

FILE NO. 169237

Recommendations

OF

Seattle Housing Authority

On elimination of "shack" problem
in Seattle.

FILED March 5, 1941.

W. C. THOMAS
CITY COMPTROLLER AND EX-OFFICIO CITY CLERK

BY C. A. Edlandson DEPUTY

ACTION OF THE COUNCIL

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| REFERRED | TO |
| <u>MAR 10 1941</u> | PUBLIC SAFETY |
| REFERRED | TO |
| REPORTED | REPORT ADOPTED |
| REPORTED | REPORT ADOPTED |
| REF. FOR ORD. | C. B. ORD. |
| <u>NOV 23 1942</u> | DISPOSITION ON FILE |

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. President:

Your

POPULIC SAFETY

Committee

to which was referred the within

Recommendations

would respectfully report that we have considered the same and respectfully recommend that

the same be placed on file.

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN

MEMORANDUM

To Wm. L. Morton

By P.S.Com.

Date April 29, 1949

Subject File No. 169237

Above file is referred to you to take up with Fire Dept. and get man detailed to patrol shacktowns.

The City of Seattle

WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SANITATION

FRANK M. CARROLL, M. D., COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

Group #3 consists of about 365 shacks extending along both sides of 6th Ave., S., from Holgate St. to Dakota St. Most of these shacks are filthy and objectionable. A Shack town in this area is particularly objectionable to the city, as it may be seen from all passenger trains coming into the city from the south. Because of the large number of shacks in this area the committee does not consider it practical to attempt an immediate total elimination, but deems it advisable that a small number should be notified each week to vacate; after which the shacks vacated will be destroyed.

The shacks in group #4, or Hooverville, have been served with notices from the Port Commission to vacate by May 1. About 150 of these shacks have already been vacated and destroyed.

Many of the occupants of group #5 are workers on the Interbay garbage fill. Some of those living in this area can afford to live in better homes. Those in this class should be asked to vacate at once and their shacks ordered razed. The others in this group should be given a little time in which to readjust themselves, and we believe they will vacate without difficulty, and this shack area could soon be eliminated. At the time this committee made its inspection, one vacant shack was found and immediately destroyed.

As the 465 at Hooverville, and others, are ordered vacated and destroyed, your committee is concerned regarding other shacks being constructed in new locations and it is recommended that a full time man be employed for the purpose of preventing any new shack construction.

There are other groups of shacks in the city, such as those along the Duwamish water way and on the beach at Smith's Cove, which are not included in this report. Buildings in these areas have existed for many years and are owned and occupied by fishermen and other part time workmen, who have a small annual income.

In view of the numerous suggestions that have been made relative to shack elimination, we wish to know at this time if you desire that our committee continue and if so, along what lines?

Very truly yours,

Frank M. Carroll M.D.

Commissioner of Health,

Joseph Lytle

Superintendent of Buildings,

Wm. H. Sears

Chief of Police,

John Fitzgerald

Chief of Fire Department.

The City of Seattle

WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SANITATION

FRANK M. CARROLL, M. D., COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

April 14, 1941.

Mr. William L. Norton,
Chairman of Public Safety Committee,
County - City Building,
Seattle, Washington.

Dear Sir:

We are submitting herewith a report of the shack elimination committee which was named by the Public Safety Committee, for the purpose of making a survey of our shack town problem and with instructions to destroy all vacant shacks, (Council File #169237).

This committee has made an inspection of the following shack areas:

1. The west side of Beacon Hill, east of Airport Way and extending from Plummer Street to Forest Street.
2. Louisville: That area which lies between Airport Way, 6th Avenue, South, Massachusetts Street and Holgate Street.
3. Other groups along both sides of 6th Avenue, South, between Holgate Street and Dakota Street.
4. Hooverville on Alaskan Way, South, at the foot of Connecticut Street.
5. On the Interbay garbage fill at 17th Avenue, West, and West Dravus Street.

Many owners and occupants in group #1, have made an attempt to make their buildings conform with city regulations. This committee believes it advisable to move slowly in the elimination of shacks in this area, with the exception of the filthy shacks which are situated in the skeleton of the old Washington Iron Works building, at 8th Avenue, South, and Norman Street. Conditions here are extremely filthy and constitute a potential health menace. On April 8, thirty shacks in this group were posted and ordered to be vacated by April 18, after which this committee proposes to have them destroyed.

Group #2, or Louisville, is a controlled shack area. The majority of the occupants in this area are of the cleaner class and attempt to keep the premises in sanitary condition. Mr. Brosseau, the duly elected mayor of this district--we are confident--will cooperate with us in the elimination of shacks in this district.

make 4 copies for - Powell
4/14/41 - w.l. - for Conference notify Health Police + Fire to be present

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

250 Central Building

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JESSE EPSTEIN

TELEPHONE
MAIN 7855

March 4, 1941

The City Council
City of Seattle
County-City Building
Seattle, Washington

Dear Madam and Gentlemen:

In our comprehensive survey of housing conditions in the City of Seattle, we included a special study of shacks and at this time wish to submit to you for your information and possible action our findings and recommendations.

We are interested in the "shack" problem even though our own statutory powers are not broad enough to deal with it directly. If shacks continue to remain or their number grow, it is quite possible, in the light of general conditions, that many families will seek to occupy them. Then we would become directly concerned, as would you, in the accompanying threat to good housing, and in the consequent hazards to health and safety. We deem our work to be preventive as well as corrective. *

We do not, however, suggest the immediate or wholesale elimination of shacks, but rather a less disruptive, more orderly and planned method. Specifically, we wish to make the following recommendations:

- (1) That none of the present occupants of shacks be forced to vacate at the present time.
- (2) That as soon, however, as any shack is no longer inhabited by its present occupants, the proper departments of the City be authorized and directed to demolish it.
- (3) That the proper departments of the City be authorized and directed to demolish immediately all presently vacant shacks.
- (4) That these departments be authorized and directed to prevent the building of any additional shacks in the City of Seattle.
- (5) That notices of these intentions of the City be given to all occupants of shacks and public notices posted in concentrated and other shack areas.

*Section 8, Housing Authorities Law, State of Washington.

The City Council
March 4, 1941
Page 2

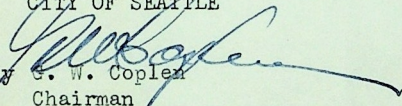
(It is not the intention of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle to seek credit (under the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended) for any elimination of shacks made pursuant to the above recommendations.)

We have defined a shack as "a dwelling unit of more or less temporary character, constructed without benefit of formal design or plan, of secondhand, nondescript building materials, and located indiscriminately." (In most instances, shacks violate legal building requirements.)

A total of 1687 shacks was found in the city. We are attaching hereto Exhibit A, showing on a map the distribution of these shacks; Exhibit B, tabulating by Census Enumeration Districts their location and number; and Exhibit C, giving basic data concerning their physical condition and occupancy.

We shall be glad to cooperate in any way we can to the end that Seattle may become a city without shacks.

Sincerely yours,
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF SEATTLE


BY S. W. Copley
Chairman

JE:AP

E X H I B I T B

March 5, 1941

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

REAL PROPERTY SURVEY

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

LOCATION AND NUMBER OF SHACKS, BY CENSUS ENUMERATION DISTRICTS

| <u>E. D.</u> | <u>No. of Shacks</u> | <u>E. D.</u> | <u>No. of Shacks</u> | <u>E. D.</u> | <u>No. of Shacks</u> | <u>E. D.</u> | <u>No. of Shacks</u> |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| A 1 | 2 | D 6 | 2 | J 2 | 6 | N 4 | 6 |
| 2 | 0 | E 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | O 1 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | K 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 878 |
| 5 | 9 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 233 |
| B 1 | 0 | F 1 | 24 | 4 | 1 | P 1 | 3 |
| 2 | 1 | 2 | 182 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 0 | G 1 | 17 | L 1 | 36 | 3 | 12 |
| 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | Q 1 | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 8 |
| C 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 6 | R 1 | 24 |
| 2 | 0 | 6 | 3 | M 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| 3 | 1 | H 1 | 17 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 9 |
| D 1 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 41 |
| 2 | 1 | I 1 | 1 | 5 | 0 | S 1 | 13 |
| 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | N 1 | 7 | 2 | 23 |
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | <u>16</u> |
| 5 | 1 | J 1 | 0 | 3 | 19 | TOTAL | 1687 |

EXHIBIT C

March 5, 1941
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

REAL PROPERTY SURVEY

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

BASIC DATA CONCERNING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND OCCUPANCY OF SHACKS

1667, or 1.35% of the dwelling units in Seattle are shacks. Almost 80% of these, 1321, are concentrated in Area O (Tide Flats) and Area F (Interbay). Five of the nineteen areas have less than five shacks each.

OCCUPANCY: 139, or 8.2% of the shacks are vacant. Of the 1549 occupied shacks, four of each five are occupied by owners. Included in the owner-occupied units are the shacks of squatters, who have either built or brought their own shacks. Only half of the vacant shacks are in Area O and F as contrasted with four-fifths of the shacks being in these two Areas.

PLUMBING: 1436 shacks, or more than five of each six shacks, have no toilet facilities. Of each ten shacks, seven lack all plumbing facilities and less than one has adequate facilities. A larger proportion of the shacks in the O and F Areas lack plumbing facilities, for of the 1115 units in Area O, 968 have no plumbing equipment. Of the 208 units in Area F, 103 or 50% have no equipment, while of the 366 units in the other 17 areas, 128 or 35% lack all plumbing facilities.

LIGHTING: 1042 shacks, more than six of each ten, do not have electric lights. In Area O one of each four have electric lights, in Area F, two of each four have electric lights while in the remaining 17 Areas, three of each four have electric lights.

COOK IN SLEEPING ROOMS: In 937 of 1549 occupied shacks it is necessary to cook in the sleeping rooms. This represents six of each ten shacks. Again the conditions in Area O and F are worse than in the other areas combined, the proportion of occupants cooking in sleeping rooms being 60.5% for Area O, 40.4% for Area F, and in all other (17) Areas, 28.1%.

VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED SHACKS: The values of the 1217 owner-occupied shacks were obtained. For the squatters, this includes only the value of the shacks, but for the other units it includes also the value of the land. The combined value of shacks and land is less than \$500 for 96% of the shacks, with the value being less than \$100 for a larger proportion of the units. For the five units with values over \$1500 it is the land which gives the value.

ADEQUACY: With the exception of 14 shacks, less than one percent, all of the occupied shacks are substandard. A larger proportion of the tenant-occupied units are standard; 2.7% for tenants, as compared with 0.4% for owners. 98, or 6.4% of the occupied units are overcrowded. Overcrowding in the tenant occupied units is over twice that of the owner-occupied; 105% for owners as compared with 5.2% for tenants. Overcrowding is also greater in the units occupied by non-white groups, being 15.1% of units occupancy substandard, occupied by non-white

groups, as contrasted with 5.5% for white groups. All of the 138 vacant units are substandard. Of the fourteen units classed as standard, one is in Area F, none in Area O, and thirteen in the remaining seventeen Areas.

RACE: Nine of each ten shacks are occupied by white groups. Only one in thirty is occupied by a negro. A larger proportion of the owners are non-white, 9.3% as compared with 3.9% for the tenants.

RENT: The rental value of shacks is very low, three out of four shacks having a monthly net of less than \$5.00. Six percent rent for \$10.00 or more per month. The proportions of both occupied and vacant units with a rental value of less than \$10.00 per month are the same. However, the vacant shacks have a greater proportion renting in the \$5.00 to \$9.00 group, 27% as opposed to 20%. For all dwelling units in the city, the rental value of owner-occupied group is greater than for tenant occupied. However, for the shacks, the situation changes and the tenant occupied have the greater rental value. Dividing the occupied shacks into three groups, the rents in Area O are lowest, in Area F, a little higher, and in the remaining 17 areas combined, considerably higher. One of each four in the "17 Areas" has a rental value of \$10.00 or over as compared with less than one in twenty for all Areas.

The median monthly rental value for all occupied shacks is \$3.33. For the tenant-occupied shacks, the amount is over twice that for the owner-occupied, \$6.49 as compared with \$2.96. The vacant units have a median monthly rental value of \$3.67.

PERSONS: There are 2065 persons living in shacks or an average of 1.3 persons in each dwelling unit. One person groups predominate with three out of each for shacks having only one person. Less than 100 shacks, 6.3% contain groups of three or more persons. The tenant groups are larger than the owner groups, 1.7 persons per dwelling unit, as compared with 1.2 persons for the owners. Of the 2065 persons, 1,514 are residing in owner-occupied shacks and 551 in tenant occupied units.

March 12, 1941

Mr. Joseph Little
Superintendent of Buildings
City of Seattle

Dear Sir:

The Public Safety Committee of the City Council will discuss File No. 169237, Recommendation of Seattle Housing Authority on elimination of "shack" problem in Seattle, immediately following the Public Safety Committee meeting next Tuesday, March 18th, at 10:00 A.M.

We presume the calendar will be finished by approximately 10:30, and this matter will come up at that time. We should like to have you or your representative attend this meeting to discuss the matter.

Yours very truly,

Wm. L. Norton

br
CC: Seattle Housing Authority

March 16, 1941

Mr. Joseph Little
Supt. of Buildings
City of Seattle

Dear Sir:

The Public Safety Committee of the City Council will again discuss the "shack town" problem next Tuesday, March 25, 1941, immediately following the 10:00 o'clock Public Safety Committee meeting, which we presume will be over about 10:30 a.m. We would like you or your representative to be present at that time to take part in the discussion.

Yours very truly,

Wm. L. Horton

br
CC: Housing Authority
Fire Department
Police Department
Health Department

March 26, 1941

Dr. F. M. Carroll
Commissioner of Health
City of Seattle

Dear Sir:

The Public Safety Committee of the City Council, having had before it for consideration File No. 169237, Recommendation of Seattle Housing Authority on elimination of "shack" problem in Seattle, made the following recommendation:

"That a committee composed of representatives from the Health, Fire, Police and Building Departments (the Health Department to supervise said committee), be authorized to make a survey of the shacktown problem and to destroy all present vacant shacks, and that these departments be further authorized to work out a solution for eventually getting rid of all shacks, the committee to report back to the Public Safety Committee at its meeting Tuesday, April 1st; and that the Health Department be instructed to post suitable notices stating that no further shacks are to be erected."

You are hereby notified of the Committee's action. Please report to the Committee at its next meeting (April 1st) as requested.

Yours very truly,

Wm. L. Horton

WCH:br

CC: Building Dept.
Fire Dept.
Police Dept.
Pub. Safety Committee ✓

March 26, 1941

Dr. F. H. Carroll
Commissioner of Health
City of Seattle

Dear Sir:

The Public Safety Committee of the City Council, having had before it for consideration File No. 169237, Recommendation of Seattle Housing Authority on elimination of "shack" problem in Seattle, made the following recommendation:

"That a committee composed of representatives from the Health, Fire, Police and Building Departments (the Health Department to supervise said committee), be authorized to make a survey of the shacktown problem and to destroy all present vacant shacks, and that these departments be further authorized to work out a solution for eventually getting rid of all shacks, the committee to report back to the Public Safety Committee at its meeting Tuesday, April 1st, and that the Health Department be instructed to post suitable notices stating that no further shacks are to be erected."

You are hereby notified of the Committee's action. Please report to the Committee at its next meeting (April 1st) as requested.

Yours very truly,

Wm. L. Norton

WCH:br

CC: Building Dept.
Fire Dept.
Police Dept.
Pub. Safety Committee

April 23, 1941

Dr. F. M. Carroll
Commissioner of Health
City of Seattle

Dear Sir:

This is to notify you that there will be a conference on the shack town problem next Tuesday, April 29, at 10:00 A.M. or shortly thereafter. The matter will be considered during the Public Safety Committee meeting. The Committee would like to have you present.

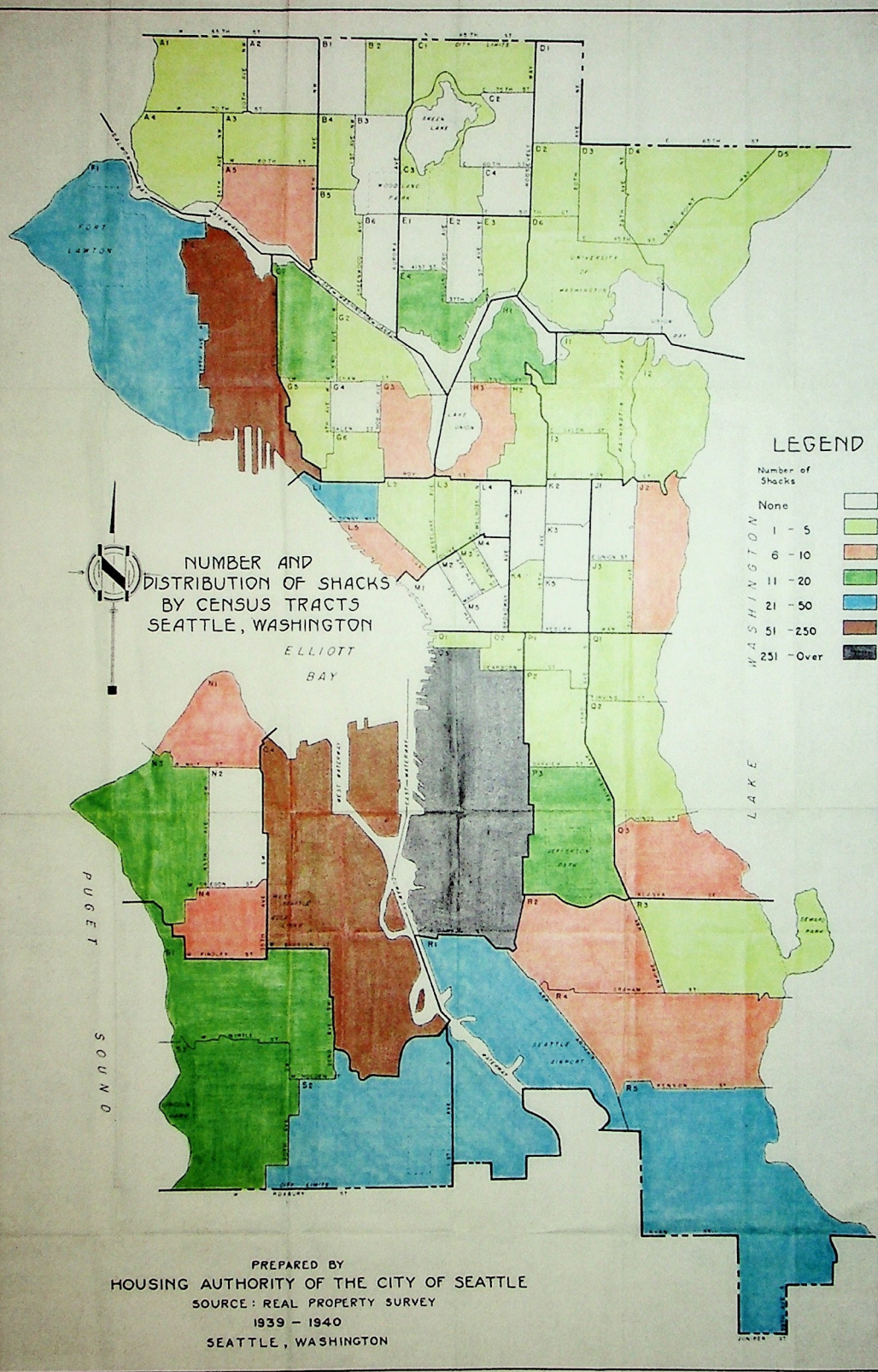
Yours very truly,

Wm. L. Norton

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CC: Supt. of Buildings
Chief of Fire Department
Chief of Police Department

2000px
jpg = 560 kb



NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF SHACKS BY CENSUS TRACTS SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

LEGEND

| Number of Shacks | Color |
|------------------|-------------|
| None | White |
| 1 - 5 | Light Green |
| 6 - 10 | Orange |
| 11 - 20 | Dark Green |
| 21 - 50 | Blue |
| 51 - 250 | Brown |
| 251 - Over | Grey |

PREPARED BY
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE
SOURCE: REAL PROPERTY SURVEY
1939 - 1940
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

← 800 p →
 Jpg = 87 KB

