

WASHINGTON
1944
Cities Vancouver

Aerial View, McLoughlin Heights

WASHINGTON
PAMPHLET

A Tale of **6** CITIES

The Annual Report of the Housing
Authority of Vancouver, Washington

FEBRUARY, 1944

A Home Front Achievement

THE NATION LOOKS UPON Vancouver today as a proving ground of American enterprise and initiative. Our community has made one of the most remarkable contributions to the war effort of any city of comparable size in the United States, and it will continue, until Victory is achieved, to lend every ounce of its civic energy to the paramount task before us.

Public housing is inseparably linked with the destiny of the community and its war industries. No report on our housing program can be complete without reference to those industries for which the emergency housing was designed.

The record of the Kaiser shipyards in Vancouver is unexcelled anywhere in the land, and the fighting ships that are being built with such unbelievable speed already have played a major role in the shifting of the war from one of desperate defense to one of crushing relentless offense. At this writing 10 Liberty ships, 30 LST's and 30 airplane carriers have slid into the Columbia River from the Vancouver yards, and 20 more carriers are being rushed on the present contract. Another large contract is expected for the local plant in the near future.

The Aluminum Company of America, employing but a fraction of the manpower of the shipyards, also has a proudful record. Enough aluminum was produced last year in Vancouver to build 30,000 fighter planes.

Bonneville Administration, employing some 350 men and women in its J. D. Ross substation in Vancouver, is facilitating the flow of electric energy to our war industries; our local lumber and plywood mills have turned out unnumbered millions of feet of forest products; our railroads are handling the greatest traffic volume in their history; our service industries, augmented by commercial facilities in the housing areas, have been equal to the challenge of a community ballooned into three times its normal size.

Your Housing Authority, born in the dark days following Pearl Harbor, was charged with the greatest responsibility ever before to face an organization of its kind, namely, to bring into being six new war-worker cities, capable of providing shelter and necessities of life for the 45,000 new residents who were to make possible Vancouver's production record. This housing development is one of the two largest in the nation, sharing honors with Portland, Ore., across the river, and dividing with Portland and Clackamas county, Ore., nearly nine per cent of all the public war housing in the United States. The way in which the Vancouver Housing Authority has fulfilled its obligation is the subject of this report, made on the second anniversary of the inception of the Authority.

Following the appointment of the Housing Authority in February, 1942, work was started on planning, and in six weeks the first contracts had been let. The speed with which raw land was conjured into cities, complete with their own water, sewage and electric distribu-

tion systems, their own stores and public buildings, was equaled only by the initiative and enterprise with which our loyal staff tackled the job. Every one "played wya over his head" in those tense days; and because of it, failure never succeeded in catching up with any of them.

With the opening of Ogden Meadows August 24, 1942, and McLoughlin Heights 30 days later, the first deep inroads were made in Vancouver's serious housing shortage. By January of 1943 the initial building program was "over the hump" with 14,000 persons living in the two projects, and since then we have been able to keep ahead of the influx of workers. The second phase of the building program—the row houses—began in February, 1943, and was completed last fall, and today 41,000 men, women and children are living in our projects. There is a comfortable surplus of housing for future needs.



FRANK CRUTSINGER
Director Region IX, FPHA

The projects in Vancouver were built by and are the property of the Federal Public Housing Authority.

They are operated by the local Housing Authority under a lease agreement, the Housing Authority serving as the government's agent, to collect the rents, maintain the properties and provide other necessary services. The total cost of these projects is over \$40,000,000. Thumbnail sketches of these "six cities" are given below:

1 MCLOUGHLIN HEIGHTS, 4000 demountable temporary houses, 500 permanent houses, and 1586 temporary row-house units, a total of 6086 units. The first demountables were occupied September 23, 1942, the first permanents April 8, 1943, and the first of the row houses July 14. The Boulevard Shopping Center was opened January 22, 1943, and the Mill Plain Shopping Center July 1. The Heights Community Center, including administration offices, medical center and community facilities, was occupied May 15, 1943, the Mill Plain community center September 22, and the Harney Hill center November 26. The three schools were opened September 7, 1943, and operate on two shifts. A fourth school is under construction. McLoughlin Heights is the largest project of its kind in America. It covers 1098 acres, contains 60 miles of streets, and has a capacity of 25,000 persons.

2 OGDEN MEADOWS, the 1992-unit war apartment project, was built for FPHA by Kaiser Company, and accepted its first tenants August 24, 1942. It contains furnished quarters for childless couples and single persons. Occupying 159 acres, it will house approximately 5500 men and women. The commercial center was opened March 1, 1943, and the community building, which also contains a cafeteria and medical



ABOVE: Members of the City Commission of Vancouver, Washington; left to right: Commissioner Fred Sinclair, Mayor John Hogg and Commissioner J. L. Rasmussen.

TELEPHONE 3822 (Downtown, City, Block 7281)
Housing Authority of the City of Vancouver
 D. ELWOOD CAPLES, Chairman FRED WARK, Vice-Chairman
 Commissioners: EARL N. ANDERSON E. J. KELLER REV. WALTER GIVENS
 W. K. PEERY, Executive Director
 Administration Building,
 McLaughlin Heights,
 VANCOUVER, WASH.
 February 9, 1944
 In reply refer to

Honorable John A. Hogg, Mayor
 and Members of the City Commission
 City of Vancouver, Washington

Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

The members of the Housing Authority of the City of Vancouver are pleased to submit this report of our activities and progress from the time of our appointment two years ago until the present time. This is in accordance with the requirements of the Washington Housing Authorities Law (Chapter 23, Session Laws, 1939), Section 24.

The success of the war housing program under our direction is due in no small part to the co-operation we have received from the Mayor and Commissioners, and from the other local agencies with which we have enjoyed such splendid relations.

Respectfully submitted,

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
 CITY OF VANCOUVER

[Signature]
 D. Elwood Caples, Chairman

BELOW: The Vancouver Housing Authority; seated, left to right: E. J. Keller, Earl N. Anderson, Chairman D. Elwood Caples, Vice-Chairman Fred Wark, and the Rev. Walter Givens. Standing, W. K. Peery, executive director.





The administration-community center pictured above houses the central offices of the Housing Authority. This building has been called the finest of its kind on any U. S. war housing project.



A group of permanent homes on Harney Hill, just west of McLoughlin Heights. There are 500 such houses on this project. Well-built, with plastered interiors, and equipped with electrical appliances, they are designed to remain after the war.



Typical McLoughlin Heights row houses. These are built on concrete slabs, are equipped with coal ranges and heaters, and are completely furnished. Designed to conserve on critical materials, they are intended for temporary emergency use only.

center, March 15. A junior high school, for children from nearby projects, is under way adjacent to Ogden Meadows.

3 FRUIT VALLEY HOMES, a 300-unit permanent project, was opened on January 19, 1943. Shortly afterward, construction began on 200 units of row house accommodations which were opened July 9. The project's shopping center served its first patrons August 31, and its community building was occupied October 15. An elementary school is now under construction. This project will accommodate a maximum of 2000 persons.

4 FOURTH PLAIN VILLAGE opened its 200 units of permanent houses February 18, 1943. Its community building was occupied October 1. It is the only project wholly within the city limits of Vancouver.

5 BAGLEY DOWNS, 2100-unit row house project, was opened September 1, 1943, and its commercial and community centers a few days later. An elementary school is under construction. This project will house 8000 persons.

6 BURTON HOMES, final project to be completed, contains 1500 row house units, and was opened September 13, 1943. An elementary school and a community center are under construction. Capacity of this project is 6000.

The dwelling units have been completed on all projects. All community buildings are finished, except the one at Burton Homes. Two child care centers at Burton Homes and the five schools mentioned above, are still under construction. Unfinished business on McLoughlin Heights includes the completion of concrete sidewalks along the principal thoroughfares, the planting of lawns around two thirds of the dwellings, and the surfacing of the main streets. The last two projects will start as soon as weather permits. Additional child care centers and a theatre for McLoughlin Heights and a theatre at Bagley Downs have been planned, but congress failed to appropriate funds, and their construction may be postponed indefinitely.

We are just now beginning to use the new 8,000,000 gallon reservoir which was built by FPHA on McLoughlin Heights to serve Bagley Downs, Ogden Meadows and Burton Homes in the valley to the north. Together with the 12 water towers and the original Ogden Meadows reservoir on McLoughlin Heights, and the tower at Fruit Valley, the Housing Authority has a total storage capacity of 10,400,000 gallons, which is ample for our 12,389 units, and also the Hudson House and Columbia House dormitories which are served by it. With its eight wells and miles of line, this system could play an important part in the post-war development of the area.

Our staff has been inspired by the way most of our tenants have adjusted themselves to their new homes. Coming here from every state and territory, all had a problem of one kind or another to overcome. Many of those who had lived in better-than-average homes before the war found the temporary war housing a little disappointing. Nearly everyone was a stranger to

this community, and most of them were unused to the climate. The hardest condition they had to overcome was loneliness. Consequently, our turnover has been large. On the other hand, thousands of our transplanted families have stayed with it and have taken root, and today they are finding a large degree of happiness here. Many hundreds of them are buying homes, small farms and unimproved property in this area, and will be fine additions to our post-war citizenry.

The problems of managing these communities have been aggravated by three factors: the tremendous size

Most Units Temporary of the projects, the temporary nature of the construction and the differences in the standard of the accommodations.

The 1000 permanents, equipped with electric ranges and refrigerators, are considered choice. The 4000 temporary demountables, detached and electrically equipped, are desirable. The 5386 furnished row house units, built last of all when materials were extremely critical, are sub-standard. They are adequately furnished, but are equipped with coal ranges and "victory" ice boxes. Rooms are small and the density is too great for families unaccustomed to living close to their neighbors.

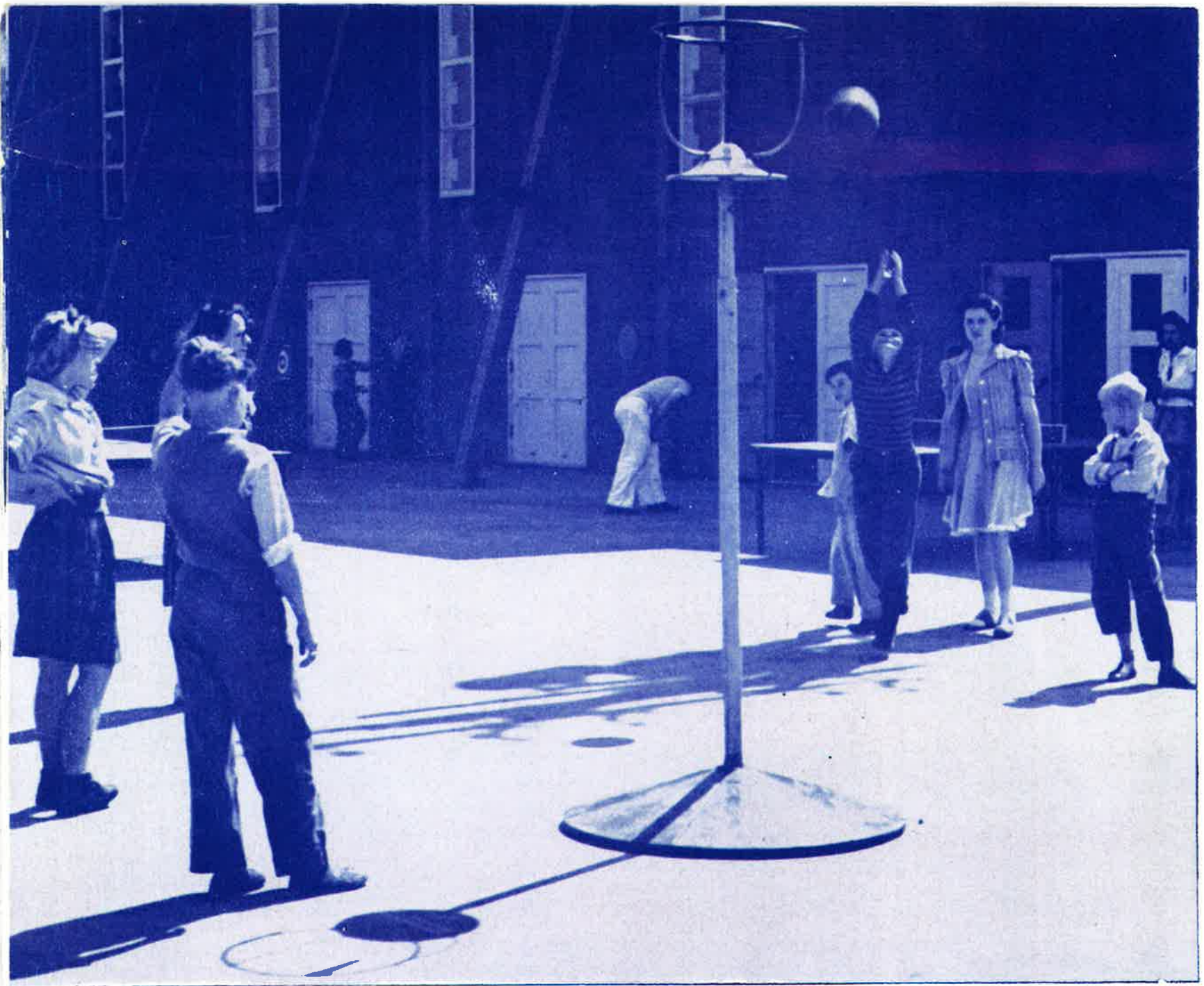
Fortunately the Lanham Act provides for the removal of all temporary dwellings within two years after the emergency, unless there is still need for some of them during the transition period.

We have taken the lead in the matter of tenant morale, and our recreation and community program, augmented by the well-organized staff of the Greater Vancouver Recreation Association with its federal grant, is one of the most complete and far-reaching on the Pacific coast. Our project services staff has made a realistic approach to the subject. It has frowned upon the "social worker" attitude. Instead, it is trying to make available to our people the kind of entertainment and community activities they were accustomed to in their former home towns.

It has taken time and education to encourage our tenants in the use of their community facilities, but we have now "broken the ice" and the buildings are becoming increasingly more popular as recreation centers. Last month's report of activities shows an average daily attendance of 3557 in all centers. Of this number 2703 were children. On some occasions as many as 6000 persons have made use of the centers in a single day.

The religious organizations have played a vital role in the field of morale. We have placed community buildings at their disposal for Sunday services. Resident pastors have been assigned to the larger projects, and visiting clergymen conduct regular services in all the others.

The school system, with which we enjoy the closest co-operation in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the youngsters, directs the extended day care program to provide wholesome activities for children during the



The recreation program on the Vancouver Housing projects has set the pace for the entire Pacific northwest. Shown above is an outdoor game known as "goal-bi" being played at the McLoughlin Heights center. These activities are moved during cold weather into the spacious gymnasium shown in the background.

The little folks (left) have a dandy time in this wading pool during the summer months. The pool is part of the McLoughlin Heights community center, and is carefully supervised. For the older children and adults on the housing projects, Vancouver's indoor pool in Memorial hall is available the year around.

half day they are not in school. Our community facilities are made available for this purpose.

A well-planned child care program has been developed by the schools for children of working mothers. Before the completion of child care centers on many of the projects, we permitted the use of dwelling units for the nursery program.

The schools have been faced by a serious shortage of classrooms, due to the delay in the construction of five new buildings to augment the three that were completed on the McLoughlin Heights project last summer. Construction is finally under way on the new buildings. Meanwhile, we have made available temporary classroom space in row house buildings in Burton Homes.

We are happy to report that the juvenile delinquency problem has been much less acute than we had anticipated, and we attribute this condition to the co-ordinated program of activities and the co-operation of law enforcement agencies. We have found also that the percentage of lawlessness among our adult tenants is at a low figure; lower, in fact, than most areas of comparable size.

The techniques that are being developed in community recreation on these and other similar housing projects, may well be setting a pattern for the post-war era. Recreation centers such as we have may become established institutions in every forward-looking city and town in America.

The Housing Authority maintains a staff of 575 employees on management. Of this number, 167 are on the office staffs, 300 in maintenance work, 66 in the fire department and 42 in the sheriff's force. Clark County Public Utility District has a payroll of 23 to provide the housing areas with electric energy and to repair and maintain appliances and equipment in accordance with the contract between the Authority and the District. We also have a contract with the county to maintain our streets.

A word about our staff. No organization has been blessed with a finer, more co-operative, more enterprising group of individuals. They came from almost every walk of life and every major occupation. The diversity of their backgrounds has enriched public housing with specialized knowledge and fresh techniques that are responsible for the success we are able to report in this document.

We have been informed by the Federal Public Housing Authority that the government will make payments in lieu of taxes to the city, county, school, and port districts for all housing projects under our direction. These payments will be based on the assessed valuation of the several projects, and the rate will correspond to the levies of each taxing body. Payments in 1944 will be based on the valuation January 1, 1943, and in 1945 on the basis of valuations January 1, 1944. Deductions will be made from these payments to reimburse the government for services provided by the Housing Authority, such as police protection.

In this type of war housing operation, all profits

made by the Housing Authority are paid to the government. Since the first project was opened 18 months ago, we have returned to the treasury \$500,000. This sum is necessarily small because the projects have just recently reached 90 per cent occupancy. In the year 1944, we expect to have a gross income of \$5,300,000, on the basis of 90 per cent occupancy, will expend \$2,800,000 for fuel, electricity, water, garbage collection, taxes, street upkeep, building maintenance, office overhead, and police and fire protection, and will return to the government \$2,500,000.

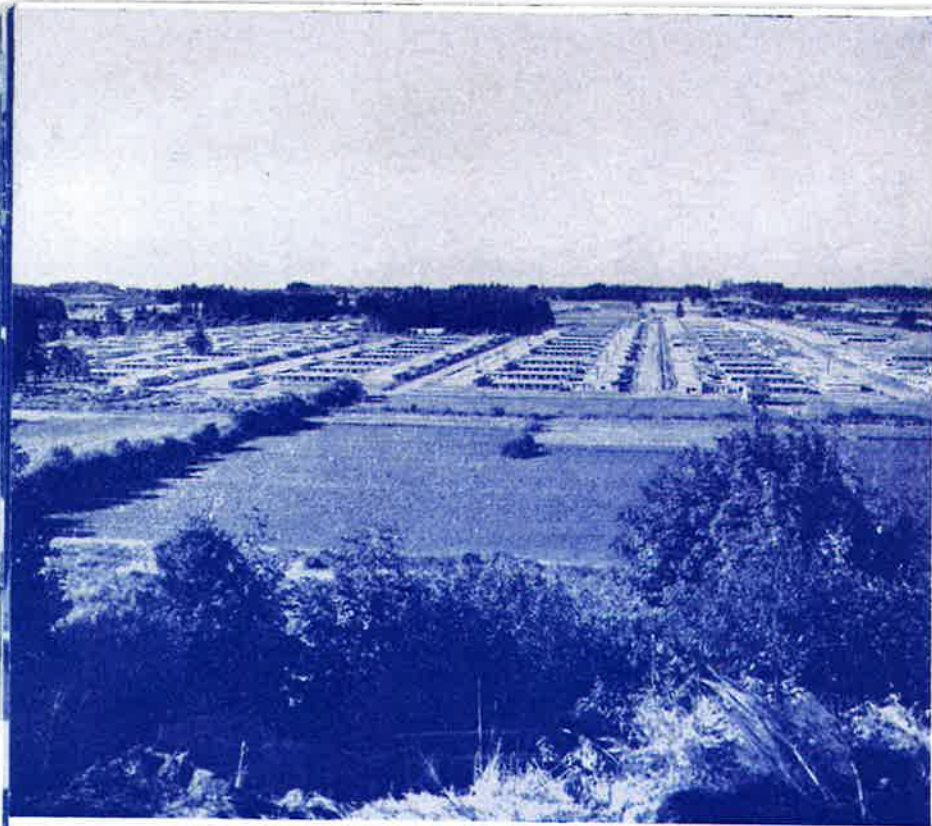
The Housing Authority is alert to the post-war problems inherent in this great housing development. Continuing studies are being made to determine the kind of problems we will face, and to develop concrete recommendations. So far as the physical aspects of the projects are concerned, the Lanham Act gives assurance that temporary units will not be left to deteriorate into slums and to depress real estate values. The disposition of the permanent homes is a matter which will depend a good deal upon local public opinion for the answer. There are three possibilities: (1) sell them to private speculators; (2) sell them to individuals; (3) sell them to the Housing Authority to operate for low-income families.

Another problem related to housing is that of homes for the thousands of new citizens who will want to remain here. If there is work for them, they will constitute a demand for homes such as Vancouver has never seen. Public housing can co-operate by retaining some of its temporary units until sufficient privately-constructed dwellings can be erected.

There is another field in which the Housing Authority and private enterprise can co-operate—the field of slum clearance. While Vancouver citizens have not been very aware of slum conditions, deterioration is in an advanced stage in several districts, and cannot be ignored much longer. The most reasonable solution so far advocated is for a public agency to purchase this property, by condemnation, if necessary, remove the buildings that cannot be remodeled, and put the property on the market as home sites. A subsidy would be required to underwrite any value that may still remain in the old buildings, but the load could be distributed so that it would not be burdensome. Further information on this matter is now being prepared, and will be placed at the disposal of interested officials.

In concluding this report, the Housing Authority wishes it understood that it entertains but one ambition—**“Ambitions”** to provide shelter for the thousands of individuals who have come to Vancouver to fight on the Production Front, and to operate the properties entrusted to it in a fair and efficient manner. Neither the members of the Board of Commissioners nor the staff have any desire to perpetuate public housing in Vancouver after the war beyond the very limited field suggested above. It should be our goal as a community to so gear our post-war economy that home ownership can become a reality for low-income families; that public assistance need never again be a major concern of our people.

FPHA Contributes To Taxing Bodies



Ogden Meadows, 2,000 unit war apartment project, unfolds in striking panorama from vantage points on McLoughlin Heights.

The Ogden Meadows community center includes recreational facilities, project offices, a cafeteria and medical wing.



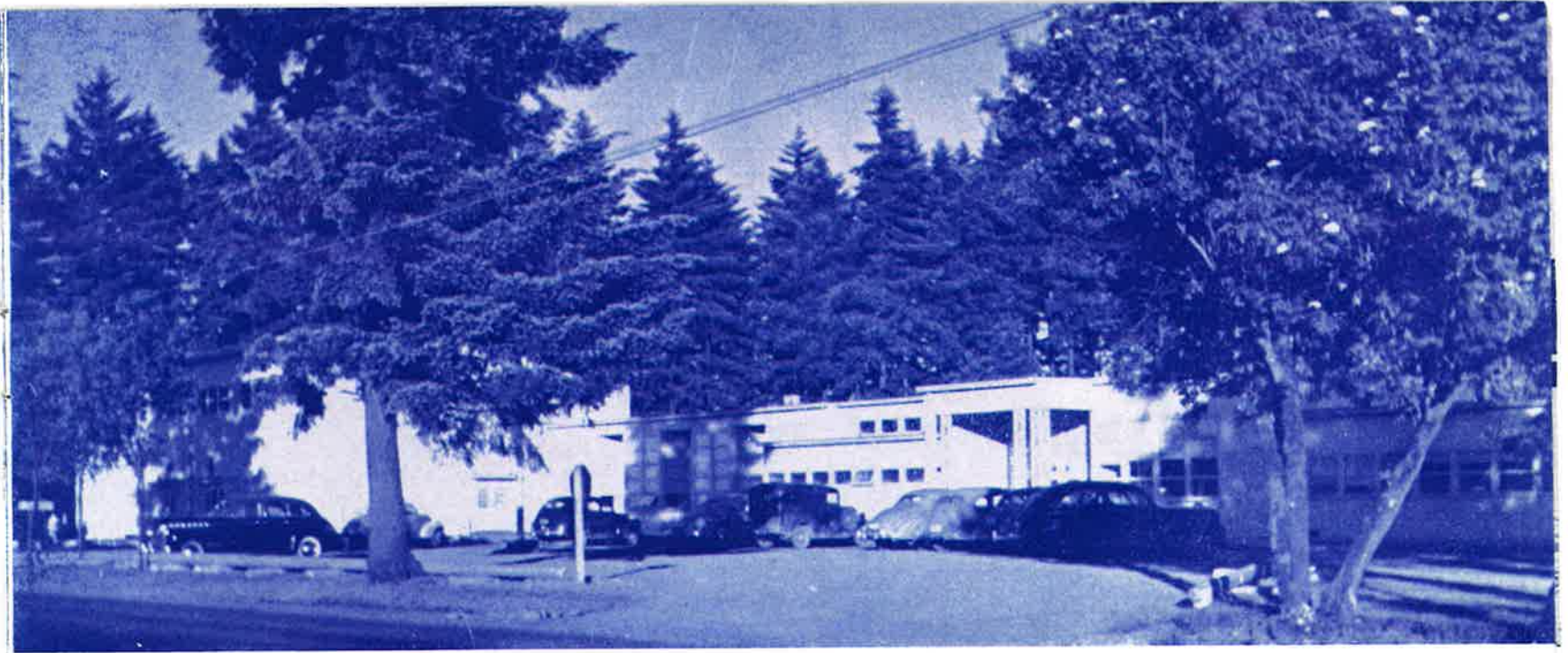
This evergreen park at Ogden Meadows is a popular recreation center for outdoor games and picnics during the summer.

A view of the 1500 unit Burton Homes housing project. This project is made up entirely of two-bedroom row-house dwellings.



A group of Ogden Meadows apartment buildings, as seen from the park. These buildings contain from eight to sixteen units.

Bagley Downs, 2100 unit row house project, is a complete city with shops, recreation facilities and essential city services.



Housing Authority of the City of Vancouver

GENERAL BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1943

ASSETS	LIABILITIES
CURRENT ASSETS	
CASH ON HAND AND IN BANK	
Administration Fund	\$180,953.22
Security Deposit Fund	56,904.48
Petty Cash Fund	349,431.34
Change Funds	7,493.75
	\$ 594,782.79
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	
Tenants Accounts (Schedule No. 1) ...	21,271.15
Sundry (Schedule No. 2)	148,678.19
	169,949.34
PREPAYMENTS	
Insurance	2,697.66
General Stores	72,222.88
General Stores—P. U. D.	16,746.34
Fuel	8,539.71
Paint	10,724.61
Returnable Containers	77.00
	111,008.20
CLEARANCE ACCOUNTS	
Payroll Clearance	2,646.68
	11,008.20
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,217,355.62
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	
Administration Account Creditors	\$180,953.22
Quarterly Rent—F. P. H. A.	56,904.48
Advanced Funds—F. P. H. A.	349,431.34
Employees Bonds	7,493.75
	\$ 594,782.79
ACCRUED ACCOUNTS	
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	111,072.48
Withholding Tax	(1,518.40)
	109,554.08
PREPAID INCOME AND DEPOSITS	
Tenants Prepaid Rent	31,333.91
Tenants Security Deposits	118,320.00
	149,653.91
SURPLUS	
	363,364.84
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,217,355.62

Summary of Projects Under the Direction of the Housing Authority of Vancouver

(AS OF JANUARY 20, 1944)

PROJECT NAME	DEVELOPMENT NUMBER	TOTAL UNITS	TYPE OF UNIT	COMPLETED	OCCUPIED
McLoughlin Heights	Wash. 45-122	4,009	Demountables	4,009	3,950
McLoughlin Heights	Wash. 45-121	502	Permanents	502	501
McLoughlin Heights	Wash. 45-129				
	Wash. 45-173				
	Wash. 45-174	1,586	Row Houses	1,586	1,481
Ogden Meadows	Wash. 45-128	1,976	Apartments	1,876	1,859
Fourth Plain Village	Wash. 45-124	200	Permanents	200	200
Fruit Valley Homes	Wash. 45-125	300	Permanents	300	298
Fruit Valley Homes	Wash. 45-172	200	Row Houses	200	139
Bagley Downs	Wash. 45-175	2,100	Row Houses	2,100	1,709
Burton Homes	Wash. 45-176	1,500	Row Houses	1,500	979
		12,373		12,373	11,116

Acknowledgments:

Cover photo by Photo Arts for Kaiser Company. Project pictures by D. W. Edmundson, Vancouver Housing Authority. Editing by Milt Bona, VHA.

Permanent units at the Fruit Valley Homes housing project are similar in design to those at Fourth Plain (below) and at Harney Hill. The project is composed of 300 such units, and also 200 row house dwellings. The project serves the Aluminum Company of America and other war industries in west Vancouver.



Fourth Plain Village, a 200-unit permanent project, is the only public housing area located entirely within the city limits. This project has a fine community center where tenants enjoy parties and attend classes in the arts. Many of the tenants of this project are employed by Bonneville Administration.

Boulevard Shopping Center, McLoughlin Heights, is the largest of five commercial areas in Vancouver's housing projects. Here under one roof are food, dry goods, drugs, clothing and service shops and a branch post office. Other shopping centers are located at Bagley Downs, Ogden Meadows, Fruit Valley Homes and in the eastern section of McLoughlin Heights.

