

#1

## Tashme internment camp

Photograph of the Tashme internment camp located near Hope, British Columbia.

**PRIMARY  
SOURCE**  
Daily life in Japanese  
internment camps



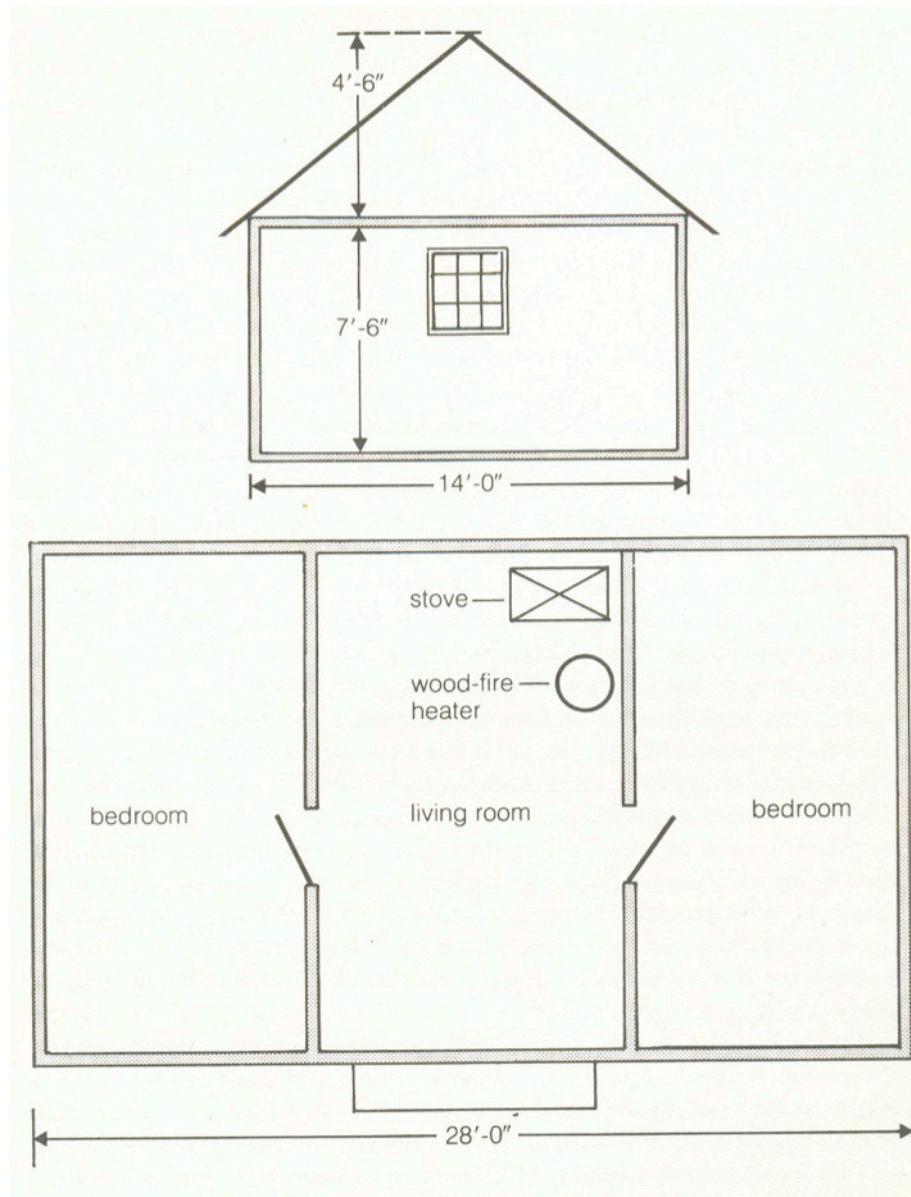
University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, JCPC 8.086.

# #2

## Standard floor plan of a two-family housing unit

Measurements and floor plan of a standard two-family housing unit in a Japanese-Canadian internment camp taken from a report on internment camp living conditions from January 9–19, 1943.

**PRIMARY SOURCE**  
Daily life in Japanese internment camps



Library and Archives Canada, Department of External Affairs Records, file 3469-AM-40

#3

## Letter from an internee to his wife

Letters written by Mr. Kensuke Kitigawa to his wife, sent during his time in the Angler internment camp during World War II. Angler was considered a prison camp, reserved for males who spoke out or fought against internment.

*Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.*



June 28, 1942

On the 16th, 9:18 p.m., the special train loaded with 190 of our comrades left Vancouver. We passed through several tunnels and at dusk of the 17th we reached the border of the province of Alberta where the marker stands which says, "5332 feet above sea level." ... I wanted to send a telegram to you immediately but we were not allowed to. I am sorry.

This camp is pretty well-equipped and from our group professionals were selected to become kitchen workers. So although the quantity is small, the food is quite tasty. The bugle wakes us at 6:30 in the morning. Breakfast is at 7:00, lunch at 12:00, and supper at 5:30. There are two roll calls: at 8:00 in the morning and at 9:30 in the evening. When we arrived here they were still heating with the wood stove, day and night. But two or three days ago, we stopped heating in the daytime. In this region the air is so dry that it is said to be very good for pneumonia and rheumatic problems. My upper right arm which was always aching is fine now, so I regard this new situation almost as if it were a spa. We all started to do some work for exercise. It was decided that I would begin working as a tailor, along with Mr. Kawai and Mr. Kimura, but since we still don't have a sewing machine, we can't begin to work. So please send me a thimble along with number four and sixteen needles.

Please do not force yourself to work too hard, and take care. Please send my regards to the people from Duncan.

August 2, 1942

I received your letter yesterday. Thank you for the photograph. You say you gained five pounds. Nothing can make me happier than this news. You say that Chinese people are now living in our house in Duncan. It does not matter who is living there. I hope that the government will settle the problem once peaceful times return. They say people in the interior camps like Slocan are living in tents. Even where you have been living now, a tent would be too cold for you with delicate health, and I doubt very much that you could survive winter there. Please do not listen to rumours. Don't follow what other people do, and instead please listen to your own better judgment.

-Kensuke Kitigawa

Kitigawa, Kensuke. Diary, in *Stone voices: Wartime writings of Japanese-Canadian Issei*, Keibo Oiwa, Ed. (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1991), p. 99, 101.



#4

## Internment bathing facilities

Photograph of the bath house at the Malakwa road camp.

**PRIMARY SOURCE**  
Daily life in Japanese internment camps



University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, JCPC 10.001

#5

## Dining hall

Photograph of the dining hall at Slocan internment camp, British Columbia.



University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, JCPC 17.005

**PRIMARY  
SOURCE**  
Daily life in Japanese  
internment camps

#6

## Conditions on an Albertan sugar beet farm

Reflection of a Japanese Canadian farmer published along with other interviews in a book entitled *Years of sorrow, years of shame: The story of the Japanese-Canadians in World War II*.



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### A hard time in Alberta

My father came back from a meeting and he looked very upset and sad and he said we were going to Lethbridge to work in the sugar beet fields. Poor but together, he said. That's the way it would be. Going to Lethbridge meant that my older brothers wouldn't be sent to road camps and we could keep together no matter what it was like.

We went by train. One coach on the train to Calgary. We took lunch, food, and slept sitting up. It was very crowded with all the families and everybody was upset. They, we didn't know what was going to happen. I was about fourteen when the Pacific war broke out and I was so young I don't think I knew why we were being taken from our homes ....

Mr. Johnson was nice to us. We had no complaints about him. He did his utmost. The only thing is that when we got there I remember my mother's face because she was so disappointed because we had a caboose to live in, a railway caboose, not a house. There were nine of us and there was just one area which could be the bedroom, and the rest was open area where they had the stove and table and cupboard. But you know, from a wood stove to a coal stove like in the caboose we had many failures and we had a hard time cooking ....

It was hard on me and my sisters because we weren't allowed to go to high school either. No. Your parents had to have seven dollars a month for each child in order to go to high school in Alberta and my parents could not afford to send girls to school, not at the rate of money they were making. It took everything they made just to buy food.

We were paid by the end of the season, in the beets. Paid by tonnage. If the crops were poor you got paid less. The tonnage was fair because the counting was all done by the co-op. Our co-op was Picture Bute.

Our father had very little to support us. We had to buy food and clothing. It was so cold. The government gave us no help.

Broadfoot, Barry. *Years of sorrow, years of shame: The story of the Japanese-Canadians in World War II* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1977), p. 167-169.



#7

## A picnic lunch

Photograph of a family picnic at the Tashme camp in the interior of British Columbia.



**PRIMARY  
SOURCE**  
Daily life in Japanese  
internment camps

University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, JCPC 8.022

#8

## Internment camp education

Photograph of a grade 1 class at the Lemon Creek camp.

**PRIMARY  
SOURCE**  
Daily life in Japanese  
internment camps



University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, JCPC 19.032



#9

## Life at Solsqua road camp

Reflection of a Japanese Canadian interned in the Solsqua road camp, published in a book entitled *Years of sorrow, years of shame: The story of the Japanese-Canadians in World War II*.



*Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.*

Lots of rice - but no freedom

The road camp was at Solsqua. That's near Salmon Arm. I was the only one at the camp who could handle a horse, so I did that for a while, but it was all on steep hills where the loggers cut down the trees for the road construction and one day a log fell on me and I was injured.

I couldn't just sit around in the bunkhouse so I'd hobble out and help the boys. You see, they were drilling to blast the rocks, so I turned that drill. We did a lot of rock work along there. You ask the boys who was in those road camps just how tough it was. It was even tougher than they would tell you now. Most of them forgot.

There were 110 men in that camp, sixty-five to a bunkhouse. We slept four together. We'd have a ten-o'clock curfew, lights out. The guards would be around, and some of the boys, a couple or a few wouldn't turn out their lights. So the guards would tell the Mounties (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and the Mounties would come around and talk to me because I was sort of in charge in that bunkhouse. I told the guys that if they didn't behave I was the one that would be moved out and they might get a real tough guy.

The alarm went off at seven in the morning and we'd eat and at eight we'd walk out to the job. Clearing brush. Piling it. No widening of right-of-way. We had a white person as a straw boss and he was just from the area, a local, and he couldn't handle the men and they'd goof off, you know. I told the men that at least they could work enough to work up an appetite. They were paying for their food, I said, so why not do a little work. So then they did better. Then we'd walk back to camp and have lunch. A hot lunch. A white cook. But when the request came for the men to be given more rice, the chief engineer came along and asked if we wanted more rice, the cook said, "ah, I give these goddamned sons of bitches plenty of rice: and I tell the engineer we get it only once a week. We are used to it every day. And I explain that rice is the cheapest food they can serve us, so then we had rice almost every day. Then back on the job at one and work to five, so we worked regular hours.

We didn't booze. That's something you never heard about.

It's just that we didn't have our freedom ....

When we'd sit around at night talking, sure we were bitter. My bitterness started at Hastings Park when I was waiting to go to the camp. I was in Hastings Park and my wife and children were in Vancouver. I asked to go out and see my wife before we were shipped out and the authorities said no. That's when my real bitterness began. Not in the camp in the bush but right in Vancouver.

Broadfoot, Barry. *Years of sorrow, years of shame: The story of the Japanese-Canadians in World War II* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1977), p. 156-157.



#10

## Housing for sugar beet workers

Photograph of a four bedroom house on a sugar beet farm in St. Agathe, Manitoba that three Japanese-Canadian families lived in during World War II.

**PRIMARY  
SOURCE**  
Daily life in Japanese  
internment camps



The National Association of Japanese Canadians, [http://www.najc.ca/thenandnow/images/experience/ww\\_46.jpg](http://www.najc.ca/thenandnow/images/experience/ww_46.jpg) (Accessed July 12, 2011)

#1

# The enemy that never was

Excerpt from a book written by historian Ken Adachi entitled *The enemy that never was: A history of Japanese-Canadians*, published in 1991.



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While a summer holiday, even a protracted [extended] one, was one thing, actually living [in the Kootenay Valley] was another. All of the interior camps were psychologically deceptive places in which to live. The magnificence of the outdoor setting and the echoes of the romantic past were but candy wrapping, hiding a grim reality.

By the winter of 1942, these camps came to be labeled by government administrators as “interior housing centres,” “relocation centres” or “interior settlements.” But these almost reassuring descriptive terms, suggesting a cozy picture of tranquil, sequestered [isolated] life in the Kootenay valley, were simply euphemisms [other names] for what many Nisei and others preferred to call “internment” or “concentration camps.” At the peak of their habitation in the spring of 1943, these camps held 12 177 men, women and children, forcibly detained and confined without trial, exposed to life under primitive and austere conditions and facing an unknown future, where the humiliation of evacuation was compounded by a regime which ignored citizenship rights and amenities which might have made existence more palatable [acceptable]. To call them “concentration camps,” however, after the pattern of Dachau or Treblinka or even the ten camps in the United States, or to label them “prison camps” after the pattern of prisoner-of-war camps in Europe or Asia would be a gross exaggeration. But they were definitely institutions which bred a prison complex; what all the official euphemisms glossed over was the inescapable fact that the evacuees were being held involuntarily.

Adachi, Ken. *The enemy that never was: A history of Japanese-Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991), pp. 251–252. Used with the permission of the estate of Ken Adachi.



#2

## International inspections

Excerpt written by historian Patricia E. Roy from *Mutual hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War*, published in 1990.



*Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.*

Because of her anxiety to secure good treatment of Canadian prisoners of war and missionaries in Asia, Canada invited the international Committee of the Red Cross, and Spain, which was the protecting power for Japanese interests in Canada, to observe her treatment of the Japanese. Throughout the war years, Spanish consular officials and E. L. Mang, the International Red Cross representative in Canada, periodically inspected Japanese settlements and received written communications. Generally, they accepted Canada's explanations of particular circumstances.

In October, 1942, however, Japan accused Canada of committing "an unprecedented outrage against humanity" by depriving "all Japanese in Canada of their means of subsistence on the pretence of establishment of protected areas," by separating families, by forcing the aged, women, and children to live in "wild desolate places," and by leaving property "unprotected."

Roy, Patricia E., J.L. Granatstein, Masako Iino and Hiroko Takamura. *Mutual hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 106. Courtesy of Patricia E. Roy, J. L. Granatstein, Masako Iino, and Hiroko Takamura

#3

## It could have been worse

Excerpt written by historian Patricia E. Roy from *Mutual hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War*, published in 1990.



*Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.*

The Canadian government and the Canadian people treated the Japanese-Canadians, most of whom were British subjects, very harshly during the war. Nonetheless, the evacuees and internees, no matter what their citizenship, unquestionably were better treated than Canadian soldiers and civilians in Japanese hands. The survivors of the debacle at Hong Kong had the misfortune to fall under the control of an authoritarian [using total control] military regime that operating under a different code of behaviour from most Western armies, beat, overworked, and starved its captives. Few in Japan concerned themselves with the plight of the POWs [prisoners of war]; few today seem aware of their country's past actions. Canadian civilians, mostly missionaries, in Japan were usually better treated, but they suffered severely from the same food and medicine shortages endured by the people of Japan. Even then, some Japanese civilians dipped into their own meagre supplies to bring gift packages to interned Canadian friends. The Canadians who had the misfortune to be caught in Japanese-controlled territory endured a variety of experiences ranging from kind consideration at the hands of some of their captors to brutal torture. All suffered from severe food shortages.

Canada's concern for Canadian POWs and civilians under Japanese control and fears of reprisals [retaliation] against them, not altruism, shaped her policy to evacuees and internees. The taking of hostages is as old as warfare, as contemporary as today's newspaper. War forced both Canada and Japan into the hostage business.

Roy, Patricia E., J.L. Granatstein, Masako Iino and Hiroko Takamura. *Mutual hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 217–218. Courtesy of Patricia E. Roy, J. L. Granatstein, Masako Iino, and Hiroko Takamura

#4

## Angler prisoner-of-war camp

Excerpt from a book edited by historian Barry Broadfoot entitled *Years of sorrow, years of shame: The story of the Japanese-Canadians in World War II*, published in 1977.



*Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.*

While the reverberations from Pearl Harbor were still racketing around the globe, forty-two Japanese on the west coast were rounded up by the mounted Police. They were Issei [Japanese born], older men, respected in their communities but of ordinary vocations—union official, barber, school teacher, and so on.

I have met Japanese-Canadians who knew these men and they swear they have not the slightest idea why they were picked up and jailed, without warrant, without trial, and, naturally, without appeal. To this day, nobody knows their crime, but somewhere in some file in Ottawa must rest the answers.

I was told by one Japanese in Vancouver: “It was a scare tactic. They may have had a little something on these guys. Something one might have said once, but nothing like you might think. They were just showing the rest of us what they could do.”

The forty-two finally wound up in Angler, a prisoner-of-war camp east of Thunder Bay. Placed in a bleak region of low hills with cold winters and mosquito-filled summers, it was formerly a German P.O.W. camp and got its reputation, if you can call it such, from the escapee of twenty-eight German prisoners and the death of two and the wounding of three by the gunfire of the guards. Little is known of that incident.

But the forty-two weren’t the only Japanese in Angler. There were more than 700 men who, while not actually dangerous to the state, were considered troublemakers.

The Canadian government eventually realized that all but a handful of these men were harmless and tried to get them to leave the camp and accept work in Ontario – as free men. A couple of hundred did but many refused saying, “Send me back to B.C. or I’ll stay here forever.” For a few it was a matter of pride, a show of defiance toward a government and a system that could treat them thus.

Broadfoot, Barry. *Years of sorrow, years of shame: The story of the Japanese-Canadians in World War II* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1977), pp. 121–122.