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PUBLIC HOUSING



Federal Works Agency - John M. Carmody, Administrator Vol. 2, No. 10 - September 3, 1940 U. S. Housing Authority - Nathan Straus, Administrator

Fairview Homes Opens, First USHA Project In Charlotte, N. C.

Fairview Homes, low-rent housing project of the Charlotte, N. C., housing authority, was formally dedicated in ceremonies observed Monday afternoon, August 19, at which J. M. Broughton of Raleigh, Democratic nominee for governor of North Carolina, was the principal speaker. Mayor Ben E. Douglas acted as master of ceremonies.

In his address Mr. Broughton paid high tribute to the public housing movement in the United States. He emphasized again and again the importance of the USHA program in building good American citizens at a period in world events when good citizens are most essential. He stressed the impossibility of developing good citizenship in surroundings which breed disease, crime, and delinquency.

Also making brief talks on the program were John P. Broome of Washington, Director of Region IV of the United States Housing Authority, and Langdon Post, former New York City tenement house commissioner and now with USHA.

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Broome said, "Charlotte is still in the forefront of American development, for today we are witnessing the beginning of another chapter in its history. The opening of this project may well be said to mark a new phase in the service which a government can render its people. Charlotte's population has quadrupled since the turn of the century, but the building of homes in that time has not kept pace with the needs of the people. During the 9 years since 1930, 4,500 families are estimated to have been added to the

Georgia Family Occupies First USHA Low-Rent Rural Dwelling

In the first half of 1940 more than 240,000 new dwelling units having a permit valuation of approximately \$825,000,000 were provided in the nonfarm areas of the United States, according to a recent release of the U. S. Department of Labor. Compared with the first half of 1939, this represents an 8-percent increase in the number of dwelling units provided.

USHA-aided projects accounted for 21,486, or about 9 percent, of all non-farm dwelling units provided in the first 6 months of 1940.

city's population, while the number of dwelling units constructed by private builders fell 1,806 short of that number. Moreover, little of this new construction provided housing within the reach of low-income families."

Mr. Post said that the opening of Fairview Homes marked the beginning of a new way of life for all those families who are living there now and will live there in the future. T. S. Johnson of Raleigh, President of the North Carolina Council of Housing Authorities, spoke briefly. The entire proceedings were broadcast over Radio Station WSOC of Charlotte.

Members of the Charlotte housing authority are Edwin L. Jones, chairman; W. Frank Dowd, Jr., vice-chairman; Earle J. Gluck, L. R. McEliece, and John Tillett. Harold J. Dillehay is executive director.

The Fairview Homes project will contain dwelling units for 452 Negro families.

Into the first farmhouse to be constructed under USHA's new rural housing program moved Farmer Vernon Ellis, his wife May, and their 2-year-old son, Vernon, Jr., late last week.

The Ellises of Thomas County, Ga., who, in the 4 years of their married life, have braved hard times in a 40-year-old pine shack with inch-wide cracks in the floors, consider themselves very fortunate indeed to be living in the neat, substantial USHA home to which carpenters have just given the finishing touches. "Just think," said Mrs. Ellis one day last week, "screens and a covered well. I guess we're the luckiest folks in the world."

One important thing about the new house, according to May, will be warmth in the winter. "One night last winter, Vernon and I were asleep in there," she said, waving into the rude bedroom of the old house where the sun shone in through cracks in the wall boards. "I woke up so cold that I just had to wake Vernon.

"Get up and let down the windows—the wind is about to blow the covers off us," I told him. He got up in the dark and fumbled around for a minute and said, 'May, the windows is down. That wind's coming through the holes in the floor.'"

The Ellises were given a unique housewarming with delegates from all the 125 rural housing authorities in the State of Georgia present, along with the Chairman of the State Housing Board and Treasurer of the State of Georgia George Hamilton, USHA officials, representatives from the

(Continued on page 4)



For 4 years the Ellis family (signing deed, center) lived in the dismal shack above. Then they heard about USHA's rural housing program.



Now they live in a sturdy, comfortable home like the model below. Rent: One acre of ground plus \$50 a year.



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FROM THE
Administrator

Greetings: It has been suggested by several local authorities that a weekly message from the Administrator would be of interest. Conducting a column is new to me, but I will try it. So—

Greetings and Salutations: This is written on the plane returning from Los Angeles. I have spent 4 days in California, conferring with the housing authorities of San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, Los Angeles City, and Los Angeles County. I met with public officials, groups of businessmen, labor leaders, social workers. I inspected several projects under construction and one fine project, opened for tenancy a few weeks ago and now one-hundred-percent occupied—Holly Courts in San Francisco.

The news from the coast is good news. Two years ago, when I last visited California, the USHA program was little understood.

Today, there is an enthusiastic and widespread endorsement of the program. Opposition has practically vanished. The President of the Chamber of Commerce of the largest city summed it up when he said: "At first we were suspicious. Today, fine new homes in place of slums, low construction costs, businesslike administration of the housing program—these have converted the Chamber from skepticism to active support."

My congratulations to the local housing authorities and citizens' housing groups for this change in public opinion.

Nathan Shans

Nursery School Begun as Experiment Proves Boon to Families at Lakeview

Unlike the old lady who lived in the shoe, the management at Lakeview Terrace, 620-family low-rent housing community in Cleveland, Ohio, knew just what to do for its 260 youngsters under school age, and did it—encouraged a local agency to establish a nursery school.

Started in 1938 as an "experiment," the school is now a going concern which has proved its usefulness to the parents and children at the project and to the city of Cleveland as well. It is one of at least 24 nursery schools now operating in low-rent housing projects throughout the country.

The school was established as a demonstration center through a grant of \$1,380 from the Cleveland Foundation. It is operated by the Cleveland Child Health Association and receives practical assistance from the National Youth Administration, Work Projects Administration, the Cleveland housing authority, and Music School Settlement. The chief of the staff was formerly in charge of Junior House Nursery School of Western Reserve University.

Space was provided by the project management; most of the equipment and some of the assistants are supplied by the National Youth Administration; a piano, victrola, scales, and other equipment were donated; toys were given by a WPA toy shop; and the staff is provided by the Cleveland Child Health Association. Members of the staff include a pediatrician from Western Reserve University Hospital.

The school has two sessions a day—one in the morning, the second in the afternoon. Upon being taken into the school, each child is given a thorough physical examination by the pediatrician.

Each day the child brings a note from home with information as to any irregularities in his eating, sleeping, emotional behavior, etc. The note is presented to the nurse who gives him his daily check-up before sending him in to play with the other children. Parents come with or call for their children at least twice weekly. In this way, nurse, teacher, and parent have

opportunity for frequent informal talks about the child's habits and health.

After medical inspection by the nurse, each child has cod-liver oil and fruit juice. Then he is sent outside to play—as much time is spent out of doors as possible. About the middle of the session, the children go into the nursery for washing, toilet, and a glass of milk. Some rest for a while, the others play games, listen to music, stories, or nature experiences. The afternoon schedule is, with slight variations, the same.

Meetings are held frequently for parents. There talks are given by experts on child care, and the administration of the nursery (funds, fees, equipment, etc.) is discussed. Parents attend the meetings religiously. To them the nursery school means healthier, brighter children, a minimum of doctor bills, and (especially to mothers) more time to do the thousand and one things that are required in running a home.

The walls of the nursery are decorated with Earl J. Neff's murals depicting well-known characters in children's literature. One, showing a sly wolf, an Indian, and a very unfortunate bear, tells the story of how the bear lost his tail. Around the top of the room is a frieze 82 feet long, showing the Brementown Musicians, Cinderella, Peter Rabbit, Big Billy Goat Gruff, Trolls, and Elves.

Direct benefits of the 24 nursery schools now operating are not always confined to project residents. Many of the schools take a large number of children from the surrounding neighborhood—children who habitually play on the project playgrounds. This is especially true at Laurel Homes in Cincinnati where, during a recent 3-month period, 2,244 nonresident children, in addition to 6,600 from the project, attended nursery sessions.

During the same period, 56,160 children of families in the 24 projects which have nursery schools were receiving the benefits of trained supervision. These nursery schools were attended by an additional 5,658 nonresident children.

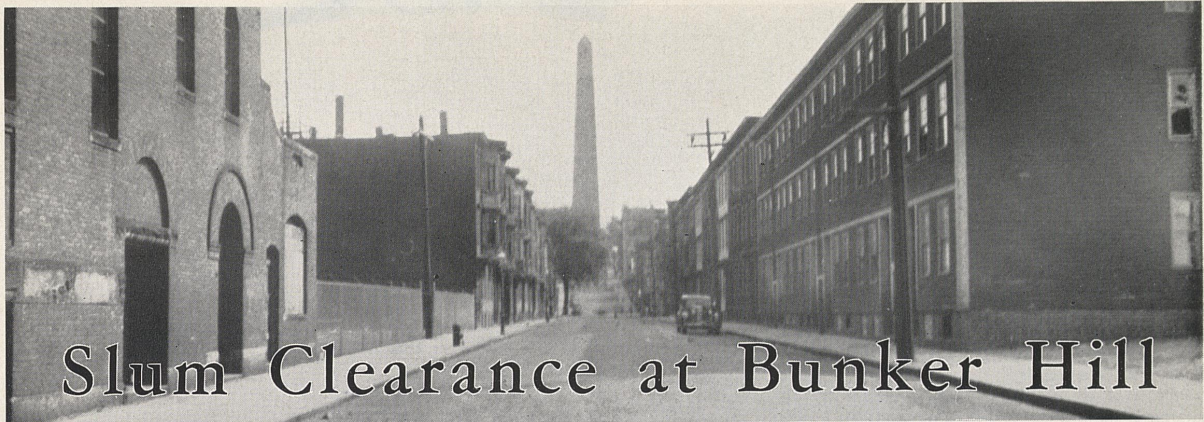


A littered alley is a bad place for children to learn the ABC's of citizenship.



Nursery schools and playground supervision on USHA projects constitute a valuable front line of defense.

9/25/40



Slum Clearance at Bunker Hill

SCHEDULED to open in September, Charlestown, Boston's largest low-rent housing community, is located in the shadow of historic Bunker Hill Monument. On this exact spot where the Minute Men of '75 heroically defended American independence and the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," stands the Charlestown community, dedicated to the same democratic ideals.

Into this planned neighborhood, replacing more than 1,100 neglected, insanitary, tenement firetraps, soon will move 1,089 of Boston's low-income families. Their new homes will have from 3 to 6 rooms. They will pay from \$14 to \$25 a month for rent, including the cost of heat, light, water, refrigeration, and cooking fuel. Among the outstanding community facilities in the neighborhood available to tenants are a municipal gymnasium, a public playground and ball park, a community health center, and one of the largest boys' clubs in America.

Charlestown is one of four USHA-aided projects now nearing completion in Boston. It is located in one of the city's most crowded and substandard areas which has long been considered a fire hazard. According to the Boston Real Property Inventory of 1934, 79 percent of all the buildings in Charlestown were wooden; 31 percent of the structures were more than 80 years old; and 25 percent were in need of structural repair or unfit for occupancy. Fifty-three

Boston Housing Project at Historic Bunker Hill is Symbol of Liberty

percent of the dwellings had no private bathing facilities, 77 percent, no central heating, and 27 percent, no indoor toilet. The Charlestown district had the highest infant mortality rate of the city, with 86 deaths per 1,000 births, as against 60 for Boston as a whole in the 5-year period, 1930-34.

In addition to Charlestown, the Boston Housing Authority has three other projects underway: South Boston, Mission Hill, and Lenox Street. The four developments will provide 3,291 homes for low-income families.

Boston's public housing program was begun before USHA was created—when Emergency Relief Administration funds were set aside for the development of Old Harbor Village by the PWA Housing Division. One of the largest of the PWA Housing Division projects, Old Harbor Village, provides homes for 1,016 families. It is managed by the Boston Housing Authority under lease agreement with USHA.

Boston is a paradoxical city, comments the Massachusetts Guide. It is a city of wide streets, spreading elms, fine public buildings, and magnificent parks. But it is also a city "where acres of ugly wooden

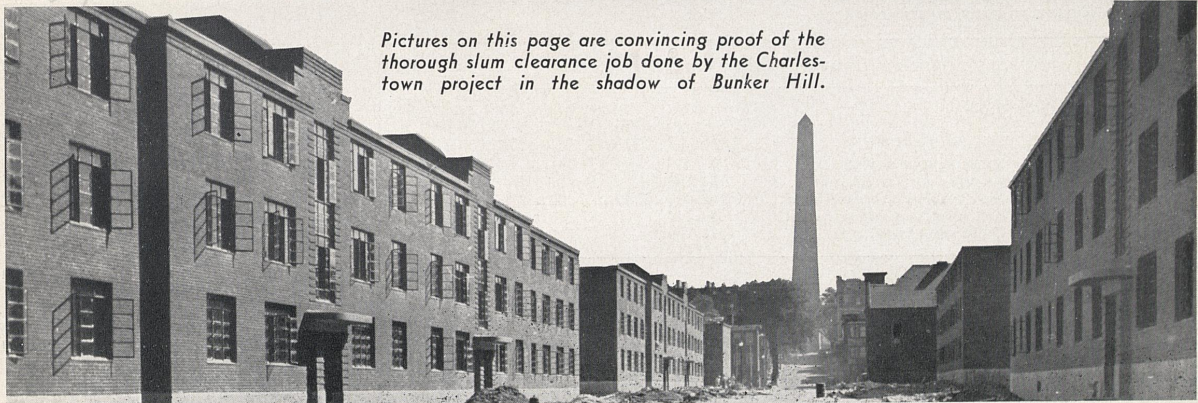
tenement houses line the drab streets; where \$10 a month rents a three-room flat in a wooden fire trap without heat, lighting, running water, or indoor toilet; and where, along Mile End Road, on the dump, are the melancholy shacks of men who can pay no rent at all."

The Charlestown area was settled in the late 1620's by John Winthrop with a party of some 800 persons. Indians and brackish water soon discouraged the party, and at the invitation of William Blackstone, they moved to his estate on the western slope of what is now Beacon Hill.

Thus Charlestown has had 300 years to develop into one of the city's worst slum sections. Since the arrival of the first Englishmen and their families, who called their settlement "tri-mountain," Boston has been expanding—thrusting long tentacles of structures out in every direction. But until the last few years, there has not been a sufficiently articulated need to inspire an effective slum rehabilitation program.

In the first place, there were no homes, no place for their inhabitants if slums were demolished. In the second place, only a few people had time to concern themselves with slum clearance. Like most American cities, Boston was so busy growing it had no time to regulate its growth.

Things are different now. The local housing authority is pushing its program vigorously forward. It has the backing of civic groups and local institutions.



Pictures on this page are convincing proof of the thorough slum clearance job done by the Charlestown project in the shadow of Bunker Hill.

Georgia Family is First to Live in USHA Farm Dwelling

(Continued from page 1)

Department of Agriculture, and other State and local notables. Speakers stressed the fact that to the hundreds of Georgia farmers who have seen years so lean that their net cash income was often less than \$5, the new Ellis home represents tangible evidence that their Government means to help them escape from such housing conditions as may have inspired "Tobacco Road."

In their old home, the Ellises had no bathing facilities. Their only source of water for household use was a crumbling well in the back yard. Yet, despite these primitive conditions, local officials pointed out that the Ellis family was enjoying much better living conditions than many of their neighbors.

The new Ellis home is built on an acre plot on the Ellis farm on "Pummy Road" about 14 miles northeast of Thomasville. It is a modest structure of three bedrooms, a living room with an open fireplace, a kitchen, and dining space. Sanitary facilities include a pump, a sealed well, and a hygienically located pit privy. For these conveniences Mr. Ellis will pay a cash rent of about \$50 a year. He will do all the ordinary maintenance and repair work himself.

The Ellis home, constructed by Price E. Jinright, Thomasville contractor, will finally cost about \$1,324. This figure includes cost of the structure, electric wiring, kitchen sink, and sanitary outside privy. The plot of ground upon which the house will stand was donated to the Thomas County Housing Authority by Mr. Ellis.

For some time to come the Ellis home will serve as a demonstration building for low-income farm families who have made application to the Thomas County Housing Authority for similar homes. The authority, flooded with such applications, will advertise for construction bids for 50 similar farmhouses within a very short time, and for another 50 soon thereafter. They will be located on acre sites on farms which the Department of Agriculture has found to be economically stable and to offer the possibility of a fair return sufficient to maintain the family and defray the rent charges. Sites will be distributed as equally as possible over Thomas County and selected so

S. Carolina Newspaper Urges Defense Project President Approves Loans To 20 Local Authorities

Complimenting the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, S. C., for doing "an intricate job admirably," *The State*, a Columbia newspaper, recommended on July 27 that an immediate request be made to Washington for another large-scale, low-cost housing project in Columbia. The quotation from *The State* follows:

"In view of the imperative new demands, arising out of the large and enlarging use by the Army of Camp Jackson a request should be made now to Washington for another large-scale, low-cost housing project in Columbia. The needs of eligible civilian families for such accommodations are such that more than a thousand applications had been filed for the 236 apartments in Gonzales Gardens, prior to the diversion of 60 of these to the Army.

"If and when Camp Jackson shall be made a permanently garrisoned post, as it should be, quarters on the reservation will eventually be built for married noncommissioned officers. But that's for the not-too-near future; the present policy is to build only temporary-type structures at Camp Jackson, and these do not include quarters for married noncommissioned officers. If an additional low-cost housing project in Columbia were authorized, it might be found practicable to make further accommodations available to the Army, without depriving too many civilian applicants."

as to take advantage of existing improvements, such as good roads, power lines, sanitary ditches, and a good water supply.

While the County authority's \$357,000 loan contract was for an estimated 200 dwellings, indications now are that it will be able to provide about 250 dwellings with the same outlay of money. This is due to the fact that first estimates of the net construction cost of a home such as was built for the Ellis family would be \$1,460, as against the \$1,324 actually bid. The Ellis home is the largest of three types planned in the Thomas County program. The other two types are a small and a medium-sized home for adjustment to the size of the family. The construction cost of the three types is estimated to average only \$1,100.

The number of public housing projects under USHA loan contract reached 450 last week, when President Roosevelt approved loans totaling \$42,646,000 to 20 local housing authorities.

USHA loan contracts now total \$643,978,-483 to 184 public housing agencies throughout the country.

Last week's loans are to defray 90 percent of the estimated cost of 44 low-rent housing and slum clearance projects. Of this number, 22 projects are new; 22 were sanctioned in previous loan contracts which have been reapproved in consolidated form.

Following is a list of cities, local authority loans, and number of units to be built:

City	Loan Contract	Number of Units
Birmingham, Ala.....	\$9,705,000	2,246
San Francisco, Calif.....	620,000	150
Daytona Beach, Fla.....	194,000	65
Orlando, Fla.....	756,000	254
Columbus, Ga.....	3,191,000	898
Macon, Ga.....	2,560,000	690
Decatur, Ill.....	1,663,000	440
Henry County, Ill.....	467,000	128
Madisonville, Ky.....	321,000	95
Baltimore, Md.....	1,294,000	286
Burlington, N. J.....	543,000	140
High Point, N. C.....	1,528,000	450
Wilmington, N. C.....	1,737,000	464
Beaver County, Pa.....	805,000	192
Erie, Pa.....	895,000	226
Puerto Rico Housing Authority.....	670,000	381
Pawtucket, R. I.....	1,275,000	310
Charleston, S. C.....	3,194,000	728
Memphis, Tenn.....	8,073,000	1,878
Nashville, Tenn.....	3,155,000	866

Schedule of Bid Opening Dates¹

Project location, number, and name (when available)	Number of units	Date of opening
Hopewell (Va.-5-1).....	96	9-16-40
Jersey City (N. J.-9-2).....	450	9-16-40
Lawrence (Mass.-10-1).....	291	9-17-40
Marietta (Ga.-10-1):		
Clay Homes.....	108	9-10-40
Marietta (Ga.-10-2):		
Fort Hill Homes.....	120	9-10-40
New Orleans (La.-1-1, Pt. II):		
St. Thomas Street.....	36	9-11-40
Newport News (Va.-3-1):		
Harbor Homes.....	252	9-5-40
Newport News (Va.-3-2, Defense).....	350	9-12-40
Pelly (Tex.-12-1).....	30	9-12-40
Pelly (Tex.-12-2).....	30	9-12-40
Philadelphia (Pa.-2-3).....	1,250	9-17-40
Washington (D. C.-1-7):		
Navy Yard.....	314	9-10-40

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

² Information not definite.

Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended August 23, 1940	Week ended August 16, 1940	Week ended August 25, 1939
Number of projects under construction ¹	255	246	89
Number of dwellings under construction ¹	94,433	90,866	38,583
Total estimated over-all cost ² of new housing.....	\$410,444,000	\$395,275,000	\$179,542,000
Average over-all cost ² of new housing per unit.....	\$4,346	\$4,350	\$4,653
Average net construction cost ³ per unit.....	\$2,729	\$2,730	\$2,916

¹ Includes projects which have been completed.

² 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.

³ The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.

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