

The Local Origins of a New Deal Housing Project The Case of Lockefield Gardens in Indianapolis

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The headline in the *Indianapolis Times* in early September 1933 came as a surprise to most residents of the Hoosier capital: “\$4,460,000 Loan Will Help City to Banish Slums.” The accompanying story, datelined Washington, D.C., explained that tentative approval had been given for federal funds to “finance elimination of slums and construction of low-cost housing units in the Indianapolis Negro section.” The proposed program, noted the reporter, had been “put through without publicity” by a planning committee of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, “the representatives of which manipulated secretly to obtain the approval of the federal works board.” The preliminary negotiations had been “so under cover” that even Democratic Congressman Louis Ludlow, who represented Indianapolis, had learned of the scheme only the day before.¹

The *Times* article marked the first open discussion of a public housing project that would eventually become known as Lockefield

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¹*Indianapolis Times*, September 8, 1933.

Garden Apartments, more commonly referred to simply as Lockefield Gardens. The enterprise remains relatively well-known today because of its long-term importance, both practically and symbolically, to the African American community of Indianapolis and also because of a historic preservation controversy that swirled around it in the late 1970s and early 1980s. (Ultimately, about two-thirds of the original project was razed; the remaining buildings were rehabilitated and incorporated into a new apartment complex.) Lockefield is invariably—and accurately—described as a federal project constructed under the auspices of the New Deal's Public Works Administration (PWA). What such a description omits, however, is recognition that Lockefield's origins involved considerable local initiative. An ad hoc committee of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce had in fact begun examining links between poor housing conditions and the provision of social services to city residents several months before the PWA's Housing Division even existed. Moreover, when the PWA did become involved its initial role was conceived as merely loaning money for the venture, not building the project itself. So although Lockefield Gardens is well known, the story of its local beginnings remains incomplete.

Housing, if not necessarily housing reform, constituted very much a front-burner issue in the early 1930s. Residential construction had peaked in the mid-1920s, several years before the stock market crash in 1929. Thereafter housing starts declined year after year. Construction of residential property dropped by 95 percent between 1928 and 1933, at the same time that non-farm foreclosures skyrocketed. Little wonder that one historian has referred to a "crisis in residential real estate" during these years. Herbert Hoover's President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership in December 1931 brought together housing experts from around the nation to respond to this dire situation. The conference and the recommendations emanating from it produced few immediate results. They did, however, embody the beginning of a change in attitudes regarding the role of government in housing. One recommendation suggested that government should begin to aid private efforts to house low-income families—an idea that, at least in the United States, had generally been derided as unacceptably radical.²

²Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago, 1996), 86; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985), 193-94.

The need to upgrade African American dwellings seemed particularly acute. The report prepared by the conference's Committee on Negro Housing detailed the substandard living conditions endured by a large percentage of the nation's black citizens. Hoover's secretary of commerce, Robert P. Lamont, wrote in the foreword to this volume that the realities of housing in African American neighborhoods "emphasize the present shortcomings of our individualistic theory of housing, and the failure which grows out of expecting each person in our highly complex industrial civilization to provide his own housing as best he may." Historian Gail Radford observes that "such sentiments were startling enough coming from a cabinet-level official in a Republican administration, but they were all the more surprising given the particularly conservative assumptions with which Lamont started." Radford concludes that this and similarly "heretical statements" by administration officials "signaled the degree to which confidence in the private market in real estate had deteriorated by 1931."³

In the spring of 1932, as the Depression deepened, Hoover and his advisors decided that additional federal action was needed to combat the crisis. In mid-May he asked Congress to expand the role of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), an agency that had been created at his request the previous year and that functioned principally to provide credit to major financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies. The proposed expansion of the RFC's activities became part of the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932. This complex piece of legislation passed through several permutations (Hoover vetoed an initial version), but the bill finally passed in mid-July and the president signed it a week later.

The act (in Title II, Section 201) empowered the RFC to "make loans to corporations formed wholly for the purpose of providing housing for families of low income, or for the reconstruction of slum areas." Two provisos, however, severely limited the ability of interested parties to take advantage of the law. First, such "corporations" had to be limited-dividend entities regulated by state or municipal law; only one state (New York) had appropriate enabling legislation in place at the time of the act's passage. Second, the projects had to be "self-liquidating"—in

³Robert P. Lamont, "Foreword," *Negro Housing*, eds. John M. Gries and James Ford (*Publications of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership*, Vol. 6; Washington, D.C., 1932), vii-viii; Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 87-88.

other words, they had to produce enough revenue to pay off the RFC loan, plus 5½ percent interest, within ten years. Taken together, these requirements proved sufficiently onerous that only a single urban housing project (Knickerbocker Village in New York City) resulted from the work of the RFC's Self-Liquidating Division. Nevertheless the expansion of the RFC's responsibilities in late 1932 and early 1933 did establish a precedent for federal involvement in slum removal and public housing. Many communities, Indianapolis among them, took note.⁴

By March 1933, when the Franklin Roosevelt administration assumed control in Washington, housing starts were stalled at one-tenth of their 1925 levels, unemployment stood at about 25 percent nationally (much higher in some places), and foreclosures were increasing. Moreover, the RFC's existing housing program was clearly a failure. "It is against this background of catastrophe," writes Radford, "that we can begin to understand how . . . a program as previously off-limits as federal financing and even outright ownership of low-rent housing could be created."⁵

Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), signed by the president in June 1933, called for a "comprehensive program of public works." This program became one of the best known of Roosevelt's so-called "alphabet agencies," the Public Works Administration (PWA). The legislation granted the new agency power for, among other things, "construction, reconstruction, alteration, or repair under public regulation or control of low-cost housing and slum-clearance projects." To implement this section of the law Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, who directed the PWA, created a Housing Division that began operation in July. The agency's first director was New York architect Robert Kohn, who had been involved in a short-lived effort to provide housing for industrial workers during World War I. He was thus, as Radford notes, "one of the few people in the country with any experience at running a government housing program."⁶

⁴James Stuart Olson, *Herbert Hoover and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, 1931-1933* (Ames, Ia., 1977), 62-79; Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 88, 92; Robert Moore Fisher, *20 Years of Public Housing: Economic Aspects of the Federal Program* (New York, 1959), 79-82; Gilbert A. Cam, "United States Government Activity in Low-Cost Housing, 1932-38," *Journal of Political Economy*, 47 (June 1939), 357-59.

⁵Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 88.

⁶*Ibid.*, 89-92; Cam, "United States Government Activity in Low-Cost Housing," 359; Olson, *Herbert Hoover and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation*, 88-89.

The Housing Division inherited the RFC's "limited dividend" program and attempted to make it more viable by liberalizing the provisions that had precluded most communities from taking advantage of it. Interest rates were reduced to 4 percent, loans were made available for up to 85 percent of the estimated costs of a project, and the repayment period was extended from ten to thirty-five years. In response to these relaxed rules, applications began to pour in.⁷

Precise details are lacking, but available evidence suggests that perhaps as early as fall 1932, and certainly by spring 1933, some Indianapolis residents were discussing housing conditions and what might be done to improve them in the Hoosier capital. One such individual was Joe Rand Beckett, a local architect and attorney, who, as his obituary put it years later, "pioneered in the building of modern housing for low-income groups."⁸ As a member of the board of directors of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, Beckett reported in mid-May 1933 to his colleagues "on the progress to date of the Planning and Housing Committee," of which he was the chairman. He explained the purpose of the committee (which had been created the previous month) and the intent of the committee members to conduct a survey of the "congested and unhealthful districts" of the city. That at least some Indianapolis leaders were watching developments in Washington with interest is clear from Beckett's conclusion that "when this movement gets underway . . . there will be a general rush by a great number of cities to get the money that will likely be released by the R.E.C. for slum clearance purposes."⁹

A month later, and just a week after passage of the NIRA, Indianapolis architect Merritt Harrison (whose firm ultimately won the contract to design Lockefield Gardens) sent a letter to the newly created

⁷Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 92. For a contemporary critique of the limited dividend program, see Eugene H. Klaber, "Limited Dividend Corporations Under the National Housing Act," *Architectural Record*, 77 (February 1935), 78-80.

⁸Beckett (1891-1969) graduated from Indianapolis's Manual High School in 1910 and subsequently attended the University of Illinois and Indiana Law School. He also represented Johnson and Marion Counties in the Indiana State Senate, 1929-1931. *Indianapolis Star*, July 29, 1969 (obituary); Justin E. Walsh et al., *A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly*, Vol. 2, 1900-1984 (Indianapolis, 1984), 32.

⁹Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors minutes, May 18, 1933 (Chamber of Commerce, Indianapolis), cited hereafter as Chamber of Commerce board minutes. Thanks go to Jeff Barnett for facilitating my use of these records. Of the seven projects completed under the limited dividend program only one replaced slums. Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 92-93.

PWA. He began by referencing the legislation, specifically the section dealing with low-cost housing and slum clearance projects and the fact that such projects had to be “under public regulation or control.” He then noted that the Indiana General Assembly, in its spring 1933 session, had failed to approve enabling legislation for “this class of work.” Was there, Harrison wondered, a way that the “public regulation” criterion could be met in the absence of an authorizing state law? “I am seeking,” he explained, “a way to proceed with an actual project in this city that we have on the boards for low cost housing Is there any way that this project can be financed under this federal legislation?” Harrison’s claim that a project was “on the boards” is ambiguous, but it seems doubtful that in June 1933 he was referring to actual architectural renderings. More likely, he simply wanted to convey to his correspondent in Washington that very serious discussions regarding publicly financed low-income housing were underway in Indianapolis and that his query was based on much more than casual curiosity.¹⁰

On July 20 Beckett once again updated the directors of the Chamber of Commerce on the progress of what was now being called the Community Plan Committee. Summarizing a study that the committee had conducted with assistance from Indiana University’s Bureau of Social Research, he highlighted the disproportionate spending on social services “to those people living in a small portion of our city.” Although Beckett did not identify specific areas during his remarks, the context clarifies his reference to districts that would have been loosely described as slums. Beckett went on to observe that “there has been quite a little talk by the Federal Government about stimulating housing” for purposes of economic recovery. At a recent conference in Cleveland attended by federal officials (from the PWA, presumably) and “representatives from a large

¹⁰Merritt Harrison to Federal Administrator of Public Works, June 20, 1933, folder H-1600, box 121, Project Files (1933-1937), Record Group 196 (Public Housing Administration) (National Archives II, College Park, Maryland); cited hereafter as PHA Files. The letter is written on the firm’s letterhead and provides no indication of whose project he cited. Harrison (1886-1973) moved to Indianapolis as a youth. He graduated from Manual High School in 1906 and the Cornell University School of Architecture in 1911. He practiced in the Hoosier capital for sixty years, eventually being dubbed the “Dean of Indiana Architects.” He and his partners designed many important buildings and projects in the state, including Crispus Attucks High School, the Indiana School for the Blind, and the State Fair Coliseum, in addition to Lockefield Gardens. *Indianapolis News*, July 26, 1973 (obituary); Connie J. Zeigler, “Harrison and Turnock (Russ and Harrison),” in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Bloomington, 1994), 662-63.



Aerial view of a portion of the neighborhood replaced by
Lockefield Gardens, Indianapolis, c. 1930

A 1933 study called the congested blocks northwest of
downtown an “economic drain” on the city.

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society, Bass Photo Company Collection

number of cities interested in movements of this sort,” the Feds had made it clear that groups applying for money had to be “responsible” and prepared to assume loans “on a business basis” to be repaid in thirty-five years. Beckett’s committee was currently examining the finances and hoped to “educate the people in Indianapolis on the housing problem.”¹¹

That education commenced a few days later when the *Indianapolis Star* published an article based on the Community Plan Committee’s

¹¹Chamber of Commerce board minutes, July 20, 1933. The Bureau of Social Research had been established by Indiana University in 1930 in connection with its Training Course for Social Work in Indianapolis. The bureau undertook “projects of interest to welfare agencies in the state.” A university publication issued in the summer of 1933 identified one of the bureau’s current efforts as “assembling data on social problems for the Community Plan Committee of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce.” Helen Cintilda Rogers, *Seventy Years of Social Work Education at Indiana University* ([Indianapolis], [1981]), 38; “The Training Course for Social Work, 1933-34,” *Indiana University News-Letter*, 21 (June 1933), 6.

study. Fleshing out Beckett's report to the chamber's board, the article noted that 26 percent of the money spent in Indianapolis "for public services of a social character"—social welfare, hospitalization, poor relief, juvenile delinquency, and the like—went to 10 percent of the residents. "This disproportionate spending of money on such a small percentage of the population," asserted the paper, "represents an economic drain upon all the people of the city." Indeed, "if this ratio of expenditure were carried out in the entire city it would mean that the city . . . would be faced with certain bankruptcy." Though Beckett did not explicitly mention race, an accompanying map indicated that this 10 percent of the population causing the greatest "economic drain" lived immediately northwest of downtown in the heart of the city's largest African American district.¹²

An article in the *Times* the following month continued the educational process but shifted the focus to the deleterious effects of poor housing. The article's author, R. Clyde White, was a professor of sociology at Indiana University and director of the Bureau of Social Research. He also served as a member of the Chamber of Commerce's Community Plan Committee and had been one of the principals involved in the committee's study. Using that study as a jumping-off point for his newspaper article, he observed, with an environmental determinism reminiscent of Progressive Era rhetoric, that unsightly surroundings "tend to complete the break-down of morale." On a more practical level, "dampness, inadequate heating facilities, and insanitary conditions endanger health," and the "contagious diseases which break out most often in such areas are a threat to the entire city." The obvious solution involved "demolition of acres of bad houses and the construction of decent, sanitary houses for the working population of the city in the same place." It had been done in numerous European cities during the previous twenty years, White argued, and could be done in Indianapolis, "provided the city unites to do it."¹³

¹²"10 Pct. of Public Drains Heaviest on City's Taxes," *Indianapolis Star*, July 24, 1933 (p. 12 for the map). Several subsequent articles, published during the next few days, highlighted particular aspects of the problem, such as expenditures for health care.

¹³R. Clyde White, "Better Houses Called City's Crying Need," *Indianapolis Times*, August 21, 1933. White earned graduate degrees from Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in New York City. An expert in social statistics, he taught at Texas A&M before coming to Indiana University in 1927 to head the Training Course for Social Work in Indianapolis. He was named director of the Bureau of Social Research when it was created in 1930. White left

As mentioned earlier, Indianapolis newspapers broke the story in early September of an anticipated federal loan. The *Times*, in addition to identifying the Chamber of Commerce as the principal sponsor of the enterprise and noting the secrecy of the preliminary negotiations, reported (optimistically, as it turned out) that President Roosevelt was expected to give final approval within a few days. The *Indianapolis Recorder*, the local African American paper, jumped on board immediately, editorializing that the project “will register for this city a forward stride that has for many years been an urgent need. . . . Colored club women and church workers should interest themselves in the government’s better housing proposition.”¹⁴

The Sunday edition of the *Indianapolis Star* reported on comments that the director of the PWA’s Housing Division, Robert Kohn, made while passing through the city. He advised that the “allocation of funds reported in Indianapolis papers [\$4.46 million] is a tentative one,” which would only become available if some local entity raised equity amounting to 15 percent of the total anticipated cost of the project (about \$787,000). He also emphasized that the government money was a loan and that dividends to the local organization were limited to 6 percent. Beckett was paraphrased as saying that “plans for handling the local situation were in embryo and that no announcement could be made concerning them just now.”¹⁵ Within a few days, however, the press reported that the Chamber of Commerce planned to organize the required limited-dividend corporation that would raise the local funds, that it was prepared to erect 200 dwelling units (of different types) in place of 750 “slum dwellings,” and that the project had been “planned solely for Negroes” and would “take place in the Negro section in the northwest part of the city.”¹⁶

It is unclear precisely how or when or by whom the decision was made that the proposed project would be “solely for Negroes.” Ickes, a former president of the NAACP chapter in Chicago, sought to reduce racial discrimination in the agencies he headed, and to ensure that PWA

Indiana for the University of Chicago in 1936. Rogers, *Seventy Years of Social Work Education at Indiana University*, 35-39.

¹⁴*Indianapolis Times*, September 8, 1933; *Indianapolis Recorder*, September 9, 1933.

¹⁵*Indianapolis Star*, September 10, 1933.

¹⁶*Indianapolis Star*, September 13, 1933; *Indianapolis Times*, September 13, 1933.

projects employed African Americans in numbers that reflected their proportion of the workforce. The Housing Division, however, generally acquiesced in local mores and most of its projects were constructed for either blacks *or* whites. The *Recorder*, when reporting the tentative federal approval to its readers, confirmed that “the basis of the loan” was the “fact-finding survey recently completed” for the chamber and “given widespread publicity in the daily press of the city.”¹⁷ As Radford observes, “the agency’s decision not to disrupt pre-existing racial patterns of neighborhoods . . . meant building houses for African Americans in deteriorated sections of cities where they already lived.” Lockefield Gardens exemplified this national pattern.¹⁸

Although the proposed project was now public knowledge, much of the activity related to it continued to be carried on behind closed doors. Shortly after September 20, Kohn received a letter postmarked Indianapolis and marked “Personal and Important.” The letter, signed simply “Henry,” included a brief note on an attached document marked with the initials “H.W.,” suggesting that its author was the well-known town planner Henry Wright. Wright and Kohn had worked together on the federal housing program during the First World War, and Wright served as a consultant on PWA housing during Kohn’s tenure with the agency. The letter writer advised the division director that notices were being sent out that day for a “non-public meeting tomorrow afternoon” that would include about forty “key business men of the banker, merchant and utility groups.” These individuals, it was hoped, would decide how to organize both a “Housing Company” (the limited-dividend corporation) and a campaign to raise the required local equity. “This notice,” he continued, “carries the Mayor’s name as one of the sponsors, and I am told that he is solidly for the proposition.” After discussing the local plans for financing, Kohn’s correspondent observed that he was “still 100% for this as the best example of rehabilitation so far presented and as completely sound, provided only Mr. Beckett delivers as promised the evidence that he has real civic and favorable political interest behind it.”¹⁹

¹⁷*Indianapolis Recorder*, September 16, 1933.

¹⁸Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 100-101, 104-105; Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue*, Vol. 1, *The Depression Decade* (New York, 1978), 66-68.

¹⁹Henry W[right?] to Robert Kohn, September 20, 1933, folder H-1600, box 121, PHA Files. A copy of the invitation to the “non-public” meeting is attached to this document. Signed by

Beckett went to work to provide those assurances. The following week he informed the chamber's board of directors, as the minutes recorded, "that Indianapolis is to raise \$787,000 for carrying on this project and that it is to be raised in the next few months." He also reported that Kohn "asked that we try to get the citizens of Indianapolis to wholeheartedly support this movement." In response the board unanimously passed a resolution endorsing the project because of the "great benefits, economically and socially to be derived" from it, and offering "its cooperation as the representative body of the City of Indianapolis for the completion of this program." A telegram quoting the resolution was promptly dispatched by chamber president Louis Borinstein to Kohn in Washington.²⁰

The project took several interesting twists and turns during the next few months. The closed-door, invitation-only meeting of September 21 led to the creation of an entity variously known as the Community Housing Committee or Community Housing Corporation. While technically distinct from the Chamber of Commerce, it was clearly a spin-off from the Community Plan Committee on which Joe Beckett had served, and the two groups shared some overlapping membership. The chairman of the corporation, William H. Trimble, was a realtor and member of the Chamber of Commerce who performed, as a biographical sketch put it, "notable work in the cause of welfare in the capital city."²¹

Mayor Reginald Sullivan and Chamber of Commerce President Louis Borinstein, it explained that the meeting was being called because "there are conditions in connection with this [tentative federal] allotment which cannot be placed before the public at this time." On Henry Wright see "Henry Wright," *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. (2007), <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0852791.html>; Richard Pommer, "The Architecture of Urban Housing in the United States during the Early 1930s," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 37 (December 1978), 236, 262.

²⁰Chamber of Commerce board minutes, September 28, 1933; Louis Borinstein to Robert Kohn, September 28, 1933, folder H-1600, box 121, PHA Files. Borinstein (1881-1972) was born in Indianapolis, graduated from Manual High School, and joined the scrap metal firm founded by his father. He was, as a newspaper editorial put it soon after his death, "a leader in the civic and business life of the community" for several decades. He was president of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce from 1931 to 1935, a member of the board of directors of the Indiana State Chamber of Commerce for twenty-six years, and active with numerous philanthropic endeavors. *Indianapolis News*, May 3 (obituary), May 8 (editorial), 1972.

²¹Trimble (1888-1977) was a native of Illinois who had attended Augustana College in that state and then moved to Indiana. He was president of the Trimble Realty Company. *Indianapolis Star*, August 7, 1977 (obituary); John D. Barnhart and Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana: From Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth*, 4 vols. (New York, 1954), 4:433-34.

Trimble announced in late September that Indianapolis contractors and laborers would receive preference for the clearance and construction work—an obvious attempt to garner local support. He also revealed a tentative location for the project: a 29-acre tract bounded by 10th and Torbett Streets on the south, 14th Street on the north, Oregon Street on the east, and Indiana Avenue and Fall Creek on the west. This site was immediately west of the all-black Crispus Attucks High School (currently Attucks Middle School) and somewhat farther north than the eventual Lockefield Gardens location.²²

During the last quarter of 1933 the Community Housing Corporation worked behind the scenes to meet the federal Housing Division's criteria, especially with regard to the local equity requirement. Simultaneously, corporation members tried to generate support for and to blunt criticism of the proposed project. The arguments in favor focused not only on the presumed advantages of improved housing but also on the economic activity that would be a concomitant of the work. Following an address in which Beckett claimed that the project would employ some 2,000 men for at least one year, the Construction League of Indianapolis adopted a resolution supporting the proposal. Later that fall the city's Central Labor Union and the Marion County Building Trades Council sent telegrams to Secretary Ickes expressing their approbation. The *Recorder* remained a consistent proponent. In October its editor highlighted the project's twin goals: "to put more men back to work at living wages" and to build "healthier homes, and more attractive surroundings for hundreds of deserving families." Six weeks later the paper denounced the ongoing "squabble over whether or not better dwellings should be erected [sic] in this city to replace the hundreds of unsuitable houses in which thousands are forced to live," and declared that "the slum must go, if Indianapolis is to march alongside other progressive cities."²³

Not everyone agreed that the proposal represented the best approach. In September, just days after the story broke, the *Indianapolis Commercial* opined that "exponents of low tax rates" should be leery of the "mysterious loan." Regardless of whether the loan was to be made to

²²*Indianapolis Star*, September 28, 1933; *Indianapolis Times*, September 29, 1933 (p. 1 for the article, p. 20 for the map).

²³*Indianapolis Star*, September 30, 1933; *Indianapolis Times*, December 7, 1933; *Indianapolis Recorder*, October 21, December 9, 1933.

the city or to a private corporation, “sooner or later the taxpayers will stand part of the expense.” The *Commercial’s* editor also questioned whether putting money into housing for African Americans would be a prudent investment: “Persons who own rental property can judge for themselves just how sound a loan would be at this time to improve housing conditions for negroes.”²⁴

Two months later the Indianapolis Real Estate Board weighed in with a resolution expressing strong opposition to the housing project. The realtors objected on several grounds, including the fact that the proposal was a “multiple project” (i.e., principally apartments) that thus “detracts from the proved design [intent] of Indianapolis citizens to own their own homes.” In addition, claimed the board, “housing of this type is unattractive to the families for whom it is intended” (an assertion quickly refuted by African American leaders) and “an increase in the total number of housing units in the city is inadvisable until the existing vacancies have been further absorbed.” The *Indianapolis News* agreed, editorializing that “[s]urely it will be generally conceded that to inflict standardized, government subsidized houses on a community priding itself in its home building and home ownership is taking an undue liberty with the value and individuality of other residence sections, and sounding a discordant note.”²⁵

While the *Recorder* stood solidly behind the endeavor and reported that “a casual poll of sentiment among the Negroes of the city indicated that they are overwhelmingly in favor of the project,” some black residents expressed concern. At a weekly meeting of the Monday Luncheon Club—which included many of the city’s most influential African American residents, several of whom were also actively involved with the all-black Senate Avenue YMCA—there was “such disagreement of those present that endorsement was withheld.” The principal issue of contention was “insistence by Negro leaders that a large number of the laborers employed in the construction work be Negroes.” In order to avoid “a repetition of the Boulder Dam and other situations in which Negro labor has been excluded,” club leaders called for contractual guarantees that a significant percentage of the workforce be African

²⁴*Indianapolis Commercial*, September 11, 1933.

²⁵*Indianapolis News*, November 11, 1933; *Indianapolis Recorder*, December 16, 1933; *Indianapolis News*, November 13, 1933 (editorial).



Agnes Street, Looking North from North Street, 1934

The western edge of the Lockefield complex would extend to this block of homes lying between Indiana Avenue, on the north, and North Street, on the South.

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society, Bass Photo Company Collection

Americans. Trimble and other members of the Community Housing Corporation explained that this was “a matter not directly under their control” since they had “no way . . . of enforcing such [a] provision in agreements with contractors.” They gave “individual assurances,” however, “that every precaution reasonably necessary will be taken to insure the maximum employment of Negro labor.” Eventually, the Monday Luncheon Club accepted these assurances and joined other African American organizations in endorsing the project.²⁶

Although they received little press coverage, some residents—on both sides of the color line—objected to the fact that the proposed project was intended for black residents only. When reporting that the Indiana Council of the National Emergency Advisory Council for Negroes had approved the plan, the *Recorder* noted in passing the council’s opinion that some opposition came “from Negroes who have been

²⁶*Indianapolis Recorder*, September 30, October 7, 1933; *Indianapolis Times*, October 7, 1933.



Homes slated for demolition on the site of Lockefield Gardens
Indianapolis civic leaders sought public support and federal financing
to remove substandard housing from the heart of the city.

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society, Bass Photo Company Collection

led unwittingly to believe an attempt is being made at wholesale segregation.” In a different vein, another *Recorder* article observed that “vehement opposition to the expenditure of so large a sum for the benefit of the Negro population” had led to a proposal to “rebuild a white as well as a colored slum area.”²⁷

Although the idea that a portion of the federal loan should be used to rehabilitate a primarily white residential area never came to pass, its mention in the newspaper was far more than a trial balloon. The *Times* reported at the end of October that the Housing Division had decided its loan should be used to construct dwellings in both black and white residential sections of Indianapolis. An area on the near south side had been identified as the site for a “slums clearance and housing enterprise for white persons . . . unless land values prove too prohibitive.” This was,

²⁷*Indianapolis Recorder*, December 16, 30, 1933.

apparently, a decision made in Washington. A letter from the Community Housing Corporation to Kohn in early November advised that: "*Following the suggestions of your department we have selected an area for a housing unit to be devoted to the tenancy of white people and have narrowed the scope of our negro housing project accordingly.*" This document was, in fact, the transmittal letter for the corporation's formal proposal, numbered 41W, for a white housing project. (A proposal for the African American project, numbered 41N, was submitted simultaneously.) It is not clear whether local complaints about dedicating all the funding to a blacks-only project might have influenced the Housing Division's decision to pursue improvements in both white and Negro areas.²⁸

At the same time that a possible white project was first announced, the papers also reported a change in the location of the black project. An inability to secure leases or options on some parcels of land in the area originally targeted had led the planners to move the project several blocks south to a site near the City Hospital. A map included in the Community Housing Corporation's prospectus for Project Number 41N showed both the original and the revised boundaries—the latter being Indiana Avenue on the north, North Street on the south, Locke Street on the west, and Blake Street on the east, where Lockefield Gardens was eventually constructed.²⁹

Verbal support for the proposal did not readily translate into financial backing, perhaps in part because of the level of secrecy the organizers attempted to maintain. The *News* observed in an editorial at the beginning of November that the project "still wants the support of Indianapolis citizens willing to subscribe \$787,000 to the purchase of stock." The paper lamented that the plan remained "incomplete . . . inasmuch as the identity of persons supposed to be urging it is not known, and the financial details . . . have not been revealed." Apparently stung by such criticism, Trimble released additional information immediately.

²⁸*Indianapolis Times*, October 31, 1933; Indianapolis Community Housing Corporation, "Project Number 41W" and "Project Number 41N," folder H-1600, box 120, PHA Files; emphasis added. The boundaries of the proposed white project were McCarty Street on the north, Ray Street on the south, West Street on the west, and Capitol Avenue on the east. *Indianapolis Star*, November 1, 1933.

²⁹*Indianapolis Star*, November 1, 1933; "Project Number 41N," folder H-1600, box 120, PHA Files.

He advised that plans were being formulated “for the creation of a non-profit, self-perpetuating body or company which will not issue stock”—a corporation of “seven or nine of the highest type men in Indianapolis to administer this project and trust.” The federal government would be given a first mortgage for its \$4.46 million allocation. “Just what the nature of the obligations to be given local investors and for local equity will be has not yet been determined in Washington and as soon as it is the terms will be made public.”³⁰

Federal officials had initially given the Community Housing Corporation a deadline of December 1 for its final proposal and local funding arrangements. On that date an extension was granted to allow the group “to perfect its plans.” The day after Christmas, PWA officials announced that they had rejected the project “as far as the present application is concerned.” Trimble, Beckett, and other corporation leaders were about to depart for Washington for a previously scheduled meeting with federal housing officials when they heard the news. They decided to proceed with the trip and after a hurried conference with Kohn the following day they announced that the Indianapolis proposal would remain under consideration. The *Star*’s headline reflected their confidence: “Housing Project for City Revived; Approval Looms.”³¹

In fact, such approval never came, primarily because the leaders of the Community Housing Corporation and their supporters proved unable to provide the local equity in a manner that federal officials found acceptable. A strong hint of this outcome came early in 1934, when an article in the *News* reported that many individuals and organizations in the Hoosier capital were convinced that Secretary Ickes would deem the proposal unsound. Noting that the promoters continued to “refuse to divulge the methods by which the Indianapolis equity is to be raised,” the paper reported it had learned that “workmen, contractors, material men and persons who sell the ground . . . will be ‘assessed’ for the money needed to be raised before the government will make its loan.”³²

The *News* did not provide a source for its information, but federal records support the paper’s account. An internal PWA memo prepared

³⁰*Indianapolis News*, November 3 (editorial), 4, 1933; *Indianapolis Star*, November 4, 1933.

³¹*Indianapolis Star*, December 2, 27, 28, 1933; *Indianapolis Times*, December 27, 28, 1933.

³²*Indianapolis News*, January 10, 1934.

by Kohn in mid-January addressed the secretary's concerns about the "sufficiency and validity of the equity subscribed" for the Indianapolis project. Although the Housing Division had previously agreed to reduce the local "match" from \$787,000 (15 percent) to \$460,000 (9.35 percent), organizers were clearly struggling to secure the required amount. Owners of the property to be acquired and architects and builders had agreed "to take part payment in debentures"—that is, to accept bonds backed by nothing more than the general credit of the Community Housing Corporation rather than a lien on particular assets. Cash in hand amounted to only \$100,000. On January 22, 1934, Ickes told Kohn of his "misgivings about this Indianapolis Community Housing project," but indicated that he was willing to go ahead "provided I can be assured a satisfactory set-up."³³

Ultimately, Ickes's concerns could not be assuaged. He continued to take exception to the local organizers' fiscal creativity, and in early March he announced that the Indianapolis project had been abandoned. The *News* quoted him as saying that "we were ready at all times to go ahead" but that after "several time extensions it is now evident that the local conditions imposed can not be met, and so we have dropped the project." He emphasized that his decision was final and requested that reporters "get it straight" that the proposal had been rejected "solely because the Indianapolis backers could not meet the financial conditions necessary to approval."³⁴

It appeared, therefore, that months of effort on the part of Beckett, Trimble, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Community Housing Corporation had gone for naught—that a locally conceived slum clearance and low-rent housing project for Indiana's capital, financed principally by a federal loan to a limited-dividend corporation, would not eventuate. But just a week later an Indianapolis paper advised its readers: "Housing Project for City Revived." The accompanying story reported that Ickes had announced the possibility that an Indianapolis project might be paid for outright from the federal housing corporation fund. "Under the new plan," the paper explained, "residents of Indianapolis would not be required to raise an equity, as was attempted before when

³³Robert Kohn to Harold Ickes, January 19, 1934, Ickes to Kohn, January 22, 1934, folder H-1600, box 121, PHA Files.

³⁴*Indianapolis News*, March 6, 1934.

the project was established as a limited dividend corporation.” The PWA director was making no promises: “It is almost like putting out money for a new thing, and of course we are going to have to give it comprehensive exploration.” Still, the concept of federal support for housing in the city apparently had not died.³⁵

Ickes’s about-face was not as precipitate as it seemed. He had, from the start, expressed his skepticism about the likely success of the limited-dividend program that the PWA had inherited from the RFC, and he had seen his concerns borne out during the first few months of the Housing Division’s existence. Radford observes that, although applications began to pour in once the agency liberalized its loan provisions, “few submissions merited serious consideration.” Many proposals “came from organizations sincerely devoted to trying to expand the supply of good low-rent housing in their locales, but their plans, for the most part, were either poorly conceived or underfunded (often both).” In the midst of a national economic crisis, “lack of money and inability to put together plausible financial plans were the critical barriers to participation”—an accurate description of the Indianapolis situation. And Indianapolis was hardly alone. Of the more than 500 proposals submitted for limited-dividend housing projects, only seven were approved.³⁶

Ickes had announced in February 1934 that the limited-dividend program would cease and that the Housing Division would assume direct responsibility for slum clearance and housing construction projects—would undertake, in effect, the role of developer. As Radford has summarized the new arrangement: “The division used local architectural firms and building contractors, but closely supervised all phases of work. It acquired sites in its own name and retained title to land and structures after construction was completed.” This was the procedure under which Ickes suggested in mid-March that the Indianapolis project might be revived.³⁷

When Ickes announced on March 6 that the Indianapolis proposal was being dropped and that his decision was final, it therefore seems likely that he was already thinking of the Hoosier capital for one of the PWA’s own projects. Some of the Housing Division staff clearly did. On

³⁵*Indianapolis News*, March 14, 1934.

³⁶Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 92-93, 96.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 99. See also *The American City*, 49 (September 1934), 99.

March 9 a regional projects manager for the division met with Indianapolis architects Merritt Harrison and William Earl Russ, who had been involved with the original proposal. Their discussion, according to a memo sent to Kohn the next day, “revolved around what had best be done now that the total allocation has been changed” from \$4.6 million to \$3.0 million. So although the level of support had been reduced, federal officials and local proponents shared the assumption that the project would proceed. The smaller budget raised the question of what cuts should be made from the initial plan, with the most obvious issue being whether both black and white projects could now be undertaken. Some difficulty arose in part because property in the proposed white area could not be obtained at a reasonable price and the entire proposal was ultimately scaled back. The memo concluded—and senior Housing Division and PWA administrators apparently accepted the suggestion immediately—that if approximately \$3.0 million “is to be used in Indianapolis, the work should be confined to the Negro Project near the Medical Center.” A few local complaints surfaced about this decision in subsequent months, but after March 1934 no real question remained that the PWA housing project proposed for the Hoosier capital would be exclusively for African American residents.³⁸

Within weeks of Ickes’s announcement that the Indianapolis project might be revived, several members of the Community Housing Corporation submitted a formal application.³⁹ Arguments for and against federal involvement in the local housing market, which had been

³⁸E. L. Ackerman to Robert Kohn, March 10, 1934, folder H-1600, box 121, PHA Files. Beckett and the Indianapolis Community Housing Corporation revived the idea of a second (white) slum clearance project on the city’s south side, and submitted a formal proposal to the Housing Division in January 1935. But in the wake of federal court decisions that restricted the division’s ability to use eminent domain to acquire property when necessary, officials decided “to go forward with no more projects on slum lands, or which would require the accumulation of a large number of parcels.” See “Prospectus for Proposed White Project, Indianapolis, Indiana [January 1935],” and A. R. Clas to Carl Ferguson, July 22, 1935, folder H-1600, box 121, PHA Files; Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 102-103.

³⁹A copy of this application has not been found, but it seems probable that it was substantially the same as the original limited-dividend proposal. A memo to Ickes in August observed that: “On March 30, 1934, certain members of the above mentioned group [a reference to the Community Housing Corporation], submitted a formal application for the development of a Federal project on the site previously indicated for the negro project. After thorough investigation, this project was approved.” Horatio Hackett, Memorandum to the Administrator, August 14, 1934, folder H-1600.703, box 121, PHA Files.

rehearsed during debate over the limited-dividend proposal in 1933, continued during the spring and early summer of 1934. In late April, the *Indianapolis Recorder* reported “endorsements of the plan by leading colored organizations of the city.” The Monday Luncheon Club passed a resolution asking Secretary Ickes to begin work immediately, and other African American organizations quickly followed suit.⁴⁰ The Church Federation of Indianapolis, a coalition of the city’s mainline Protestant congregations, determined that it did not have the expertise to judge the “economic, financial or structural plans” for the proposed project. But the federation did “heartily” approve the elimination of slums and the construction in their place of “modern hygienic homes that may be rented at moderate rates within the reach of the low wage earner.”⁴¹

The Chamber of Commerce likewise continued its support of the endeavor. On April 27 the organization’s finance committee passed a resolution supporting the “proposed Community Housing Plan of the Federal Government.” Even more significantly, the chamber’s new executive vice-president, William H. Book, included a strong endorsement of the project in a list of proposals for future Chamber of Commerce activities—proposals that the board of directors promptly adopted. Book, while stressing that the organization should “advance in every possible way the federal slum clearance project in Indianapolis,” admitted that “there has been some strenuous opposition to this project locally.” He argued, however, that the “benefit to the Indianapolis building industry” and the “social benefit to the entire community through elimination of congested, insanitary and crime and disease-producing living conditions” should override any concerns. And then there was the reality of the situation: “The federal government will spend a large sum of money on such projects and since it is to be spent it behooves the people of the city to obtain the greatest possible benefit from the expenditure. Indianapolis must pay its share of federal taxes, from which such expen-

⁴⁰*Indianapolis Recorder*, April 28, 1934.

⁴¹Church Federation of Indianapolis resolution, June 5, 1934, copy appended to J. H. Brown to Horatio Hackett, June 6, 1934, folder H-1600.09, box 121, PHA Files. Brown, then the Housing Division’s manager in Indianapolis, observed that while the federation’s resolution did not “specifically support our particular project, it is thoroughly in sympathy with the idea, and at least removes this particular body from the realm of those who might subsequently join in a protest.”

ditures must come. The practical course seems that of support of the project and the development of others, when possible.”⁴²

Others disagreed—for philosophical reasons, pocketbook reasons, and sometimes both. The editors of the *Indianapolis Star* took cognizance of the argument that the city might as well get in line for any largess available from Washington but nonetheless believed that “it is a question as to whether the benefits would offset the reasons for opposition.” Those reasons included “the Federal invasion of this field,” which would be “a blow to realty interests and to many with rental property which has become a burden through inability to find paying tenants.” Moreover, that paper argued, the Hoosier capital had “no ‘slum’ district comparable with the dangerous tenements of New York city.”⁴³

The Indianapolis Real Estate Board could not have agreed more. Asserting that “you can not rent the kind of property [apartments] they are intending to build in Indianapolis,” the board adopted a resolution that condemned the project as “economically unsound and wrong in principle.” The realtors expressed their opposition to the federal government “entering into any business or fostering any projects which are in competition with private enterprise or private industry”; they claimed that the Indianapolis proposal “would have a tendency to discourage home ownership which is the foundation of our government” and argued that the rental rate of the new structures would necessarily be “prohibitive to those now living in this district and would force these occupants to blight other areas.” When Ickes, who had been informed of the resolution, was quoted in an Indianapolis paper expressing doubt that the Real Estate Board spoke for the people of the city, local realtor O. P. Foreman (who described himself as an “ardent Democrat”) responded that he was convinced that 80 percent of the city’s residents agreed with the board’s position. Among the owners of rental property with whom he had talked, Foreman claimed, he had found no one “to

⁴²“Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce,” April 27, 1934, copy in box 4, folder 48, Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Collection (M422) (William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis); “Tentative Proposals Affecting the Program of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce,” appended to Chamber of Commerce board minutes, July 19, 1934. An intriguing aspect of this situation is that Book, who headed the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce for almost thirty years, has a reputation, earned somewhat later, as a conservative who opposed most forms of federal aid.

⁴³*Indianapolis Star*, March 16, 1934 (editorial).



Architectural model of the neighborhood replaced by Lockefield Gardens, c. 1934
 The architectural firm of Russ and Harrison, which won the contract to design
 Lockefield Gardens, prepared this scale model of the buildings on the site.

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society

express himself other than in absolute opposition to the plan of the U.S. Govt. building apartment buildings in Indianapolis and entering into direct competition with private industry in the rental business.”⁴⁴

Neither Ickes nor his newly appointed Housing Division director Horatio Hackett (Kohn had resigned when it became apparent that Ickes preferred slum clearing to new housing) was dissuaded by the project’s opponents, and during the remainder of 1934 preliminary work continued. By the beginning of June the project manager in Indianapolis was corresponding with the Washington office concerning technical details such as street abandonment and zoning in the affected area. The *Recorder* reported in mid-July that 65 percent of the land had been acquired. Several weeks later federal officials approved the appointment of a local advisory committee that included many individuals who had

⁴⁴*Indianapolis News*, April 20, 23, 25, 1934; O. P. Foreman to Mr. Secretary [Ickes], April 26, 1934, folder H-1600.09, box 121, PHA Files. The *Star* also supported the Real Estate Board, proclaiming in an editorial: “The idea of government-owned rental property is distasteful to every American citizen, even though his investments may not be directly jeopardized by a competition which no private individual can meet.” Not so, resolved the Mapleton Branch of the Socialist Party, which urged Ickes to “disregard [the] real estate board’s opposition to [a] federal housing program as emanating from selfish, speculative real estate operators. This board does not represent informed opinion of public-spirited citizens.” *Indianapolis Star*, April 24, 1934 (editorial); *Indianapolis Times*, April 23, 1934. Realtors in Philadelphia likewise feared that new housing units would diminish the value of their properties and objected to government competition when vacancies already existed. In other cities opponents criticized federal use of eminent domain to obtain land. Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 103, 128-29.

been involved with the limited-dividend proposal—such as Beckett, Trimble, and Borinstein—as well as several other prominent residents. The Indianapolis firm of Russ and Harrison was awarded the architectural contract. In early September, with 90 percent of the land having been secured as a result of willing seller-willing buyer negotiations, a PWA attorney initiated condemnation proceedings against the entire tract in order to obtain the final 10 percent and to ensure that the Housing Division would have valid title to all properties. By late November more than one hundred families and businesses had moved from the area and the government began to issue checks to those property owners whose parcels had been purchased.⁴⁵

Although the Housing Division and the Chamber of Commerce had worked together in formulating the Lockefield project, they did not agree on all particulars. The federal agency typically requested bids for construction of an entire enterprise. Some smaller Indianapolis-area contractors complained that the size of the project would preclude their submitting a bid, and thus an outside firm would inevitably get the job. The chamber took up their cause, writing directly to Ickes to suggest that “the project be divided into three or four units, or that at least bids be taken both on three or four units and on the project as a whole.” There was a “strong likelihood,” the chamber argued, that dividing the work would reduce costs. And, as they candidly admitted, “we are naturally much interested in having our local contractors have [an] opportunity to bid on the project.” In a brief, almost curt, response, Hackett advised that although alternatives had been given careful consideration the division had decided to let the work as a single contract.⁴⁶

Demolition of the existing structures began on December 18, 1934, and the principals turned the occasion into a celebratory event. As the *Star* informed its readers that morning: “Culminating months of

⁴⁵J. H. Brown to Horatio Hackett (Attn: M. D. Carrell), May 31, June 4, 1934, folder H-1600.088, box 121, PHA Files; *Indianapolis Recorder*, July 21, 1934; Horatio Hackett, Memorandum to the Administrator [Ickes], August 14, 1934, folder H-1600.703, box 121, PHA Files; *Indianapolis Star*, September 7, 1934; *Indianapolis Times*, August 22, September 7, November 26, 1934.

⁴⁶Louis Borinstein to Harold Ickes, November 14, 1934, Horatio Hackett to Borinstein, November 26, 1934, folder H-1600.09, box 121, PHA Files. See also *Indianapolis Star*, December 4, 1934. Hackett did offer the suggestion that several local contractors could band together and submit a single bid. In the end the principal construction contract did in fact go to an outside firm, the N. P. Severin Company of Chicago.

work to bring the slum clearance project to Indianapolis, representatives of state, municipal and civic organizations will gather at noon today for a luncheon . . . to mark the start of the clearing of the slum section . . . in the vicinity of the City Hospital, [which] is expected to become a model Negro community.” Trimble, who chaired the advisory committee and had been involved with the initiative since its beginnings, presided over the event. Several prominent members of the city’s African American community were in attendance, including Faburn DeFrantz, who was also a member of the advisory committee. The governor, the mayor, the president of the Chamber of Commerce (Borinstein), and the president of the Construction League of Indianapolis all offered brief remarks. The main address was given by Hackett who praised the city for being “one of the first to make a survey of its blighted areas and to estimate in dollars and cents the cost of supporting a decaying section.” Following lunch the group took a bus tour of the district and then joined a crowd of residents to watch as a small house in the 800 block of West Walnut Street was quickly razed. (A proposal to dynamite this structure, an action that some local newspapers erroneously reported actually took place, was rejected by the demolition contractor due to safety concerns.) Clearing the 22-acre tract of its buildings, streets, sidewalks, and utilities took several months. The general construction contract was let in the spring of 1935, the formal groundbreaking ceremony took place in July of that year, and Lockefield Gardens (the name was selected in 1936) opened its doors to tenants in early 1938.⁴⁷

This examination of the origins of Lockefield Gardens confirms much of what has been known about the project, but it also reveals details that have gone unrecognized. Previous narratives have not, for example, noted that the initial plans for the complex called for it to be situated several blocks north of where it was ultimately constructed. And the reality of Lockefield’s status as a segregated community for African Americans has obscured the fact that very serious consideration was given, in both Indianapolis and Washington, to building a whites-only project as well.

⁴⁷*Indianapolis Star*, December 18, 19, 1934; *Indianapolis News*, December 18, 1934; *Indianapolis Times*, December 18, 19, 1934; *Indianapolis Recorder*, December 22, 1934.

Perhaps the most significant finding, given Lockefield's usual association with the New Deal, is that the concept emerged as a local response to a perceived problem (albeit with hopes for substantial external funding). The Planning and Housing Committee (later the Community Plan Committee) of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, which sponsored research to identify the city's housing needs and began searching for solutions, existed before the Housing Division was established. And when local architect Merritt Harrison wrote to the newly created Public Works Administration in June 1933, he referred to an "actual project . . . that we have on the boards for low cost housing." It is true that Indianapolis leaders were on the prowl for federal dollars, and that Beckett, Trimble, and others worked diligently in late 1933 and early 1934 to meet the local equity criterion of the Housing Division's "limited dividend" program in order to secure a long-term government loan. But the *idea* for a slum clearance and low-income housing project in Indianapolis originated locally—it was not imposed from Washington. Only after the city failed to raise the "match" required for the loan did the PWA's Housing Division decide to take on the project itself—a project for which much of the preliminary work had already been done.⁴⁸

The innovative design features of Lockefield Gardens—a low-density plan, chevron-shaped buildings oriented to take advantage of natural light and ventilation, and a central mall—were much admired and widely copied, one reason preservationists so adamantly opposed destruction of the complex decades later. The craftsmanship of the buildings has usually been described as having been of the highest quality, but in fact serious construction defects led to considerable criticism and required remediation that delayed occupancy for many months. The criteria used to select residents, and the "means test" used to determine

⁴⁸For a list of the fifty-one projects built directly by the PWA, see Radford, *Modern Housing for America*, 100-101. Several of these projects have been the subject of scholarly examination, for example, John F. Bauman, "Black Slums/Black Projects: The New Deal and Negro Housing in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania History*, 41 (July 1974), 311-38; John F. Bauman, "Safe and Sanitary Without the Costly Frills: The Evolution of Public Housing in Philadelphia, 1929-1941," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 101 (January 1977), 114-28; Raymond A. Mohl, "Trouble in Paradise: Race and Housing in Miami During the New Deal Era," *Prologue*, 19 (Spring 1987), 7-21; Frank Ruechel, "New Deal Public Housing, Urban Poverty, and Jim Crow: Techwood and University Homes in Atlanta," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 81 (Winter 1997), 915-37.

their continued eligibility, also caused complaints over the years. But in December 1934 such controversies lay in the future, and the residents of the Hoosier capital who had proposed and advanced the Lockefield Gardens project no doubt took great satisfaction in watching the site being cleared for the city's first foray into public housing.

