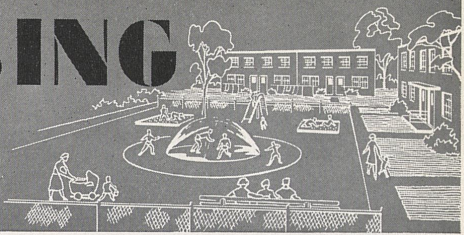


FW3.7:1/4A

# PUBLIC HOUSING

## Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Federal Works Agency - John M. Carmody, Administrator

Vol. 1, No. 44 - June 11, 1940

U. S. Housing Authority - Nathan Straus, Administrator

This week  
**10,506 families**  
were living in  
**USHA Homes**

## 3 New Florida Housing Projects Put State In Leading Position

### Gov. Graves Appointed Montgomery Chairman

Former Governor Bibb Graves of Alabama was recently named Chairman of The Housing Authority of the City of Montgomery to succeed John S. Hodgson.

Making the announcement, Montgomery's Mayor Gunter said: "Colonel Graves has always been vitally interested in housing, and it was during his administration, and largely due to his enthusiastic support, that the State Housing Act was passed."

Other members of the Montgomery authority are L. D. Rouse, Vice-Chairman, Charles W. Moulthrop, Paul B. Fuller, and Howard E. Pill (appointed with Colonel Graves). Charles P. Rogers is the Executive Director.

The Montgomery authority is about to begin the construction of its first USHA-aided project. Later in the summer work will begin on an addition to Riverside Heights.

With USHA loans and earmarkings for the construction of public housing projects in Florida totaling \$18,663,000, Florida is one of the leading States in the Nation's crusade against slums and bad housing.

Almost 1,300 low-income families in five Florida cities will have moved from sub-standard houses into new USHA-aided homes by the first of July. With the 458 families now living in two PWA Housing Division projects, the total number of families in Government-aided homes in Florida will be about 1,758.

Florida cities are a curious blend of the oldest and the newest in the country. St. Augustine, on the northeast coast, was founded in 1564, 42 years before the English colony at Jamestown. Miami, near the southern extremity of the State, is one of the newest of America's large metropolitan centers. Thus the problems of rebuilding the old and planning carefully for the new must be solved simultaneously by Florida's planners and builders.

As early as 1934 Miami received Federal assistance through the PWA Housing Division in the construction of a low-rent housing project now known as Liberty Square. A short time later funds were set aside for the construction of a similar project (Dur-

keeville) in Jacksonville. Since that time public housing has come to be considered a permanent and necessary feature of the municipal program in both cities.

The Florida Housing Authorities Law was approved June 1, 1937, 5 months before the United States Housing Authority came into existence. It provides for tax exemption of bonds and property of the local housing authorities, and gives them the right to exercise the power of eminent domain in acquiring property for low-rent housing projects.

When the USHA program was started, Florida cities were among the first to apply for aid. The two PWA Housing Division projects had demonstrated the desirability of public housing programs, and a forward-looking State legislature had opened the way for immediate action.

Brentwood Park in Jacksonville, the first USHA-aided project to be completed in Florida, was opened July 1, 1939. It was followed by the opening of Edison Courts in Miami, December 15, 1939, and Jordan Park in St. Petersburg, April 12, 1940.

The three latest Florida projects to open—Pine Haven in Daytona Beach (opened May 1), Liberty Square Addition in Miami

(Continued on next page)



The intersection of Spruce and Chestnut Streets, Tampa, Fla., in July 1938.

Chestnut Street in April 1940. North Boulevard Homes project nears completion.

UK LIBRARIES



(scheduled to open in June), and Dunbar Village in West Palm Beach (also scheduled to open in June)—will provide homes for 167, 352, and 246 low-income families, respectively.

The following projects are scheduled to open early in July: North Boulevard Homes in Tampa (see pictures), Fla-10-1 in Fort Lauderdale, Attucks Court in Pensacola, and a second addition to Liberty Square in Miami.

At present, 11 Florida cities—Daytona Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Key West, Miami, Orlando, Pensacola, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Tampa, and West Palm Beach—have housing programs calling for the construction of 21 projects.

The estimated over-all cost of new housing per dwelling unit of the three projects opened since May 1 is remarkably low—\$2,941 in Daytona Beach, \$2,779 in Miami, and \$3,343 in West Palm Beach. This is due in large part to the low land costs. In Daytona Beach, West Palm Beach, and Miami, where the projects are constructed on vacant land, the average gross cost of land per dwelling is only \$33, \$90, and \$11, respectively.

In all three projects rentals are lower than the average rental for substandard housing throughout the city, and estimated average tenant incomes are between \$470 and \$603.

The 167 families at Pine Haven live in one-story row houses. They pay an average of \$7.36 per month for shelter in their new homes, whereas the average family in a *substandard* house in Daytona Beach pays \$8.08. The total monthly cost of shelter rent plus utilities (water, hot water, gas for cooking, and electricity for lighting and refrigeration) averages \$11.24. The estimated average income of project families is \$470 a year.

At Liberty Square Addition, the dwellings are one- and two-story row houses. The average shelter rental is \$8.05 per month. This is \$5.95 under the \$14 (for Negroes) average shelter rental for *substandard* housing in Miami. Shelter rent plus water, hot water, gas for cooking, and electricity for lighting and refrigeration costs tenants an average of \$11.63 a month.

Tenants at Dunbar Village have an estimated average income of \$603 a year and pay shelter rents averaging \$8.03 a month. The average rent paid in West Palm Beach for *substandard* housing is \$10 (for Negroes) a month. The cost of water, hot water, gas for cooking, and electricity for lighting and refrigeration added to the \$8.03 shelter rent is \$12.50 a month. The homes are in one- and two-story row houses and one-story twin houses.

Following is a tabulation of rents, incomes, and costs on the three new Florida projects:

| Project                                   | Opening date | Number of units | Average estimated over-all cost of new housing per dwelling | Average estimated net construction cost per dwelling | Average estimated land cost per dwelling | Average monthly shelter rent—substandard housing in city | Average monthly shelter rent—project | Average monthly shelter rent plus utilities—project | Average annual income—project tenants |
|---|--------------|-----------------|---|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Daytona Beach:<br>Pine Haven.....         | 5-1          | 167             | \$2,941   | \$1,887  | \$33                                     | \$8.08   | \$7.36                               | \$11.24   | \$470                                 |
| Miami:<br>Liberty Square<br>Addition..... | 6-1          | 352             | 2,779   | 1,977  | 11                                       | 14.00  | 8.05                                 | 11.63   | -----                                 |
| West Palm Beach:<br>Dunbar Village.       | 6-1          | 246             | 3,343   | 2,125  | 90                                       | 10.00  | 8.03                                 | 12.50   | 603                                   |

## Housing in Scandinavia—A Review

*Housing in Scandinavia*, by John Graham, Jr., University of North Carolina Press. 216 pp. \$2.50. Index and illustrations.

The American public has learned more about Scandinavia in recent months, as a result of war publicity, than it perhaps ever knew before. Certainly one result of such publicity has been to arouse American admiration for the splendid record of social progress achieved by these small northern countries. As Mr. Graham points out in his preface, "In the journey toward a dynamic and mature democracy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland have already entered the social stage. Here we see vigorous efforts being made to achieve a more satisfying life for all groups of society." Although the author's primary concern is with Scandinavian housing, he omits no opportunity to relate the housing program to the whole background of Scandinavian accomplishment, frequently underlining his conviction that "In both rural and urban areas the recurring theme running through social undertakings, including housing, is *help to self-help*."

Mr. Graham's first chapter is entitled "Land For Housing," and it is the land problem which really dominates the volume. Substantial experience in the public housing field in this country (as architect, consultant, and lecturer) had prepared Mr. Graham to give sympathetic reception to and strong endorsement of the land policies which he found being successfully carried out in all the Scandinavian countries.

Early in the book we are given a careful analysis of the "social value" of land (keystone in the Scandinavian housing structure). "... the proper mission of land is to function as a catalytic agent, assisting capital to develop resources and ministering to individual and community needs. . . . Therefore, in a social conception of land value, what the individual owns is not the actual land but the privilege of putting that land to its best use as determined by society."

Proceeding on such a definition, the principal Scandinavian cities (such as Copenhagen, Helsinki, and Stockholm) have for many years been carrying on an extensive land acquisition policy, in order "to secure sites for housing purposes and to influence the price of land so that unbridled speculation will be prevented." Only where municipalities have followed a far-sighted land acquisition policy can city plans evolve from blueprint to reality, Mr. Graham believes. A map of Stockholm, showing large areas of adjacent land in municipal ownership,

helps to explain Swedish success with city and regional planning during a period when most American city plans have gathered dust in the back rooms of city halls. "Land exploitation in the United States has taken on the characteristics of a social menace and now threatens the life line of construction in low-cost housing," Mr. Graham asserts. "In Scandinavia an intelligent answer to the land question has been found."

Beginning, then, with a sound land policy, the Scandinavians have gone on to provide homes for all classes of the people by an ingenious combination of methods. One chapter of Mr. Graham's book discusses municipal or subsidized housing; another describes the operation of cooperative housing societies; while a third treats of the rural program, with special emphasis on colonization. Subsidized housing has been carried on in every Scandinavian country for many years, thoroughly and thoughtfully. Cooperative housing "in its rent level one step above the subsidized municipal housing fills the large gap which lies between the municipal housing and the housing produced by private initiative."

An interesting feature of the book is a detailed description of the erection of a "self-help" house near Stockholm. Aided by a loan from the city, and with a small amount of skilled assistance, hundreds of Stockholm families are building their own homes on the outskirts of town each year. Working weekends and in the late afternoon, the able-bodied members of the family dig the cellar, mix the cement, and lay up the cement block basement walls. House walls and partitions are of prefabricated wooden sections; skilled workmen help the family to put these in place, and likewise handle the tile roofing. But a surprising amount of labor is furnished by the family itself, in spare time. Each home has a lot large enough for flower and vegetable gardens.

Throughout his discussion of rural housing Mr. Graham directs attention to the relationship between the rural home and the entire farm economy. Denmark especially has been successful in establishing small, self-sustaining farm units where every acre is put to its best use and where production and distribution are intelligently controlled by farmers' cooperatives.

"Housing in Scandinavia" is well illustrated with both photographs and sketches. It is written in an attractive, colloquial style and appears to be excellently documented.

### Williamson, W. Va., Authority To Profit by City's Cooperation

The Housing Authority of the City of Williamson, W. Va., is expected to advertise for bids during June. In order to achieve low rents, the city government is expected to assume the greater proportion of administrative management costs of the projects. There has been complete cooperation by the city government with the local authority in respect to such conditions of the loan contract as extension of utilities, street improvement, and the other usual details, which in this instance involved considerable expense.



## Architects and Health Officials Talk Housing

Health officials in convention at Philadelphia and architects at Louisville recently pointed to low-cost housing as the number one solution for many of the economic and social ills of our time.

In Philadelphia, where 10,000 delegates met at the nineteenth biennial convention of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, Dr. C.-E. A. Winslow, professor of public health at the Yale School of Medicine, said Federal housing projects are "the only practical answer" to the problem of "slum sickness" which now is victimizing American cities.

Poor housing is a "major health problem," Dr. Winslow said. "Is it possible to doubt that rat-ridden tenements breed endemic typhus, or that room-overcrowding facilitates the transmission of diphtheria, scarlet fever, meningitis, and pneumonia?"

"Can it be doubted that rickety steps and rotten handrails, dark stairways, woodstoves, and kerosene lamps contribute to a substantial proportion of fatal accidents?"

In Louisville, May 19, Dean Walter R. McCornack of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology School of Architecture and vice president of the American Institute of Architects, urged the extension of low-cost shelter benefits to 19,000,000 families in the low-income brackets to create a national "bulwark against catastrophe." Dean McCornack was in Louisville to attend the seventy-second convention of the American Institute of Architects. He termed low-cost shelter one of the most important aspects of a program of "civilization building."

"The answer to the low-cost shelter question does not by any means constitute the entire program of civilized building, but it does offer a practical and important part of such a program."

## Milbank Memorial Fund Conference Stresses Public Health Standards

In New York City, recently, representatives from the professional fields of both public health and public housing met at the Eighteenth Annual Conference of the Milbank Memorial Fund. In a series of round-table discussions, specific attention was directed to public health standards in housing.

Coleman Woodbury, Executive Director, The National Association of Housing Officials, and Dr. Reginald M. Atwater, Executive Secretary of the American Public Health Association, discussed housing opportunities and responsibilities of a public health administrator. After outlining the functions of the local housing authority, Mr. Woodbury concluded that cooperation of public health officials is imperative if local authorities are to operate efficiently. Public health officials, he said, should take the lead in the enforcement of police powers with respect to existing dwellings.

Mr. Atwater declared that there is a direct relationship between health and housing and that the American public health official must grasp a broader concept of his job.

Mr. Allen A. Twitchell, Technical Secretary of the Committee on the Hygiene of Housing, presented a summary of field studies of heating, lighting, and noise conditions in a number of occupied dwellings in various parts of eastern United States. The Committee observed that "anything less than 68 to 70 degrees for living rooms and kitchens, and less than 65 degrees for bedrooms, would be subnormal. . . . Very low humidity exerts an unfavorable influence by direct drying effect on the membranes of the nose and throat. . . . Indoor air movement of at least 50 feet per minute is held to be essential. . . ." Mr. Twitchell said the Committee's investigations in five public

housing projects confirmed the Committee's opinion that window areas should be approximately "15 percent of the floor areas with an exposed sky angle of 45 degrees."

Dr. George C. Ruhland, Washington, D. C., Health Officer, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing Survey Procedures, said his committee is developing schedules and instructions which will determine the relative quality of housing in specific blocks lying within an area generally substandard.

Dr. James A. Ford, Associate Professor of Sociology, Harvard University, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Standards of Occupancy, reported that his group is reviewing tentative standards and is studying problems of room and dwelling-unit occupancy, as well as occupancy and overcrowding regulations.

After hearing a paper on health centers and services in public housing projects by Mr. J. C. Leukhardt, Research Analyst of the United States Public Health Service, the round table concluded that "public housing agencies and real estate boards should cooperate with school, health, welfare, and recreation boards to lend their united support to revitalizing city planning activities."

## Queens College Survey Covers Four Slum Areas

With the twin purpose of carrying out Queens College's program of coordinating academic life with community life and of teaching in advanced courses by familiarizing students with primary materials, a group of political science majors is conducting a first-hand study and evaluation of the four slum clearance areas in the Borough of Queens (New York City) designated by the City Planning Commission for low-cost housing.

Under the direction of Professor Phillips Bradley, chairman of the department of political science, the study was undertaken several weeks ago at the request of the Queensboro Council of Social Welfare, in an effort to present to the Planning Commission a comprehensive critique of the areas selected on location, need, and relationship to the rest of the borough.

In addition to numerous "on the spot" investigations of the areas concerned, the students are examining in detail the residential development of the borough, with specific attention to the growth of the public housing movement in what is the fastest growing part of the city.

Under this category the group is preparing a history of the growth and expansion of Queens in terms of residential characteristics and trends, industrial characteristics and their trends, and the position of public services and facilities in the general picture. Under this part of the study there will also be a detailed analysis of population movements as shown by the areas of greatest density and increase, comparison with other boroughs, and the population trends which appear probable in the future.



Aerial view of Kamehameha Homes, one of three USHA-aided low-rent housing projects being constructed in Honolulu, T. H. The three projects will rehouse 732 families and destroy an equal number of slum dwellings. Island officials state that behind a

screen of "paradise foliage," are some 3,500 Hawaiian families living in slums, "difficult to equal for their dilapidation, squalor, dirt, and dangerous lack of sanitation." On the 16-acre Kamehameha Homes site, are 55 structures containing homes for 221 families.



## Ponce Starts Clean-up Campaign on Slum Site

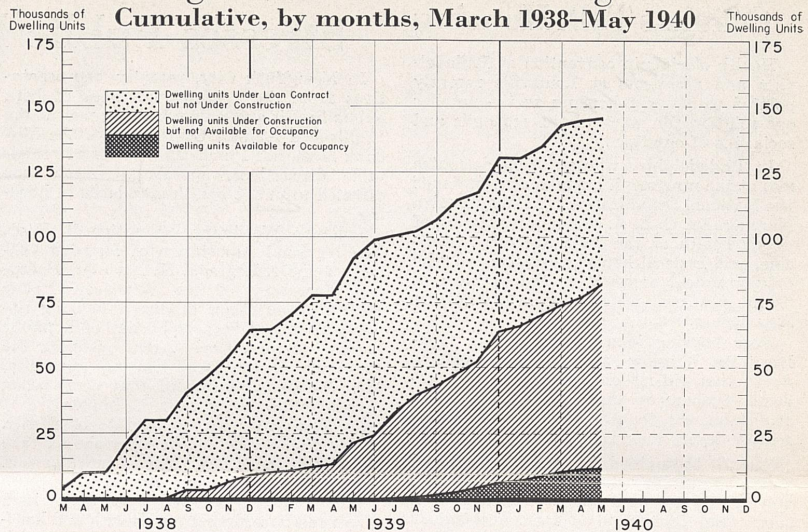
The City of Ponce, Puerto Rico, is experiencing its biggest clean-up campaign in 20 years. Construction on the Santiago Iglesias site in that city cannot begin at once, but residents of the area have enthusiastically joined the municipal housing authority in a vigorous clean-up drive.

The site for the new project now contains some 700 slum shacks which must be demolished before construction can begin. In order to improve living conditions there in the interim, the local housing authority, in agreement with the municipality, has instituted regular garbage and rubbish collections.

But garbage collection on the shack-cluttered site is not a simple matter. According to a report from Teodoro Moscoso, Jr., Executive Secretary of the Housing Authority of the Municipality of Ponce, many of the streets in the Santiago Iglesias area are in "such poor condition that the garbage trucks cannot negotiate them, and cleaning up the accumulated filth and rubbish is possible only with the cooperation of the neighborhood." "Cooperation" is a matter of the families' hauling their own rubbish to designated points where the trucks can load it.

"Quick response of the residents in the neighborhood has made the plan work with unbelievable ease and success," Mr. Moscoso reports. "Children with brooms are cleaning up the accumulated rubbish in streets with baskets and little carts, transporting the rubbish to the collection points, which the Authority has designated with flags."

## Progress of the USHA Program Cumulative, by months, March 1938-May 1940



### Construction Report Analysis

On May 29 President Roosevelt approved loan contracts for seven USHA-aided projects in four cities, as follows: 1,359 units in Los Angeles County, Calif.; 28 units in Frankfort, Ky.; 80 units in Anacosta, Mont.; and 196 units in Jackson, Tenn. Earmarkings outstanding for additional loan contracts now total only \$50,517,517.

(It should be noted that, because of cur-

rent revisions in loan contracts, the data in the "projects under loan contract" column reflect net changes from one month to another. During this past month, for example, the withdrawal of one large loan contract caused a net decline in value of loan contracts.)

During May, 13 projects entered the construction stage, bringing to 215 the total number now under construction or completed. These 13 projects are: Cincinnati, Ohio, 750 units; Birmingham, Ala. (2 projects), 913 and 480; New York City, 1,170; Helena, Mont., 72; Denver, Colo., 346; New Bedford, Mass., 200; McComb, Miss., 84; Charleston, S. C., 129; Portsmouth, Ohio, 260; Elizabeth, N. J., 405; Chester, Pa., 350; and Detroit, Mich., 440.

There were 26 projects open for occupancy as of May 18. Pine Haven (Daytona Beach, Fla.), Mravlag Manor (Elizabeth, N. J.), and Poindexter Village (Columbus, Ohio) have opened since the date of the last monthly report—April 20.

### Construction Report Weekly Data

| Item  | Week ended<br>May 31, 1940 | Week ended<br>May 24, 1940 | Percentage<br>change |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Number of projects under construction <sup>1</sup> .....        | 215                        | 210                        | +2.38                |
| Number of dwellings under construction <sup>1</sup> .....       | 82,550                     | 80,966                     | +1.96                |
| Total estimated over-all cost <sup>2</sup> of new housing       | \$366,214,000              | \$359,053,000              | +1.99                |
| Average over-all cost <sup>2</sup> of new housing per unit..... | \$4,436                    | \$4,435                    | +0.02                |
| Average net construction cost <sup>3</sup> per unit.....        | \$2,775                    | \$2,772                    | +0.11                |

### Summary of USHA Program as of May 31, 1940

| Item  | Projects under<br>loan contract <sup>1</sup> | Projects under<br>construction <sup>1</sup> | Projects beng<br>tenanted <sup>4</sup> |
|---|--|---|--|
| Number of projects.....   | 412  | 215   | 26                                     |
| Number of local authorities represented.....                    | 172  | 118   | 20                                     |
| Number of States represented.....                               | <sup>5</sup> 35                              | <sup>5</sup> 29                             | 11                                     |
| Number of loan contracts.....                                   | 245  |   |  |
| Value of loan contracts.....                                    | \$633,690,000                                |   |  |
| Number of dwelling units in projects.....                       | 145,272                                      | 82,550                                      | 12,474                                 |
| Number of dwelling units available for occupancy.....           |  |   | 11,402                                 |
| Total estimated development cost <sup>6</sup> .....             | \$708,620,000                                | \$398,497,000                               | \$60,565,000                           |
| Total estimated over-all cost of new housing <sup>2</sup> ..... | \$649,968,000                                | \$366,214,000                               |  |

<sup>1</sup> Includes projects which have been completed.  
<sup>2</sup> 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.  
<sup>3</sup> The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.  
<sup>4</sup> As of May 18, 1940.  
<sup>5</sup> Includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.  
<sup>6</sup> Includes over-all cost of new housing plus the cost of purchasing and demolishing old slum buildings and the cost of land bought for future development.

### Schedule of Bid Opening Dates <sup>1</sup>

| Local authority and project<br>number | Number of<br>units | Date of bid<br>opening |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Biloxi (Miss.-5-3).....               | 100                | 7-1-40                 |
| Fall River (Mass.-6-2).....           | 222                | 6-12-40                |
| Honolulu (T. H.-1-2).....             | 122                | 7-1-40                 |
| Houston (Tex.-5-2).....               | 328                | 6-18-40                |
| Martinsburg (W. Va.-<br>6-1).....     |                    |                        |
|                                       | 48                 | 6-25-40                |
| Martinsburg (W. Va.-<br>6-2).....     | 52                 | 6-25-40                |
| Memphis (Tenn.-1-4).....              | 500                | 6-28-40                |
| Montgomery (Ala.-<br>6-2).....        | 150                | 7-1-40                 |
| New Britain (Conn.-5-1).....          | 340                | 6-28-40                |
| Phoenix (Ariz.-1-1).....              | 225                | 7-1-40                 |
| San Antonio (Tex.-<br>6-4).....       | 236                | 6-20-40                |

<sup>1</sup> There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening.

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.