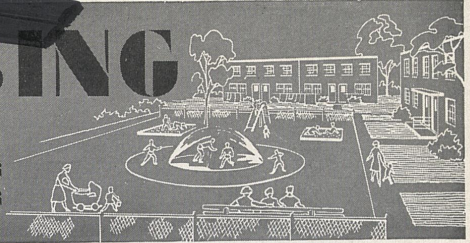


FW 3.7.1/26

PUBLIC HOUSING

Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Vol. 1, No. 26

Federal Works Agency, U. S. Housing Authority—Nathan Straus, Administrator

February 6, 1940

Carmody Links Housing and National Defense in Detroit Speech

Speaking at Detroit recently, before housing officials from 10 Midwestern States, John M. Carmody, FWA Administrator, stated: "Investment in housing is the biggest step in national defense."

There is a demand for at least 4,000,000 new low-cost homes, Mr. Carmody stated. In order to meet this, "the cooperation of many groups, including public officials, private bankers, labor organizations, manufacturers of materials, contractors, and public-spirited citizens will be necessary."

Mr. Carmody's address, given at the Detroit-Leland Hotel January 22, was part of the 5-day program of the Regional Conference on Housing Administration and Management. The conference was conducted by NAHO in cooperation with the Detroit Housing Commission and the United States Housing Authority. Carl L. Bradt, Director-secretary of the Detroit Housing Commission, was in charge of local arrangements.

Among the leaders in the public housing field who appeared at the conference were Coleman Woodbury, Director of NAHO; Ernest J. Bohn, Director, Cleveland Housing Authority; Thomas P. Danahey, President, Detroit Housing Commission; Hon. E. J. Jeffries, Mayor, City of Detroit; Bleeker Marquette, Consultant to the Cincinnati Housing Authority; and B. J. Hovde, Administrator of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority, and USHA special Consultant in charge of Management Review Division.

Conference on Children in a Democracy Asks Expanded Public Housing Program

More than 500 delegates, from every section of the country, met in Washington for the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, from January 18 to 20. Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, was Chairman, and Katharine F. Lenroot, Chief of the Children's Bureau, served as Executive Secretary.

At sessions held on January 19 the Conference approved a General Report, incorporating the reports and recommendations of 11 committees which had been working for some months on various child-welfare problems.

Roosevelt Praises Work of White House Conference

Addressing a general session of the Conference on Children in a Democracy, meeting in the East Room of the White House on January 19, President Roosevelt discussed the Conference Report and commented extemporaneously on the various recommendations. References to housing, and the relationship between good housing and child welfare, were frequent.

The President emphasized the tremendous proportion of underprivileged children in the country. "You tell us that more than half the children of America live in families that do not have enough money to provide adequate shelter . . ."

He also strongly endorsed that section of the Conference Report which called attention to the need "for continuing and expanding public and private housing programs, if families of the lowest income groups are to live in dwellings suitable for the rearing of children."

"We still have much to do," the President declared. "Too many children are still living under conditions that must be corrected if our democracy is to develop to its highest capacity."

The report of the Conference Committee on "Housing the Family" defined "a suitable dwelling place" as "a matter not only of the design of the structure itself but also of the character of the immediate surroundings, and of the planning of whole neighborhoods for mutual protection and advantage for young and old."

The Committee emphasized its support of the slum clearance and low-rent housing program by advocating expansion of this work in the first of its eight recommendations.

The recommendations, as adopted by the Conference, follow:

1. The Federal Government should continue and expand its program of promoting slum clearance and new housing for low-income groups through further authorization of Federal loans and appropriations for Federal grants to local housing authorities.

2. The Federal Government should give attention to rural areas where half of the Nation's children live. Federal housing programs for rural areas should be adapted to rural conditions and should include grants and loans for construction of new homes and repair of substandard dwellings when their condition warrants, as-

(Continued on next page)

sistance in providing safe water supply and sanitation and encouragement of electrification.

3. State and municipal governments should enact legislation to provide loans and grants for public housing and to authorize cooperation with the Federal Government in housing programs.

4. Better housing for families of moderate income should be promoted by safeguarding credit for housing purposes to assure low-interest rates and long-term amortization, thus serving to stimulate private building and home ownership; by encouraging cooperative effort of industry and labor to reduce building costs; and by encouragement of housing cooperatives and other agencies in which the motive of profit is subordinated to that of social usefulness.

5. Adequate regulatory laws should be enacted, and they should be enforced by competent inspection departments in every city. Such departments should have budgets sufficient for enforcement of laws and regulations concerning proper construction, maintenance, repair and management of dwellings, and demolition of buildings when necessary. Local governments should modernize their building, sanitary, zoning and housing codes to conform to present knowledge of sanitary and other requirements, and to eliminate needless cost.

6. Public assistance budgets should include provision for housing adequate for family needs. In each community rent allowances should be based on the rental cost of such housing.

7. Continuous research by public and private agencies should be part of housing programs. Appropriations should be made for this purpose to governmental agencies participating in housing. Research by private groups should also be encouraged.

8. Since support of an enlightened public opinion is essential in housing as in every other socially important field, citizen committees should be organized in communities to promote public interest and understanding. Housing facts and problems should be made widely known to the public

through educational and informational methods.

The Report Committee consisted of:

Homer Folks, *Chairman*

C. Anderson Aldrich, M. D., Clinton W. Areson, Chester I. Barnard, Frank G. Boudreau, M. D., William Clayton Bower, William G. Carr, Grace L. Coyle, Mrs. Saidie Orr Dunbar, Mrs. Katharine Dummer Fisher, Loula Friend Dunn, Ben G. Graham, William Hodson, Fred K. Hoehler, Rabbi Edward L. Israel, Hugh R. Jackson, Charles S. Johnson, Rev. George Johnson, Jacob Kepecs, Rev. Bryan J. McEntegart, A. Graeme Mitchell, M. D., W. R. Ogg, James S. Plant, M. D., Homer P. Rainey, Floyd W. Reeves, Felix J. Underwood, M. D., C.-E. A. Winslow.

It's "In Again—Out Again" for Smith Family When They Seek Admission to Newark Project

The Smith family, of Newark, N. J., is going to live in a USHA-aided project, after all. But it was touch and go for a while. If you think that "tenant selection" is a dry business, listen to their story.

When John Smith (as we'd better call him) applied for admission to the new project, the people at the office of the Newark housing authority shook their heads. "Too much income," they told him. They explained that they'd set a local limit for tenant incomes, that tenants were not supposed to earn more than four times their rent, even though the Federal law permitted slightly higher incomes.

"Your family is too small—just the wife and child," they pointed out.

"Oh, if that's it, I think it'll be all right," John told them, brightening up. "In a couple of weeks my wife is going to have a baby."

The housing people were very sorry, but even one more baby wouldn't quite give him the right sized family. "Three or more minor dependents," they quoted to him.

So John Smith was out of the project. He went away pretty disappointed.

But ten days later the miracle happened. John rushed straight from the hospital, all the way across Newark, to the housing authority office.

"I'm in!" he shouted. "We've got TWINS . . . that is, I mean, two more minor dependents!"

Current Housing Literature

TRAINING FOR RECREATION, by Dorothy I. Cline, University of Chicago Press, 1939. 130 pp.

The story of the WPA recreation program, 1935 to 1937, by a consultant for that program, now of the USHA Community Relations staff. Discusses the organization and administrative aspects of the program at some length, its training methods, special aids to training, such as bibliographies, notebooks, radio, films, exhibits, and others. Concludes with a forecast and analysis of what recreation programs and leaders are likely to be in the future. Bibliography.

Note.—Copies may be obtained free on request to the University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago.

HOUSING COMES HOME TO CONGRESS, by Arthur C. Holden. *The Atlantic*, February 1940, pp. 250-259.

A critical analysis of USHA financial and administrative methods.

The housing people were as tickled as he was. "You're in, all right," they assured him. "Now go home and get some rest."

So John did. It was a great world—a new family and a new home, all in one day.

The next morning he arrived at work walking on air. Hardly had he entered the door when the boss rushed up and congratulated him.

"Great stuff, John!" he roared. "Always wanted twins myself. From now on your pay goes up 25 percent."

John's elated grin froze on his face. Grabbing a pencil, he figured desperately on the back of an envelope. Over and over again he multiplied, divided, and subtracted—but it was no use. His income was too high!

Miserably he dragged himself to the telephone and called the Newark housing authority office. "I'm *really* out this time," he faltered. "I just . . . I just," he swallowed hard, "I just got a raise!"

But we told you the story had a happy ending. The housing people did their own figuring. And, since John's income was only \$8.50 a year over the local maximum (and still below the Federal requirements), they decided to grant an exception.

So the Smiths (all five of them) will live in the USHA-aided project in Newark, after all. And their story should prove to everyone that "tenant selection" is not dull routine but a perpetually exciting adventure.

Feb 12

There's A Path That Connects . . .

(One of the most vigorous and effective housing campaigns in the country is being waged by the Norfolk (Va.) News Index. A recent feature of the newspaper's fight to start a public housing program in Norfolk is the front page story here reproduced in part.)

"Oh Lawd, We Gotta Git Outa This Hole"

This Is the Complaint of One Norfolk Slum Dweller In the Hovel That Also Houses the Maid In One of Norfolk's Mansions.

(By Ellis M. James)

Sixty families in Titustown have only one source of water. It's an outdoor water faucet.

We found a half-dozen little colored children getting water there. Two had a rickety hand wagon with leaky tin cans to hold water. A little girl carried a small shiny bucket.

Negro people from several blocks around in Titustown have to carry water to their homes from this outdoor water spigot. Their city water was long ago shut off.

Some of the women have to tote buckets of water almost half a mile.

Sixty families—but only one water source. Outdoors. Over an iron grill placed above a hole in which stagnant water stands.

We went to visit one of these homes in Titustown. One of these homes where they have no water—except from that outdoor faucet. The home is at 1136 Hannah Street. It is the home of K. H. Fitchett, his wife, Virginia; his daughter, Annie May; and his son, Davie.

The house is one of those white, box-like buildings you see from the road as you go through



THIS IS THE HOUSE that Jack built . . . and it took a lot of it. It's the home of one of Norfolk's best citizens. He is not responsible for Norfolk's slums. But he should be interested . . . for his maid lives in the slum below . . .

Titustown. The buildings look like big beehives—but they're not nearly as good as beehives. They are about 18 or 20 feet square. They have four rooms. Not very big rooms.

The yard of the Fitchett home was neatly raked. Shrubs were planted there. A well-kept fence was around the yard. But of course the whole yard was as tiny as you can imagine.

"We gotta git outa here. Lawd, I don't know where we're goin'. But we gotta git out of this hole." That's what Virginia Fitchett said to us when we went into her home at 1136 Hannah Street, Titustown.

"Look at that ceiling. See where the water done come through on us? What do we do when it rains? We git everything in the house and sets it on the floor to catch water. That's what we does.

"Look here at this crack around the window. Shove your hand right through it. Window loose. You kin shake it. See? Lawd, it gits cold with that window like that."

"Where do you get your water for drinking and washing?" we asked.

"Where they all gits it. Up there by the road. Rain or shine, death or sickness, that's where we gits it."

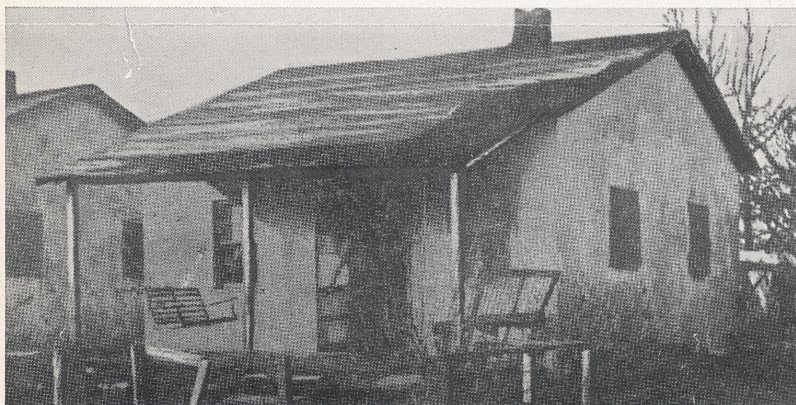
Virginia Fitchett is a neat Negro woman. Her house is neat and clean inside. No rugs. Just rough plank floors. Board walls. No wallpaper.

Plumbing? Just an old-fashioned outhouse, privy or whatever you call it. Just one of dozens of privies in Titustown.

"How much rent do you pay for this place?" we asked.

"We pay \$10 a month. Imagine

(Continued on page 4)



THIS IS WHERE THE FITCHETTS LIVE. The house was built a long time ago. The rent is \$10 a month. Toilet facilities are limited to a Chic Sale structure. Sixty families living in little "beehive" houses like this get water from one spigot. Norfolk slums are costing the taxpayers \$750,000 a year.

Construction Bids

Bid Openings Definitely Scheduled

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Baltimore (Md.-2-1).....	701	2-14-40
Bristol (Va.-2-1).....	142	2- 6-40
Bristol (Va.-2-2).....	74	2- 6-40
Butte (Mont.-3-1).....	225	3- 9-40
Hattiesburg (Miss.-1-2).....	120	2- 8-40
Helena (Mont.-4-1).....	71	3-10-40
Gary (Ind.-11-1).....	305	2-15-40
Omaha (Nebr.-1-2).....	272	2-27-40

Bid Openings Tentatively Scheduled ¹

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Akron (Ohio-7-1).....	276	3-15-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3).....	614	3-15-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3-A).....	292	3-15-40
Charlotte (N. C.-3-1-A).....	108	3-15-40
Fajardo (P. R.-3-1).....	210	3- 9-40
Frederick (Md.-3-2).....	50	3-15-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-1).....	86	3-15-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-2).....	206	3-15-40
Oakland (Calif.-3-1).....	396	3-14-40
Tampa (Fla.-3-2).....	320	3- 1-40
West Palm Beach (Fla.-9-2).....	120	3- 1-40

¹ There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening. None of the bid openings shown here have as yet been definitely scheduled.

Construction Report Analysis

Two new projects went into construction during the week ended January 26. The 97-unit project in Meridian, Miss., is the fourth low-rent housing project in that city. The 858-unit project in New Orleans—also the fourth in the city—brings to 3,299 the number of families in New Orleans to be rehoused under the city's slum clearance program. The addition of the new projects, together with upward revisions in the cost estimates for two other projects, caused slight increases in both the average over-all cost of new housing per unit and in the average net construction cost per unit.

The Wheeling, W. Va., Housing Authority is organizing an amateur photographic contest on good and bad housing.

Two More State Housing Associations Organized

The first month of 1940 has seen the organization of two State Associations of Housing Authorities—one in Alabama and the other in Virginia.

The Alabama Association was organized January 15 at a State-wide meeting of local authority members and others interested in the program.

During a day of speeches and discussions devoted to local authority problems, the following men were elected to important positions in the new Association: President, Frank E. Spain, Chairman of the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District; Vice President, J. S. Hodgson, Chairman of the Housing Authority of the City of Montgomery; Secretary-treasurer, George Fearn, Jr., Executive-director, Mobile Housing Board; Admn. Secretary, William Nicrosi, Housing Manager, Montgomery.

In the Virginia meeting, held January 23 at Richmond, Governor James Price was an honored guest. Addressing about 100 housing officials and other program supporters at a luncheon in the Hotel Richmond, Governor Price referred to President Roosevelt's recent statement that one-half of America's children are reared in substandard housing: "No free country can endure if one-half its youth is a prey to bad housing."

The newly elected officers in the Virginia Association of Housing Authorities are: President, Col. Carrol Kidd of Bristol; Vice President, David Dick, Newport News; Secretary-treasurer, W. Guy Ancell, City Manager of Hopewell, and Executive-director of the Hopewell Housing Authority.

New USHA Leaflet Shows What Housing Means to the Negro

Just off the GPO presses is *Public Housing and the Negro*, fifth in a series of leaflets explaining the USHA program. It is a concise statement of the Negro's need for public housing in the United States, and what is being done about it.

Public housing means more to the Negro than a home, the leaflet points out. "It has recognized him as an integral part of the American people. It has included him in the development of its policies. It has opened the door of employment in a variety of occupations—professional, technical, skilled, and clerical."

Copies are available free of charge, upon application to the Informational Service Division of USHA.

There's A Path That Connects

(Continued from page 3)

dat! Ten dollars a month for this ole hole.

"Lawd, we don't want to stay here. But where can we go? We gotta git outa here. . . . We done lived here 18 years now. It's too long to stay in a place like this."

Virginia Fitchett's daughter, Annie May, is a maid employed at the home of Lawyer James Martin. The boy, Davie, is 16. He doesn't have a job. "Ain't nothin' to do."

(On its editorial page that day the News Index asked:

"Are you looking for a good investment for that money you've saved? Would you like for your dollars to earn 10 or even as high as 50 percent?"

"If you would, go out and buy a slum. Slums are eyesores. They are a cancer on the Body Politic. They breed Crime and Disease and Despair. But they're a gold mine.")

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended January 26, 1940	Week ended January 19, 1940	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction.....	166	164	+ 1.22
Number of dwellings under construction.....	65,898	64,943	+ 1.47
Total estimated over-all cost ¹ of new housing.....	\$295,939,000	\$290,984,000	+ 1.70
Average over-all cost ¹ of new housing per unit.....	\$4,491	\$4,481	+ .22
Average net construction cost ² per unit.....	\$2,820	\$2,819	+ .04

¹ Includes: (a) Building the house, including structural costs and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation; (b) dwelling equipment, architects' fees, local administrative expenses, financial charges during construction, and contingency expenses; (c) land for present development; (d) nondwelling facilities.

² The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.

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