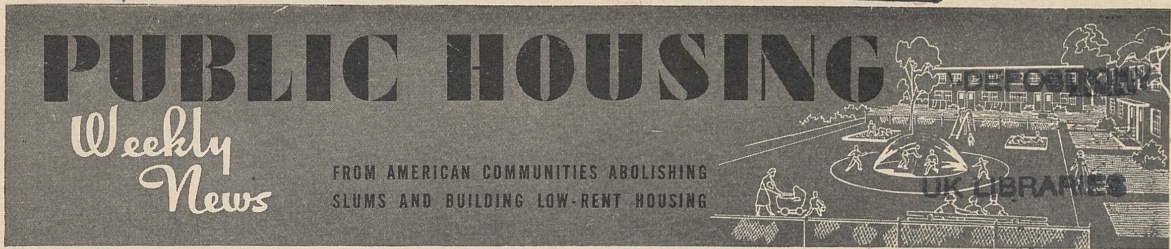


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Vol. 1, No. 16

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

November 28, 1939

Two Favorable Decisions On State Housing Laws Rendered by Courts

Stating that "there is no more reason why the Legislature of our State may not, under its power of eminent domain, take private property in order to effect slum clearances than in order to provide for roads, railroads, and swamp clearances," Justice Joseph L. Bodine of the New Jersey State Supreme Court recently handed down an opinion upholding the State's Local Housing Authorities Law.

With the right of local housing authorities to obtain land by condemnation at issue, Mr. Pasquale Romano, Newark property owner, had sought the Supreme Court's decision.

Because the Supreme Court's decision in New Jersey is not final, it is likely that Mr. Romano will appeal his case to the Court of Appeals and Errors, New Jersey's court of last resort. At present, the highest courts in 16 States have upheld State housing legislation. They are: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. In Florida and Montana, the Supreme Courts have twice upheld the State housing laws, making a total of 19 favorable decisions.

Constitutionality of the law permitting the construction of low-rent housing projects in Jacksonville, Fla., was challenged by a group of property owners headed by J. H. Higbee, before the Duval County Circuit Court. Judge A. D. McNeill dismissed the bill of complaint.

Public Health Experts to Cooperate With USHA in Administrative Survey

In line with USHA policy of founding its program on a basis of practical fact, Administrator Nathan Straus recently secured the cooperation of the Public Health Service, which assigned Dr. Joseph M. DallaValle, Sanitary Engineer, and Mr. John C. Leukhardt, Research Analyst, to advise and assist in public health matters.

The first concern of Dr. DallaValle and Mr. Leukhardt will be to study administration and methods of public health and public housing agencies in order to coordinate their activities. This will involve investigating how local health officers and local housing authorities work together; how local public health facilities; what part county health officers might play in an extensive rural housing program; and how new public health legislation will affect the public housing program.

In addition, the new advisers will devote themselves to the development of better criteria for measuring substandard housing, taking into account ventilation, sanitation, over-crowding, environmental nuisances and neighborhood congestion. The results of their study will form the substance of general statements which will be issued by the United States Public Health Service. These statements will also contain recommendations calculated to assure selection of tenants from homes most detrimental to health. They will further discuss health factors which might disqualify

(See PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS COOPERATE WITH USHA on p. 3)

LOWELL SETS RECORD ON BID AWARD

The construction contract for the North Common Village project was signed within 72 hours of the opening of bids by the Lowell (Mass.) Housing Authority. Meeting at 7:30 P. M., November 6, the local authority voted its recommendation for award and dispatched the bid documents by air mail to the Regional Office. USHA Administrator Nathan Straus wired the authorization to award on November 8. The evening of November 9 the local authority met with the successful contractor and signed the contract.

"Educate the Public," Ohio Conference is Told

Speaking before 100 delegates from cities in Ohio, Kentucky, and Michigan, at the third Ohio Housing Authorities Conference, which convened this month in Cincinnati, Charles P. Taft, member of the Cincinnati City Council, said the big job of housing authorities is to educate the public.

The public must be given the facts, Mr. Taft declared. They must be shown that although public housing costs money, the expenditure is legitimate and necessary. Public leaders, Mr. Taft said, must be shown that their constituents want housing.

The Ohio Conference was held November 10-11 under the direction of Ernest J. Bohn, Conference Chair-

(See "EDUCATE THE PUBLIC" on p. 2)

Current Housing Literature

WHITHER THE CITY?, by Lewis Mumford, *The American City*, November 1939, pp. 60-62.

Mr. Mumford advocates slum clearance, large-scale housing, neighborhood planning, park development, and other municipal improvements.

COMMUNITY PLANNING, *Building America*, November 1939, Vol. V, No. 2, pp. 34-63.

Includes articles on the growth of American cities and towns, the city slum problem of today, the USHA program, and the necessary elements of community planning. Profusely illustrated.

PLANNING BODY URGES NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY, *Real Estate Record*, Nov. 11, 1939, p. 3.

Survey of New York's metropolitan area by the Regional Plan Association indicates that the potentialities of the neighborhood policy have not been completely realized. Williamsburg Houses cited as the closest approach to a complete neighborhood.

DAILY'S CAMPAIGN STARTS LOW COST HOUSING PROJECT, *Editor and Publisher*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 26.

How a low-cost housing project was started in New Brunswick, N. J., as a result of a campaign waged by the *Daily Home News* and the *Sunday Times* of New Brunswick.

FHA MOVES FORWARD WITH PLAN TO HELP LOWER INCOME GROUPS, by Staff Correspondent, *American "Standard" News*, November 1939, pp. 1, 4.

New FHA program designed to aid families with incomes as low as \$900 to build their own homes.

\$3,800 BUILDS SWEDISH ECONOMIC HOUSE, *Practical Builder*, November 1939, p. 12.

Description of low-cost one-story house featuring Swedish custom of utilizing the basement for part of the living quarters. Illustrations and floor plans.

HOUSING PROGRESS IN SCOTLAND, by G. B. Johnson, *Commercial Intelligence Journal (Canada)*, July 22, 1939, pp. 150-156.

History of public housing in Scotland since the Great War.

WASHINGTON NEWS LETTER, by The American Municipal Association—The Federation of State Leagues of Municipalities, *New Jersey Municipalities*, November 1939, pp. 25-27.

Discusses recent activities and changes of policy in the USHA, approval of additional housing projects, the decentralization of USHA's administrative staff, and the appointment of Dr. Soper. Also contains an item entitled "Architect's Convention Favors Federal Planning Assistance."

EMERGENCY LEGISLATION AFFECTING HOUSING AND BUILDING WORK GENERALLY, *Journal of The Royal Institute of British Architects*, Oct. 16, 1939, pp. 997-999.

Short summary of principal war legislation affecting English housing and building industry.

FACTORY-BUILT HOMES, *Federal Home Loan Bank Review*, September 1939, pp. 373-375.

Most recent contribution to the low-cost housing field is the prefabricated steel house which will be on the market in November. Illustrations and floor plans.

HOUSING PROGRESS, *The Municipal Journal and Public Works Engineer*, Oct. 13, 1939, p. 2204.

Brief resumé of housing activities in Manchester and other English cities. Official attitude toward postponement of housing scheme due to war conditions.

Nursery School Conference Discusses Design and Supervision for Projects

"Proper supervision of the play of young children benefits not only the children and their parents, but the whole neighborhood," is the opinion of Dr. Mary Dabney Davis, Specialist in Primary and Nursery Education of the U. S. Office of Education.

Dr. Davis was one of a group which discussed "Nursery Schools in Public Housing Projects" at the Biennial Conference of the National Association for Nursery Education, held in New York City, October 24-28. Others in the group were: Mrs. Alva Myrdal, Founder and Director of the Stockholm Training College for Nursery School Teachers; Molly Flynn, Farm Security Administration; Dr. Grace Langdon and Miss Isabel Robinson of the Work Projects Administration, and Mrs. Kate Edelman and Duane V. Ramsey of USHA.

Throughout the discussion emphasis was placed upon the importance of designing space, both outdoors and indoors, for varied use.

Although in special instances, space can be set aside exclusively for the use of a Nursery School, in many places the nursery education work must be carried on in rooms which are also used for a variety of other activities.

Sliding or folding doors, screens, or movable lockers which can be used to subdivide a large room into smaller areas are among the devices which have been developed to adapt community space to the requirements of nursery education without destroying its usefulness for other activities. Outdoor play space must also be planned for use by groups of children with limited supervision.

Ways in which the nursery school program has been adapted to meet this and other requirements were described. If mothers are not employed, for example, half-day sessions for the youngsters plus instruction on diet, proper rest, etc., for the mothers may be a satisfactory substitute for the all-day nursery school.

A comparison was made of the Nursery Schools in Swedish housing

developments with those in this country. Housing information necessary for nursery school teachers in public housing projects, and the importance of coordinating local services related to child welfare were discussed.

The members of the discussion group agreed that it is the responsibility of all organizations and individuals interested in the education of children to cooperate with local housing authorities in planning and providing the facilities required to meet play needs of the youngsters in a local project.

Widespread interest in the whole subject of nursery schools in public housing projects led to the adoption of a recommendation that the members of the group prepare for publication a summary of the principal topics discussed.

"Educate the Public"

(Continued from p. 1)

man and Director of the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority. The first day was devoted to separate sessions on Legal and Financial problems, Planning and Construction, Management and Public Relations. The following day, delegates visited Laurel Homes, former PWA Housing Division Project in Cincinnati, and Green Hills, one of the three Farm Security Administration Greenbelt developments in the country.

O. W. L. Coffin, Secretary of the State Housing Board and prominent Cleveland realtor, also emphasized the need for public education. Mr. Coffin pointed out that authorities often become too engrossed in planning and administrative detail, neglecting the important task of keeping the public informed and interested. Speakers emphasized that successful public relations involves a frank, straightforward attitude on the part of the authorities.

Catherine K. Bauer, USHA Consultant, recently returned from an extensive European trip, addressed the Conference on "European Housing as I Saw it Last Month."

12/2/39

Public Health Experts Cooperate With USHA

(Continued from p. 1)

families from tenancy, and necessary health service facilities on the project site.

The new arrangement gives USHA the services of the Nation's final authority on matters of health. It is anticipated that the technical statements of the USPHS will settle long-standing questions concerning construction standards. Cost limitations and the necessity for stringent economies present many varied and serious problems to low-rent housing technicians.

For instance, do present USHA minimum standards provide adequate heating facilities? Is complete cross-ventilation essential? What is the proper relation between window and floor space? From the health standpoint, does concrete or wood make the more desirable floor? How many cubic feet of air are necessary per person and, consequently, how high should ceilings be in relation to the other room dimensions? What are the advantages and disadvantages, hygienically, of ice and mechanical refrigerators? Do new, economical

LIBRARY FACILITIES PROPOSED FOR PROJECTS. Edward J. Leonard, Chairman of the Allegheny County (Pa.) Housing Authority recently proposed to the County Commissioners that they contract with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to furnish books to urban and rural areas in Allegheny County through local housing projects. Projects in McKees Rocks and other communities will include library space to be used by people of the community as well as project tenants.

methods of plumbing installation in multiple dwellings constitute a health menace, or should local building codes be revised? And finally, how can the whole collection of home hazards—the falls resulting from loose rugs and slick floors, the bathtub electrocutions, and so forth—be minimized?

In offering its services for the consideration of these and similar problems, the United States Public Health Service is making an important contribution to the country's housing program. Of equal value is USHA assistance to Public Health, for each time a slum area is cleared a public health menace is removed.

Syracuse Holds 2-Day Exhibit of Apartment

Early opening of the Syracuse (N. Y.) Eastern project was heralded by the recent exhibit of an attractively furnished typical apartment. The 2-day public inspection was sponsored by the Women's Housing Committee. Mrs. Florence Kemp, Tenant Relations Director of the Syracuse Housing Authority, had charge of furnishing and decorating the apartment.

Nearly all the furniture used was second-hand, but had been carefully renovated. The kitchen contained a red dinette set and a white porcelain work table. In the sitting room, besides a couch and desk, were several arm chairs which had been covered with bright-colored chintz. The bedroom was equipped with double bed, dresser, chest of drawers, and small chairs. Apartment walls were painted in ivory.

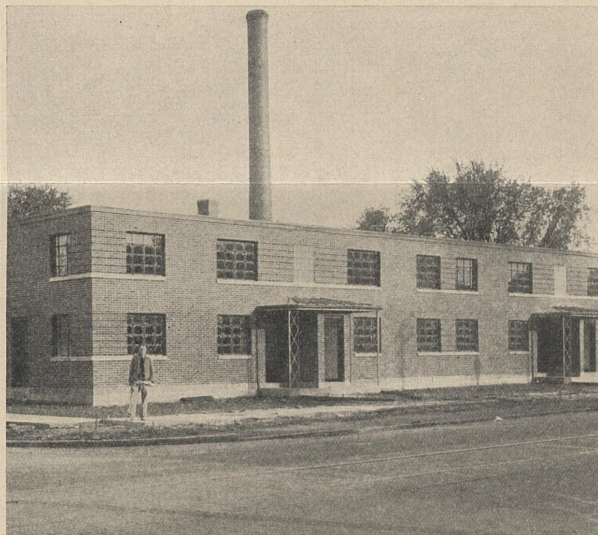
Demonstration units of this nature have been found by local authorities to provide an excellent public education medium, while at the same time supplying valuable suggestions to future tenants. The method is being used more and more frequently as a preoccupation technique.

Before



Six families (11 adults and 10 children) lived in this Syracuse tenement now replaced by the Eastern project. They paid from \$12 to \$17 monthly rent, and were without either private baths or private indoor flush toilets. The wooden fire escape is the only exit for those living on the third floor.

After



Syracuse will soon have more than 300 of the 668 units in its first USHA project ready for occupancy. Average rents will be lower than those of the slums which formerly occupied the site. The homes in the project consist of modern, sanitary 3-story apartments, 2-story apartments, and group houses.

Construction Bids

Bid Openings Definitely Scheduled

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Anniston (Ala.-4-1).....	166	12-18-39
Atlanta (Ga.-6-3).....	634	12-14-39
Atlanta (Ga.-6-5 Pt. I).....	552	12- 6-39
Atlantic City (N. J.-14-1).....	375	12-20-39
Baltimore (Md.-2-7).....	700	12- 5-39
Camden (N. J.-10-1).....	275	12- 8-39
Charleston (S. C.-1-4).....	128	12-11-39
Columbus (Ga.-4-2-A).....	104	12-12-39
Corpus Christi (Tex.-8-1-R Pt. II).....	24	12-13-39
Corpus Christi (Tex.-8-2-R).....	210	12-13-39
Corpus Christi (Tex.-8-3-R).....	100	12-13-39
Fall River (Mass.-6-1).....	354	12- 1-39
Great Falls (Mont.-2-1).....	156	12-15-39
Laredo (Tex.-11-1).....	272	12- 8-39
Meridian (Miss.-4-1).....	89	12- 6-39
New Haven (Conn.-4-1).....	460	12-19-39
Oakland (Calif.-3-2).....	154	12-13-39
Paducah (Ky.-6-1).....	125	11-28-39
Paducah (Ky.-6-2).....	75	11-28-39
Pensacola (Fla.-6-1).....	120	12-14-39
Pittsburgh (Pa.-1-3).....	1,758	12-22-39
San Francisco (Calif.-1-2-R).....	472	11-28-39
Savannah (Ga.-2-3).....	330	12- 8-39
Toledo (Ohio-6-2).....	112	11-28-39

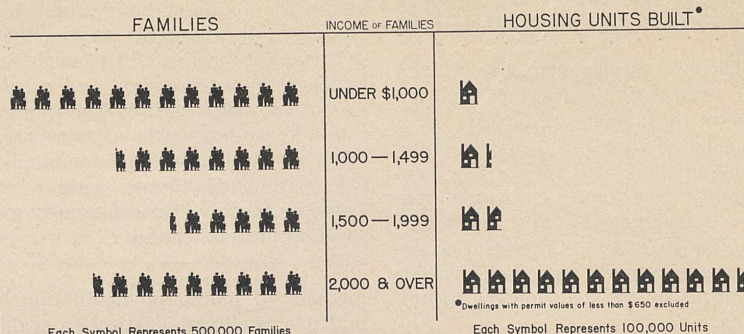
Bid Openings Tentatively Scheduled¹

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Allegheny Co. (Pa.-6-2).....	288	12-18-39
McKeesport (Pa.-5-1).....	206	12-19-39
Meridian (Miss.-4-2).....	119	12-19-39
Meridian (Miss.-4-4).....	89	12-19-39
New Orleans (La.-1-3).....	916	12-19-39
New Orleans (La.-1-5).....	903	12-19-39
Norwalk (Conn.-2-1).....	135	12-19-39
San Francisco (Calif.-1-3).....	750	12-19-39

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.

URBAN RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION FOR FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES

BY INCOME GROUPS



Each Symbol Represents 500,000 Families

Each Symbol Represents 100,000 Units

Sources: Figures on income, derived from "Consumer Incomes in the United States", 1935-1936, National Resources Committee. Figures on housing units built in all urban places estimated from building permit data published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and cover years 1929-1938.

Federal Works Agency
United States Housing Authority

Research & Statistics Division
Research Section — Oct. 21, 1939

Only 225,000 Units Built For Ten Million Families

The great discrepancy between potential housing demand and actual private housing production is strikingly illustrated by the above chart. According to National Resources Committee estimates, almost 60 percent of America's urban families had incomes of under \$1,500 a year in 1935-36. Only about 14 percent of all housing units built during the decade 1929 to 1938, however, were available to the some 10,000,000 families in this income group. At the other end of the scale, 74 percent of the new housing units were built for 26 percent of the Nation's urban fam-

ilies (those with incomes of \$2,000 or over). Almost half of all new construction (46 percent) was aimed at the 10 percent of all families with incomes of \$3,000 or over.

Construction Report Analysis

During the week ended November 17, two new projects were added to those under construction—216 units in Wilmington, N. C., and 1,531 units in New York City. The addition of the new projects brought the total number of dwellings now under construction to 51,053. The average over-all cost of new housing per unit showed a slight increase, but the average net construction cost per unit remained unchanged.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended November 17, 1939	Week ended November 10, 1939	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction.....	122	120	+1.67
Number of dwellings under construction.....	51,053	49,306	+3.54
Total estimated over-all cost ¹ of new housing.....	\$234,340,000	\$226,150,000	+3.62
Average over-all cost ¹ of new housing per unit.....	\$4,590	\$4,587	+0.07
Average net construction cost ² per unit.....	\$2,891	\$2,891	No change

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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