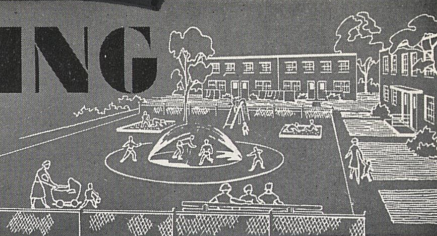


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# PUBLIC HOUSING

Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Vol. 1, No. 30

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

March 5, 1940

## “Roof Over America” On Air March 24

Office of Education Radio Series  
Featured by CBS Nation-Wide Chain

U. S. Commissioner of Education J. W. Studebaker recently announced a Nation-wide educational program to inform shelter-needy Americans—whose incomes may vary from \$1,000 to \$10,000 a year—how housing services of local savings and loan associations, banks, private industry, and Government agencies may help them improve the roof over their heads.

Radio, printed bulletins, and graphic exhibits will bring the information to citizens.

Cooperating with the U. S. Office of Education are various Government housing agencies, the U. S. Government Printing Office, and the Columbia Broadcasting System.

The radio series will be entitled “Roof Over America” and will consist of 13 half-hour documented broadcasts. They will be heard as part of the Democracy in Action series over a coast-to-coast network of more than 100 CBS stations at 2 p. m. E. S. T., every Sunday, beginning March 24.

At the same time the U. S. Government Printing Office will release a booklet on this subject. It will trace the historical rise of our diversified housing situation of today, telling of pioneer efforts to effect improvements, largely by individuals, and discuss present concerted efforts toward better conditions, both in city and rural areas. The booklet will also contain a simplified key to the functions and services of all Federal housing and home-financing agencies.

Exhibits sponsored by Government housing agencies will be displayed before thousands of persons in schools and colleges and at meetings of public and educational groups. These will depict how the Government not only tests building materials and methods but helps industry rehouse entire communities.

The broadcasts, presented over the Democracy in Action series, will cover the following:

Mar. 24 . . . What Do We Mean “Home, Sweet Home”?

The status of housing today. . . . Slums that blight metropolitan, industrial, and rural areas. . . . Extent of substandard housing.

Mar. 31 . . . How We Got That Way.  
History of housing problem in America.  
. . . Americans on the move from south

(Continued on page 2)

## Youngstown, St. Petersburg Open Projects—842 Homes Provided

Shelter Rent \$12.43 In Westlake—  
Jordan Park Incomes Average \$500

Projects were opened during February in Youngstown, Ohio, and St. Petersburg, Fla.; they will provide homes for 842 low-income families.

At Westlake, Negro project in Youngstown, the average monthly shelter rent per dwelling is \$12.43, only 75 cents more than the average rent Negroes must pay for substandard shelter in the city. Annual income per family in the project is expected to average, roughly, \$1,020. Built on a site which was formerly one-third slum, the Westlake project will consist of 600 units, constructed at an average estimated over-all cost of \$4,963 each. This includes gas ranges and electric refrigerators as standard equipment. The monthly cost to the tenant of all utilities—heat, hot and cold water, electricity for lighting and refrigeration, and gas for cooking—averages \$7.66 per unit.

The project is built in the notorious “Monkey’s Nest” district, a slum which derives its name from the appearance of its tumble-down pine shacks. It has long been regarded as a dangerous fire and health

hazard. A check-up of dwellings formerly occupying the project site revealed that about 75 percent were unfit for human habitation.

Jordan Park, in St. Petersburg, also for Negroes, will serve 242 families whose average annual income will be about \$500. This is \$80 lower than the average income for Negroes occupying substandard dwellings in St. Petersburg. The average monthly shelter rental of \$8.85 per dwelling is just under the average rental of \$8.90 which Negroes in St. Petersburg pay for substandard housing. The project is built on a site which was predominantly vacant. Hot and cold water, electricity for lighting, gas for cooking, heating, and refrigeration will cost the tenants about \$4.02 per month.

A survey of several slum areas in St. Petersburg at the time the local authority submitted its application for a USHA loan disclosed that 1,253 Negro families were living in substandard dwellings and that approximately 150 Negro families were living two or more to a dwelling. A report by the building department described 20 percent of the buildings as being unfit for human habitation. An influx of families from untenable buildings in other sections of the city is said to have caused the overcrowding.

**Before . . .** Six out of seven of these Griffith Street shacks in Youngstown, Ohio, had no private toilets or bathing facilities. Three out of four were substandard.



**After . . .** Westlake Project of the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority, photographed from the same spot. All 618 dwelling units have private indoor toilets and baths.

Library, Western Kentucky State Teachers College

## "Roof Over America" Series Starts March 24

(Continued from page 1)

to north, from east to west. . . . Farm tenancy, one-crop farming, and droughts that blight rural America.

Apr. 7. . . . What Price Bad Housing? Inadequate sanitation and infested homes raise doctor's bills. . . . Cheerless homes and cheerless people. . . . How society pays for the criminal and the physically unfit.

Apr. 14. . . . Hurdles in Housing. How speculators and excessive costs created housing shortages and high rents. . . . The mortgagee, the "villain in the piece." . . . How building associations and Government agencies come to the rescue.

Apr. 21. . . . Houses That Jerry Built. Methods of the Unscrupulous Builder. . . . How incompetent planning and the speculative fever led to jerry-built homes; Attitude of Home Owner. . . . How lack of knowledge of housing standards and the possibility of a quick sale result in the home as a "temporary" abode.

Apr. 28. . . . Voices in the Wilderness. Battling for better housing: Work of Jacob Riis, Jane Addams, Edith Elmer Wood, Barney Vladeck, Lawrence Veiller, Theodore Roosevelt, Lillian Wald, Julius Rosenwald, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt. . . . Rise of the Technicians: Robert D. Kohn, James Ford, Louis Pink.

May 5. . . . Doing Something About It. Getting adequate housing laws. . . . Increasing the number of local housing authorities. . . . How civic, church, labor, social, and patriotic groups are "doing something about it."

May 12. . . . Streamlining the Home Industry.

Planners and builders get together. . . . Can we have mass production of housing? How the Bureau of Standards, U. S. Forest Products Laboratory, and private research foundations serve technicians and home owners. . . . Narrowing the "no-man's land" in housing.

May 19. . . . The House Next Door. Advantages of building restrictions and zoning regulations. . . . Protecting old neighborhoods against deterioration. . . . Rural zoning: "How shall we best use this land?" . . . Experiments in zoning.

May 26. . . . Rooms With a View. The Garden Cities of England: Letchworth, Port Sunlight, Bournville, etc. . . . American experiments; Greenbelt towns; Sunnyside, N. Y.; Chatham Village, Pittsburgh; Happy Valley, Tenn. . . . Government enterprise in community planning.

June 2. . . . Keeping the Factory Fires Burning. Better housing means better business. . . . Government as a guarantor of building investment. . . . Cooperation of architects, contractors, materials, men, financial institutions, for better construction.

June 9. . . . Here's What We Mean "Home, Sweet Home."

A housing tour: Life in homes of slum clearance projects, HOLC rehabilitated homes, resettlement homes, homes financed by FHA insured mortgages.

June 16. . . . Uncle Sam on the Housing Frontier.

Public housing and the American tradition. . . . Government services available to city dwellers and farm owners. . . . How Government helps private enterprise to provide a better Roof Over America.

More than 100 CBS station managers have written U. S. Commissioner Studebaker offering the services of their stations for the "Roof Over America" series.

Publication of a booklet, also called "Roof Over America," was decided upon as a result of 4 years' experience with educational radio broadcasts, U. S. Commissioner Studebaker said. Radio, buttressed by informative printed bulletins, has proved more valuable from the educational point of view than radio without supplemental printed aids.

The booklet, prepared for teachers, students, study groups, and individuals interested in improving the "roof" over their homes, will be written in popular style and will be illustrated with charts, drawings, and photographs.

Among the agencies which are cooperating in the broad educational program are: Central Housing Committee, Federal Housing Administration, National Bureau of Standards, Forest Products Laboratory, Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Bureau of Chemistry and Agricultural Engineering, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U. S. Public Health Service, and the United States Housing Authority.

Teachers, educators, and dramatic groups interested in using "Roof Over America" scripts may secure them, after they go on the air, from the U. S. Office of Education's Radio Script Exchange.

## "Arizona Municipalities" Publishes Housing Issue

"Arizona Municipalities," official organ of the Arizona Municipal League, speaking for 32 communities throughout the State, features Slum Clearance and Low-Rent Housing in its February issue.

Winters Haydock, USHA Regional Director, San Francisco, contributes an analysis of the USHA program and discusses the purposes and possibilities of public housing in the Rocky Mountain and far western States.

Leslie J. Mahoney, well-known architect from Phoenix, in charge of plans for the Phoenix projects, writes on "Planning the Housing Project." Social aspects of housing are discussed by Rev. Emmett McLoughlin, Director, Santa Monica Mission and Clinic, and Chairman of the Housing Authority of the City of Phoenix; and Gunnar Mykland, Assistant Director, Housing Authority of the City of Austin, Tex., discusses local housing administration and presents a detailed summary of housing activities in Austin.

Hess Seaman, Phoenix City Attorney, in a regular feature, "Q's and A's on Municipal Legal Issues," answers the question: Is a municipality acting within its powers in appropriating money to pay preliminary expenses of its Housing Authority before receipt of Federal funds?

## Individual Owners Paid Over 2 Million for Land

Analysis of the land acquisition records of the first 46 USHA-aided housing projects shows that four-fifths of the 1,055 parcels acquired were previously owned by private individuals. Of the balance, only 2 percent of the owners were banks and trust companies, and less than 5 percent were realty corporations. Industrial corporations held less than 1 percent of the land parcels purchased, and building and loan associations owned only 1.1 percent.

The total purchase price of the land acquired was \$5,069,845.92, of which a little less than 80 percent, or \$4,032,691.51, was the equity actually paid to the owners. Private individual owners received 54.5 percent of the total equity, or \$2,196,273.60. Liens paid at acquisition amounted to 20.5 percent of the purchase price. Among the liens were 290 mortgages amounting to \$667,774.64, or about 13 percent of the purchase price.

It is interesting to note that 778 of 1,055 parcels of land acquired were in slum sites.

The following tabulation shows the distribution of ownership and equity payments for the parcels of land acquired for the 46 projects.

Types of owners	Amount of equity paid	Percent of total equity
Private individuals	\$2,196,273.60	54.5
Banks and trust companies	215,360.83	5.3
Building and loan associations	23,823.60	0.6
Realty corporations	242,505.42	6.0
U. S. loan agencies	9,500.00	0.2
Religious and educational organizations	36,004.57	0.9
Estates	487,962.94	12.1
Municipalities	164,733.61	4.1
Industrial corporations	382,497.18	9.5
Partnerships and other companies	274,029.76	6.8
	\$4,032,691.51	100.0
Public liens: Current and delinquent taxes and special assessments	250,617.20	
Private liens: Mortgages, interest, judgments, etc.	786,537.21	
TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE	\$5,069,845.92	

## New Leaflets Treat Slum Clearance and PWA Housing

Two more in the series of leaflets describing the USHA program, "Clearing the Slums" and "PWA Housing Division Projects," have recently been released.

"Clearing the Slums" points out that there are two methods currently used by local housing authorities to clear slums. The first is direct: A slum area is purchased, slum structures are destroyed, and the new housing project rises out of the ashes. The second method is indirect: The site for the new project may be entirely or partly vacant; it may or may not be in a slum district; but for each home in the new project one substandard dwelling somewhere in the city is eliminated. The leaflet is devoted to a discussion of the relative merits of the two methods.

"PWA Housing Division Projects" is designed to clear up the confusion arising from the fact that the USHA program actually embraces two very distinct kinds of housing project—the first built by the PWA Housing Division, the second built under the entirely different USHA system.

3/7/40

# Design For Community Living in Hill Creek

**D**ILAPIDATION is only one aspect of a slum; shelter is only one of a family's daily needs. Tearing down dilapidated houses does not remove the slum any more than building low-rent housing satisfies all the needs of low-income families. Family needs are provided for only when wise planning and alert management are brought together in a low-rent community designed for 24-hours-a-day living.

At Hill Creek, PWA Housing Division project (now under USHA lease to the Philadelphia Housing Authority), such a combination is proving its effectiveness. The physical project provides the space and the facilities for well-rounded family and community living. The management policy, emphasizing tenant maintenance and responsibility, stimulates the use of project facilities. Three organizations on the project, the Tenants Association, the Civic Asso-



Top . . . The work of the Upholstering and Interior Decorating Classes is displayed in this picture taken at a recent exhibit. The chair at the left was re-upholstered by the class.



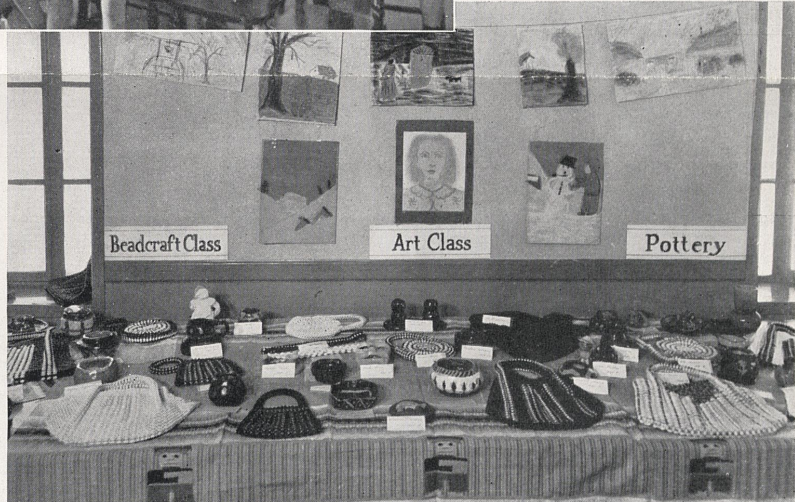
Center . . . Children in the preschool group. Their leaders, Mrs. E. Lehman, Miss H. Nadelstein, and Miss M. E. Pegg, have developed a program which provides training in deportment and character building.

Bottom . . . Beadcraft, Art, and Pottery. All the objects on the table below were made by members of these three classes. The materials are inexpensive.

ciation, and the Women's Club, in cooperation with the Work Projects Administration, are responsible for a leisure-time program calculated to include every member of the community. The program ranges from kindergarten classes to a course in Interior Decorating. It includes instruction in beadcraft, needlecraft, upholstery, pottery making, woodwork, drawing and painting, athletics, social and tap dancing, piano and choral music, dramatics, public speaking, and journalism.

Leon Raider, Hill Creek Manager, says: "There are so many group activities the problem is to find space for them." The project's indoor recreation space includes a social building and two recreation basements.

Dr. C.-E. A. Winslow of Yale's School of Medicine says that such projects present "the one definite factor designed today to uphold the family."



## Public Housing Bills In State Legislatures

(as of February 26, 1940)

With most of the State Legislatures now in session, it is important to know what consideration is being given to housing. At present, housing bills are pending before the legislative bodies of seven States. Most of them are amendatory; in California, however, an attempt is being made to create a State Housing Authority to handle the problem of rural housing, and in Kentucky the Rural Housing Commission Bill would authorize the creation of county and regional housing commissions. Following is a brief description of each of the pending bills:

**California:** State Housing Authority Bill (S. B. 62; A. B. 57) would create a State Housing Authority with the usual powers of a housing authority and the express power to undertake the construction of dwellings for persons of low income in rural areas. This bill has passed the Assembly.

**Amendments to Housing Cooperation Law (S. B. 63; A. B. 58)** would make the existing Housing Cooperation Law applicable to the State Housing Authority.

**Kentucky:** Amendments to Municipal Housing Commission Act (S. B. 214; S. B. 210). S. B. 214 would facilitate the public housing program in Kentucky by clarifying some of the provisions in this Act and make it conform more closely to the United States Housing Act. S. B. 210 would make the Act applicable to cities of the sixth class. Rural Housing Commission Bill (S. B. 211) would authorize the creation of county and regional housing commissions with power to undertake the construction of dwellings for persons of low income in rural areas.

**Housing Cooperation Bill (S. B. 212)** would specifically authorize public bodies to furnish financial and other assistance to housing commissions.

**Legal Investments Bill (S. B. 209)** would make obligations of public housing agencies legal investments for public officers, banks, and other financial bodies and fiduciaries. **Validating Bill (S. B. 213)** would declare valid the creation, proceedings, contracts, and agreements of housing commissions.

**Mississippi:** Amendments to Housing Authorities Law (S. B. 93) would authorize creation of regional housing authorities

with power to undertake the construction of dwellings for persons of low income in rural areas. Would also expressly grant this power to county housing authorities. Amendments would also improve provisions on bonds of housing authorities as legal investments.

**Validating Bill (S. B. 92)** would declare valid the establishment, proceedings, contracts and agreements of housing authorities.

**New Jersey:** Legal Investments Bill would make obligations of housing authorities legal investments for public officers, banks, and all other financial bodies and fiduciaries.

**New York:** Amendments to Public Housing Law (A. B. Int. 1116 and A. B. Int. 1118). Amendments apply to or are related only to housing projects aided by the Federal Government. Amendments would clarify provisions in the Public Housing Law and change some of the bond provisions to greatly facilitate the financing of housing projects under such Law.

**Rhode Island:** Validating Bill (S. B. 84) would declare valid the creation, proceedings, contracts, and agreements of housing authorities.

**South Carolina:** Amendments to Housing Authorities Law (S. B. 1086) would authorize creation of regional housing authorities with power to construct dwellings for persons of low income in rural areas. Would also expressly grant this power to county housing authorities.

## Pittsburgh Authority Supplies Speakers for Local Meetings

The Pittsburgh (Pa.) housing authority is answering the popular demand for information about their local housing program by assigning members of the staff to speak before local organizations. Requests for speakers recently have come from organizations such as the Community Executives Round Table, various branches of the Department of Public Assistance, the South Side Community Forum, the Public Health Nursing Association, Pittsburgh Kindergarten Teachers, Monday Luncheon Club, East Liberty Forum, Pittsburgh Personnel Association, Special Community Meeting, South Side Community Council, Disappointed American Committee of the First Baptist Church, and the Men's Club.

## Georgia Farmers Meet To Discuss USHA Housing

Over 1,000 dirt farmers, together with businessmen and State officials, representing 110 of Georgia's 167 counties, met in Macon recently, at the invitation of the Georgia Farmers Union, to discuss USHA's rural housing program in terms of the needs and means of the Georgia farm family.

George B. Hamilton, State Treasurer of Georgia, and Chairman of the Georgia State Housing Authority Board, in announcing the first State-wide conference on rural housing in America, said that a rural housing project in Thomas County, Ga., made possible under the USHA program, "is well on the way to actual construction." He said the conference would make other counties aware of the movement's possibilities.

Evidently the other counties were already very much interested in the possibilities of the program, because Fred T. Bridges, State Secretary of the Farmers Union, brought his files to the conference to show that over 16,000 individual inquiries concerning the rural housing program had been received from farmers throughout the State.

After a morning spent in listening to explanations of the rural program by Mr. Hamilton and USHA Representatives Colvin and Nedved, the afternoon session assumed the nature of an open forum. Questions were asked and answered and plans discussed for organizing the Georgia counties.

Resolutions were passed by the conference stressing the importance of and emphasizing the need for a rural housing program. Delegates to the meeting were pledged to study ways of publicizing the program in their localities and of winning the support of county commissioners. The State Housing Authority Board will encourage the organization of county authorities.

At present, Georgia has only one rural housing authority (Thomas County), while Mississippi, her neighbor State, has 25. Next week's issue of PUBLIC HOUSING, No. 31, will carry a detailed story on rural housing authorities throughout the country.

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

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Akron (Ohio-7-1).....	276	3- 8-40
Baltimore (Md.-2-2)....	434	3-27-40
Butte (Mont.-3-1).....	225	3- 9-40
Charlotte (N. C.-3-1-A).....	108	3-20-40
Frederick (Md.-3-2)....	50	3-25-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-1)....	86	3-23-40
Lexington (Ky.-4-2)....	206	3-23-40
McComb (Miss.-3-2)....	90	3-20-40
New Orleans (La.-1-8)...	746	3- 7-40
Tampa (Fla.-3-2).....	320	3-13-40
West Palm Beach (Fla.-9-2).....	120	3-19-40

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

## Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended February 23, 1940	Week ended February 16, 1940	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction.....	179	178	+ 0.56
Number of dwellings under construction.....	69,916	69,588	+ 0.47
Total estimated over-all cost <sup>1</sup> of new housing.....	\$312,635,000	\$311,507,000	+ 0.36
Average over-all cost <sup>1</sup> of new housing per unit.....	\$4,472	\$4,476	- 0.09
Average net construction cost <sup>2</sup> per unit.....	\$2,809	\$2,812	- 0.11

<sup>1</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) non-dwelling facilities.

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

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