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# Jerome Center To Be Closed In June

**ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY SECRETARY OF INTERIOR H. L. ICKES. FUTURE USE OF FACILITIES NOT KNOWN.**

The Jerome Relocation Center south of town which now houses approximately 6,500 persons of Japanese descent will be closed about June 30, according to an announcement made Tuesday by Secretary of Interior Ickes.

Built at a cost of more than three million dollars, the center was opened in October, 1942.

It has been operated by a staff of appointed personnel under the War Relocation Authority and a detachment of Military Police has been on guard duty since the first evacuees arrived.

Secretary Ickes' announcement that the center would be closed did not indicate what the center might be used for after the evacuees are moved to other centers.

The Interior Department's announcement follows:

"Plans of the War Relocation Authority for the closing of the Jerome Relocation Center near Jerome, Arkansas, were announced today by Secretary of the Interior, Harold U. Ickes.

"The Jerome Center, one of the two in the Mississippi Delta Region of Arkansas where persons of Japanese descent evacuated from from the Pacific coast are living, will be closed in June.

### **Economy Of Operation Cause**

Economy of operation dictated the move to close the center, the Secretary said, as the 92,000 people remaining in WRA centers can be cared for more economically in nine centers than in ten.

"It has been the intention to close a center as soon as the relocation program progressed far enough to make space available in other centers to accommodate the people who will have to be moved," he said. "The 18,000 persons who have left the centers under the relocation program now make it possible to absorb the residents of one of the centers without undue crowding."

"Secretary Ickes pointed out that the Jerome Center was the last to be established, so development of physical facilities had not progressed as far as at some of the others, its population, 6,554 as of February 1, is one of the smallest, and existence of the Rohwer Relocation Center only 36 miles away with a capacity of nearly 2,00 additional persons as a result of relocation, would produce the total amount of transportation involved and minimize the difficulties of moving.

### **Relocation Program To Continue**

The relocation program from Jerome as from the eight other relocation centers will continue during the spring months and residents will be given all possible assistance in finding opportunities to reestablish themselves in communities outside the evacuated zone. The Jerome residents who have not relocated as individuals or families before the first of June, according to Secretary Ickes, will be moved to other relocation centers, including Rohwer, located nearby, Grenada, in Colorado, Heart Mountain, in Wyoming, and possible others if more space is needed.

"The Jerome Relocation Center was opened in October 1942, and at the peak of its population was temporary home for 8,672 persons of Japanese descent. Under the relocation program of the WRA 1,518 persons have left the center.

Evacuee residents of the Jerome center, under WRA guidance, have carried on many different types of activity in an effort to make the community as nearly self sufficient as possible. During the 1943 farming season, according to Project Director, E. B. Whitaker, they produced vegetables and other food crops on 718 acres of land, harvesting a total of 1,170,564 pounds of crops, shipped 15,000 pounds of corn and sweet potatoes to other centers, cleared 200 acres of new land and several hundred acres more of partially cleared land, and slaughtered 1,215 head of hogs raised from feeders, for their own use. In the seven months period between July of last year and February 1 of this year, they have produced 281,000 board feet of lumber and cut 6,006 cords of firewood.