Volume XVI Rochester, N. Y., December 20, 1954
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FOREWORD

Five years ago, a Negro publication called THE VOICE came into being in Rochester with the idea of uplifting the Negro masses in every phase of community life, while also creating a strong desire for a better understanding between all racial groups and a better appreciation of the Negro and his capabilities. Improved housing for our group was and is Point 7 in THE VOICE platform, found on Page 2 of that publication. It was realized that Rochester, noted for its liberality, was not doing its part by the Negro people in the way of aid to provide comfortable and sanitary homes. THE VOICE found its way by carriers and representatives into from 700 to 800 homes weekly. This means of contact created a normal interest and stimulus and stimulated discussion.

Housing became a live subject. Query after query as to what could be done about their plight was ever in the conversation of the tenants. Many of the homes in which Negroes live were found to be unsafe, unsanitary, overcrowded, without sinks, without bathtubs, with one toilet for several families, or with toilet outdoors or in the cellar, with water in cellars, no furnaces, and generally without the facilities to insure health and cleanliness. It was an acute shortage in one section, overcrowding in another, over-renting in a third, and in general the tenant's fault for such conditions. We presented our survey in thorough survey in 1938, when a campaign for BETTER HOUSING was started, initiated by THE VOICE. This survey was made in 1st, 3rd, 7th, 9th, and 11th wards, where the majority of the Negro people live. A study of the condition of the homes, location and social conditions was made. The following points were proved definitely by this survey: ONE, that there is an acute shortage in one section, along with bad homes; and TWO, that an overwhelming number of unfit homes were occupied by the Negro people at excessive rents. It was found that a serious problem existed within a minority, low income group, which must eventually affect the majority. The deplorable situation now facing the Negro people in regard to housing is far-reaching. For its amelioration co-operation of city, state and national government is required, as in the Housing Act of 1938, based on the Wagner-Steagall Law.

City Manager Baker has received a copy of our original survey, of which the following is a revised and abbreviated edition. We are glad to report that the Citizens' Committee on Housing accepted the entire survey for further study. The Barriers of Discoloration

In keeping with statements of the foreword, we find that Negro people are faced with a problem quite different from problems of other groups in need of improved housing. It is difficult for Negro people to rent due to prejudice practiced against them indirectly. Invariably he must be reminded of the fact that he isn't wanted in certain parts of the city. Even in the areas where he now lives, there are numerous houses and apartments he cannot rent, because certain big real estate agencies set the example of refusing to rent to Negroes. Often their houses remain empty for months, even years, if while Negroes don't apply.

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THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS VOICE DEC. 20, 1954

Housing of Negro Families

(Continued from Page 1)

slavery by segregation.

In the Seventh Ward, a great number of houses and outbuildings are rented to
the Negro people that are not fit
for human beings at any time.

Yet rents of $2.75, $4.00, $5.00
and $6.00 are frequently asked. We
have been proving that one pretext
or another is used to argue. If in case
when landlords know that Negro
rents must submit due to having
Negroes in their houses, to help you make it, to drive the

a Negro woman who had
been paying $2.75 a month at
least three years for a cottage
of three rooms, without either a bath
or cellar. A few months ago the
landlords demanded $2.00, visit-
saying that with the extra $2.00
he would make adequate repairs.

Through the tenant paid the 66%
increase, no sign of the repairs has
since been seen.

Unfair Economic Status

No doubt, economic status of the Negro is definitely related to bad
housing. The fact is that Negro
weeks' are not afforded jobs in
Baker factories, hotels, breweries,
or on either police, fire or wa-
ter departments, or in city hosp-
tals or parks, or in hundreds of
other places throughout the city.
The result is that Negro people are
left in the very lowest income
broads, both in depression and in
so-called prosperous periods. Does the Negro ever choose for
domestic work, washing care in a
cafe, acting as porter, unless he
has business or a profession.

Some Negroes are not interested in
industry as others, it is only nat-
ural he can't be better his housing
condition.

High Death Rates Among Negroes

The yearly death rate among the
Negro people is far higher in
proportion to the entire population of approximately 2,000,000.
Necessity, homes, crowded, badly ventilated—underneath the Negro people's
genera): English. Poverty delays his
seeking medical care. Usually sent
to ICU Sanitarium for x-rays and
further examination, he often finds
himself in a hospital where care is
demandable due to past neglect. Bad
housing is a source of most disease.

"A Bad Risk" for Life Insurance

That the Negro is considered a
"bad risk" by life insurance com-
panys is seen in the voluntarily
of some companies to write policies for
Negroes. There are many cases to
denounce. Despite pressure of state law,
authorizing insurance for
eligible after undergoing
physical examinations.

Why is the Negro considered a
"bad risk"? This is because of his
vocation—mostly manual and
heavy work, (if not jobless) under
adverse circumstances, with severe
exposure, in all kinds of weather,
and above all because of the fact
that he is forced to live in unsafe
and unsanitary houses without ade-
quate from disease and contamination.

Many Realities Incomprehensible

We hear much about his word,
"determination" of property. For the
Negro people there is another
meaning which Mr. Webster did not
speak of in his explanation. The
propriety of the occasion arrived as
by some landlords, business people
and others, that he forced the Negro

as to his family and friends. Trys, Christmas Cards, Seal, Ribbon,
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Housing of Negro Families

(Continued from Page 2)

Negro people are also members of the great human family. We also wish to point out that whenever a Negro family has been allowed to move into and live in a so-called exclusive section of the city, they have proved to be congenial, upright, clean, and worthy neighbors and citizens. It is unfortunate that the outset court procedure, must always enter into the picture and even go so far as to deny a humble people the God-given right to dwell in a home of their own. Housing, an immediate problem.

With the conclusion in March, 1938, of the Negro Housing survey conducted by THE VOICE, the news was broadcast in Rochester that both national and state governments are extending their laws for slum clearance, improved and low-cost homes—enforcement of the multipletwelling law and for special financial aid to the homeowners and small landlords. Of special interest is the establishment of the United States Housing Authority through the recent Wagner-Steagall Law. Half a billion dollars is now available with more forthcoming to replace blighted areas or substandard dwellings with low-cost houses.

THE VOICE supports the plan for a broadcurrythrough whose editors were able to make. Such a survey should be carried through, notably so that the people’s suffering from tenancy and unseaworthy housing can be alleviated by making use of the federal government’s large-scale, low-cost housing program as specified in the Housing Act of 1938.avn

SECOND WARD

Survey covered 15 families involving 79 persons:

Without bath

Parnnaces

Gas

Leak in roof

Broken sewer pipe

Smoke

Electric

Bad Toilets

Dump Cellar

Lamps

One case of a man living in a barn in the 151 Adams St.

FIRST WARD

Survey covered 6 apartments involving 13 persons:

2 public toilets in hall for use by 8 apartments. Only 1 apartment has toilet and bath. One public shower in hall used by 5 persons in 5 apartments. Roof is placed in case in hallway. Ventilation—poor in rear apartments.

ELEVENTH WARD

Survey covered 15 families involving 79 persons:

Dark Rooms

Without bath

Stoves

Parnnaces

Trap door in cellar

Electric

Leak in ceiling

Leak in roof

Gas

Lamps

Bad Toilets

Dump cellar

Slower pipe broken

Outside water dish

A family of six in 6 rooms, no bath in toilet in cellar which is wet and damp. The child had asthma later two months ago, another had a defective eye condition.

SEVENTH WARD

Survey covered 62 families involving 152 persons:

Dark Rooms

Without bath

Stoves

Parnnaces

Trap door in cellar

(Continued on Page 4)
Housing of Negro Families

(Continued from Page 3)

| Gas | 27 |
| Lumpy | 7 |
| Carpeted in cellar | 1 |
| Bag Toilets | 13 |
| Door cellar | 13 |
| Leed in roof | 14 |
| No cellar | 3 |
| Outside cellar doors | 1 |
| sewer pipes broken | 11 |
| 2 Bath tubs out of order | 1 |
| 2 Toilets in hallway | 1 |
| Servicing 11 1-room apartments including approximately 15 persons |

EIGHTH WARD

Survey covered 19 families involving 110 persons:

| Dark rooms | 25 |
| Surveys | 24 |
| Pictures | 15 |
| Trap doors in cellar | 4 |
| Elevators | 8 |
| Lamps | 6 |
| Red Toilets | 13 |
| Damp Cellars | 15 |
| Sewer pipe broken | 3 |
| Leek in roofs | 12 |
| Outside cellar doors | 3 |

Three outstanding cases of serious overcrowding from a health and moral standpoint:

1. One family of 8 in 6 rooms, 3 children.
2. One family of 12 in 6 rooms, 2 children.
3. One family of 10 in 6 rooms, 8 children. Two boys sleep in one bed. Ages 3, 8, 9, 10, 12.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

In going about from house to house interviewing persons in the recent survey roads which included both Negro persons, we found them willing and eager to answer questions, show their homes and the conditions under which they are obliged to live. In many cases we found that the houses were unfit to live in. The majority of places surveyed needed major repairs in the stairways, floors and walls, also the plumbing was bad. Many were found without bath tubs and furnaces. The majority of cellars are dirt and are damp from water seeping in. Many cases we found without bath tubs and furnaces. Whether or not this was due to a lack of funds is not known. Many cases we found without bath tubs and furnaces. Whether or not this was due to a lack of funds is not known.

The tendency to make the entire house damp, as it breeds diseases such as tuberculosis. Several bad cases of overcrowding were found which have been listed in summary. Rats, mice, roaches and bedbugs were found in many homes, even to the large homes. Many cases we found without bath tubs and furnaces. Whether or not this was due to a lack of funds is not known.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the 11th ward where a number of Negroes live in bad homes be included in the areas listed for Housing Study, also from Charles St. west to Prospect St.
2. That prevailing laws governing housing be enforced, as making repairs.
3. That discrimination against Negro tenants be abolished.
4. That at least 2 of the 20 Investigators be picked to make the Housing Study be Negro. That Negro be included in whatever kind of project is built here.
5. That since New York City, Buffalo, Syracuse, Utica, Schenectady, Yonkers, Port Jervis and Lackawanna have set up necessary authorities and have petitioned the U. S. Housing Authority for loans to build low-rent houses at any profit, Realtors and Bankers would not be willing and eager to answer questions, show their homes and the conditions under which they are obliged to live. In many cases we found that the houses were unfit to live in. The majority of places surveyed needed major repairs in the stairways, floors and walls, also the plumbing was bad. Many were found without bath tubs and furnaces. Whether or not this was due to a lack of funds is not known. Many cases we found without bath tubs and furnaces. Whether or not this was due to a lack of funds is not known.

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