

FW3,7:1/32

PUBLIC HOUSING

Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING
SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Vol. 1, No. 32

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

March 19, 1940

South Carolina Farmers Confer on Rural Housing

Delegates Unanimously Approve Resolution to Obtain USHA Aid

Acting upon a resolution passed by the State Senate on February 21, J. Roy Jones, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries for the State of South Carolina, called a State-wide rural housing conference at Columbia recently. It was attended by farmers, businessmen, county agents, and others interested in the rural housing problem from 31 of the 46 counties in the State.

Purpose of the conference, as set forth in the Senate resolution, was to "bring full and complete information to the farmers of South Carolina" on USHA's rural housing program, and "to secure for them such benefits as they are entitled to" under legislation pending on the calendar of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States.

Speech by Governor Maybank

The audience heard South Carolina's Governor, Burnet R. Maybank, in an address of welcome, assert that the rural housing movement "is in the best interests of our people."

State Senator Edgar Brown said: "This meeting may well be the turning point in the economics of agriculture in South Carolina. Unless we can make the homes of rural people comfortable and attractive, we can't maintain economic strength."

A resolution to join with other southern States to obtain Federal assistance for a rural housing program was approved unanimously. The resolution included a clause memorializing the National Congress to pass pending housing legislation which contains provisions for a rural program.

Cornerstone Ceremonies At College Homes

Cornerstone ceremonies were held at College Homes, Negro housing project with 320 dwelling units, Sunday afternoon, March 3. Webster Porter, Chairman of the Negro Advisory Committee, presided. Addresses were made by Negro leaders and Chairman Olin Berry of the Knoxville Housing Authority, Inc. Documents and pictures deposited in the cornerstone included the U. S. Housing and Tennessee Housing Acts, copies of various contracts and resolutions, a history of the project, views of the site before construction, and progress pictures.

George B. Hamilton, Georgia State Treasurer, and Chairman of the Georgia State Housing Authority, explained the possibilities of the rural program, and discussed the initial steps in gearing local agencies to the national program. Rudolph Nedved, of USHA, explained the USHA rural housing program, and answered questions on policy and procedure.

Visitors From Other States

Among the important visitors were: L. J. Folse, Executive Director of the Mississippi State Planning Commission; W. H. Stauffer, Director of Public Welfare of Virginia; and H. K. Thatcher, Executive Director of the Agricultural and Industrial Commission of Arkansas.

Held at the Columbia Township Auditorium, February 29, the Conference was the second State-wide rural housing conference in the United States. The first was held recently at Macon, Ga. (see PUBLIC HOUSING, No. 30).

Charleston Opens 2nd Project—162 Dwellings

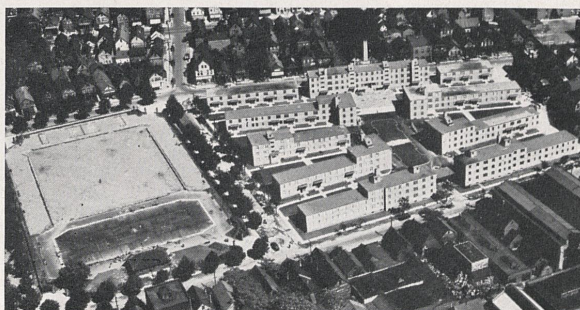
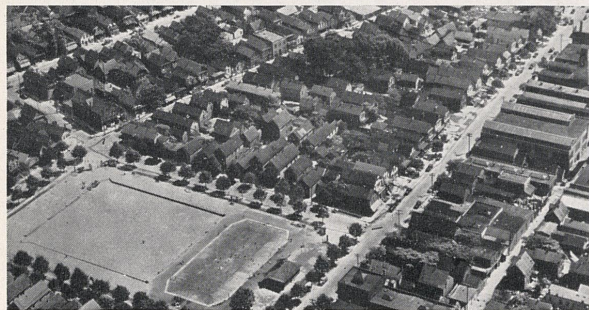
Anson Borough Homes to Rehouse Negro Families at \$7.55 Rents

Anson Borough Homes, Negro slum clearance project in Charleston, S. C., welcomed the first of its 162 low-income families early this month when Reuben Shears, his wife, and five children moved into their new home at 14-D Marsh Street. Nine other families followed the Shears into new homes.

The 10 families came from a nearby slum neighborhood, which, as soon as present structures are vacated, will be converted into a low-rent housing project to be known as Wraggs Borough Homes. They will pay an average shelter rent of \$7.55 per month. Their incomes average \$450 per year, only slightly higher than the \$400 which is the average annual income for all Negro families living in substandard housing in Charleston. The cost of water and electricity for lighting is \$1.47 per family.

Backyards For Recreation

All structures are one story high, with backyard courts where tenants may fraternize according to local custom without being subjected to the inconveniences of street and sidewalk traffic. Play space is reserved for small children, and each family has a small plot of grass. Simplicity of design throughout assures low maintenance costs and makes it possible for the tenants to assume a large share of the responsibility of management. The over-all cost of the project per dwelling is \$4,487. It is one of 5 projects in Charleston for which USHA funds totaling \$3,194,000 have been made available to the local authority. All five projects will occupy former slum sites.



Before . . . This Buffalo site was covered with old, substandard dwellings, set three deep on the lot; 84 such dwellings were eliminated by the project. **DEPOSITORY** Willert Park is an excellent example of the slum-site type of project, where dangerous, unsightly structures are replaced by a well-planned project.

Nursery Schools Win Praise From Mothers

Taking advantage of their geographic and social unity, and the cooperation of local agencies, 12 public housing projects have set up nursery schools, eight of which are conducted by WPA, and four by private agencies. The projects furnish only the space; supervisors and equipment come from local agencies and contributions.

In Cincinnati, two project nursery schools accommodate 50 children. Each has developed in a unique fashion. In one instance, the Mothers' Training Center at the University of Cincinnati supplemented WPA assistance with a loan to the nursery school. The loan was repaid by the mothers out of the proceeds from parties, suppers, and contributions. The Mothers' Club and interested parents cooperate with the University in arranging lectures and discussions on child care, health, nutrition, and behavior.

The mother of one child in the nursery school reports: "My little girl eats better than before; she takes her naps regularly; and she is developing more imagination and independence in her play. She always has interesting stories to tell about the activities of the nursery school. I don't know what we'd do without it."

At Lakeview Terrace, the Cleveland (Ohio) Child Health Association, with the cooperation of other local agencies, organized a nursery school as a teacher-demonstration center. The project supplies an attractive, well-designed nursery school unit and an outdoor playground. With funds from the Cleveland Foundation, the Child Health Association provides the staff, health, and nutrition services. The University Hospital provides the services of a pediatrician, and the Visiting Nurses Association, a nurse. Most of the equipment was made by the National Youth Administration, which also supplies assistants who receive training in nursery school education.

The school has become a city-wide demonstration center. Students from Western Reserve University School of Medicine attend biweekly clinics there, and student nurses from St. Luke's Hospital come in for observation purposes.



NYA assistant supervising the milk period in Lakeview Terrace nursery school.

Projects Stimulate Private Construction

Almost \$15,000,000 of new construction in the immediate neighborhood of selected public housing projects was reported in a recent survey. By no means a complete reflection of the new building stimulated by public housing activity, the survey nevertheless gives a clear indication that European experience along these lines will be duplicated in the United States.

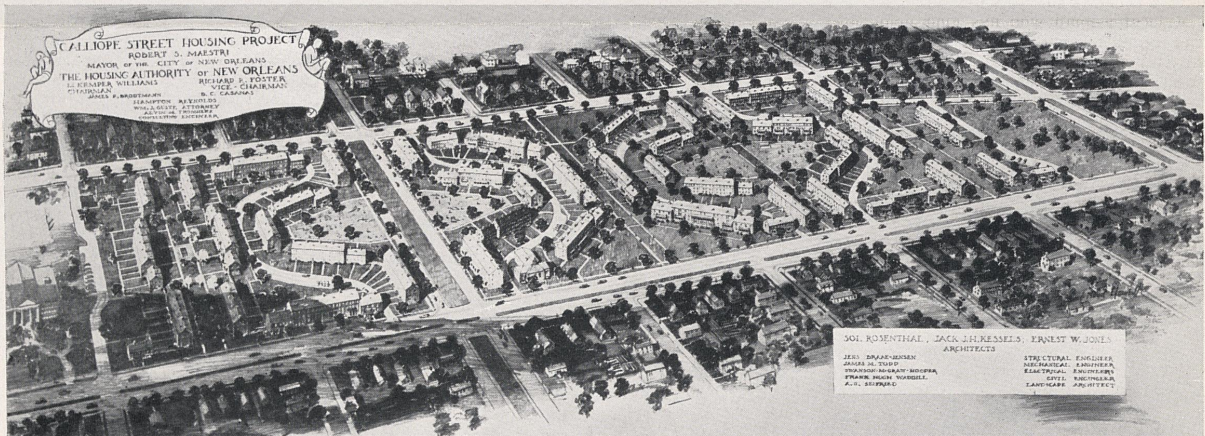
Only 35 USHA-aided projects and 43 PWA Housing Division projects were covered in the study. Especially in the case of USHA-aided projects, it is still too soon to estimate the full effect of public housing construction; but these early reports suggest definite encouragement of nearby building.

Roughly, 60 percent of the construction reported was private, the remainder being public works such as streets, sidewalks, schools, and playgrounds. Of the \$8,841,000 of private expenditure, \$1,039,000 went for repairs and improvements and the rest for new construction. One- and two-family dwellings made up the largest single item of new construction.

Summary of Private and Public Construction in the Immediate Neighborhood of 35 USHA-Aided Projects and 43 PWA Housing Division Projects

Type of construction	New construction		Repairs and improvements		Total construction	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
Private:						
Stores and shops.....	104	\$881,000	119	\$222,000	223	\$1,103,000
Gasoline stations.....	21	160,000	11	24,000	32	184,000
Markets.....	5	168,000	8	7,000	13	175,000
Theaters.....	9	689,000	4	20,000	13	709,000
Office buildings.....	9	38,000	16	17,000	25	55,000
Other commercial.....	93	756,000	42	187,000	135	943,000
Dwellings, one- and two-family.....	962	4,515,000	617	257,000	1,579	4,772,000
Dwellings, multiple-family.....	18	363,000	536	255,000	554	618,000
Churches.....	14	232,000	12	50,000	26	282,000
Total private.....	1,235	\$7,802,000	1,365	\$1,039,000	2,600	\$8,841,000
Public:						
Sidewalks, streets, schools, playgrounds, etc.....						\$5,934,000
Total private and public construction.....						\$14,775,000

Sources: Data taken from reports submitted by Construction Advisers, January 1940, and by Housing Managers, June 1939.



For many years the above site was a New Orleans city dump. The "Calliope Street" Project now being built here will rehouse 690 low-income families. Two

other projects are also under construction. The present New Orleans program will provide new homes at low rents for 20,000 people now forced to live in slums.

Informing Tenants on Home Care

By EMLY M. BULLITT, Supervisor of
Tenant Selection, City of Louisville
Municipal Housing Commission

The coming of spring with the opening of the new housing project provides indeed strong stimulation to slough off the old trappings and enter joyfully into the new life. Already furniture salesmen with an ear to the ground are, figuratively at least, in hot pursuit. It is, therefore, with the idea of helping prospective tenants conserve their limited budgets, while at the same time gratifying their need for more adequate furnishings, that a Home Demonstration display and service is being set up in connection with Clarksdale, Louisville's low-rent housing project for white tenants, familiarly known to old-timers as KY-1-1.

It is the Commission's policy to integrate its program with those of established local institutions and it therefore turned to the Home Economics Department of the University of Louisville for advice and guidance. While various conferences with the University were progressing, interest was manifested and assistance offered by the Housekeeping Aid Department of WPA; the Volunteers Bureau, which functions as a member of the Council of Social Agencies; and by private individuals with a good knowledge of home furnishing, especially as applied to a limited income, and with a genuine interest in helping people achieve happier surroundings. Representatives of these groups recently were brought together for the purpose of integrating their activities and making final plans.

As a result of this Conference it was arranged that the University, through a senior student in Home Economics—who is working for credit—will keep its hands on the controls by supplying color charts and pamphlets setting forth principles of good home furnishing. Members of the Volunteers Bureau, with Junior League and College Club backgrounds, including a basic knowledge of interior decoration, will man the exhibit and upon request will visit homes to give concrete suggestions.

A local woman who has long made low-cost furnishings her hobby and who has manifested a keen interest in the housing projects will supply samples of attractive and durable materials which may be had for small cost or for the asking, and she will devote herself especially to visits to individual homes where she will give advice on revamping old furniture by sanding, varnishing, or painting. Or she may go as far as to give advice about streamlining Victorian models, which, if not practicable at the present time, may be done later under skilled direction in the proposed arts and crafts room of Clarksdale. Chairs may be cut down, top-heavy bedsteads lowered, bunk beds built for the youngsters or contrived by setting one single bed atop another. She will give advice on refreshing and dyeing old fabrics, on the use of color and line, and on the opportunities for the nimble-fingered housewife to achieve charm and repose in her home. Here is a creative opportunity in which father, mother, and children can join

in preparation for the fuller life which awaits them in their new home.

The Department of Housekeeping Aid, Work Projects Administration, will have an exhibit of furniture made from barrels, boxes, and crates, in various stages of completion. A most comfortable wing chair can be made from a barrel sawed half way through the middle and well padded. A cradle may be made from a barrel sawed lengthwise. A little padding, some muslin and a bow, and presto! a couch for a prince! Kegs and cheese boxes may be developed into the most fascinating dressing table stools and footstools. Boxes of different sizes and shapes have many uses. Wave a wand over them and they become day beds, packing

boxes, book shelves, and what have you. There will be a display of good curtains made from inexpensive muslin, or from orange sacks, and the like. On every article will be pinned the cost of materials used in its construction.

This group will maintain its own personnel, who will give advice as to how the various articles can be made. Such furnishings may be made by the prospective tenant while he is waiting for admission. With these possibilities in view the contractors have been asked to set aside nail kegs and boxes, which abound in great numbers, for use in furniture making. The display rooms will be open to the public, and advice will be given to all who come.

RENT AND INCOME LIMITS FOR 35 PROJECTS

Rent and income limits have been approved by the Administrator for 35 USHA-aided projects providing homes for 18,020 families. Eighteen of these projects are completely or partially occupied. The following tabulation gives rent and income figures for each development. Asterisks indicate occupancy.

Four other projects—Queensbridge, New York City; DeSoto Bass Courts, Dayton, Ohio; Westlake Terrace, Youngstown, Ohio; and Major Bowman Terrace, Vincennes, Ind.—have been opened for occupancy, al-

though rent and income limits had not been finally approved as of March 9.

The lowest average shelter rent per dwelling unit so far announced is that of the Santa Rita project in Austin, Tex., where the figure will be \$6.59 per month. Three projects report estimated average annual family incomes of less than \$500.

It will be noted that rents and incomes are, in general, substantially lower in the South than in the North, a reflection of regional variations in construction and other costs.

Project	Number of dwelling units	Shelter rent per dwelling unit	Shelter rent per dwelling unit, plus utilities	Estimated average annual family income for entire project
FLORIDA:				
Daytona Beach, Pine Haven	167	\$7.36	\$11.24	\$470
Jacksonville, Brentwood Park*	230	10.58	13.37	750
Miami, Edison Courts*	345	11.90	15.95	750
St. Petersburg, Jordan Park	242	8.85	12.87	500
GEORGIA:				
Augusta:				
Olmsted Homes*	167	10.35	13.95	665
Sunset Homes*	108	8.52	11.52	498
INDIANA:				
Vincennes, Major Bowman Terrace*	83	8.85	13.22	592
KENTUCKY:				
Louisville, Clarksdale	786	13.00	18.30	750
MICHIGAN:				
Detroit, Brewster Addition*	240	13.83	20.54	887
NEW JERSEY:				
Elizabeth, Mravlag Manor	423	14.74	21.63	868
Newark, Pennington Court*	236	13.75	21.05	842
North Bergen, Meadow View Village	172	13.73	22.75	925
NEW YORK:				
Buffalo:				
Lakeview*	668	13.35	21.01	850
Wilbert Park*	173	12.91	19.88	750
Commodore Perry	772	13.22	20.51	825
New York:				
Queensbridge*	3,149	16.97	22.67	Unknown
Red Hook	2,545	16.64	22.64	1,060
Syracuse, Pioneer Homes*	678	13.72	21.61	834
Yonkers, Mulford	552	16.65	24.78	1,110
OHIO:				
Dayton, DeSoto Bass Courts*	200	12.72	19.82	797
Toledo, Charles F. Weiler Homes*	384	14.25	21.79	839
Youngstown, Westlake Terrace*	618	12.43	20.09	Unknown
PENNSYLVANIA:				
Allentown, Hanover Acres*	322	13.99	21.77	878
Pittsburgh:				
Terrace Village I				
Bedford Dwellings		15.61	20.15	778
Terrace Village II	3,073			
SOUTH CAROLINA:				
Charleston:				
Robert Mills Manor and ext.* (2 projects—only 1 in occupancy)	266	12.26	14.36	765
Anson Borough Homes*				
Wraggs Borough Homes	290	7.55	9.02	450
TENNESSEE:				
Knoxville:				
Western Heights	244	11.16	12.79	659
College Homes	320	10.01	11.56	631
Memphis, Lamar Terrace	478	14.46	17.36	636
TEXAS:				
Austin:				
Chalmers Street*	86	8.62	13.03	640
Rosewood	60	6.97	11.28	550
Santa Rita*	40	6.59	10.98	545
WEST VIRGINIA:				
Charleston:				
Washington Manor	304	10.50	15.51	680
Littlepage Terrace	170	15.00	20.36	1,000
Mount Hope, Stadium Terrace	70	11.88	15.00	759

* Preliminary.

Bridgeport Students Take Housing Course

Fifteen hundred eleventh-grade students in the high schools of Bridgeport, Conn., have recently received housing instruction, resulting from cooperation between school officials, the Bridgeport housing authority, and USHA through a plan which is believed to be the first of its kind in the United States.

With the approval of the Board of Education, an outline was arranged. As a first step, Julian Sohon, librarian of the Bridgeport public library, prepared a bibliography of more than 300 items. After the students had had 3 weeks of preparation, A. E. Casgrain and Miss Jean Coman, representatives of the USHA, and Mr. Howard Comstock, of the Bridgeport housing authority, lectured for 2 days each in the city's three high schools. They used photographs from the site of Yellow Mill Village, Bridgeport's first USHA-aided project, large posters, and USHA literature to supplement their talks. Each teacher was furnished with a copy of the new Foreign Policy Association book, "New Homes for Old," by William V. Reed and Elizabeth Ogg.

The lecturers devoted the first day to a summary of housing progress in European countries, traced briefly the efforts in the United States prior to the Wagner-Steagall Act, and outlined the procedure by which Bridgeport established a housing authority and applied for a USHA loan.

The second day was devoted to the activities of the local housing authority in Bridgeport as an example of hundreds of such authorities throughout the country.

Half of each period was given up to questions and answers, and the students showed a lively interest in the subject. Many mistaken notions about public housing were corrected in the course of these informal discussions.

Students in some of the classes made expeditions to the project site and to slum areas to take their own photographs, which will be included in the notebooks and scrap-books required as part of the course.

Superintendent Warren, the department heads, and the Housing Authority of the City of Bridgeport all expressed satisfaction with the results of the course. It is being considered as an annual feature of "Problems in American Democracy" for the high schools.

Tennessee Conference

A feature of the Tennessee Conference on Social Work, 26th annual session, held at Knoxville, was the sound picture "Housing in Our Time," shown by the Informational Service of Knoxville Housing Authority, Inc. After the picture, a public housing forum was held. Hundreds of pieces of literature on public housing, covering national and local phases, were distributed. Interest centered largely on the topic of rural housing. More than 500 social workers from all parts of the State attended.

Small Communities Form Bulk of Housing Program

More than four-fifths of the 179 communities participating in the USHA-aided program have populations of 250,000 or less.

Local housing authorities in 145 such communities have received USHA commitments totaling \$231,432,000.

Housing projects are under way or completed in 43 communities with populations of less than 25,000; 25 have less than 15,000 and several are under 5,000.

A break-down of USHA loans and earmarkings shows:

Population	Number of communities	Percent of total number
Less than 25,000.....	43	24
Between 25,000 and 50,000.....	39	22
Between 50,000 and 100,000.....	30	17
Between 100,000 and 250,000.....	33	18
More than 250,000.....	34	19
Total.....	179	100

Projects range from Red Hook Houses and Queensbridge Houses in New York City, with 2,545 and 3,149 homes, respectively, to the 70-home project now nearing completion in the little coal-mining town of Mount Hope, W. Va., which has a population of about 2,800.

Among the smaller communities in which USHA-aided slum clearance and low-rent public housing programs are under way also are: Pelly, Tex., with a population of about 3,500; Beverly, N. J., approximately 3,000; Marietta, Ga., about 8,000; Bristol, Va., around 9,000; and Fort Lauderdale and Sarasota, Fla., each with 1930 U. S. Census populations under 9,000.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended March 8, 1940	Week ended March 1, 1940	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction.....	184	184	No change
Number of dwellings under construction.....	71,699	71,699	No change
Total estimated over-all cost ¹ of new housing.....	\$320,179,000	\$320,179,000	No change
Average over-all cost ¹ of new housing per unit.....	\$4,466	\$4,466	No change
Average net construction cost ² per unit.....	\$2,803	\$2,803	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.

Publication is approved by the Director, Bureau of the Budget, as required by rule 42 of the Joint Committee on Printing. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. Subscription price \$1 domestic, foreign \$1.80 per year. Single copies, 5 cents. Material for PUBLIC HOUSING should be addressed to Informational Service Division, U. S. Housing Authority, Washington, D. C.

Housing Acts Upheld by Nebraska Court

The Nebraska State Supreme Court upheld the State's housing acts of 1935 and 1937 recently when Omaha property owners demanded a declaratory judgment on the validity of the two acts.

The Court's opinion, handed down by Justice Carter, held that the elimination of unsafe and dilapidated tenements and their replacement with safe, sanitary, low-rent dwellings, is a legitimate subject for the exercise of the police powers of the State, "to protect the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the people."

The Nebraska housing laws do not violate the "due process" clauses of either the State or Federal constitutions, Justice Carter's opinion declared. Neither do they violate those provisions prohibiting taking or damaging private property for public use without compensation.

The claim of the property owners that the acts grant special privileges was refuted in the opinion, which held:

"The acts do not grant special privileges to those benefited, for the reason that they involve a public purpose from which the entire community benefits."

Schedule of Bid Opening Dates¹

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Atlanta (Ga.-6-4).....	598	4- 9-40
Baltimore (Md.-2-2).....	434	3-27-40
Baltimore (Md.-2-3).....	658	4-15-40
Baltimore (Md.-2-5).....	397	4-15-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3).....	614	4- 5-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3-A).....	292	4- 5-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-4).....	432	4-20-40
Brunswick (Ga.-9-1).....	128	4-20-40
Brunswick (Ga.-9-2).....	144	4-20-40
Camden (N. J.-10-1).....	275	3-25-40
Charlotte (N. C.-3-1-A).....	108	3-20-40
Cincinnati (Ohio-4-1).....	750	4-15-40
Dayton (Ohio-5-1-R).....	604	4-15-40
Denver (Colo.-1-2).....	348	4-15-40
Detroit (Mich.-1-2).....	180	4-18-40
Frederick (Md.-3-2).....	50	4- 3-40
Helena (Mont.-4-1).....	72	4-19-40
Houston (Tex.-5-2).....	328	4-11-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-1).....	86	3-23-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-2).....	206	3-23-40
Martinsburg (W. Va.-6-1, Pt. I).....	60	4-15-40
Martinsburg (W. Va.-6-1, Pt. II).....	40	4-15-40
McComb (Miss.-3-2).....	90	4-20-40
Nashville (Tenn.-5-1).....	350	4-19-40
New Bedford (Mass.-7-1).....	200	3-26-40
Phoenix (Ariz.-1-3).....	135	4- 1-40
Ponce (P. R.-1-4).....	120	3-27-40
Portsmouth (Ohio-10-1).....	268	4-22-40
Washington (D. C.-1-4).....	310	4-23-40

¹ There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening.