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## HISTORY OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON

In the nation's war housing epic Portland has played a leading role. It stands today at the head of the list of all American cities that have produced publicly financed war housing for the emergency. In barely two years Portland has built the largest single war housing project of the nation, and two of its projects are numbered among the ten largest in existence.

The story of public war housing in this area is the story of the effort to provide homes in the shortest space of time for a great army of war workers. The program includes the building of 25 separate housing projects of 19,189 dwelling and dormitory units, all told, and an entire city to shelter 40,000 war workers and their families.

From the day the Housing Authority was created by the City Council, and the commissioners appointed, soon after the Pearl Harbor attack, public war housing became one of the crucial issues of the war effort. From that day a determined home front army labored behind drafting boards and in the field against many odds—the lack of materials, war restrictions, shortage of skilled labor, priorities, snows, floods, strikes picket lines, and above all, against time. Public war housing cropped up on available vacant lots, on old farmlands, and tracts inside and outside the city limits. It is doubtful whether a speedier housing construction record was ever made.

The reason for this relentless attack on housing was that nearly overnight Portland had become a high pressure defense center. One shipyard, Commercial Iron, had launched its shipbuilding program with navy contracts as early as 1940, and incidentally, with the first naval ship to be built in the area since World War I. The Kaiser Corporation had opened their

<p>PLAINTIFF'S DEFENDANT'S</p> <p>EXHIBIT <i>J-73</i></p> <p>Case No. <i>44-20</i></p> <p>IRA G. BOLCOMB Reporter</p>
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Oregon shipyard for the Maritime Commission in February of 1941; Willamette Iron and Steel began to turn out transports in the summer of 1941; and Albina, in existence for 40 years, was also speedily geared for war production. But lack of shelter for the workers of shipyards and allied plants seriously threatened production. For not only shipyards, but approximately 700 allied subsidiary industries classed as essential to national defense, made enormous increases in their personnel as the great shipbuilding program swung into action. Portland housing grew more critical with the opening of the Kaiser yards--Vancouver, in January, and Swan Island, in March of 1942--and the Gunderson yard in the summer of the same year. During this time the eyes of the nation were focused on Portland and its war achievement.

On December 11, 1941, the Housing Authority of Portland, Oregon, was created by the City Council, and five commissioners were appointed, giving to Portland the advantage of publicly financed war housing to supplement available privately owned homes. Its existence was made possible by the United States Housing Act, of 1937; and subsequent legislation, and the Oregon Housing Laws, passed from 1937 to 1941, including the Oregon Defense Housing Law of 1941. The local Authority operates as an agency of the Federal Public Housing Authority, in turn under the jurisdiction of the National Housing Agency, at Washington, D.C. The Portland Authority has retained only two of the originally appointed commissioners. Lost by resignation were Mrs. C. S. Jackson, replaced by C. B. Wegman, who in turn was replaced by Harry T. Capell, and Chairman C. M. Gartrell, who resigned on September 1, 1944. Vacancies caused by resignation and by the death of D. E. Nickerson, June 30, 1944, were filled by H. J. Detloff, and Sanford E. Norby.

The curtain raiser on public housing was staged early in 1942 with a modest civic ceremony, in which Mayor Riley and Chairman Gartrell, of the Portland Authority, turned the first earth for the Columbia Villa project. The enterprise, born of the war crisis, and launched that day with scant public attention, was to grow to a public housing program involving an investment close to \$60,000,000, a staff of approximately 1500 to keep it in operation, and to develop new construction as needed, and eventually reaching the proportions of a city within a city, larger than Galveston, Texas, or Springfield, Illinois.

From July 12, 1942, when the first sections of the Gartrell Homes were opened to tenants, week by week, and day by day, dwelling units were finished for the newcomers who were clamoring for shelter. Quite possibly they were "putting up," meanwhile, in their cars, their trailers, in tents, old shacks, and unpartitioned store rooms, hotel lobbies, and basements, and whole families were living in one room. Many traveled from 20 to 50 miles to work their shipyard shifts.

Of the 26\* projects managed and operated by the Housing Authority of Portland, only two, Columbia Villa, of 400 dwelling units, and Dekum Court, of 35 units, are of permanent construction. The remaining public housing can never become slums on the fringes of Portland, as temporary projects are to be demolished at the end of the emergency, and will leave no scars on our scenic landscapes.

The construction chapter for the first 25 projects closed with the completion of East Vanport and Fessenden Homes, begun in October, 1943, and completed early in March, 1944. At present the local Authority has 18,455 dwelling units under management. Of this total 110 are dormitory units.\*\*

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\*Consolidated to 11 projects for management purposes.

\*\* Placed in stand by status, November, 1944.

April, 1945  
*Oregon Historical Society*

## HOUSING PROJECTS OF THE PORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

Columbia Villa

Columbia Villa, the only permanent\* public housing project in the Portland area erected under the direction of the Housing Authority of Portland, has been described by national housing officials as one of the most beautiful public housing groups in America. With its country life, or suburban atmosphere, it has been considered a splendid example of public housing. Begun May 5, 1942, as a government-aided project, with the first funds allocated by the United States Housing Authority (U.S. Housing Act of 1937) to the Portland Authority, and opened in the same year, it became the prologue to the great public war housing program of the following year. As it was their initial venture in housing, it also became the only project built, owned, and operated by the Portland Authority.

Columbia Villa consists of 400 dwelling units, at North Columbia Boulevard and Adriatic Avenue. The houses are a modification of the Eastern Oregon ranch-house style, with the second story rising between two one-story sections, and arranged for small or large families.

In designing the group, Stanton and Johnston, Portland architects, insisted upon space between the groups, consistent with the best Portland tradition in homebuilding. Backed by the Authority, they finally succeeded in laying out a project that leads the coast region for low density of population. Five families to the acre is the standard. The buildings are set at wide intervals over the elevated site that commands views of Mt. Hood, St. Helens, and the sweep of the Cascades.

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\* Dekum Court, of 85 dwelling units, and also of permanent construction, was built by the Public Buildings Administration to house non-commissioned officers of the Portland Air Base. This project is managed by the Housing Authority of Portland.

The buildings are arranged according to a plan originated by the architects in an out-spreading U-shape, with the flare to the street, and the narrow part to the rear premises for the sake of sightliness. All is well landscaped, with the native trees conserved, and the individual homes enhanced by private plantings of flowers and improved by Victory gardens. The streets curve spaciously about the wide open sections, interspersed with parking areas and playgrounds. The well appointed community building, in its attractive setting, carries out the country club idea.

Lease & Leigland, with an initial proposal of \$1,312,000, built the 128 duplex and four-plex structures of one, two, three, and four bedrooms, the community building, and 10 laundries. The dwellings are unfurnished, except for electric ranges, electric refrigerators, gas water heaters, and gas circulating heaters. The completion date for the entire project was June 15, 1943.

### THE GARTRELL GROUP

The lot-lease, or Gartrell Plan of public war housing, ceased to be an experiment in the defense area of Portland, on July 12, 1942. At that time the first units of a project involving 725 dwelling units on 52 scattered sites, begun May 7, 1942, were ready for occupancy, as the first war housing of the metropolitan area to be opened.

The lot-lease plan, proposed to the Housing Authority of Portland by its chairman, C. M. Gartrell, was regarded as a practical measure that would take advantage of vacant lots and turn a liability into a war housing asset. Nor would the city pattern be disturbed, as in the case of large, compact, and localized groups of war housing.

The plan was finally approved by the Federal Public Housing Authority as an experimental project, involving the 725 units in single and duplex types. This project attracted attention in national circles, and won so much approval from the Federal Authority that the practice of leasing rather than purchasing sites for temporary war housing is now being followed by the FPHA wherever possible.

Vacant city-owned lots, within a reasonable distance of the war plants, and served by streets, water mains, and other utilities, many of them abandoned to public ownership, have been used, at a great saving to the Federal Government. Under the Gartrell lot-lease program, 508 of these scattered lots have been obtained for war housing, and are being held under lease at a rental equal to the going taxes on the property. Thus, the city can still sell these lots after the emergency. Under the Gartrell plan leases may be terminated in six months after the close of the war, or they may run five years, and may be renewed. Dwellings will be salvaged only, and not as dwelling units, when the final disposition is made.

As detached houses rather than apartment types, these dwellings are not furnished, but are equipped with individual coal space heaters, with electricity, gas, or coal ranges for cooking.

The building contracts, totaling a cost of \$1,739,326.96, were placed with nearly 30 separate firms. The architects were Margaret Fritsch, Richard Sundeleaf, Dougan & Heims, Herman Brookman, R. D. Kennedy, and Wade Pipes. The project was completed October 10, 1942.

Project	ORE-35026
"	" 35059
"	" 35091
"	" 35095
"	" 35096
"	" 35097
"	" 35098
"	" 35099

### THE GUILD'S LAKE GROUP

A panorama of the Guild's Lake district would show one of the major housing developments controlled by the Portland Housing Authority. It is the second largest public war housing project of the metropolitan area, totaling 2606 dwelling units in eight projects, and was planned to shelter about 10,000 residents. It is known as one of the largest housing projects in America, lying within the corporate limits of any city. It stands on 245 acres of leased ground, and was developed at a cost of \$5,783,359.

Its scenic surroundings, below the west hills, and its extent have made the Guild's Lake project one of the most interesting of the Portland area. On this historic site, ~~nearly~~ 40 years ago, the Lewis & Clark Fair of 1905 was staged to celebrate the Centennial of the Lewis & Clark Expedition to the mouth of the Columbia River. Old timers will remember the classic white structures and the lakes and waterways that once enhanced the site.

Guild's Lake Court, to shelter 358 families, was the first segment of the development to be finished, back in the pioneer days of war housing when, on October 22, 1942, eight families were moved into their new quarters. The single family and duplex houses and the community building were designed by Morris H. Whitehouse, Portland architect, and constructed by Ross B. Hammond.

A second construction section, in the seven other projects, involving four-plex and six-plex row houses of 2248 dwelling units, have made housing history by the speed of construction. A period of 10 days only from the opening of all bids, between January 15 and February 4, 1943, to the breaking of ground



was a new record for the entire housing program. The flying start was due to good weather and early priorities that were issued before the contract bids were submitted, making it possible for the contractors to know in advance the priority rating of materials required.

As an expediting factor plywood pre-fabrication panels were extensively used. Originated by the Portland Door Company, and never before used in this area, these 40-inch panels could be quickly put in place, and were found to be much faster construction than any previously used.

All of the no-bedroom units are furnished, and 60 per cent of the others, which are of from one to four bedrooms. The furnishings include beds, chests of drawers, davenos that open for the no-bedroom units, breakfast table and chairs. The houses are heated by coal space burners, and cooking is done by coal in the later sections and by electricity in Guild's Lake Courts, with electric water heaters and refrigerators as part of the equipment.

Five community buildings serve the different sections. Five day centers for children were also originally planned. Three centers, Guild's Street, Vaughn Street, and Gona Street, were transferred for operation by the Portland Public Schools, and were opened in December, 1943, as grade schools for grades one, two, and three. Playgrounds and sports areas are limited because of the sandy nature of the soil, and consist in the main of small playgrounds at the rear of the dwellings. These projects are very accessible to the recreation facilities of the city parks.

This housing was built for workers of defense plants, primarily for the Willamette Iron & Steel Company, and other industries holding navy contracts. Architects for the seven remaining projects were <sup>Hersor</sup> Hersor & Tucker; Barrett & Logan, and Earl Cash; Richard Sundeleaf and Herman Brookman; Sutton, Whitney & Aandahl; Morris H. Whitehouse; Jones & Marsh; Roald & Schneider; and John K. Dukehart. Handling the construction were the contracting firms of Askevold & Rund; Pacific Construction; Ernest C. Sinnett; K.T. Henderson; Gilmer & Halvorson; Lease & Leigland; and Northwest Construction.

Guild's Lake.....3

Construction was begun on May 14, 1942, and the last project was completed  
December 27, 1943.

### UNIVERSITY HOMES

Opened August 17, 1942, University Homes, at 9009 North Foss, is one of the major projects of Portland's war housing program. With 2005 dwelling units, it ranks third in size. It consists of 218 apartment buildings, 78 service and 4 maintenance buildings, one commercial and a large administration building, which accommodates a spacious gymnasium or auditorium, a library, lounges, project offices, a small hospital, and a cafeteria seating 250 persons.

Perhaps surpassing all public housing records anywhere was the construction of the University Homes group. Graders moved upon the site one July day in 1942. There were no streets, no lighting, and no other utilities nearer than the border of the 105 farm acres. Trees and brush were to be cleared, the site levelled, and streets laid out. Yet in 38 days tenants were moved into the first 72 units, which were furnished and complete in every detail.

The furnished apartments are in one-room and two-room arrangements, in eight-plex and sixteen-plex buildings. Central heating and ice refrigeration are included in the utilities.

This project is practically self-contained, with a complete food and variety store, beauty parlor, ice concessions, and all other necessities on the site. Day care for children, a kindergarten, and recreation under a resident director are provided.

The one-story structures were designed by A. E. Doyle & Associates, and erected by Ross B. Hammond, at a cost of \$4,730,000. The development covers an area of 105 acres. Begun July 6, 1942, the final construction was finished November 28, 1942.

### ST. JOHNS WOODS

St. Johns Woods, consisting of 967 dwelling units, is one of the larger war housing projects, and the largest single-house project of the Portland area. More than 800 families were provided with separate dwellings at the peak of the emergency. This group was among the earliest opened, the first families being placed on December 15, 1942.

The individual structures, of one to four bedrooms, and the duplexes, numbering approximately 150, are unfurnished, but coal ranges, electric refrigerators, electric water heaters, and circulating space heaters are included in the equipment.

Named from the woodlands lying in different segments of the site, the St. Johns Woods project is widely scattered over a large area, with North Swift Boulevard cutting through the project at an angle. A community building, at 8450 North Johnswood Court, with its various activities, including kindergarten and recreation, fosters a community spirit.

Responsible for the designs were Lawrence & Holford, Jones & Marsh, and Roald & Schneider. The homes were built by Wesco Construction Company under an initial contract of \$3,220,000. Construction was begun June 8, 1942, and completed finally on October 10, 1943.

PARKSIDE HOMES

This project, at 1053<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> North Libya, very close to the Oregon shipyard, was opened December 4, 1942. One-story buildings of single and duplex types provide 260 dwelling units that are unfurnished except for electric ranges, water heaters, and refrigerators, and coal-burning space heaters.

A community building, child care center, and two playgrounds not only provide essential services, but keep the small community together.

The lay-out was designed by Johnson, Wallwork & Dukehart, and was built by Robertson, Hay & Wallace, under an initial contract of \$871,140. The project was begun May 2, 1942, and finally completed on January 8, 1943.

FULTON HOMES

Fulton Court is of the same general locality as Slavin Court, and serves the same defense plants, mainly the Commercial Iron & Steel Works. It consists of 324 dwelling units groups over many scattered sites. Many of the buildings are close to the water-front, and others lie on higher ground, a few homes grouped together, or in larger sections as the sites permitted. Altogether there are 55 row houses, arranged to accommodate four to eight families, in units of one, two, and three bedrooms, a community building, a child care center, and a maintenance building. They were designed by Pietro Belluschi, and were built by Tri-State Construction, at a cost of \$616,399.

Of these dwelling units 60 percent are furnished. Heating is by coal-burning space heaters, and cooking is also done with coal. Ice refrigerators are included in the equipment.

Though not a centralized project, the community building at 3420 Southwest Macadam Street, and the child care center, with accommodations for 60 children, ~~will~~ tend to draw Fulton Court together into a community group. It was opened September 1, 1943. Begun on May 3, 1943, it was completed October 30, 1943.

Projects ORE-35021  
ORE-35027  
ORE-35028  
ORE-35061-T

DEKUM COURT, HUDSON STREET HOMES,

FIR COURT, MOUNTAIN VIEW COURT

Dekum Court, at the Portland Air Base, consists of permanent houses for army and navy enlisted men and civilian personnel. The group of 85 dwelling units was designed by Floyd Maramore and Associates, and was built by B. H. Sheldon, at a cost of \$265,000. The unfurnished houses are equipped with gas burning space heaters, gas water heaters, and electric ranges and refrigerators. Built under the direction of the Public Buildings Administration, the project was turned over to the Portland housing authority by the FPHA, on July 15, 1942. It was opened to the first residents on June 15, 1942.

Hudson Street Homes, 9202 North Westanna, is a project of 118 dwelling units. It was built at a cost of \$355,000, by Ward & Milbrandt, from the design of Herzog & Tucker. These unfurnished houses are heated by coal heaters, and equipped with electric ranges, water heaters, and refrigerators. Begun May 20, 1942, they were completed March 1, 1943, and were ready for the first occupants November 6, 1942.

Fir Court, 9135 North Gilbert Place, in the same neighborhood, is the smallest of the public war housing projects of the Portland area. Sheltering 72 families, it consists of temporary construction, designed by Barrett & Logan, and built by Ward & Milbrandt, at a cost of \$235,500. The houses are unfurnished and are equipped with coal heaters, electric ranges, water heaters, and refrigerators. Begun May 20, 1942, and completed March 1, 1943, they were opened to the first tenants on December 24, 1942.

Mountain View Court, A project of 100 trailer houses, was established for the workers of the reduction plant of the Aluminum Company of America, at Troutdale, Oregon, at a cost of \$166,188. It was discontinued when Fairview Homes was opened, June 2, 1943.

FAIRVIEW HOMES

At the official opening of Fairview Homes, June 2, 1943, four interested communities took part -- Portland, Troutdale, Gresham, and Fairview. Aside from its great service to the nearby communities, Fairview Homes has distinctive values of its own that make it superior public housing. In a setting of great natural beauty, over-looking the scenic Columbia River Valley, at Arata Road and Halsey Street, the suburban project is one of the most attractive of the developments by the Housing Authority. Started January 22, the project of 264 dwelling units was erected for the employees of the reduction plant of the Aluminum Company of America, at a cost of \$696,860.

The buildings, including a community building, were designed by F. Marion Stokes, Bernard Heims, and L.L. Dougan, and built by the Tri-State Construction Company. The topography of the site made for an unusual treatment, and the sloping contours give the development an informal appearance. Curving streets are also an attractive variant for the hillside group of homes. , 16 miles from Portland.

The 79 row houses for four and six families are heated by coal space heaters, and equipped with white enamel coal-burning ranges, and ice refrigerators. Oregon-made furniture is supplied for 60 per cent of the apartments with bedrooms, and for all the no-bedroom types.

A full recreation program is provided, monthly health clinics, and limited child care.

The project was begun on January 22, 1943, and finished September 7, 1943.



BELLAIRA COURT

The total development involves seven structures, used as dormitories for the civilian personnel of the Portland Air Base, and includes four dormitories of 110 units, two service buildings, and a community building, to accommodate 66 men and 44 women. The design was by Lawrence & Allyn, local architects, and the construction, under standard FPHA specifications, was by Knott, Rogers & Dunbar, at a total cost of \$94,940.

The buildings are spaced around an irregular quadrangle, and so arranged that each two dormitories are serviced by a utility annex, which contains a lounge, all toilet facilities, including showers, and a coal-burning furnace.

The community building provides administration and maintenance quarters, a cafeteria seating 125 persons, and social lounges for general community purposes.

The plan was designed to conserve five clusters of trees on the site, both for appearance and concealment, and in accordance with the policy that avoids destroying trees on a federal reservation. The construction was begun on March 25, 1943, opened September 27, and finally completed, September 22, 1943. The project was placed in stand-by status on November 1, 1944, to be programmed again later in case of need.

Projects ORE-35202  
ORE-35282  
ORE-35279

POWERS DORMITORY  
EAST VANPORT  
FESSENDEN COURTS

Powers Dormitory, is a converted structure to accommodate 498 single men, as a reception center, at 123 N. E. Third Avenue. Plans were prepared by Glenn Stanton and Hollis Johnston for the conversion by the installation of partitions and facilities, at a cost of \$55,764. The dormitory was deprogrammed January 1, 1944. The conversion began April 20, 1943, and was completed September 4, 1943.

East Vanport, was originally designed to provide 848 dwellings, but later reduced to 484, rose on the site of the old Peninsula Golf Course, across the highway from Vanport City. A duplex on the site provided two more units.

Specifications called for one-story row houses of four and eight units to a building, and of two and three bedrooms to a unit. They are furnished, and equipped with coal space heaters, coal ranges, and ice refrigerators.

A community building and a commercial center complete the civic plan, with full advantage taken of the scenic setting, the rolling contours of the old greens the landscaping, and the native growths. The public buildings are so placed that the streets radiate fan-wise from this point through the dwelling areas. Though the completion date was set for April 1, 1944, the first tenant was admitted to this project on February 24, 1944. Exclusive of a small fire house, the cost of this project was \$626,175. The design was by Stanton & Johnston; the construction by Wegman & Son.

Fessenden Courts. A small segment of the last group of dwelling units allocated to the Portland area is known as Fessenden Courts, at North Fessenden near North Wall. It consists of 152 dwelling units and a community building designed by Jones & Marsh, and built by Wegman & Son, at a cost of \$375,000. It was opened January 31, 1944.

April, 1945

*Original Historical  
Society  
1946*

## VANPORT CITY

Vanport City was the most inspiring construction feat of the entire public housing program. Built to shelter 40,000 people, it literally sprang to life full-grown from the grass roots of the Columbia River lowlands. There was nothing like it in America—nor anywhere in the world. The crucial purpose of the community, its dramatic birth in the exciting early days of the Second World War, the tense speed of its construction, and its great size make Vanport City unique.

Of the 25 separate war housing projects, totalling 19,189 dwelling and dormitory units, to come under the control of the Portland Authority, and involving an investment of close to \$60,000,000, Vanport City is the most spectacular and the most improbable. Not in any period of American history, or its building annals, do we find the Federal Government or any private agency producing an entire city of this extent, including public buildings, a water system, and all other utilities.

Distinguished Americans and foreign visitors alike are impressed by the size and completeness of the 'Miracle City,' as it is frequently called. With its own shops, school system, child care centers, church and welfare organizations, fire and police departments, a public library, theater, hospital, a great recreation program in a number of centers, and the civic luxury of overhead outdoor lighting, paved streets, and landscaping, this self-contained community will long remain one of the marvels of the war effort.

Ground was broken for Vanport City on September 14, 1942. The first rent receipt issued was dated December 12, 1942. Thus in the brief space of 90 days Vanport City had appeared on the map of Oregon, to become the second city in population of the state, the fifth of the Northwest, the nation's largest single public war housing project, and the largest mass housing experiment of all time. As it was rushed to completion, at the peak of construction, more than 5,000 persons were employed, of whom 650 were women.

The townsite covers about 647 acres of reclaimed land bordering Denver Avenue, in the northwest corner of the metropolitan area, and south of the Columbia River. Winding waterways, fringed with native trees, a natural shallow lake within the boundaries, and scenic hills and snow peaks in the background give interest to the setting. The site was selected because of its convenient proximity to the three Kaiser shipyards—Swan Island, Oregon, and Vancouver. Lying mid-way between Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington, the new community became officially Vanport City.

The war city can never become a ghost town nor a monster<sup>s</sup> alum. Under the Lanham Act administration, unless another provision is made, it will be demolished or removed, and truck gardens again may flourish where the 26-million-dollar city once stood.

Since the city could have no gradual expansion, as most American cities know in their evolution from a settlement or a village, the sudden bringing together of thousands of exiled workers from every part of America, uprooted from their homes, under constantly changing conditions, resulted in problems of management, maintenance, and operation probably found in no other community of the land. The synthetic character of the city, its temporary span of life, and its experimental social features, make the welding of a community spirit more difficult than in normal cities that have developed their own institutions

and social life as they have grown. The problem is to retain the population and eliminate costly moving about, both for its own sake and that of the war effort. In the complete absence of an indigenous and attractive community life, arrangements for an acceptable social scale of living had to be created more or less artificially.

Construction

Planned and begun by the United States Maritime Commission and the Kaiser Corporation because Lanham Act funds were not at the time available, the Vanport City project was eventually turned over to the Federal Public Housing Authority. On August 1, 1942, Edgar F. Kaiser, son of the Portland shipbuilder, entered into the construction contract with the FPHA, as prime contractor, with two local building firms as sub-contractors. Maintenance, operation, and completion were delegated to the Portland Housing Authority on October 15, 1942.

Albert A. Pierson, chief project engineer for the Federal Public Housing Authority, was placed in direct control of all construction. The buildings and utilities were designed by George M. Wolff and Truman E. Phillips, Portland architects, long engaged in the designing of public buildings for the Northwest. They also planned the landscaping of the townsite in conjunction with landscape architects and engineers.

The George H. Buckler Company was responsible for 371 apartment buildings and all utilities, such as the water supply, sewer system, electric distribution, streets, parking lots, and landscaping. The second contractor, Wegman & Son, erected 349 apartment building and all the special public and serviced buildings. The Denver Avenue underpass, which connects the community with the outside world, and the west end access roads were planned by the Oregon State Highway Commission. The underpass was built by the Kaiser Company, and the access roads by the George H. Buckler Company.

The Buildings

Vanport City originally consisted of 703\* two-story, "Type A" and 8 "Type B" apartment buildings, identical in plan, and designed for 14 or 8

apartments to each building, and 9 smaller, multiple-unit "Type C" one-story structures, totaling 9,942\*\* dwelling units, with 183 service annexes, and 50 special public and service building.

The designated buildings to care for the social, civic, and service needs of the community include an administration building, a United States post office, six grade schools, four nursery schools, one central fire station, two fire substations, a cafeteria, seating 400 persons, a theater, with a capacity of 785 persons, two large and five smaller community buildings, a Red Cross building, a library, an infirmary of 136 beds, a police station, and five commercial centers, containing food markets, apparel and other shops, drug stores, beauty parlors, and lunch counters; also, a ware house, maintenance buildings, and ice houses. Fifteen playgrounds and sports areas, among the largest of the Portland district, complete the civic plan.

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\* Reduced to 701 apartment buildings by reason of fire: one building totally destroyed; one salvaged and remodeled for Red Cross building, but still containing 8 rentable apartments. (Red Cross Building, opened March 30, 1944)

\*\* Reduced to 9,916 apartments by fire.

Dwelling Structures

Three types of apartment buildings have been used, and are identified as types A, B, and C. All are of frame construction, with bevelled siding and waterproof veneer on the exterior, and composition roofing over solid wood sheathing on the roof.

Interior walls are all covered with pre-finished, bleached mahogany plaster board of three-eighth-inch thickness. Ceilings are covered with three-eighth-inch fibre, applied over 1x4 wood stripping. Bathroom walls and ceilings are covered with one-fourth-inch water-proof veneer. Soft wood floors are finished with a light varnish. The A Type apartment buildings are two-story structures of 14 family dwelling units. These units are one-bedroom apartments, but are planned so that they may be used as two-bedroom or no-bedroom, units to meet the demand.

The B Type apartment buildings are also two stories in height, and are divided into eight dwelling units of one-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments, which may be altered to serve as one-, two-, and three-bedroom units.

The C Type apartment buildings are one-story structures with four dwelling units which will serve as either one-, two-, or three-bedroom units.

The A and B Types are constructed in groups of four with a service annex for each group. The annex contains the laundry room extra baths, hot water tanks, and the coal-fired furnace, fed by automatic stokers, and supplying heat by a forced warm air system.

The apartment suites have caused much favorable comment because of compact arrangement, inviting appearance, and built-ins that make for



efficient and reasonably comfortable living. The furnishings are plain, but meet all the requirements of temporary homes. Each apartment includes a living room with kitchen counter, fitted with an electric range and oven, ice refrigerator, a dinette table, chairs, an occasional chair, and a davenc that opens to make a double bed in the main room. The bath is equipped with shower and standard ware. The bedroom is provided with a bed, blankets, and a chest of drawers; but no dishes, linens, or silver are furnished.

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VANPORT CITY

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

It was necessary to provide for Vanport City, lying outside the jurisdiction of Portland School District No. 1, a separate school system, which was to become the nation's largest school within a public housing project, and of itself a unique institution. Traditional educational methods were modified in order to assume a total responsibility for the child during the working day, whenever both parents were working, through an extended service program which carried past the regular school session.

The Vanport City school was originally operated by Columbia School District No. 33, of Multnomah County, but is now a separate entity known as Vanport City District No. 33. The administration consists of city superintendents, assistant superintendents, and a teaching and business staff of approximately 300 persons. It began its existence in March, 1943, in several apartments, with practically no regular class-room equipment.

The Federal Government, under deficit financing, provided ten modern buildings for the children of the community: six elementary buildings in two main centers, and four nursery school buildings at convenient locations about the city. Each elementary building has quarters for a kindergarten for five-year-old children, giving facilities for nursery school, kindergarten, and elementary education. High school students are sent to Portland high schools at district expense.

The school system offers, in addition to the usual education procedure, health supervision, under the direction of the public health department, hot meals in modern school cafeterias, planned by competent dieticians, free text books, and extended service for the hours added to the regular class-room periods. Recreation, hobby groups, sports, games, and other health and character-building activities give variety to the extended service program. Vanport schools necessarily remain in session during the summer, with the emphasis placed on recreation of the sport fields and play areas, and special activities,

such as arts, handicrafts, music, and home-making.

The child care program grew out of a situation in which the child had been deprived of a natural home environment by the employment of both parents, or by a parent obliged to sleep during the day. The service is standard, with directed games, indoor and outdoor play periods, lunches, singing, rest hours, and health observation directed by child specialists. Play and other equipment is in miniature to meet the levels of children from two to five years old.

The public health and hygiene programs of the project, conducted by the Portland and Multnomah County departments of health, provide public health clinics, administer first aid, carry on educational services, and provide for bedside nursing, as of any other normal community.

Seven community or social buildings, including two major centers, and 15 sport fields and play areas invite community life and provide for community activities. The main buildings are equipped with modern recreation and sports apparatus, and are available for the use of the young and the old. At one time a building was set aside for the exclusive use of high school students, and provided study rooms for their convenience, and one was maintained for children from three to fourteen years.

An organized recreation program operates in these facilities on a year-round basis, with indoor and outdoor activities supervised formerly by recreation leaders under the direction of the Municipal Recreation division of the Portland Bureau of Parks, in cooperation with the Project Services Department of the Housing Authority. In January, 1945, the Vanport City Recreation Association, Inc., a non-profit organization, was formed by a group of men and women residents of Vanport City or identified with the city to supervise the recreation program.

Because the program has been adapted to industrial shifts, it was often continuously sustained through the twenty-four hours. It embraces organized sports, athletics, social affairs, with dancing, games, and theatricals; also classes in a wide range of subjects, such as arts and crafts, home nursing, nutrition, drama, and music, and juvenile recreation and activities in character building through clubs and youth organizations.

A separate library building has been provided, said to be the only library building in a public war housing project in the United States. It is operated and maintained by the Portland Public Library, which also distributes books for children through Vanport School libraries.

When the influx of war workers began to reach Portland the churches of the city started a plan for the religious needs of the anticipated housing population. They approached the problem through Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations. The work of the Protestant group, inter-denominational in character, has been coordinated through the United Church Ministry, of the Catholic group, through the Catholic Committee, and of the Jewish group, through the Jewish Council. A staff of resident ministers and field secretaries have charge of the program at Vanport City, and in the absence of church buildings on the project, community buildings have served. The church program, including Bible and Sunday schools, young people's meetings, and choir work, has probably called out the greatest community participation, next to general recreation.

Prominent welfare organizations are active at Vanport City, though their programs are also available in Portland. To name but a few, they include the city, county, and state departments of Public Health, Council of Social Agencies, Juvenile Court, United Church Ministry, American Red Cross, Office of Civilian Defense, Child Guidance Clinic, U. S. G., Federation of Community Clubs and Councils, National Youth Agencies (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, 4-H Clubs, Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C.A., Catholic Youth Organization), State Vocational Education Department, County Agricultural Extension Office, and Victory Garden Committees.

While not all of these organizations are strictly welfare in their purpose, their fields merge with other activities for the betterment of community living.

File

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

It has been the desire and the responsibility of the Portland Housing Authority to operate and maintain its war housing projects in such a manner as will insure the comfort, safety, health, and morale of the war workers and their families. Uprooted Americans from the Blue Ridge and the Ozarks to the Sierras, and the plains between, from the Florida Keys to Puget Sound, have formed a population exposed to new conditions, new climates, and new work. Not yet integrated into a strange community, the migrants have also been exposed to loneliness, homesickness, and discouragement, according to temperament. They have presented many problems and not of physical housing alone. Four walls and a roof were not enough. Much more was essential to keep a scarcely natural community on an even keel. The Authority attempted to meet its obligation in the wider interpretation of housing by making available to the war workers the customary community services in the fields of health, recreation, education, welfare, and morale.

During project construction, or closely following, as the needs became apparent, community facilities were provided. As houses were required for the men and women of the production forces, so were schools and nurseries for their children, and social centers for leisure-time activities and meeting places for clubs and church organizations. Shopping arrangements for food and clothing and other family supplies were imperative in certain of the more remote projects, and theater, library, and cafe privileges desirable.

To bring facilities, programs, and tenants together required an expansion of management by a special department dealing chiefly with community activities and services for war workers and their families. It is called the Project Services Department, and is in charge of a director who acts as public relations medium and as technical adviser to the management in affairs concerned with his department. Many projects have their own Project Services Advisers, who act as coordinators for the various community activities.

in the fields of education, public health, recreation, welfare, and religion, and who correlate the work of the various public and private agencies, and bring their programs to the attention of the residents. Dealing with the human side of the equation they are also accountable for participation of the project residents in all the social and community living provided. The attempt has been primarily to stimulate project residents to generate their own community activities and social affairs, and to assume leadership responsibility for themselves and the younger people.

Since no community remains static the daily scene is dynamic. The purpose has been to keep the approach to the community and its problems through Project Services flexible and ready to meet the changing demands. Community services in general, however, remain fairly constant, having grown out of normal community living. The war migrants, wherever possible, have been directed into established programs of the metropolitan area, such as the Y's, Boy and Girl scouts, municipal recreation, and church organizations, though it may have called for expansion of these in certain directions. In other cases where expansion was not feasible, additional services have been established, as in the new school district for Vanport City, which grew in ninety days from a district of one small school building to one of five large elementary schools, with an attendance, including kindergarten and nursery schools, of close to 5000 children.

To keep an immediate contact with the residents in many projects, neighborhood councils, or tenant councils, have been created to help solve community problems and to make pleasanter living conditions. Mimeographed bulletins are weekly features in many projects to keep the residents in touch with the program of events.

### Project Services

#### Education

In the majority of projects education does not become a separate service since the children attend the public schools of Portland, and in many projects child care is also under the jurisdiction of School District No. 1. Vanport City, lying outside this district

becomes an exception, with the nation's largest school system within a public war housing project, and of itself a unique institution. Traditional educational methods and routines for this community have been abandoned to meet the needs of nearly 5000 war-isolated children. The school program is built around the idea of a total responsibility for the child during the working day rather than the old-style schedule of a partial oversight, when one or both parents remained in the home.

The Vanport school was originally operated by Columbia School District No. 33, of Multnomah County, but is now a separate entity known as Vanport City District No. 33. The administration consists of superintendent, assistant superintendents, and a teaching and business staff of approximately 300 persons.

The Vanport schools began their existence in March, 1943, in several apartments, with practically no regular class-room equipment. Eventually they were organized to meet problems, which in many ways were peculiar to the community.

Specifically, a large number of children were concentrated in a small area, and without the influence of stable family and community life. The schools had to take on many of the functions normally of the home and community by providing food, health, observation, rest, and friendly security for the child.

Care of these children of working parents had to be given for at least ten and one-half hours every day of the week until the shipyards changed to a six-day week, and many home-centered activities, and those of children's groups apart from the school, were assumed. Both day and night care for pre-school children had to be arranged in the child service centers for children of working or sleeping parent. Inadequate play areas during the rainy months also forced the schools to give greater attention to indoor recreation.

Vanport schools attempted to meet these problems with school facilities, that were at first only about 50 percent adequate. Approximately 4000 children were in daily attendance in the elementary schools, with facilities for only 2500 at a time, making a two-shift program a necessity.

The Federal Government, under deficit financing, has provided modern buildings for the children of Vanport City. Though temporary in purpose, they have been fully equipped and staffed to offer a modern program of education.

Four nursery school buildings and five elementary buildings in two main centers were originally provided. The sixth elementary building was opened early in 1945. Each elementary building has quarters for a kindergarten for five-year-old children, giving the war community facilities for nursery school, kindergarten, and elementary education. High school students are sent to Portland high schools at district expense.

School services, in addition to the usual education procedure, include health supervision under the direction of the public health department, hot meals in modern school cafeterias, planned by competent dieticians, free text books, and extended service, for the hours added to the normal school session. Recreation, hobby groups, sports, games, and other health and character promoting activities give variety to the extended service program. Vanport schools necessarily remain in session during the summer, with the emphasis placed on recreation of the sports fields, special activities, such as music, arts, handicrafts, and home-making, and on fundamental school subjects.

#### Child Care Service

The child care program grew out of a situation in which the child has been deprived of a natural home environment by the employment of both parents, or a parent obliged to sleep during the day. The service is standard, with directed games, indoor and out-door play periods, lunches, singing, and rest hours under child specialists. Health observation is also included. Facilities are in miniature to meet the levels of children from two to five years old, though care may be extended in either age direction to meet existing demands.

The service consists of a program in which every child is considered individually, for his best physical, mental, emotional, and social development. The nursery school was not meant to supplant the home, but rather to supplement it, in child development.



Child care centers, operated by the Vanport school system, are established at Vanport City, with four buildings, each with a capacity of 160 children, also at University Homes, Fulton Homes, and Guild's Lake, operated by School District No. 1. One Vanport center provides a twenty-four hour service, and the care of a registered nurse during sleeping hours. Limited child care is provided at other projects, where the need is apparent.

### Health

The health and hygiene programs of the projects are under control of the Portland and Multnomah County department of Public Health, which conduct public health clinics, administer first aid, carry on educational services, and provide for bedside nursing, as of any other normal community. Service is offered in the fields of communicable disease, tuberculosis, and venereal disease control, immunization, maternity nursing, infant and pre-school hygiene, school and adult hygiene, morbidity, crippled children, and general sanitation.

Vanport City has its own Infirmary in addition to the public health service. In other projects the health service is offered in clinics, usually held in the administration buildings, and by direct means. The Vanport City Infirmary is built in two wings, 400 feet in length, with a connecting cross section, about a landscaped court. The structure provides space for 136 beds in the medical, maternity, children's, and isolation wards, with service rooms, diet kitchens, offices, laboratories, and a surgery to accommodate an adequate staff of doctors, nurses, and attendants. Aside from the public health section it is privately operated.

### Recreation

An organized recreation program operates on a year-round basis, with indoor and outdoor programs supervised by recreation leaders under the direction of the recreation division of the Portland Bureau of Parks, in cooperation with the Project Services department of the Housing Authority, except at Vanport City, which has its recreation programs administered by a local group known as the Vanport City Recreation Association, Inc.. Because it was adapted to industrial shifts for certain projects, the program at times was nearly continuously sustained through a twenty-four hour period.

In 19 special community buildings at Vanport City, East Vanport, Guild's Lake, Parkside Homes, University Homes, Columbia Villa, St. Johns Woods, Fairview Homes, and Slavin Courts (Fulton Homes), and in nearby sports and play areas, the program is carried on. Meeting and social rooms are provided at Fir Court, Hudson Street Homes, Bellairs Court, and Fessenden Homes. Dekum Court has access to Air Base recreation, and other projects have the advantages of adjacent city parks, or other community facilities.

Project buildings are equipped with modern recreation and sports apparatus, and are available for the use of young and old. The program embraces organized sports, athletics, social affairs, with dancing, games, and theatricals; also classes in a wide range of subjects, such as arts and crafts, home nursing, nutrition, drama, and music, and juvenile recreation and character-building activities through clubs and welfare organizations.

The Portland Public Library provides book service in community buildings, except in Vanport City where a separate building has been provided, the only library building in a public war housing project in the United States. The Portland Library also distributes children's books through the Vanport schools.

Vanport City has seven community or social buildings, including one major building containing lounges, meeting, club, and game rooms, kitchens, lockers, and a spacious gymnasium, with stage and collegiate floor, that was considered one of the most complete facilities in the Northwest. A second community building is constructed on the same plan but to a smaller scale. Numbered among recreation features are 15 sport fields and play areas.

### Churches

When the influx of war workers began to reach Portland the churches of the city started a plan for the religious needs of the anticipated housing population. They agreed to approach the problem through Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish organizations. The work of the Protestant group, inter-denominational in character, was coordinated through the United Church Ministry, of the Catholic group, through the Catholic Committee, and of the