

Short History of Amache Japanese Internment Camp

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent declaration of war against Japan many Americans believed that the Japanese-Americans were spies or traitors. In fact, very few Japanese-Americans were disloyal but the hysteria revolving around the war led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 9066, which authorized the Secretary of War to set up military areas where Japanese-Americans from the West Coast would be sent until their loyalty was proven and they could work and live outside the camps.

Evacuees were first sent to assembly centers in California, Arizona, Washington and Oregon. People with as little as 1/16 Japanese blood could be sent to these centers. The Japanese-Americans had as little as 6 days notification to dispose of most of their property and possessions before they were transported. Many were forced to sell property at well under market value while assets of the Japanese immigrants (the Issei) were frozen leaving them with few possessions or savings.

The federal government then transferred these internees further in-land to such camps as one near Granada, Colorado. It was located 140 miles east of Pueblo in southeastern Colorado. Since the postal designation for the camp was "Amache" it was called both "Granada" and "Amache". It was in operation by August of 1942 and officially closed October 15, 1945. At its maximum population it held 7,318 people.