including some early gambling offenses) were recorded in the camp, serious crime was non-existent at Amache. Bill McGuin, the Sheriff of Prowers County, remarked in July 1943 that "If we put that many white people in a relocation camp, under the same conditions, there'd be hell to pay. There would be fights everyday and we would feel a lot more resentful than the Japs do."<sup>58</sup>

The Amache Post Office opened in the latter part of September 1942 and delivered mail to individual living units throughout the camp.<sup>59</sup> The center's 17-building hospital complex had a 150 bed capacity with laboratories, operating facilities, and X-ray equipment. The more than 200 hospital workers included evacuee doctors, nurses, and dentists, as well as WRA personnel. The facility could handle all but the most specialized procedures and also addressed public health issues at the camp.<sup>60</sup>

The Amache Consumers Enterprises, Inc., was organized in January 1943 as a local consumer's cooperative. A charter membership drive was begun 11 January 1943 and within weeks had raised \$25,000. The Co-op operated and controlled several retail and service stores at the camp. Within months the stores were grossing more than \$40,000 per month, providing a broad selection of inexpensive goods and services.<sup>61</sup>

Education: The initial construction phase of Amache did not include the building of schools, as WRA planning assumed that evacuees would erect such facilities. A lack of skilled construction workers among the evacuees led the WRA to select a private contractor for the work. The November 1942 contract with the R.E. Rippe Construction Company of South Pasadena, California, called for the erection of a high school and two elementary schools (frame structures of temporary construction) at a cost of \$308,498. The project provoked a flood of angry reaction from politicians and newspapers within the state. Senator Johnson decried the "absolutely unnecessary school building project at the temporary Japanese colony at Granada," and pointed to highway, gold mining, and reclamation projects that had been halted in the state due to a shortage of manpower and materials.<sup>62</sup>

Project Director Lindley defended the school project as "a matter of ordinary democratic fairness to educate children of evacuees." The *Rocky Mountain News* supported the project, opining that the cost was more a function of wartime inflation than WRA extravagance. Senator Johnson brought the question of Amache school construction to the U.S. War Production Board, which canceled priorities on the two elementary school buildings in January 1943. Only the high school building was completed; elementary and junior high classes were conducted in remodeled barracks buildings in Block 8-H.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 8 July 1943, quoted in Holsinger, 99.

<sup>59</sup> *Lamar Daily News*, 24 September 1942.

<sup>60</sup> Mitchell, 42; U.S. War Relocation Authority, "Amache" (1944), 15-16.

<sup>61</sup> Holsinger, 58.

<sup>62</sup> *Lamar Daily News*, 20 November 1942; *The Denver Post*, 29 December 1942.

<sup>63</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, 31 December 1942 and 3 January 1943; *Lamar Daily News*, 22 January 1943; *The Denver Post*, 25 January 1943.

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The educational system was an important segment of camp life at Amache. At the beginning of 1944, there were approximately 2,000 children enrolled in the schools, which also offered adult and vocational education classes. The use of standard textbooks in high school social studies classes reportedly stimulated such thorny questions as: "If we are citizens, why are we in concentration camps?" The curriculum included classes designed to facilitate eventual resettlement after the war, such as special English language classes for *Issei*. Caucasian teachers hired from outside of the camps led the classroom curriculum, while Japanese American evacuees typically only held positions as assistant teachers within the classroom. The student-teacher ratio in all of the relocation centers was substantially higher than national averages, but educators at Amache admitted that their program was "a compromise between local conditions and recommended practices."<sup>64</sup>

**Social Organizations:** Social, religious, and community groups quickly took root at Amache. Churches of various denominations were represented in the camp and held services in selected recreation buildings. The Buddhist and Christian Union (a consolidation of various Protestant denominations) churches were the largest groupings at the camp. The most impressive religious ceremonies were the *bon-dori* ceremonies, held as part of the Feast of the Lanterns in August 1943 and 1944. More than 1,000 dancers, many in traditional attire, participated in the festivities.<sup>65</sup>

Three community libraries were organized beginning in October 1942 and the *Granada Pioneer*, a mimeographed camp newspaper, began bi-weekly publication in English and Japanese at the end of the month. Other active organizations included the American Legion, the Women's Federation, the YWCA and YMCA, the American Red Cross, and Boy and Girl Scout troops. The Boy Scouts boasted 350 members and were organized into seven troops.<sup>66</sup>

**Recreation:** A Little Theater group was started at the center in November 1942 and the first full-length motion picture was shown in January 1943. Elaborate wood carvings were produced by several of the older *Issei* men using homemade tools. Flower arranging, ceramics, *bon-kei* (miniature landscapes), and other crafts were pursued by residents. The mess halls were used for functions that could not be accommodated in the smaller recreation buildings, such as talent shows, dances, movies, and block meetings. Judo and Japanese wrestling contests were particular favorites of *Issei*, while *Nisei* preferred baseball and basketball. The center had a basketball court and Amache High School played other teams in southeastern Colorado in both basketball and baseball.<sup>67</sup>

**The Farm Program:** The War Relocation Authority had acquired an extensive tract of land for Amache premised on plans for an elaborate agricultural program, which made Amache distinct from the ten other camps. The farm program operated during the 1943 and 1944 growing seasons and produced substantial amounts of agricultural products, which were used at Amache, shipped to other relocation centers, or sold. During 1943, 2.7 million pounds of vegetables were produced at the project; the number grew to 3.3 million pounds in 1944. In addition to such common vegetables as onions, potatoes, head lettuce, celery, spinach, and lima beans, the

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<sup>64</sup> Holsinger, 67; James, 43 and 63.

<sup>65</sup> Holsinger, 87; U.S. War Relocation Authority, "Amache" (1944), 7-8.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, "Amache" (1944), 11-12.

<sup>67</sup> Mitchell, 38. For an example of an Amache wood carving, see Edward H. Spicer, et al, *Impounded People: Japanese-Americans in Relocation Centers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946; reprint, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969), 94.

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center's fields produced such exotic crops as *habucha* (a tea plant), mung beans, *daikon*, and Chinese cabbage. Nearly 19 million pounds of field crops were grown over the 1943-44 period, including alfalfa, corn, sorghum, milo, wheat, barley, and rye.<sup>68</sup> Besides vegetable and feed crops, the farm program also included beef and dairy cattle, poultry and hogs. As Amache occupied territory/land that was previously ranch and farm land, canals, fields, and other existing agricultural facilities such as a dairy farm and trench silos were used by the program.

According to WRA staff, the principal difficulty in administering the farm program was "the chronic shortage of labor." The WRA had anticipated utilizing the large block of farmers among the evacuees in the center's agricultural program. The meager \$16 monthly wages provided little incentive for undertaking hard farm work and many evacuees felt that, if the government had incarcerated them, then the government assumed a responsibility for providing their sustenance. At harvest time, the center administrators had to exhort the entire camp populace to take time from other activities to assist in bringing in the crops. Even this was not entirely satisfactory to farm managers, who complained that the volunteers produced lower crop yields by carrying home "a large percentage of the crop they harvested." Farm operations were also hampered by inadequate farm equipment and facilities and frequently disrupted by the granting of temporary leaves as evacuees pursued farm labor opportunities outside of camp that paid substantially more for similar work. An agricultural fair was staged in September 1943 to publicize the impressive accomplishments of the program.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to the farm program, vocational agricultural students also operated a 500-acre farm belonging to Granada High School. Victory gardens in the evacuee housing area were common. Residents also contributed to a fund for the purchase of trees to be planted between rows of barracks/apartments. The impacts of landscaping improvements undertaken by residents are visible in aerial photographs of the camp.

**Resettlement**

Having once removed the Japanese population from the West Coast, the focus of the War Relocation Authority turned almost immediately to resettling them in other parts of the United States. A survey of Amache residents conducted in the summer of 1943 found that only a small percentage of evacuees were interested in leaving the center in the near future. "Uncertainty of public sentiment" was cited as the main reason for not leaving. Other concerns listed included lack of emergency funds, insufficient information about conditions on the outside, fear of not being able to support dependents, and inability to find suitable housing.<sup>70</sup>

One of the first relaxations of the mass confinement of the Japanese Americans was the authorization of leave for college students to pursue higher educational opportunities. Evacuees were also given seasonal leave to assist agricultural endeavors. The leave program was eventually expanded to permit those with job prospects in other parts of the country to leave the centers. By late August 1944, nearly 2,700 evacuees had been granted indefinite leave from Amache. When the exclusion orders were lifted in December 1944, the WRA began to vigorously urge evacuees to leave the centers.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Mitchell, 77-78.

<sup>69</sup> Amache Historical Society, "Historical Report: Operations Division--Agricultural Section, Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado," copy of U.S. War Relocation Authority final report (Torrance, California: Amache Historical Society, 1978); *Lamar Daily News*, 16 September 1943.

<sup>70</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Relocation Program*, 30-31.

<sup>71</sup> Daniels, 98.

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As some evacuees left Amache to relocate, the center received some transfers of evacuees from other camps. When the Jerome, Arkansas, camp closed in 1944, 552 of its residents came to Amache. The designation of the Tule Lake Relocation Center in California as a high security segregation facility for evacuees classified as “disloyal” resulted in the transfer of 1,050 “loyal” Tule Lake residents to Amache and 215 “disloyal” Amache residents to Tule Lake between September 1943 and May 1944. Project Director Lindley believed that the Tuleans, coming from a more troubled camp, had an adverse impact on the situation at Amache. A number of Tule Lake evacuees were elected to the Community Council at Amache and strained relations for a period of time between the administration and the residents.<sup>72</sup>

The state of Colorado was second only to Illinois as a destination for evacuee resettlement by the end of the war. Of the 6,108 persons relocating to Colorado, more than half settled in Denver, many near downtown in substandard rooming houses along upper Larimer Street.<sup>73</sup>

**Military Service**

Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, *Nisei* serving in the U.S. military were discharged and classified 4-C by the Selective Service System—the same category assigned to enemy aliens. The initial opportunities for Japanese Americans to aid in the war effort came in 1941-42 when the Army sought recruits for its Japanese language school. In January 1943, the Army announced the creation of an all volunteer combat unit (the 442nd Regimental Combat Team) composed of Japanese Americans from the mainland.<sup>74</sup> Some *Nisei* objected to service in a segregated unit, while others felt any service at all was problematic given the treatment accorded them and their families. Only 31 men initially volunteered from Amache in February 1943 out of an eligible pool of 1,200. Project Director Lindley held meetings to resolve some of the residents' questions and doubts and the number of volunteers rose to 124.

In January 1944, the War Department declared that *Nisei* in relocation centers were again eligible for the draft. Mass meetings, led by former residents of Tule Lake, were held at Amache to protest this decision. Holsinger noted that "the idea of being drafted for service in the same Army which was holding them 'prisoners' did not appeal to many of the evacuees at Amache." While most of those drafted reported for induction, a few refused on principle to report and were convicted of draft evasion.<sup>75</sup>

A sign inside the main entrance to the center displayed the number of Amache residents serving in the military. The camp possessed a Blue Star Mothers organization and a USO (United Service Organizations). By the end of the war, nearly 1,000 residents were in service, including women Women's Army Corps (WACS) members and Army nurses. The Amache silk screen shop also played a role in the war effort. The shop received contracts from the U.S. Navy to produce a variety of colorful posters.

Japanese American units compiled a distinguished record in Europe, suffering nearly 9,500 casualties, including six hundred dead, and amassing more than 18,000 individual decorations and seven Presidential Distinguished

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<sup>72</sup> Mitchell, 123; Holsinger, 63-64; U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Description*, 168; Spicer, et al, 96-97.

<sup>73</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Relocation Program*, 126.

<sup>74</sup> The 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, made up of *Nisei* from Hawaii, had been established in 1942.

<sup>75</sup> Holsinger, 72.

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Unit Citations.<sup>76</sup> Thirty-one young men who served from Amache died while in the military and are honored by a 1983 monument at the camp cemetery.<sup>77</sup>

**Governor Ralph G. Carr and Attitudes Toward the Center in Colorado**

At an April 1942 meeting in Salt Lake City with War Relocation Authority officials, Colorado Governor Ralph L. Carr, a Republican, was the only western governor to indicate that evacuees would be welcomed in his state. Kansas Governor Payne Ratner probably reflected the view of most politicians when he stated that "Japs are not wanted in Kansas." Ratner had earlier ordered state police to prevent the voluntary migration of Japanese Americans into the Sunflower State. By contrast, Carr urged acceptance and understanding for Japanese Americans, stating that "I was brought up in a small town where I knew the shame and dishonor of race hatred. I grew to despise it because it threatened the happiness of you . . . and you. . . and you." He opposed the mass relocation, arguing that "if we do not extend humanity's kindness and understanding to [the Japanese Americans], if we deny them the protection of the Bill of Rights, if we say that they must be denied the privilege of living in any of the 48 states without hearing or charge of misconduct, then we are tearing down the whole American system."<sup>78</sup>

Senator Johnson denounced Carr's stance on relocation, which was extremely controversial. The state's largest newspaper, *The Denver Post*, took advantage of every opportunity to run negative stories on Amache, the evacuees, and the WRA administrators, liberally sprinkling its headlines with "Jap" or "Japs." The *Rocky Mountain News*, particularly columnist Lee Casey, adopted a more sympathetic posture, as did the *Lamar Daily News* under the editorship of Fred Betz, Sr. One of the most virulent diatribes in the state's press appeared in the *Gunnison News-Champion*, during the time of the school construction controversy:

Clean out the Japs, don't educate them. . . . What earthly sense there is in coddling these Japs is beyond hope of explanation. They are bloodthirsty, yellow men with savage hearts. . . . Some are citizens, it is said. So much the worse for us. It is a God-given opportunity to denounce their citizenship and ship every mother's son of them back to Nippon after the war.<sup>79</sup>

Governor Carr lost his 1942 bid to unseat Senator Johnson, a loss which he attributed to his support for the Japanese Americans. A bust of Carr, who died in 1950, was placed in Denver's Sakura Square in 1976 "in grateful memory of his unflinching Americanism, and as a reminder that the precious Democratic ideals he espoused must forever be defended against prejudice and neglect." Another memorial to Carr is located on the grounds of the Colorado State Capitol in Denver.<sup>80</sup>

The Colorado Council of Churches, the Denver Council of Churches, and the Colorado Council of Church Women of the Rocky Mountain Region were described by M. Paul Holsinger as the "most consistent of all the groups who supported the Japanese." The groups sympathized with the plight of the evacuees and members

<sup>76</sup> Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1976), 135; Hosokawa, 409-10; Holsinger, 71.

<sup>77</sup> Holsinger, 65.

<sup>78</sup> Holsinger, 24, 25, and 30; Melyn Johnson, "At Home in Amache," *Colorado Heritage* (1989): 11; quotation from Lurie "Legacy of Shame," 58.

<sup>79</sup> *Gunnison News Champion*, 28 January 1943.

<sup>80</sup> Holsinger, 100-03; "Uprooted: A Portfolio of Japanese-Americans in World War II," *Colorado Heritage* (1989): 27.

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visited the camp, provided relocation assistance, and produced pamphlets about the evacuees. A Citizen's Emergency Committee, composed of religious leaders, university academics, and businessmen, succeeded in defeating a proposed 1944 constitutional amendment that would have prohibited persons of Japanese ancestry from owning land.<sup>81</sup>

WRA Reports Officer Joseph McClelland felt that residents in southeastern Colorado were very much opposed to the center and believed that a majority continued to feel that way throughout the life of the project. In the vicinity, the center was popularly known as "the Jap Camp." He attributed the public attitude to fear of the evacuees and a more general dislike of New Deal federal government projects. One Japanese American recalled an incident in which an area restaurant refused to serve a uniformed *Nisei* serviceman who was home on leave. Robert C.L. George, who wrote his master's thesis on the center's secondary school while the war was still going on, commented on the attitudes prevalent in neighboring communities:

With minor exceptions this populace has used every opportunity to discriminate against the Japanese. In many of the stores, for instance, there are two prices, one for the local gentry and the other for the Japanese. They have gone out of their way to make things as unpleasant as possible for these people, refusing them admittance to their communities except for business transactions, of course. The town of Lamar let it be known that their park was for the local citizenry only—Caucasian at that. They refused to let Japanese American Boy Scouts take part in their Memorial Day parade this year, on the one hand, but readily sold them large amounts of Scout uniforms on the other.<sup>82</sup>

**Closure of the Center**

The West Coast exclusion order was lifted by the Army's Western Defense Command 17 December 1944, opening California to Japanese American resettlement in January 1945. An immediate exodus of evacuees from Amache did not occur, however. The population stood at 6,255 on 1 January 1945 and remained above 6,000 through March. Some families desired to remain at Amache until the end of the school year in June. Others, having lost their homes and property, feared the uncertainty that a move would entail. The government provided \$25 and bus or train transportation. Some hesitated to return to California remembering the hostile environment there at the time of their departure.<sup>83</sup>

WRA administrators at Amache had planned a staged closure of the camp, under which selected blocks would be closed every month. The Community Council objected to this approach and the administration relented, agreeing to keep all residential blocks open until 1 August. Beginning in June, block mess halls were closed when the population of a block dropped below 150 residents. Departures averaged approximately 500 per month, but there were still more than 4,000 evacuees at Amache on 12 July when the WRA announced plans to close the center 15 October 1945. At the beginning of August, services within the center were stopped or cut back and blocks began to close.<sup>84</sup>

More than 3,000 evacuees still resided at Amache at the beginning of September. To commemorate those Amache residents who had died in military service or in camp, the Christian and Buddhist churches erected a

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<sup>81</sup> Holsinger, 102-03.

<sup>82</sup> McClelland; George Ushiyama, personal communication, 9 September 1993, Rocky Ford, CO; George, 79.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Description*, 19; Mitchell, 131-32.

<sup>84</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People*, 19; Holsinger, 107 and 110.

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granite monument at the camp cemetery, housed in a small brick structure built by the evacuees. A wooden marker listing the names of the dead was also included, along with an epitaph which noted: "In spite of the strong camaraderie we came to know over the long and trying years, and the many fond memories we hold so dear, it shall be ever so difficult to revisit these grounds."<sup>85</sup>

The military guard left the camp in mid-September and Amache officially closed on 15 October 1945, when the last group of 85 evacuees departed. Amache, the seventh of the ten centers to open and the second to close, had been in operation just over three years (1,146 days).<sup>86</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* columnist Lee Casey commented that the closure marked the end of an incident "of which we should be thoroughly ashamed" and noted that:

Amache may be a symbol of abuse of power by the military—an abuse that, unfortunately, the courts did nothing to check. But it is, likewise, a symbol of loyalty despite a severe strain. It is additional evidence that Americanism is a heritage that belongs to many peoples whose ancestry goes back to many lands. It is further proof that, through a severe trial, our fellow-citizens of Japanese descent did not lose their confidence and their faith.<sup>87</sup>

**Disposal of Center Assets**

Most of the outlying farm land of Amache was declared surplus in January 1945, when it became apparent that the camp would close later that year. Tracts were leased to local farmers and later sold by the Federal Land Bank of Wichita, Kansas. The land comprising the built-up portion of the center was sold to the Town of Granada following the war for \$2,500. Town Mayor H.E. McKeever promoted the purchase and the camp's deep wells subsequently provided the town's water supply.<sup>88</sup>

The War Assets Administration disposed of the buildings and contents of Amache during the 1946-47 period. Most of the buildings were demolished for salvage, prompting the *Pueblo Star-Journal* to comment that "many southeast Colorado farms have Amache materials among their improvements." Some buildings were sold at modest prices to governmental units and non-profit groups. Such school districts in southeastern Colorado as Otero County School District Number 11 (La Junta), Bristol Consolidated Schools (Bristol), and the Granada Consolidated School District Number 6 (Granada) received buildings. The University of Denver acquired the hospital complex and removed it to Denver for use as an infirmary and speech clinic. The Town of Granada bought a number of buildings.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Sterling Advocate*, 15 October 1945; Denver Central Optimist Club, *Amache Remembered, 1942-1945* (Denver, Colorado: Denver Central Optimist Club, 1978).

<sup>86</sup> U.S. War Relocation Authority, *The Evacuated People*, 17; *Lamar Daily News*, 15 October 1945; *Sterling Advocate*, 15 October 1945; Hoffman.

<sup>87</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, 17 October 1945.

<sup>88</sup> Hoffman and Prowers County General Records, Book 334, Page 429, filed 22 June 1948.

<sup>89</sup> War Assets Administration, Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado, case files, in the files of the National Archives and Records Administration, Lakewood, CO.

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**CONCLUSION**

Following the removal of the temporary buildings from the site of Amache during 1945-47, the location was largely abandoned, except for its role as the water source for the Town of Granada and through use of the western part of the site as the town dump. A small rodeo arena was built in the northeastern area of the camp shortly after World War II. This small rodeo arena, reconstructed in 1999, is used by Granada's townspeople for rodeo events. In 1968, the area originally occupied by the center hospital in the northern area of Section 14 was cleared of existing foundations and the Hillcrest Homes housing complex for migrant farm workers was constructed. Originally built by a group of growers, the housing complex was later owned by the Colorado Rural Housing Development Corporation and called Vista Nueva.<sup>90</sup> Several of these housing units are now owned by local landowners. In the late 1960s, a cylindrical metal water tank providing water to the town was installed in the southeastern portion of the site; in 2000, a new metal water storage tank was built directly south of the rodeo arena.

In 1983, a ten foot tall *ireito* monument, inscribed at the top with "Amache Remembered," was installed adjacent to the cemetery and dedicated to those from Amache who died in military service, to evacuees who died at the camp, and to all those who were held there during the war.<sup>91</sup> This monument was funded by the Denver Central Optimist Club, which has organized pilgrimages to the camp every year. These pilgrimages include a ceremony with Christian and Buddhist homilies, personal tributes and flower presentations. The visits have served as occasions to remember and reflect on what happened here during World War II and as opportunities to maintain and improve the cemetery area of the site.

Since 1990, the Amache Preservation Society (a Granada High School organization founded by John Hopper) has worked diligently on the preservation of the center. The Amache Preservation Society has not only helped preserve the site, but has also safeguarded many documents and artifacts from the camp, such as old photographs and personal belongings from former evacuees and WRA administrative personnel. The Amache Preservation Society has also recorded oral histories of former business owners and other local residents, camp employees, and evacuees. Most of the Japanese American oral histories were accumulated during the 1998 Amache reunion, which attracted approximately 500 visitors. Through its work at the relocation center, the Amache Preservation Society has developed a deeper understanding of Japanese American internment during World War II from the internee perspective and of the violation of their constitutional rights as U.S. citizens.

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<sup>90</sup> Al Gold, Colorado Rural Housing Development Corporation, Denver, CO, personal communication, 28 September 1993..

<sup>91</sup> Denver Central Optimist Club, *Amache Remembered*.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

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## Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office - Other State Agency  
 Federal Agency  
 Local Government  
 University  
 Other (Specify Repository): Amache/Granada/Trails Museum

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: 593 Acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	13	733584	4215241
B	13	735190	4215293
C	13	735241	4213679
D	13	733643	4213626

Verbal Boundary Description: The National Historic Landmark boundaries shown on the attached maps follow the section lines of Section 14 Township 23 South and Range 44 West except for two small areas in the northwest and northeast corners.

Boundary Justification: The nominated area of the Amache site includes the entire built-up portion of the camp originally enclosed by barbed wire that still possesses physical integrity and where archeological sites and historic features have been identified. The boundary includes the cemetery area in the southwest corner. An archeological survey completed in 2003 confirmed the presence of archeological features throughout this core area of the historic camp.

The boundary is expanded from the original National Register nomination to include a strip along the western boundary, which originally contained the coal storage, root cellar, sewage disposal, and camp dump. Although this section has been disturbed by the existence of the Granada town dump, sufficient archeological materials still exist to warrant inclusion in the NHL boundary.

Excluded from the boundary are: 1) the former hospital area now occupied by a large non-historic housing project; and 2) all of the outlying agricultural areas which reverted back to private ownership after the war and are now used for a variety of mostly agricultural purposes. The entire 593 acres comprising the National Historic Landmark are owned by the Town of Granada.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY****Date**

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**List of Photographs**

This information is the same for all photographs.

Property: Granada Relocation Center  
 Location: Prowers County, Colorado  
 Photographer: Thomas G. Keohan  
 Historical Architect  
 Heritage Partnerships Program  
 National Park Service  
 Intermountain Regional Office (IMR)  
 Date taken: December 12, 2004  
 Location of original negativity: IMR files.

<b>Exposure No.</b>	<b>View Looking</b>	<b>Description</b>
No. 1	South	Entrance to Amache looking to the administrative area from County Road FF.
No. 2	South	Visitors to Amache are greeted with interpretive signs installed by the Amache Preservation Society at the camp's entrance. This sign includes a map of the camp based on a drawing by Amache High School student, Eddie Kubota, at the time of internment.
No. 3	North	Remnants of a wire fence similar to the historic fence that surrounded the Granada Relocation Center. Fence in photo is near the former athletic field.
No. 4	North	Post Office site from 4 <sup>th</sup> Street.
No. 5	Northwest	Post Office foundation.
No. 6	East	Unique Post Office sidewalk.
No. 7	West	Concrete slab barracks foundations are framed by trees planted by former internees near "K" and 12 <sup>th</sup> streets.
No. 8	Northeast	Concrete slab barracks foundation near "G" and 12 <sup>th</sup> streets. Amache displays integrity through existing barracks foundations remaining at the site.
No. 9	Northwest	The concrete water reservoir, covered with wood and rolled roofing, is located on the west side of "G" Street, east of the staff housing area.
No. 10	Northwest	The concrete block well house on the north end of camp is located south of the concrete water reservoir. Built at the time of the camp's construction, these two contributing resources still stand south of the administration area.
No. 11	Northwest	Site of the Amache Co-op Store with the poured concrete, one-room vault structure.
No. 12	West from 12 <sup>th</sup> and H Streets	Most of Amache's gravel roads are still drivable and reveal the original camp layout.
No. 13	Southeast	Road intersection at 12 <sup>th</sup> and "K" streets showing Chinese elm and cottonwood trees planted by evacuees.
No. 14	North	A typical mess hall foundation.

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<b>Exposure No.</b>	<b>View Looking</b>	<b>Description</b>
No. 15	Northwest	Amache's old cemetery is now furnished with benches, grass, and a chain-link fence due to preservation and maintenance efforts by the Denver Central Optimist Club and the Amache Preservation Society.
No. 16	South	A granite memorial installed by internees in September 1945 to honor those who died at Amache is inscribed in both Japanese and English. It sits inside a small brick structure with a replacement red gabled roof, adjacent to the cemetery.
No. 17	Southeast	This stone <i>ireito</i> monument built in the cemetery area commemorates those who lived and died at Amache, in addition to the 31 Japanese American veterans who died fighting for the U.S. military.
No. 18	Southeast	In the northeastern section of Amache sits the End of the Line Arena, built by the Town of Granada after World War II. It is equipped with bleachers, surrounded by an electric fence, and is adjacent to a small mobile office.
No. 19	Northwest	The Town of Granada built this non-contributing water tank, which currently serves as the town's water source, in 2000. It is located south of the rodeo arena on "H" and 6 <sup>th</sup> streets.
No. 20	East	A non-contributing water tank installed in the late 1960s by the Town of Granada sits at the northeastern corner of "K" and 12 <sup>th</sup> streets. It served as the Town of Granada's water storage until 1990, when it was abandoned.
No. 21	Southeast	Guard tower foundation blocks located near the landfill. The administration and housing areas can be seen in the background.
No. 22	Northwest	Concrete and brick manhole near 6 <sup>th</sup> and "H" streets.
No. 23	Southwest Block B6-H	Concrete pond feature located in housing block B6-H. Granada High School teacher John Hopper and his students excavated the pond as a class project.