





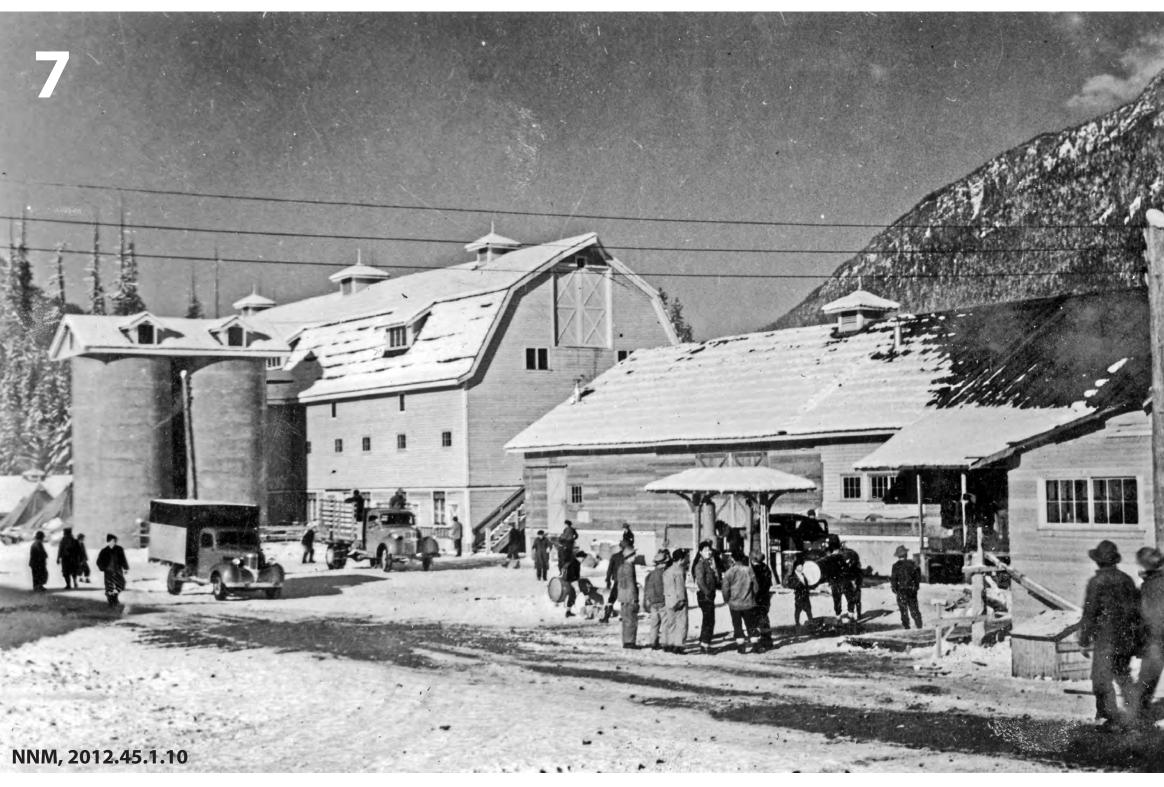


Photos:

- 1. Tashme dancers posing after a stage performance.
- 2. Men at the Shoyu (soy sauce) factory proudly displaying their product 1943
- 3. Tashme Hayabusa baseball team photo 1944 Senior League Champions.
- 4. 1st Tashme Wolf Cub Scout Pack August 26th, 1944









- 5. Enjoying wintertime activities in Tashme.
- 6. Shipment from Japan, January17, 1944 4 Barrels of Shoyu, 16 Boxes of Tea, 4 Barrels of Miso.
- 7. The school, community hall, general store & BCSC office.
- 8. A banquet in the community hall D Building.

TASHME - JAPANESE CANADIAN INTERNMENT CAMP 1942 - 1946

Why were British Columbians of Japanese Descent Interned?

During World War II, Sunshine Valley was the location of an internment camp for over 2,600 British Columbians of Japanese descent. Tashme was the largest of the eight internment camps established in B.C. after the Declaration of War with Japan in 1942.

As a result of the War Measures Act, the B.C. Security Commission (BCSC) forcibly removed over 22,000 persons of "the Japanese race" living within the 160 km (100-mile) "Protected Area" of the Pacific coast of B.C. and sent them to internment camps in the Interior of the province.

After initial containment and processing at Hastings Park in Vancouver, internees were transported to work camps and internment camps throughout B.C. In the spring of 1942, all able-bodied men were initially separated from their families and forced to work on the construction of highways in the Interior of the province, including the Hope-Princeton Highway. Later, when families were allowed to join the men in the road camps, the need for increased housing resulted in the establishment of the Tashme internment camp.

Establishment and background of Tashme

The land before you was once known as the 14 Mile Ranch, the dairy and livestock farm of Amos B. Trites. The government of the day deemed the 464 hectare (1,200 acre) property suitable to accommodate the anticipated 2,966 persons, or 500 families, that would be sent here. Previously used as a Depression-era Relief Workers' Camp, the existing farm buildings (horse stable, two pig barns with pens, a blacksmith shop, metal shop and car garage) were considered assets that could be adapted to suit the needs of the internment camp. On July 2, 1942, the Department of National Defence entered into an agreement to lease the ranch for \$500 per month.

The name of the newly established camp was a point of concern, as the Post Office would not recognize the name "Trites' Farm" for mail delivery. The B.C. Security Commission chose to rename it as "TASHME", derived from the first two letters of the last names of three commissioner Austin Taylor, a prominent Vancouver businessman, John Shirras of the BC Provincial Police, and Fred Mead of the RCMP. The first internees arrived in Tashme on September 8, 1942, having travelled from Hastings Park by train to Hope, and then by bus or truck for the remaining 14 miles. By January 6, 1943, the official population of Tashme was 2,644. The population of the camp also included staff of about 40 Caucasians, who were BCSC staff, RCMP, hospital and other government employees, and nine missionaries.

Housing

As people arrived in Tashme, it was clear that the camp lacked sufficient infrastructure to accommodate them. Housing was constructed on-site, often by internees themselves. Small "houses", which were simple tar paper shacks, were hastily constructed using lumber from the surrounding forests milled in the on-site sawmill.

Measuring approximately 4x7 metres (14x24 feet), they housed as many as eight persons, often from more than one family. The field that is now a campground once held 347 small wooden shacks. Imagine rows and rows of these small houses, arranged on ten avenues running north to south on the land.

Each shack was subdivided into three sections - a living-kitchen area in the centre, with one or two bedrooms on either side. Interior doors were not permitted; curtains provided privacy. With no electricity, kerosene lamps requiring constant cleaning provided the only source of indoor light. There was no indoor plumbing, and the residents of four shacks had to share an outhouse with four privies, located in the back yards between the rows of houses. Water was also a shared commodity, with just one common outdoor tap located at every fourth house on each avenue.

A round pot belly-style woodstove in the kitchen provided the only source of heat. Despite the harsh winter climate, the shacks were not insulated, and during the first winter, the rough shiplap lumber shrank as it dried, creating gaps that let the severe winter weather inside. Internees complained of nearly unbearable conditions, and of having to chip away ice which stuck their blankets to the walls in the morning when they awoke.

One of the existing barns on the property, now the Sunshine Valley Community Centre, was an apartment of 38 suites on two floors with communal kitchens on each floor. A former sheep barn was used as living quarters for single men.



Community Life

Tashme was designed to function much like a 'company town'. Despite being a prison camp, there was a strong sense that life must go on in as normal a fashion as possible. The BCSC, along with religious and charitable organizations, operated and/or provided housing, goods and services, schools, a hospital, employment, and recreation for the internees. The federal government funded elementary school education, high school was provided by the United Church of Canada and the curriculum of the B.C. Department of Education was followed.

Unlike other internment camps in the Interior of the province, Tashme was isolated due to its distance from other communities. Life in the community flourished despite rudimentary and restrictive conditions; the residents of Tashme created a strong sense of community life during the internment years.

Community leaders and residents organized and sponsored sports, clubs, recreation and community events in the schools, churches and the community hall. The camp included a baseball diamond and sports field for outdoor community events. Two concrete silos are all that remain of a barn that functioned as a school and a community hall. The silos are a reminder of community meetings, church services, judo matches, basketball games, movies and concerts, dances, banquets and other events that helped internees maintain a sense of their former lives while imprisoned in the camp.

The camp also included a General Store, BCSC administration offices, and a warehouse. Nearby were smaller buildings for the RCMP detachment, Post Office, a shoe repair shop, a power plant, a bakery, a meat market and a mess hall. A barber shop provided haircuts for 25 cents and a shampoo for 10 cents.

Traditional Japanese bathhouses were an integral part of life in Tashme. Four bathhouses were shared by the residents, and each had two large *furo* – deep Japanese bath tubs – for soaking, and a smaller tub for drawing hot water for washing. The bathhouses were very popular, and the sound of the Japanese geta (flat wooden sandals) on the wooden boardwalks that lined the avenues was an everyday occurrence as people walked to and from the baths.

The Commission also established allotment gardens for the internees to tend crops of vegetables, and fields for fodder (oats and barley) for the horses and pigs. Despite the high altitude and short growing season, crops were successfully grown to sustain the population of the camp. Crops grown by the Commission were harvested and sold through the General Store.

The camp included a 50-bed hospital staffed by a Caucasian doctor and two Japanese Canadian doctors. The nursing staff was mostly Japanese Canadian. There were patient wards, a maternity ward, an operating room and offices for the doctors, dentist and head nurse. A morgue was built in the back of

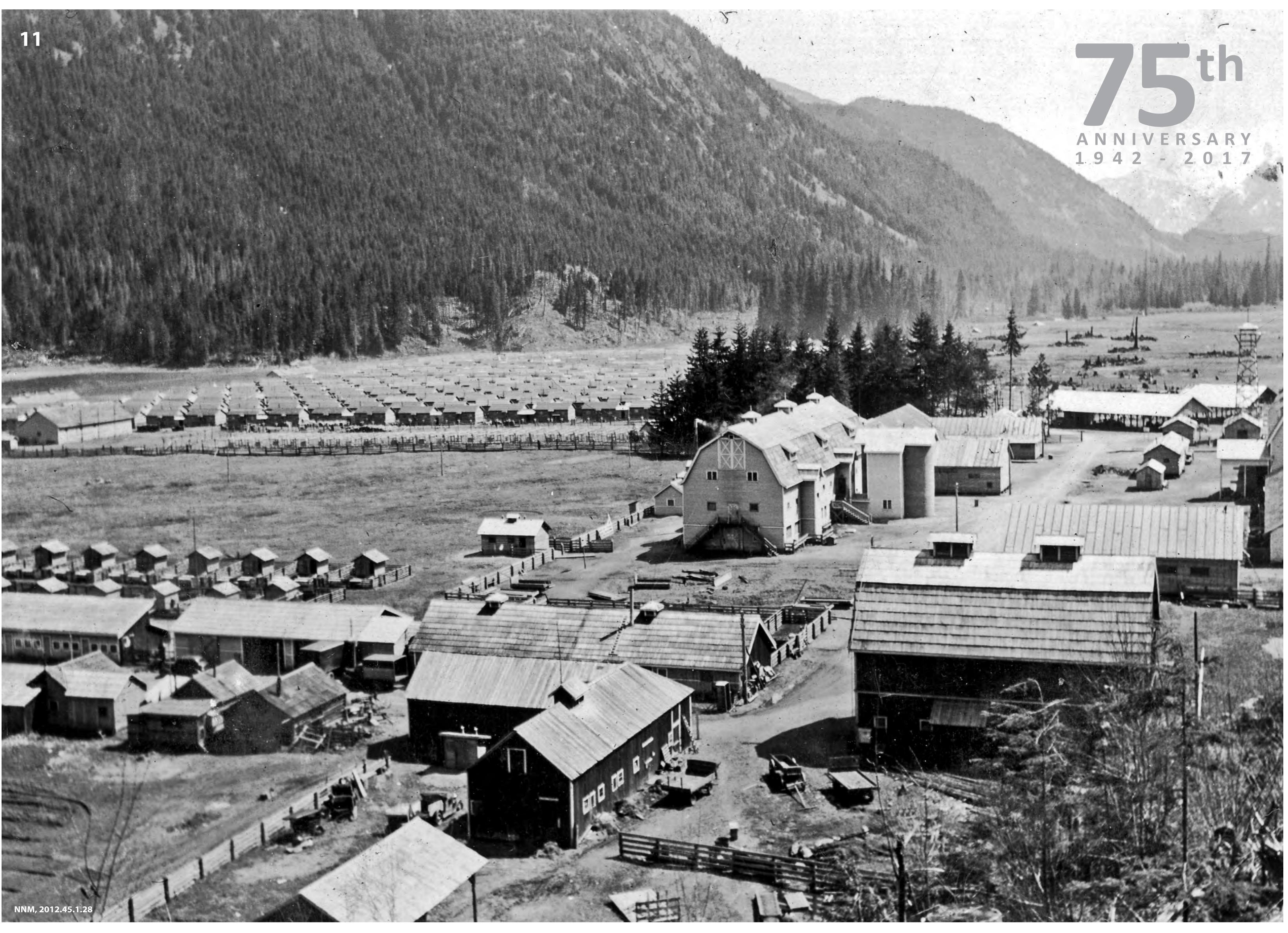
End of the War – Post Internment

By the spring of 1944, the population of Tashme was declining rapidly. The Japanese Division of the Department of Labour was acting on its mandate to disperse persons of Japanese descent to other internment camps in B.C. or to other parts of Canada east of the Rocky Mountains.

At the urging of government authorities many families of first- and second-generation Japanese Canadians living in Canada chose to repatriate to Japan. These families were moved to Tashme and three other camps designated as staging points for people destined for Japan, to await departure of their ships from Vancouver.

Tashme was the first internment camp scheduled for closure after the war. By June of 1946, families and individuals were leaving every week to seek employment elsewhere in the province or in other parts of Canada. By June 25, the hospital had closed and the equipment was shipped to other camps where people were awaiting dispersal to other places. Tashme officially closed on August 12, 1946, but a few families remained to dismantle the camp and clean up the property for return to its owner. The last family departed from Tashme in October, 1946.



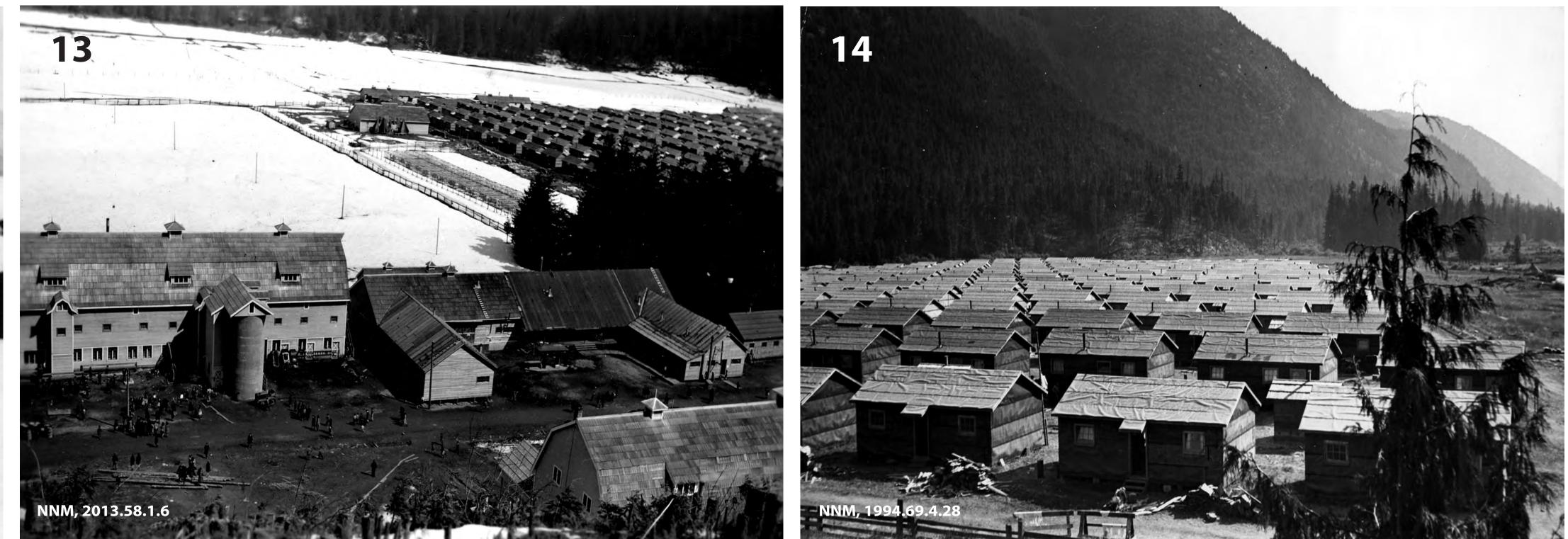




Photos:

- 9. Men arriving in Tashme.
- 10. Tashme Hospital.
- 11. Arial view of Tashme looking east towards Manning Park.





Project Partners:

12. A shack in the winter.

13. Tashme - looking north. The soy sauce factory and shacks in background.

14. Tashme shacks arranged on ten avenues running north to south.







