

CHAPTER FIVE
OUTER WORLD
HOUSING IN NEWARK

The Negro migration from the South to the North was accompanied by enthusiasm, but also by a serious lack of discretion and consideration of racial problems, but despite the enthusiasm, settling in the North was a serious problem living in urban industrial centers and changing rural and small-town workers into city dwellers and industrial workers, required a vast reorganization of the Negro's life.

The first and most prominent problem facing these new arrivals was housing. The Negroes were housed in the older parts of the city and held there by both economic and racial considerations. As these areas did not expand rapidly enough to keep pace with the sudden population growth, the result was over-crowding, high rents, and accentuation of such physical problems as sanitation and of all the social problems growing out of the close association of all types of characters.

The large influx of Negroes into Newark tended to increase racial segregation by enlarging the Negro group within the Third Ward and other Negro districts, and by intensifying white opposition to any attempt by Negroes to enter new neighborhoods. The bad effects of these housing conditions were more apparent to the social workers than to the Negroes themselves, most of whom especially those from rural areas had always lived in houses equally bad or even worse. But in the South there was not the congestion, the exposure to disease, the severe weather, and the other hazards associated with northern urban life.

To determine the housing conditions under which our respondents lived, several questions were asked and certain observations made during each interview. We found that of the hundreds of homes visited more than half were in need of

major repairs and were by no means fit for human habitation. More than a quarter needed minor repairs and somewhat less than a quarter were in reasonably good condition. As to the number of families in each household, a little more than three fourths of the homes were occupied by only one family, a little less than one fifth by two families, and a very small number by three or more families. Exactly half of the interviewees reported that from four to six persons lived in their respective households; about one third reported from one to three persons; and about twenty percent reported six or more persons. Investigating the number of rooms occupied by these families, we found that slightly less than two thirds lived in four or five rooms, that almost one fifth lived in from one to three rooms, and that the remainder lived in more than six rooms.

Negroes have always lived in all parts of Newark but the greatest concentration of Negroes is in the Third, Seventh, and Fourteenth Wards. White tenants have seldom moved from decent dwellings in this section until the houses are completely dilapidated. Only when no other group will rent them are they made available to Negroes.

Following the inspection of 500 homes and the interviewing of 1,500 families during 1917, the Sanitary Division of the Department of Health reported, with regard to migrant Negro families, that "the main difficulty seemed to be the shortage of adequate accomodation for families." Since no white landlord wanted the Negro as a tenant at all, especially in any modern house, serious overcrowding was unavoidable; there were simply not enough houses to go around. The resulting living conditions were reported to be contrary to all sanitary laws. At the same time, the white landlords took the opportunity to extort high rents \$15 and \$16 a month in some cases for miserable shacks and cellars.

When such conditions were found, the Department of Health immediately ordered their discontinuance. The chief result of this practice were to drive the Negro families from one undesirable place to another, though in some in-

stances improved quarters were found. It had been their observation that when these people were given a better type of dwelling, their cleanliness and general habits of living improved.

The solution given to the problem of Negro housing at that time was the suggestion that wooden houses be built for their accomodation, to give them a chance and to treat them like human beings. It was suggested that some capitalists in the city who willing, to meet this great emergency by providing money to build modern Negro tenements. With the provision of adequate housing accomodation, there was also suggested that liberal propaganda for the ignorant and for the vicious and careless prosecution in the law courts for the violation of the sanitary code accompany improved housing.

The plan to build wooden houses did not materialize, as wooden houses are not only fire hazards, but merely temporary structures at best. Since the Negro is a permanent part of the population, permanet housing should be provided for him. The Prudential Apartments in the Third Ward, while housing only a small number of Negroes in Newark, have indicated one approach to the solution. It does not, however, solve the problem for all Negroes, especially those lowest in the economic scale.

After a survey of the Third Ward in September, 1930, the Urban League reported that the investigation of more than sixty tenements in which Negroes were living showed that on the average, 5.4 persons were occupying each room. In many instances, a community toilet served two or more families and most of these facilities were not in working order. These rooms rented at \$12 to \$15 per month for whites, while Negroes paid from \$30 to \$50 for the same rooms.

Many feel that the trend among the Negro population away from the city to the suburbs is as the a result and solution to the need for room. This again does not aid the Negroes of lower economic levels. We should be concerned with providing employment which will make it possible for the mass

of Negroes to live in decent homes, rather than attempting to serve the interests of the real-estate owner in spite of the low salaries of Newark's Negro population. One should not disregard the fact that even the Negroes whose salaries are sufficient to provide for good housing are nevertheless forced to live in the least desirable sections of the city.

In 1934, the Newark Department of Health made a household survey as part of the program of the Civil Works Administration. The results showed that 8,558 families, consisting of 57,636 persons, were living under overcrowded conditions, the majority of them in the slum districts. Similarly, in 1937, another survey was directed toward housing conditions in the Third Ward of Newark, with the purpose of determining the relationship between housing conditions and rates of morbidity and mortality in this area.

The high points in the survey were the following:

1. The total number of houses and other buildings surveyed was 2,476, of which 2,010 were dwellings.
2. Major repairs were needed by 54.2 percent, while 14.8 percent were unfit for habitation.
3. Eighty percent of the dwellings were infested with rats, mice or vermin.
4. Seventy percent of the buildings were built before 1902.
5. Sanitary violations existed in 1,894 of the dwellings - 94 percent of the total.
6. Tuberculosis cases reported were four times as frequent as in the rest of the city, and the syphilis cases reported were six times more frequent.

The findings of these two surveys emphasized the very definite need of a slum clearance program for the city of Newark. As a result of the publicity given to these surveys and of efforts by various agencies interested in better housing, the necessary state legislation was enacted under the provisions of the Wagner-Stegall act. In Newark a housing authority was created with power to finance, plan, supervise the construction of, and maintain low-rent housing and slum-clearance projects.

The Newark Housing Authority planned a \$14,000,000 program to pro-

vide homes for 2,469 Newark families in six separate projects. Ninety percent of this sum was to be loaned to the Newark Housing Authority by the United States Housing Authority. The remaining ten percent to be raised by the sale of bonds of the local authority. These obligations will be repaid by the rents to be collected and by annual contributions from the United States Housing Authority.

The following is a description and location of the projects:

- PENNINGTON COURT**-The Pennington Court apartments house 236 families. They occupy two square blocks at South and Pacific Streets, and were completed in February, 1940.
- SETH BOYDEN COURT**-The Seth Boyden Court will accommodate 530 families and will be located at Dreamland Park, running from Frelinghuysen Avenue to Weequahic Park. Completion is due this year (1940).
- BAXTER TERRACE**-Baxter Terrace will house 615 families, and will cover five squares blocks of slums, at Orange, Nesbit, Sheffield, and James Streets.
- STEPHEN CRANE VILLAGE**-Stephen Crane Village will be located near Branch Brook Park in the Silver Lake section, and will house 254 families. Completion is due this year (1940)
- ROANOKE AVENUE**-The Roanoke Avenue Apartments will house 434 families. They will occupy several blocks in the Ironbound factory section at Hawkins Street.
- LIVINGSTON STREET**-The Livingston Street Apartments will accommodate 300 families, replacing two blocks of slums and junk-yards in the Third Ward.

Space of from 1000 to 1800 square feet is being provided by the Housing Authority in each unit, to be devoted to a Health Center maintained by the Health Department. Conferences and clinics on the care of babies will be held and lectures on personal hygiene will be given. Chest examinations will be made, immunizations of children will be given, and some dental service may possibly be available. Space will be provided for visiting nurses and other welfare workers.

At the start of its work, the State Housing Authority divided the city of Newark into 14 divisions or units which it called "housing tracts." The Third Ward falls within the boundaries of Housing Tract 3. The Real Property Inventory report for 1934 defines the boundaries of tract 3 as: Jeliff Avenue, Waverly Avenue, Bergen Street, Springfield Avenue, Camden Street, 15th Avenue, Hunterdon

Street, South Orange Avenue, Bergen Street, Cabinet Street, Camden Street, West Market Street, Bergen Street, Sussex Avenue, City Railway, (Morris Canal Bed) Dickerson Street, Norfolk Street, Orange Street, City Railway, (Morris Canal Bed) 6th Avenue, East Clifton Avenue, Park Avenue Mount Prospect Avenue, Bloomfield Avenue, Webster Street, Crane Street, Broadway, Broad Street, State Street, High Street, Clinton Avenue, Avon Avenue to Jeliff Avenue.

Newark is one of the many cities throughout the State included in the Real Property Inventory financed by Emergency Relief Administration Funds. Field work for the survey was carried on by enumerators employed through local relief agencies. Information was gathered concerning all residential structures. Such facts as the condition of structures, the principal material used in construction, the sanitary facilities, the number of dwelling units, the number of occupants, heating apparatus, fuel and lighting are included in the tabulation.

Questions asked by the door-to-door enumerators regarding the condition of the structures and their facilities were formulated in collaboration with experts in the housing field, representatives of the building industry, building material manufacturers, plumbing and heating supply manufacturers, manufacturers of modern household appliances, and other experts in allied phases of the building industry. The information obtained should be of great value to those interested in civic development and improvement, as well as those interested in building maintenance and appliance manufacturing and distribution.

STRUCTURAL INFORMATION

The survey discloses that there are 7090 structures in this tract of which 026 are single family houses, 1309 two-family houses, and 2033 apartment houses; there are also numerous other types of dwellings. Fifty-seven percent of these 7090 structures were built between 1859 and 1893, 38% between 1894 and 1913, and less than 4% in the last 20 years facts which clearly indicate a downward trend of building activity.

The inventory reveals that of the 7090 structures 27% are reported as unfit for use, 19% as requiring minor repairs, 53% as requiring major repairs, and but a trifle over 1% as in good condition. There are 697 garages, providing a car capacity of 2012 automobiles, while 1999 cars are reported for this area.

OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY

The figures gathered by the survey show that of 23,745 dwelling units in this tract, 20,948 are rental units and 2797 are occupied by owners. The present occupants of these 23,745 dwelling units have maintained occupancy of the premises for varying periods: 18% for less than six months, 27% for 6 months to a year, 23% for two to four years, and 31% for 5 to 20 years or more. At the time of this survey 3453 dwelling units were reported as vacant, of which 43% had been unoccupied for five months or less, 35% for six months to a year, and 22% for two years or over. Of these vacant units about 5% were found to be in good condition, 15% in need of minor repairs, 51% in need of major repairs, and 29% unfit for use.

RENTS, VALUE AND TENURE

The rentals in this area are principally within the range of \$15.00 to \$24.99 per month. Of the 2797 owner-occupied dwellings 352 were found to be free from all financial encumbrances, 840 were mortgaged, and in 1605 cases this information was not obtained. Values of the properties were computed principally on one family, two family and row houses. It was disclosed that about 15% were valued from \$2000 to \$4999, 14% from \$5000 to 7499, and 11% above \$7500. No values were given on 58% of the dwellings enumerated.

LIVING QUARTERS AND FACILITIES

With regard to the number of occupants to each room, about 19% of the dwelling units are reported as being very spacious, 22% as spacious, 29% as adequate, and 29% as crowded. Extra families sharing dwelling units with the

usual occupants numbered 1219. Heating stoves were used for supplying heat in 69% of the structures; 25% used steam or vapor. The survey also shows that in 97% of the structures coal was the principal fuel used.

Sanitary conditions disclosed that 57% of the 23,745 dwelling units had hot and cold running water, and that in 43% only cold water was available. Water closets were adequately provided throughout this tract, although 2575 are located in the yards. Tubs or showers were in use in 53% of the homes, 47% were without these facilities. Electricity for lighting and gas for cooking are available in almost all of the dwelling units. Mechanical refrigeration is in use in about 5% of the homes.

A summation of the data available on housing in the Third Ward is as follows:

DATA FOR
NEWARK -- HOUSING TRACT NO. 3
ESSEX COUNTY- NEW JERSEY

(Preliminary figures subject to correction)

DATA CONCERNING STRUCTURES

STRUCTURES BY TYPE OF DWELLING

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Total Number.....	7,090.....	23,745
Single family.....	926.....	926
Row House.....	34.....	156
2 Family.....	1,309.....	2,617
3 Family.....	1,385.....	4,156
4 Family.....	80.....	319
Old Law Apartment.....	1,605.....	9,406
New Law Apartment.....	428.....	3,943
Hotel, Clubs, Rooming Houses..	116.....	2,222
Other Dwelling.....	1,207	

STRUCTURES BY AGE

<u>Number of Years</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>
1929 - Date	24
1924 - 1928	65
1919 - 1923	57
1914 - 1918	121
1909 - 1913	301
1904 - 1908	460
1899 - 1903	1,282
1894 - 1898	682
1884 - 1893	2,023
1885 and earlier.....	188
Not Reported	1
Total Structures.....	7,090

STRUCTURES BY CONDITION

<u>Condition of Structures</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>
Good.....	100
Needs Minor Repairs.....	1,343
Needs Major Repairs.....	3,748
Unfit for Use.....	1,899
Not Reported.....	0
Total Structures.....	7,090

DATA CONCERNING STRUCTURESSTRUCTURES BY PRINCIPAL MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION

<u>Material</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>
Wood.....	5129
Brick	1640
Stone	13
Stucco	275
Other	33
Not Reported	0
Total Structures	7090

GARAGES AND AUTOMOBILES

<u>Items</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
Structures with Private Garages	697
Structures without " "	6827
Not Reported as having or not having garages.....	106
Total Structures	7090
Car Capacity of reported garages.....	2012
Number of reported automobiles	1999

DATA CONCERNING DWELLING UNITS

<u>Items</u>	<u>OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Total Dwelling Units		23745
Rental Units (Includes vacant units for rent)		20948
Dwelling Units occupied by owner.....		2797
Occupied Dwelling Units.....		20292
Vacant Dwelling Units		3453
*Vacancy Percentage		14.7%
Extra families (sharing dwelling unit with usual occupants.		1219

DURATION OF OCCUPANCY BY PRESENT OCCUPANT

<u>Period Occupied</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
0-5 months	3677
6-11 months	2336
1 year	3199
2 years	2189
3 - 4 years	2590
5 - 9 years	2748
10-19 years	2429
20 years and over	1122
Not reported	2
Total Occupied	20292

DATA CONCERNING DWELLING UNITSDURATION OF OCCUPANCY

<u>Period Vacant</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
0 - 5 Months	1476
6 - 11 Months	555
1 year	671
2 years and over	749
Not reported	2
Total Vacant.....	3453

DWELLING UNITS BY RACE OF OCCUPANTS

<u>Occupied by</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling units</u>
White Persons	13144
Negro Persons.	7124
Persons of Other Races.....	15
Persons of Race not reported	9
Total Occupied	20292

CONDITION OF VACANT UNITS

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Good Condition	166
Need Minor Repairs.....	502
Need Major Repairs	1778
Unfit for Use	1007
Not reported	0
Total Vacant Units.....	3453

RENTAL UNITS BY MONTHLY RENTAL

<u>Monthly Rental Rate</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Under \$10.00	492
\$10.00 to \$14.99	3328
\$15.00 to \$19.99	7358
\$20.00 to \$24.99	4922
\$25.00 to \$29.99	2742
\$30.00 to \$39.99	1516
\$40.00 to \$49.99	313
\$50.00 to \$74.99	217
\$75.00 to \$99.99	12
\$100.00 to \$149.99	6
\$150.00 and over	1
Rent free or not reported	41
Total rental units (includes vacant units for rent)l.....	20948

DATA CONCERNING DWELLING UNITS (Con't)DWELLING UNITS BY PRINCIPAL TYPE OF HEATING APPARATUS

<u>Type of Heating Apparatus</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Hot Air Furnace	106	140
Steam or Vapor	1729	4632
Hot Water	35	58
Heating Stove.....	5212	18904
Other.....	3	5
Not Reported.....	3	5
None	2	1
Total	7090	23745

DWELLING UNITS - PRINCIPAL FUEL USED FOR HEATING

<u>Fuel</u>	<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Coal.....	6911	22837
Wood	58	145
Gas	11	28
Oil	97	710
Kerosene.....	11	20
Other	0	0
None	1	4
Not reported	1	1
Total	7090.....	23745

RUNNING WATER IN DWELLING UNITS

<u>Water</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Cold	10195
Hot and Cold	13545
None	7
Not Reported	1
Total	23745

LIGHTING FACILITIES IN DWELLING UNITS

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Gas	1233
Electricity	21427
Other or none	1084
Not Reported	1
Total	23745

COOKING FACILITIES IN DWELLING UNITS

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Gas	22630
Electricity	16
Other or none	1097
Not reported	2
Total	23745

DATA CONCERNING DWELLING UNITS (cont.)TENURE AND ESTIMATED PROPERTY VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED PROPERTIES

<u>Tenure</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Number occupied by Owner	2797
Owned Free	352
Mortgaged	840
Not Reported	1605
<u>Owner's Estimate Value</u>	
Under \$1,000	1
\$1,000 to \$1,499	13
\$1,500 to \$1,999	27
\$2,000 to \$2,999	78
\$3,000 to \$4,999	361
\$5,000 to \$7,499	379
\$7,500 to \$9,999	172
\$10,000 to \$14,999	103
\$15,000 to \$19,999	20
\$20,000 and over	14
Not reported	1629
Total	2797

DWELLING UNITS BY NUMBER OF ROOMS

<u>Rooms</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
1.....	48
2.....	1320
3.....	5165
4.....	8866
5.....	5411
6.....	1959
7 and over	976
Not reported	0
Total	23745

DWELLING UNITS BY NUMBER OF PERSONS PER ROOM

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Very spacious (To 1/2 person per room)	3849
Spacious (Over 1/2 to 3/4 persons per room).....	4386
Adequate (Over 3/4 to 1 person per room	5734
Crowded (Over 1 to 2 persons per room)	5796
Overcrowded (Over 2 to 3 persons per room).....	482
Greatly overcrowded (Over 3 persons per room).....	44
Persons per room not reported	1
Total Occupied	20292

DATA CONCERNING DWELLING UNITS (Con't)

WATER CLOSETS USED BY DWELLING UNITS

<u>Private Water Closets in Dwelling Unit T</u>	<u>Dwelling Units</u>
1.....	19168
2 and over	210
<u>Water Closets-Partial use-in Hall</u>	
1 used by two family units	1660
1 used by three dwelling units	104
1 used by four dwelling units	12
1 used by five or more family units	0
<u>Water Closets-Partial use-in Yard.</u>	
1 used by one Dwelling Unit.....	1302
1 used by two Dwelling Units	1078
1 used by three or more Dwelling Units	195
Not Reported.....	16
Total	23745

TUBS AND/OR SHOWERS IN DWELLING UNITS.

<u>Tubs and/or showers</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
None.....	11081
1.....	12588
2.....	75
Not Reported	1
Total	23745

MECHANICAL REFRIGERATION

None.....	22593
Electric	1148
Gas	2
Other	0
Not Reported	2
Total.....	23745

Despite the obstacles in the way of improved housing for Newark's Negroes, tremendous strides have been made since the days when wooden frame structures were suggested to relieve the congested slum areas. The projects erected by the Newark Housing Authority will provide the Negro of low income levels with acceptable living quarters at reasonable rentals. However, provisions have not yet been made for the Negroes of above-average income levels who can afford to pay rentals higher than those set by the new housing projects. These Negroes are still compelled to live in segregated areas, despite their economic adequacy to provide excellent quarters for themselves.

Discrimination directed against the Negro on the question of housing accommodations is but one phase of the many-sided pattern of social discrimination. It would seem that the inability of Negroes to enter all fields of endeavor and be paid the rates of other ethnic groups due to restrictions based on color, is a primary problem in the search for an answer to the sub-standard housing in Newark. However, even in cases where there is the ability to pay the required rentals, Negroes are not free to live where they choose. They are not accepted as neighbors in any section of the city where they desire to or can afford to live. Thus social segregation coupled with the problem of low incomes and resultingly low standards seem to have created a lasting problem for this city. This problem is being attacked on the practical side- but we have yet to witness the breaking-down of the particular social stigmata which are responsible for segregation.