

Citation: Shack Elimination Committee to Public Safety Committee, April 14, 1941. CF 169237. Comptroller Files, 1802-01, Seattle Municipal Archives.

The City of Seattle
WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SANITATION
FRANK M. CARROLL, M. D., COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH
April 14, 1941.

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4/10/41 - 1 - work - for Confession notify Health. Public & Fire to present

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.

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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 L. Latta

Superintendent of Buildings,

Wm. H. Seave

Chief of Police,

John Nitzjckald

Chief of Fire Department.