

**From “Providing Housing” to “Building Communities”:**

**A Brief History of the Albany Housing Authority**

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## **Introduction**

The broadly diverse fifty-six year history of the Albany Housing Authority has been shaped by the many phases of its existence. Some have echoed larger patterns in public housing that affected the country as a whole, while others have been unique in time and place. Its birth in 1946 came as a response to veterans' needs for housing. Like many other agencies across the nation, it was involved in the construction of tower projects like the Thacher and Lincoln Park Homes. It is now actively involved in housing programs that focus on helping its residents become part of a community, as evidenced by the HOPE VI and Section 8 voucher programs. The Albany Housing Authority, or AHA, has also expanded its influence to include a variety of social service and outreach programs. It has tested its ingenuity and ability to adapt to housing needs in a unique situation. Across decades, the Albany Housing Authority has survived and matured into an organization that endeavors to promote a sense of community as well as effectively discharge its core duty of providing decent, safe, affordable housing.

## **Early History and Historical Context**

Many people think of World War II as a time that tried the nation and tested its resourcefulness, patriotism, and courage. However, the years immediately following the war presented challenges of their own. Many returning soldiers faced a struggle to secure employment and housing. On August 1, 1945 the Federal Government's Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning released a small booklet entitled *Postwar Housing*,<sup>1</sup> which emphasized the need for housing coordination to be focused on a local level.

In his end of year message for 1945, Mayor Erastus Corning singled out two issues of immediate concern to the City of Albany. One was the construction of a city-owned bus

terminal. The other was the establishment of a housing authority. Mayor Corning reasoned, “With a Municipal Housing Authority in existence it is, first, considerably easier to gather together all the information that is needed on our housing problems to give us accurate and complete knowledge of its various phases. Second, if such a Housing Authority should determine that there is a need for public housing, it would be in a position to start immediate negotiations with Federal and State Agencies with the view to constructing the necessary projects without delay.”<sup>2</sup>

The Mayor’s initial concern was housing returning veterans who were unable to secure living arrangements for their families. Building housing was one thing, but administering that housing and screening applicants would require systematic oversight by an agency. Mayor Corning told the American Veterans Committee (AVC) that, “With the formation of the Albany Housing Authority, the referral service would be rendered by one city sponsored agency.”<sup>3</sup>

At its meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1946, the Albany Common Council passed a motion authorizing Mayor Corning to seek State legislation that would create a housing authority for the city. On February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1946, the Public Authorities Law was amended by the addition of Section 1284, making official, the birth of the Albany Housing Authority. The original legislation called for five members to make up the governing Board of Commissioners of the AHA and imbued them with “the powers and duties now or hereafter conferred by the public housing law upon municipal housing authorities.”<sup>4</sup>

The organizational meeting of the Albany Housing Authority was held on March 31<sup>st</sup> 1946. The founding members of the five-person committee were Roy G. Finch, M. Michael Dobris, Rev. William Hunt, Rev. Reginald M. Field, and Edward F. Kennel. Mr. Finch was named the first chairman. At the meeting, the bylaws of the Housing Authority were adopted and, in

addition to the five governing members, the position of Executive Secretary was established. As well as being responsible for maintaining the AHA records, the original bylaws state that the “Executive Secretary of the Board of Commissioners shall be the Executive Director of the Authority and shall have general supervision over the administration of business and the affairs of the Authority...”<sup>5</sup>

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946, by appointment of Mayor Corning, Bernard V. Fitzpatrick became the first Executive Secretary of the newly created Albany Housing Authority. Fitzpatrick had a long history of municipal service. Having served in the Mayor’s office in one capacity or another since 1926 he was familiar with the workings of municipal government. During the Mayor’s one-year absence from office while serving in the military, it had been Fitzpatrick who faithfully sent newspaper clippings and kept the Mayor abreast of the happenings at City Hall. The June 1, 1946 edition of the *Times Union* referred to Fitzpatrick as one of the most popular individuals in the administration. Fitzpatrick was granted an annual salary of \$5,500, an amount that exceeded his salary as Mayor Corning’s administrative assistant by \$1,650.

To help defray costs of setting up the Housing Authority, the city’s Common Council initially allocated a municipal budget of \$4,750. The Report of the Comptroller for that year indicated that only \$2,732.65 was spent on salaries and “printing, stationary, etc.”<sup>6</sup>

Even though the Authority’s initial concern was to house veterans, board members and the Executive Secretary had large-scale public housing projects in mind. On October 21, 1946, Bernard Fitzpatrick was present at a meeting with several members of the New York State Division of Housing. The Housing Authority proposed to begin work on 600 units of public housing pending state funding. Sadly, the State Division of Housing felt that with building materials still being tightly controlled so soon after the war, and with federal emphasis being on

veteran's housing, it was unlikely that so many units of public housing would receive funding. Albany would not see its first large-scale public housing project for several years.

The Albany Housing Authority did, however, immediately begin to assist with emergency housing for veterans. They were involved with the creation of barracks style housing that was erected in St. Mary's Park, as well as coordinating the moving process for veterans and their families into various properties in the city. St. Mary's Park was located off Washington Avenue, and is the current site of the Albany High School, just west of Beverwyck Park. The city's involvement in the project would be short lived. Disagreements with the State Housing Agency over how the project was to be administered caused Mayor Corning to withdraw the city's participation in July of 1946. Although the State Housing Commissioner at the time, Herman T. Stichman, claimed to be "mystified" by the Mayor's action, Corning felt that with the state directly overseeing a city authority, complications would arise that would leave the city at a disadvantage.<sup>7</sup> The city surrendered 500 veterans' applications to the state. As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1947, 130 families would be housed. Although the city had withdrawn from the project and left it under state control, the AHA kept its connection with some residents of the project.

Fitzpatrick's role as Executive Secretary of the Housing Authority would be a brief one. He resigned his position on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1947 to become the Deputy Commissioner of Welfare for Albany County. The position of Executive Secretary remained vacant till January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1948, when Harry J. Wands was appointed.

### **The First Large Scale Projects**

The Housing Act of 1949 made federal funds available for urban renewal and public housing. This would later be bolstered by the Housing Act of 1954 that provided “a workable program” for urban renewal efforts.<sup>8</sup> Early in 1950, the AHA began plans for its first federal grant to build large-scale permanent public housing in conjunction with urban renewal efforts in Albany. Sites were selected on Colonie Street and Van Woert St. The federal government rejected the Van Woert St. site, but approval was given for Colonie St.<sup>9</sup> The Public Housing Administration (PHA) approved a loan of \$210,000 with an initial advance of \$26,000. Edward J. Toole was selected as the architect. The Colonie St. project was given the designation NY 9-1, and ground was broken January 23, 1952.<sup>10</sup> At its inauguration the project would be named the Robert E. Whalen Homes, in honor of a well-known Albany attorney who had participated in the State Constitutional Convention of 1938.<sup>11</sup> The first tenants moved in on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1953, and the project was completed later that year at a total cost of 1.5 million dollars. In their original configuration, the Whalen Homes consisted of 108 apartments in six, three-story brick buildings. Mr. and Mrs. George J. Lynch were proclaimed the first official tenants of the Whalen homes, and Mayor Corning greeted a box laden Mrs. Lynch as she entered her new home in the “C” building of the site. When asked what she thought of her new apartment, she replied simply, “It’s lovely here.”<sup>12</sup> Before the completion of the first project, the Albany Housing Authority saw another change in its management. In 1951 Michael Murphy would become the new Executive Director.

The building of the AHA’s second project, NY-9-2, ran almost concurrently with the Whalen Homes. Designed by Edward J Toole, it was placed in an area heavily modified by urban renewal efforts on the newly configured streets of Brady, Lawn, and Maguire in North Albany. Unlike the Whalen Homes, the second project consisted of 292 units of row housing spread

across 23 two-story buildings on an over 30-acre site. The project was finished at the end of 1953 with the first residents slated to move in that December. Project NY-9-2 was inaugurated as the Edwin Corning Homes in honor of Mayor Corning's father who had been Albany's Democratic Party Chairman in the 1920's and had also served as lieutenant governor under Alfred E. Smith.

The Corning Homes brought the Housing Authority back to its roots. Although the veterans' housing project in St. Mary's Park was successful in many ways, it was always intended to be a temporary solution. The Legislature had set its initial life at five years in 1946, but had granted two one-year extensions since many families were still unable to find permanent homes. December 31, 1953, was set as the date by which the state was required to have all of the homes razed and the site ready for surrender to the city.<sup>13</sup> At the end of October of that year, Judge M. Michael Dobris, the then chairman of the Authority, announced that several of the 50 remaining veterans' families would be able to move into the soon to be completed Corning Homes.<sup>14</sup> Even with the Housing Authority's aid, the final 20 families on the park would have to be removed by the city as it finished the state's demolition work on the last few remaining buildings in June of 1954.<sup>15</sup>

### **Towers in the Park and the South Mall**

The late 50's and early 60's would bring two changes to Albany that would impact public housing. The first was the change in the city's composition brought about by mass moves to suburban townships such as Colonie, Guilderland and Bethlehem, and by the development of new residential subdivisions in the sparsely settled western and south-western areas inside the city limits. The second was the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller South Mall project, which was

announced in March 1962 and required purchase by the state and demolition of the structures on 98.5 acres of densely occupied city streets on the south side of downtown Albany. Estimates of the number of people displaced by the South Mall varied from 7,000 to 9,000 people. In November of 1962, the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal released a survey of housing needs in Albany.<sup>16</sup> In the report it noted that between 1950 and 1960 Albany had lost 3.9% of its population, dropping from 134,995 people to 129,726 over the course of the decade. The simple shift of 5,269 people obscures an underlying, more relevant ethnic shift. Between 1950 and 1960, the minority population increased by 86.6% or 5,091 people, while the non-minority population declined by 10,360. This change mirrored a then common occurrence in the United States. With the prosperity of the 50's, many white middle-class households left the central city in favor of single-family homes in the suburbs. An article in the March 20, 1960 edition of the *Times Union* lamented two problems. First, a rapidly increasing demand for new housing was driving up the cost of building materials. Second, new homebuyers were demanding ranch style and split-level housing as opposed to two-story or taller homes. The article stated that efforts to resurrect the two-family home had failed miserably.

It was impossible to build this new, popular style of housing in the center of the city. Land was simply too expensive and in too short supply. As a result Albany began to extend west and southwestward, developing new lower-density neighborhoods beyond Pine Hills and along the more distant portions of New Scotland Avenue, Hackett Boulevard and Whitehall Road. This new, automobile-dependent lifestyle offered greater privacy and more indoor and outdoor space. In 1957, during this period of drastic transition, Michael Murphy would leave his post as Executive Director of the Housing Authority and be replaced by Robert Bender, a former city alderman and resident of the South End.



The out migration of the middle-class from the city did not resolve housing issues. The 1962 housing survey classified 6,469 or 14% of all housing units in Albany as “deteriorating,” and 1,578 units, or about 3.5%, as “dilapidated.” Comparatively, Albany had greater percentages of “deteriorating” and “dilapidated” housing than the City of New York. Many of the deteriorating housing units had no running water or private toilet. In fact, 2,018 units of housing that had been deemed structurally sound had no running water or private toilet either. By 1961 all rent control measures placed on Albany by the state had been removed and rents had risen roughly \$13 a month in just one year. This was during a time when the median monthly rent with controls in place had been around \$40 a month. The new families who were coming into Albany, many with lower incomes, were entering a housing market full of substandard units with steadily increasing rents.

After the passage of the 1954 Housing Act, numerous proposals were made for federally funded urban renewal projects in Albany. They were intended to replace slums and blighted areas with new housing, businesses and public facilities. With the middle class on the move to the suburbs, Albany’s inner city neighborhoods, like those of many other American cities in the North-East and Mid-West, were decaying and beginning to suffer the first signs of economic downturn. One of Albany’s urban renewal projects was aimed at the city’s South End. It called for dramatically altering the existing structure and configuration of buildings and streets in the area.

The public housing that was to be built in the renewal area was a radical departure from past efforts in the city. Following the example of other new projects around the country, Albany opted for “towers in the park” which concentrated residents vertically as opposed to horizontally. The historic street system with its small blocks was largely eliminated, creating new

“superblocks” of towers and open space. The idea was to use only small portions of a lot for building while leaving the area surrounding it more open. New York City had already used this concept to build public housing projects such as the Elliot Houses in Manhattan, and the Brownsville Houses and Albany Houses in Brooklyn.<sup>17</sup>

The new tower style developments were often concrete slab type construction. This was designed to allow large numbers of units to be built quickly and more economically. A lower start-up cost per unit was important to housing authorities that were often expected to build large numbers of units with limited grant money.

Albany’s new housing project in the South End was to have four, twelve-story towers built on an area bounded by Rensselaer, Green, Bassett, and Church streets. The new project also differed from the two existing projects in that it was named before the final bid was even accepted by the US Public Housing Authority. The towers were to be called the John Boyd Thacher 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes in honor of the late former mayor of Albany. The Housing Authority also established a maximum income before the project was begun. In order to qualify to live in the new apartments, a family of three could earn no more than \$2,400 annually.<sup>18</sup>

On December 15th, 1958, demolition began for the new public housing site.<sup>19</sup> The old homes in the area were completely destroyed, and construction of the massive towers began. The buildings were designed by Urbahn, Brayton, & Burrows of New York City.<sup>20</sup> The general construction was overseen by H. R. H. Construction of New York City.

Construction of such large buildings was not a simple task. In July of 1959 it was discovered that some of the dowels that supported reinforcing rods in the foundation were bent, and had to be replaced.<sup>21</sup> Beyond problems in construction, the buildings themselves had interesting quirks that had been purposefully incorporated into the design. There was to be no garbage collection.

Trash was thrown down a central chutes into an incinerator. Each building had a staggered elevator system. One elevator stopped only on even floors, and the other only on odd floors. Perhaps the decision that sparked the most initial curiosity was the choice to have no shower plumbing installed. The reason for the decision was twofold. One reason was to reduce building costs. The other was to prevent water damage. Robert Bender, the AHA Executive Director, quipped, “You’ll have to remember, there’ll be a lot of children living in those buildings.”<sup>22</sup>

The first of the towers was completed in early 1961. In the February 26, 1961 edition of the *Times Union*, a huge two-page spread advertised the development. “Lofty Apartments Spring from Slum” was the headline for one article on the Thacher Homes. Aerial photos of the project showed the austere towers looking out over the Hudson River and dwarfing the surrounding buildings.

Construction on the Thacher Homes had scarcely begun when the Albany Housing Authority began looking for a site for the city’s fourth public housing project. The plans for the project were twofold. Designed by August Lux and Associates, the first portion would involve the construction of a fifth twelve-story tower near the Thacher Homes and designated for elderly residents. The second portion would involve two-twelve story buildings and two eight-story buildings. These four towers were to be built incorporating a small portion of Lincoln Park, and for that reason they were named the Lincoln Park Homes. Built by the MSI Corporation, the Lincoln Park Homes were completed in 1966.

Tower living brought with it new challenges. Those living in the upper floors were unable to watch children playing on the grounds, and children were left to play in halls and stairwells. The novelty of elevators was also attractive. The strain of overuse and vandalism forced the Housing Authority to spend thousands of dollars a year just to keep the elevators functioning.<sup>23</sup> Although

the outside area of the towers was open, the inner areas were hidden from view. This made them hard to patrol effectively with security. By May of 1963, tenants of the Thacher Homes would say that it was impossible to leave after dark, and that they lived in fear.<sup>24</sup> In June of 1967, faced with increasing vandalism and crime, the governing board of the Housing Authority would order Robert Bender to “completely circulate” the residents of the Thacher Homes for the second time since the development was built.<sup>25</sup> This circulation entailed reassigning tenants to new apartments in an effort to scatter families and break up groups of people in particular areas that were viewed as problematic.

George Marbley remembers the beginnings of the Thacher Towers. He moved in 1966 with his family of nine children and became quickly aware of how the towers’ layout did not take into account some simple aspects of family living. One immediately obvious problem was the lack of ground floor restrooms. Marbley recalls, “During this period of time we had a lot of kids in these buildings... big families... a lot of them... all through here. Now a lot of the families at that time would let kids go out and play in the playgrounds. We had little playgrounds around here and they’d go try to make it back in the building to use the elevator. You would find waste and urine on the elevator, the hallways weren’t mopped, stairwells, everything was a mess.” Father Peter Young, a respected priest and advocate for South End residents, also remembers those times. “People that were coming in were not in any way prepared for that kind of living. ... The bathrooms were upstairs in the apartments and not downstairs where they needed to be, so the kids would run into the elevator and go to the bathroom all the time. Then they finally put bathrooms in the lobbies. We were working with these little things all the time in the community because there were a lot of people in the projects.”

Maintenance problems were also taking their toll. With the new towers, it was vandalism and emergency repairs as opposed to simply age and a high tenant volume as was the case with the Whalen and Corning Homes sites. Bender struggled to keep maintenance fully staffed, but he experienced a high turnover rate and a lack of interest among maintenance firms in the area. Several times in the sixties he would complain to the board of the AHA that he was unable to adequately recruit for maintenance positions.<sup>26</sup>

In the mid-sixties the Albany Housing Authority faced a unique change that would further challenge the already burdened housing situation in the city. The demolition of more than a thousand buildings to make way for the Governor's South Mall, eventually to be known as the Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza, had made Albany's already tight housing market much tighter. To ease the crisis, Rockefeller promised housing would be built to replace what was lost during this process.

In conjunction with the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, the Albany Housing Authority began work on NYS-136. Designed by Lux and Quakenbush and built by the Cozzolino Construction Corporation, the project was completed in 1967 and dubbed the Ezra Prentice Homes. The new development offered low-rise family housing on South Pearl Street.<sup>27</sup>

Even with the Ezra Prentice Homes, more housing was needed to replace that which was lost to demolition under the South Mall initiative. Plans were begun to construct another state sponsored development commissioned as NYS-137 and located near the Empire Plaza. The name of Roosevelt Terrace was chosen for the project, and plans drawn up by Blatner, Mendel, and Mesick were submitted in late 1966 to the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.<sup>28</sup> The project was to be built in the South Mall area as partial fulfillment of Rockefeller's housing promise. Everything was proceeding as planned, but when the estimated

building cost rose from its starting point of ten million dollars to nearly nineteen million dollars, the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal informed the Housing Authority that state funding was no longer available, effectively scrapping the whole project in early 1969. The March 12, 1969 minutes of the AHA Board of Commissioners meeting noted that canceling the project at such a late stage would be costly.<sup>29</sup> The site had already been graded and steel pilings driven. However, without full State funding, nothing could be done. The designation NYS-137 would not die with the project, and circumstances would create the need to accelerate construction of public housing at other locations.

In 1968 and 1969 the Housing Authority was struggling to get funding and plans together for senior citizen apartments on Central Avenue. The demand for this kind of housing was so great that the Authority entered into a contract with the State Broadway Company to renovate and lease the Hampton Hotel beginning in 1969. The Hampton Hotel project received the designation NY-9-6, and it eventually provided 100 units of temporary housing.

In May of 1969 the Urban League Fair Housing Coalition held public meetings to discuss nine sites that had been proposed for public housing. The meeting was heavily attended by those who had lived in the South Mall area, and whose homes had been lost to the construction of the Plaza. There were two major concerns of former South Mall residents. First, that there had still not been enough housing created, public or private, to replace what had been eliminated in downtown Albany. Second, that “towers in the park” style housing was unacceptable. Some at the meeting even referred to the towers as “cement jungles.”<sup>30</sup> Others stated what the poor really wanted was houses and gardens. The problem was, for the most part, this wasn’t feasible. The South Mall construction had eliminated approximately forty blocks of housing and displaced

roughly 3,500 families. Building another forty blocks in Albany with the limited monies available for public housing was impossible.

Still, something had to be done. The lack of housing was beginning to reflect poorly on Governor Rockefeller who was already being accused by many of being fiscally irresponsible. Rockefeller's political plans included a bid for the presidency, and a lackluster performance in an area such as housing tied to his monolithic South Mall building project could be damaging. In September of 1969, leaders of the NAACP met with Governor Rockefeller specifically to discuss the problem of low-income housing.<sup>31</sup> Rockefeller promised to get on the ball. The fact is that several projects were already in the works. In July 1969, Edward Kennell, the then vice-chairman of the Albany Housing Authority, had announced that two projects were to be built. One with federal money to be located in Arbor Hill and designated as NY-9-5, and the other, an extension to the Prentice Homes known as NYS-137-A.

These two projects were in addition to the tower for seniors being built on Central Avenue, designated NY-9-7. It consisted of 195 units, and was intended to meet the growing needs of Albany's low-income elderly population. The project was designed by Robert Louis Trudeau who also designed the arch gateway to the Albany Law School. Built by Sofarelli Associates Inc. and completed in 1972, NY-9-7 was christened the Westview Homes. Hailed as a "strikingly modern structure" because of its unique rounded shape, the tower was close to the shopping district and easily accessible by bus. One early resident recalled the need for "a place with transportation ... we wanted a church." The Westview Homes were ideal because "you really didn't need a car." The tower was developed as a turnkey project meaning the general contractor was in charge of construction and completion, and then sold the ready-to-rent units to the Housing Authority, who purchased it with state or federal funds.<sup>32</sup>

Continuing to use the NYS 137 designation while intensifying the building schedule, the state announced two more projects that would be built with state funds; a project of family units designated NYS 137-B, and another tower for seniors, NYS 137-C. The Ezra Prentice Homes and the NYS 137 series would be the only large-scale projects in which the AHA would work in conjunction with the state. All other projects were funded through federal money and would be independently developed by the Housing Authority.

### **The Yarbrough Homes and Urban Renewal in Arbor Hill**

In May of 1971, work was finished on NY-9-5. Located at the corner of Livingston Avenue and North Pearl Street, the Ida Yarbrough Homes offered two types of public housing units. The two seven story towers were designed to provide 224 units for low-income elderly. The towers had features specifically designed for that population, such as centrally linked emergency pull switches and a nurses station. The remaining housing at Ida Yarbrough was low-rise, family type construction. This consisted of 129 units with three, four, and five bedroom layouts. The Ida Yarbrough homes were named for a locally famous, African-American community leader and civil rights activist. Yarbrough, who had passed away in 1969, was once quoted as saying, “You don’t leave a community if it doesn’t have exactly what you want. You want to build it yourself.”<sup>33</sup> Yarbrough was a founder of the Albany Inter-Racial Council as well as its first woman president.

The Yarbrough Homes was also a turnkey project. The “ready to rent” arrangement was intended to free up the AHA from the obligations of oversight, but the lack of state supervision in this case became a specter that haunted the site for years to come. In many places the construction had been rushed or components had been improperly installed. Among these were



plumbing problems that led to flooding and roofs that developed severe leaks due to improper assembly. In February of 1977, the AHA announced that it had discovered too many flaws and that it planned to file suit against the general contractor.<sup>34</sup>

The site selection for the Yarbrough homes was part of a much larger urban renewal project in Arbor Hill. The Urban renewal efforts were an attempt to revitalize the neighborhood through the construction of new buildings to replace those that were substandard or too costly to repair. Urban renewal could be subtle, imperceptibly altering the actual physical layout of an area, or it could be dramatic, involving new road layouts and different styles of buildings or approaches to land use. The plan for Arbor Hill involved drastic changes. As early as 1958, the neighborhood was targeted as an urban renewal area.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the early sixties, a major, comprehensive plan for Arbor Hill was developed and refined. By 1963, the project took shape and was divided into three stages. The first stage involved removing some of the existing grid system and building the Manning Boulevard extension as a continuation of Ten Broeck Street.<sup>36</sup> The first phase also involved the construction of housing of three different types: garden apartments, a private high-rise development, and public housing. The first phase was designed to increase Arbor Hill's housing stock and provide a greenbelt within the city. The second phase included the building of a school, a park, and some additional housing. The final phase involved some scattered site rehabilitation and renewal between Clinton and Livingston Avenues.

Ultimately, only the first phase of the urban renewal project would be completed. The Ida Yarbrough Homes were constructed to make up the public housing component. The garden apartments were built by the Dudley Park Association, which was formed by the Albany Episcopal Cathedral of All Saints and the Morning Star Baptist Church. The Dudley Park Apartments were a 263-unit development keyed to offering affordable housing. Also built as

part of the Arbor Hill Urban Renewal Project was Ten Broeck Manor. Planned by the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC), this two-site project was constructed by the F.D. Rich Housing Corporation. The development consisted of two-story apartments and was called a “country village” by the developers.<sup>37</sup> These apartments still exist, but are now known as Skyline Gardens and managed by Interstate Realty Management. A few other elements of the urban renewal project were put in place at various times. The Whitney M. Young Jr. Health Clinic was finished in 1970 and the new Arbor Hill Elementary School was completed in 1973. In 1986 a short-lived shopping center was also constructed.<sup>38</sup>

Community interactions take place in the context of the neighborhoods of which they are a part. When it was decided that Ida Yarbrough would be placed in Arbor Hill, the intention was to provide affordable housing that would allow families in the neighborhood to remain. Simply living in a neighborhood, however, does not create community. Peter Blau, a noted sociologist, stated that opportunities for contact determine the probability of social associations.<sup>39</sup> Blau suggested a few structural factors that influence the probability that individuals will have opportunities to interact. One that relates to public housing is the impact of proximity. For individuals to interact they must share some kind of close physical proximity at some point. Applying this to communities, for bonds to form, individuals who reside there must have regular face-to-face contact with one another. Homes with visible individual street entrances increase the likelihood of this taking place.

The Yarbrough Homes, like other tower projects, suffered from having solely communal entrances. Further, security procedures actually barred other members of the community from access to the high-rise portion unless they already knew a tenant. Distance can be physical, but it can also be perceived. Cul-de-sacs, enclosed housing, or structures that depart from those

commonly found in a community can serve as perceived barriers to interaction. The struggle comes in that these are common features in multiple unit housing, as they tend to heighten the sense of security for residents. However, communities can interact through the sharing of community resources such as parks, community centers, or local businesses. The nature of The Yarbrough Homes made community interactions like this critical. The failure to implement phases two and three of the urban renewal program meant that some community features that were planned would never come to fruition or be only partially completed.

Still, Yarbrough tenants have found ways to interact with the larger Arbor Hill community. For a long time the Arbor Hill Community Center, located at 50 Lark St., offered an opportunity for resident interaction. One resident explained, “We used to go up to the center...the big center. I used to belong there until they tore it down.” Although the old community center was demolished in 2000, residents of Ida Yarbrough Homes continue to use the new community center in the renovated Engine 2 Company fire station as a way to meet with others in the community.

### **The NYS-137 Projects**

In October of 1973, NYS-137-B was completed in the South End and designated Creighton Storey Homes. This low-rise development was designed for families and had a blend of two, three, four, and five bedroom layouts. The general contracting work had been done by Continental Multiplex, and the final price tag for the development was \$4,040,732.

NYS-137-C was a seventeen-story tower at 45 Central Avenue. Designed by Blatner, Mendel, Mesick, and Cohen as another project for seniors, it contained 158 one-bedroom apartments. Built by OR-DI Construction Corp and completed in the fall of 1974, the tower was

named the Townsend Park Apartments. It was constructed at a total cost of nearly four million dollars. Unlike Westview, Townsend Park Homes is a more traditional tower block shape. Their location near the Public Library, Art Institute and Washington Park instantly made them one of the more desirable housing options for Senior Citizens.<sup>40</sup> Also, unlike Yarbrough, Townsend had been closely monitored by the State during construction. This precluded many of the structural problems of the Yarbrough high-rises, slowed their aging and reduced recurring maintenance demands.

The large amount of public housing built in Albany in the early seventies was unusual. By that time most of the country had stopped building public housing tower blocks. Other tower projects in the US had seen disruption far worse than that experienced at Thacher and Lincoln Park Homes. One of the most famous cases, Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, was torn down in 1972 at a loss of 300 million dollars. In 1973, President Nixon declared a moratorium on federal funding for all housing and community development projects. The fact that Albany was building a large portion of its public housing at that time evidenced the city's unique character in two ways in particular. First, the South Mall project had created a sense of urgency for public housing. Rockefeller's involvement in scrapping the first NYS 137 project fueled additional demands for public housing. Coming to a head in 1969, there was a major effort to get new housing projects started. This allowed the AHA to push through the Yarbrough and Westview Homes construction before Nixon's moratorium took effect. Second, the state provided funds at a time when federal funds were being curtailed. Still, the moratorium affected Albany. Two projects did not receive approval in time and were never built. One was a 225 unit elderly project to be built next to the Westview Homes. The second was 125 units of scattered units designed to meet the need for family housing.

### **The Awkward 70's and the Rise of the Tenant Associations**

While the early seventies saw the construction of a large number of units of public housing, it could also be considered the most tumultuous period in the Albany Housing Authority's history. In the spring of 1970, under pressure from the tenants, the Housing Authority terminated Seiden Security and Investigation as providers of security for the Thacher Homes. Thacher residents said the guards were virtually non-existent and when they were present, they harassed residents and used aggressive tactics to police the buildings. The Thacher Homes had been labeled by many as the worst housing in Albany. There had been reports of several muggings and widespread vandalism. The tenants of the Thacher Homes did not want another private security company in the building. They demanded that a tenant based security patrol be established to provide both jobs for tenants and assurance that the guards had a vested interest in the security of the buildings. Difficulties also arose over the maintenance of these buildings. Due to the combined effects of vandalism and age, many AHA projects were in need of substantial rehabilitation. All these factors combined placed a substantial strain on relations between the AHA administration and its' residents.

It was out of these clashes that the tenant associations in each of the projects were born and gained strength. Father Peter Young remembers the tenants coming to him for assistance in working with the AHA. He recalls, "It started with the problems of the playground, and it evolved from one thing to another." Soon Thacher, Lincoln, and Whalen Homes all had well organized and vocal tenant associations. These three tenant associations formed the core voice of the residents in their dealings with AHA. The Albany Tenant Association Council was created for the purpose of presenting unified demands to the AHA.

In early 1971, two lawsuits were filed against the Albany Housing Authority. The first dealt with the manner in which the Authority assessed extra rent for damages done to the interior and exterior of units. The second contended that the Authority's eviction process was unfair in that evictions often took place at a moment's notice.<sup>41</sup>

Matters continued to worsen. The Housing Authority was in the process of applying for a two million dollar modernization grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In June of 1971, fearing that the grant would not be used to address the issues about which they were most concerned, the Albany Tenants Association wrote a letter requesting HUD block the grant until the Housing Authority could guarantee the incorporation of their demands into the rehabilitation plans.<sup>42</sup> Negotiations for a tenant security patrol dragged on. The debate stemmed from the Housing Authority's desire to retain ultimate control over who was hired or dismissed.

While security issues were the biggest concern for the residents of the towers, those in the Whalen Homes wanted new roofs and other sorely needed upgrades. Tired of wrestling with the Housing Authority, Julia Corazzini, the president of the Robert Whalen Tenant Association, announced at the end of October that residents of the Robert Whalen Homes would engage in a rent strike, withholding their November rent if their demands were not met.<sup>43</sup> The Housing Authority chairman at the time, Eugene Devine, stated there was really nothing that the AHA could do without the modernization money. The rent strike at the Whalen Homes would continue for almost three years.

In frustration, the Housing Authority tried to evict those Whalen residents who were striking. The date of December 31, 1971 was marked for those residents who had withheld their rent to be dispossessed. The cumulative effect of these numerous problems took its toll on Executive

Director Robert Bender and he resigned on December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1971, citing ill health. His resignation was so sudden that a replacement had not yet been identified. Bernard Granger would eventually be sworn in later in 1972 as the Executive Director of the AHA.

Granger took charge of an Authority in rough shape. Tenants of the Thacher Homes, angered that a tenant security force was still not in place, joined the rent strike in February of 1972. The County Court Of Appeals had stayed the eviction of the Whalen families, but required them to post a \$6,500 bond to the court. The tenants, unable to pay the bond, turned to two priests who paid it on their behalf.<sup>44</sup> The tenants continued their reassurance that the withheld rent money was being placed in an escrow account and would be turned over to the Housing Authority when their demands were met.

The tenants involved in the rent strikes continued to point to three critical issues that needed addressing. First were capital improvements including new roofs for the Whalen Homes. Second, the tenants wanted a resident member of the Albany Housing Authority governing board. Third, they wanted their own tenant-manned force to provide security at the sites.

The AHA was hard pressed to resolve these issues. The ability to make massive repairs to the projects was tied to the HUD modernization grant that had been delayed. Also, after a meeting with striking tenants, Mayor Corning flatly refused to appoint a tenant member to the Albany Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.<sup>45</sup> The Housing Authority could only negotiate on the tenant security force, hoping that their efforts would end the strike.

The main point of debate regarding the security force was that tenants wanted a force controlled, staffed and managed by residents. After discussions with the Housing Authority, and realizing that total control was impossible, the tenants proposed an employment committee comprised of five housing authority representatives and four tenant representatives. Problems

stemmed from whether or not the employment committee would ultimately be able to control the hiring and firing of tenant patrol members. Edward Kennell, vice-chairman of the Housing Authority, explained early on in negotiations that the AHA could not surrender total control to tenants for any program that involved the Authority's funds.<sup>46</sup>

The ongoing rent strike presented an enormous challenge to the AHA. The withheld rent money placed an unmanageable strain on the Housing Authority's budget. In May of 1972 the details of the Tenant Security Patrol were ironed out. The idea for the employment committee was dropped. The program would include a tenant supervisor and be staffed by tenants. Dennis Tarantino, president of the Albany Tenant Association Council and the Lincoln Park Tenants Association, was to be the temporary first supervisor until another tenant could be trained.<sup>47</sup>

By December of 1972, HUD had awarded the Albany Housing Authority the first \$300,000 of its modernization funds. In addition, the total size of the modernization grant had been increased to three million dollars.<sup>48</sup> In February of 1973, some tenants of the Whalen Homes made a good faith payment of their rent. The Housing Authority was inching closer and closer to a resolution.

In April of 1973, another milestone was reached. Mayor Corning chose Philip Rappaport as the first tenant member of the Albany Housing Authority governing board.<sup>49</sup> A retired chef and member of the Albany Housing Authority Resident Affairs Council, Rappaport had been one of the original tenants of the Lincoln Park Homes. His appointment put the final issue of the rent strike to rest. Although the strike did not officially end with Rappaport's appointment, it quickly lost its momentum. All told, it would result in roughly \$80,000 dollars of rent being withheld.<sup>50</sup>



A bias suit launched against the Housing Authority would shatter the brief respite. Tenants of the Thacher Homes filed a class action suit claiming that the Housing Authority purposefully concentrated black tenants in the Thacher Homes, while discouraging them from entering into North Albany projects such as the Corning Homes.<sup>51</sup> In hearings held in January of 1974, Bernard Granger would be called on to explain the Housing Authority's tenant screening process.<sup>52</sup>

The Authority was also engaged in attempting to collect back rent from the tenants who took part in the rent strike. Several families, including leaders of the strike, had left the projects unannounced, giving no notice of their intentions or any forwarding address. Some of the families owed several thousand dollars in rent. Those who remained were left to negotiate repayment with the Housing Authority.<sup>53</sup>

Frustrated with the financial state of the AHA, and weary of the variety of problems most housing projects faced, Bernard Granger resigned on October 1, 1974 after roughly three years as Director of the Housing Authority. Into his shoes stepped Joseph F. Laden, a man who would ultimately hold that position for the next sixteen years.

### **The Laden Years and the Renewal of the AHA**

Although the Authority was struggling financially, Laden came to the new post with enthusiasm and resolve. His first act was to trim the overburdened budget. His cuts were drastic, but deemed necessary to make the Authority viable. One of the positions he eliminated was that of Assistant Executive Director.<sup>54</sup> He also cut approximately 100 maintenance positions and some of the recreation programs that the Authority had been sponsoring. The city eventually

intervened, restoring a portion of the reduced maintenance staff and recreation programs under its budget.<sup>55</sup>

With some of the financial pressure off the Authority, Laden focused on program development. The most immediate concern was to make numerous improvements to the Thacher, Lincoln Park, Whalen and Corning Homes, including the installation of new kitchens and repair of the elevators. In 1974, federal legislation opened another avenue for the Housing Authority. The 1974 Housing and Community Development Act created the Section 8 program which allowed housing authorities across the nation to subsidize qualified tenants rents with federal funds while they lived in private housing. Participating landlords, after approval, could be guaranteed tenants, and also be assured rents at up to 120% of fair market value. The AHA quickly began making this known through local newspapers in an effort to attract landlords to participate and increase the overall availability of publicly assisted housing within the city.

In 1975, the AHA had another first. Eugene Devine passed away after a several month long illness, leaving the position of Housing Authority Chairman vacant. In his place, Edward Kennell was elected Chairman. Already the first minority on the Housing Authority Board and one of its founding members, Kennell would now be the first black Chairman. His history of municipal service was impressive. Not only had he been a president of the Albany Inter-Racial Council, but he had also been the Deputy Director of the Albany Urban Renewal Agency for fourteen years.<sup>56</sup> When he was first appointed to the AHA Governing Board in 1946, he was the first black to serve on any upstate New York Housing Authority.

Another advance came in 1976 with the expansion of the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to include two positions reserved for residents. Two years prior, in 1974, a bill introduced by State Senator Walter B. Langley required that all New York housing authorities

have at least two tenant commissioners. Rather than require the Mayor to make appointments, the AHA amended its bylaws to add two tenant elected positions to the Board of Commissioners. Unlike appointed board members whose terms were five years, the elected tenant members were to serve for two years and receive a maximum salary of \$1,500.

The first tenant elections took place on June 8, 1976. They were heated battles, with ten candidates running for the two posts.<sup>57</sup> In the end there were more surprises in store for the AHA. The first two elected Resident Commissioners were women, making them both the first elected members of the Housing Authority, and the first women members. Eva Toombs, elected to represent the projects in the northern portion of the city, was an elderly resident of Westview Homes. Gwendolyn Taylor, chosen to represent the southern projects, worked as an inspector for the Albany Building Department and lived in the Ezra Prentice Homes. The new representatives were paid \$75 per board meeting attended.<sup>58</sup>

Laden showed himself to be a creative and caring Executive Director. He emphasized the importance of getting the AHA involved in federal and state supported pilot programs. In 1975, Albany was chosen to participate in a federal pilot project known as the Work Incentive Program, under which the maintenance staff could earn additional income based on exceeding established production and productivity standards.<sup>59</sup> The program was predicated on one that had been developed in British public housing and consultants that had implemented the program in London came to Albany to provide support and assistance. The initiative was ultimately credited with doubling the efficiency of the maintenance staff.<sup>60</sup>

In 1977, Laden proposed a novel approach for revitalizing the South Mall. He recommended turning the Thatcher Homes into student housing. His reasoning was that students were more suited to tower living and also had money to spend in the downtown area. The recouped money

could be used to relocate the residents in the Thacher Homes to housing more suited for families.<sup>61</sup> Unfortunately, the federal government disapproved of the concept<sup>62</sup>

Laden also tried to find creative uses for the land purchased as the location of the original NYS-137, which was never built. The area was bounded by Madison Avenue, Eagle, Grand, and Philip Streets.<sup>63</sup> The Housing Authority had been leasing the land to the state for additional parking, but the value of the land was estimated at three million dollars.<sup>64</sup> That money could be used to offset operating costs or build a modest amount of low-income housing. Plans to sell the land did not work out, but Laden was not discouraged. He re-leased the land to the state and sought urban renewal money to turn a portion of it into a site for a farmer's market.<sup>65</sup>

In late May of 1978, the elderly community and the AHA would get a shock. The State Broadway Company requested an increase in their lease charges for the Hampton Hotel. This prompted a general inspection of the structure to see if it was in need of rehabilitation. During the inspection, the Albany Fire Department discovered that the building violated several sections of the fire code. The problems were sufficiently critical that the building was put on a 24-hour fire watch until all the seniors were evacuated. Joseph Laden had no choice but to cancel the federal lease on the building and move all the seniors out. Two elderly women had already died in a fire at Westview Homes, and no one was prepared to risk the lives of residents by exposing them to this potential danger. The seniors living in the old hotel were heartbroken. The Housing Authority was able to find homes for all of them in either the public senior developments or the privately run South Mall Towers. Over a decade later in 1993, the Hampton Plaza would be sold to the state and converted for use as office space.<sup>66</sup>

Under Laden, the Housing Authority began to investigate the use of alternative energy sources. In an effort to reduce utility costs, the AHA sought and obtained a 2.2 million dollar

grant for a public housing project that would use a passive solar power system.<sup>67</sup> Nicknamed the “Solar Village”, it was hoped that solar power would maximize rent revenue by reducing the cost of utilities, consistently one of the most expensive elements in public housing operations. At the time the grant was awarded, no specific site had been chosen. Site selection for the solar village would later prove to be an insurmountable challenge for the AHA. One of the more inventive conservation plans involved mounting a windmill atop Westview Homes to reduce the amount of power that had to be purchased for the project.<sup>68</sup>

In 1981, the Housing Authority took part in a pilot program to help low-income households find appropriate social services. Often in the past, families had been unaware of programs and opportunities in which they could participate because those programs and opportunities were fragmented and administered by agencies that the families were unfamiliar with. Albany was one of six cities chosen to host a Family Supportive Services Information Fair.<sup>69</sup> The Fairs, sponsored by HUD, were designed as a venue that local agencies could use to target a specific population and expose them to the myriad of social service programs that were available. By connecting social agencies with their clients, the Fair’s goal was to improve the quality of life for low-income families. The Fair also represented a growing trend of viewing housing authorities not only as providers of housing, but as umbrella organizations helping to provide a broad range of support services to their clients.

### **Revitalizing the Tower Projects**

Joseph Laden’s most memorable and visible accomplishment is likely to be the complete rehabilitation of Thacher and Lincoln Park Homes. To many, the Thacher Homes represented everything that was bad about public housing. Many said that, like Pruitt-Igoe, the Thacher

towers should be torn down and chalked up to experience. One ten-year Thacher resident said, “The public can’t win no way they try.”<sup>70</sup> For Laden, however, demolition was tantamount to surrender and he believed it was too soon for that. The total destruction of Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis represented the loss of 300 million dollars. Albany was different. For one thing, the Thacher Homes were a smaller and much less expensive project. Rehabilitation was a viable answer, but would not be easy.

It would, however, have to be a total rehabilitation. As Laden explained, “We could have patched and painted a couple of years ago, but that is not the solution now. You are just throwing money down the drain.”<sup>71</sup> One important element was to change the make-up of the Thacher Homes. Experience had shown that tower living was unsuited to large families. The difficulties involved in supervising children in the towers made the living situation unpleasant. For that reason it was decided that after rehabilitation, the towers would be exclusively for the elderly and childless couples.

The Thacher rehabilitation would be a comprehensive plan. Four of the towers would be completely gutted. The size of the apartments would be increased and blind corners near the elevators, notorious for muggers, would be eliminated. The fifth tower would house a heating plant and office space for the Authority on the first two floors. . The family housing lost in the towers would be replaced in two ways. First, the Housing Authority would build forty-four new townhouses. Those townhouses were given the designation NY-9-11, and built on Green and Plum Streets.<sup>72</sup> Second, to improve the quality of housing stock in the area, the Housing Authority would rehabilitate roughly the same number of existing homes.<sup>73</sup> This rehabilitation project would be given the designation NY-9-12. The total cost for the rehabilitation and new construction was estimated at 19 million dollars.

The rehabilitation of the first two towers would be completed in the fall of 1982. The townhouses became available during the summer of 1983,<sup>74</sup> and the last of the rehabilitated homes were put back on the rental market in 1985. Anxious to remove the stigma of the Thacher Homes, the entire site was renamed Steamboat Square in honor of the historic area on which it stood, close to where the nineteenth-century steam ferries that plied between Albany and New York City had docked. How did the rehabilitation change the character of Thacher? George Marbley emphatically remarked, “Well, I’ll tell you this. It’s been a big change from the sixties to now.” Steamboat Square was successful because it took into account the needs and desires of those most suited to living in the towers while simultaneously providing alternative housing for families with children.

Laura Moody, the AHA staff architect, points to the Steamboat Square initiative as a precursor to HOPE VI, incorporating many of the goals that program now emphasizes. It took a distressed project, reconfigured and modernized it, and created new, low-rise housing with individual entrances for families. It rehabilitated existing housing stock and helped to stabilize the surrounding neighborhood. Laden reserved the ground floor of each building for possible leased space in the hope of mixing public with private ventures. The National Commission on Severely Distressed Housing recognized Steamboat Square as an example of a successful rehabilitation project and a model for what could be done with housing projects in decline.

In 1982 the Housing Authority announced that Lincoln Park would receive a similar rehabilitation.<sup>75</sup> The first two floors of three towers were converted to family housing with a private entrance. By giving families their own entrance to the building they were able to avoid the lobbies and halls. Being on the lower floors made letting children play in the outdoor areas of the project easier to supervise and control. The upper floors of the three Lincoln Towers were

reserved for singles and couples. The building at 63 Morton Avenue was reserved for seniors. The total cost of the renovation was estimated at \$6.9 million. One difference that set the Lincoln rehabilitation apart from the Steamboat Square rehabilitation was that land and finances were not available to build additional, new housing, at Lincoln. This difference is a poignant one when considering the two ventures.

Laden fought hard for the interests of those living in public housing. In many ways he was more successful in negotiating with the tenants than his predecessors had been. In the late summer of 1978, he defused the possibility of another rent strike, this time at the Ezra Prentice Homes. Tenants were upset about pest control, leaking roofs, and the lack of a traffic light at South Pearl and Mt. Hope Drive. Laden told the tenants that barring the traffic light, which he would need to discuss with the city, their concerns could be easily met.<sup>76</sup> By staving off another rent strike Laden ensured that more money would not be lost -- money that was sorely needed to maintain and improve the housing stock.

On two occasions, Joseph Laden backed the tenants against powerful city interests. First, in late 1982, plans were discussed to build a low security prison facility in the South End. Those tenants who lived in the South End naturally opposed the location. They received the full support of the AHA, with the added message that “the Authority would side with its tenants”.<sup>77</sup> Second, Laden opposed a 3.5-acre industrial park that would be built near the newly remodeled Steamboat Square. He argued that such a development would serve to cut Steamboat Square off from the Pastures area, which was in the process of being redeveloped.<sup>78</sup> Steamboat Square needed to feel that it was part of a community. Laden also argued that the land was needed for parking, hoping to preserve the area as open.<sup>79</sup> The industrial park was eventually constructed, but not before Laden had voiced his opposition several times in public.



Joe Laden was keenly aware of the problems of managing both state and federal projects. When housing projects are built, their completion doesn't mean that they are paid for. Housing projects typically cost several million dollars. Bonds are normally issued to immediately pay the contractors and paid off through loans subsidized by the state or grants from the federal government. Housing authorities ideally operate in such a way that their rents combined with subsidies allow them to pay for their bonds and make payments to the city in lieu of property taxes. These payments are negotiable, but certain ideal percentages are used as benchmarks. In the 1970's, the city was entitled to ten percent of the difference between rents collected and utility costs. If the cost of maintenance and utilities exceeded the rents collected, the Housing Authority could not pay the city without assistance. In federal projects like Lincoln Park Homes, HUD paid any shortfall that the Housing Authority might experience. In the 1970's, however, state projects like Creighton Storey were only subsidized in terms of bond payments. That meant that when maintenance and utility costs exceeded the rents collected, the burden was shifted to the city, which lost the payments in lieu of taxes that it should have received from the AHA.

When maintenance costs were high, the Housing Authority also had to raise rents to cover operating costs. Tenants living in federal projects were insulated to some degree by federal subsidies. Those living in the state projects often faced rent increases not assessed to those in federal projects.<sup>80</sup> Laden aggressively sought to resolve this and lobbied for the federalization of Ezra Prentice, Creighton Storey, and Townsend Park Homes. When a state project is federalized the federal government pays any bonds that are outstanding. . The project is also eligible for federal capital improvement and operating subsidies to assist with ongoing expenses. In an effort to save taxpayer money, the bonds for Ezra Prentice, Creighton Storey, and Townsend

Park Homes had already been combined into a single issuance.<sup>81</sup> Ultimately, only the Ezra Prentice Homes and their extension were federalized in 1981.

### **Disappointments of the 80's: Two Cancelled Projects and the Highway Lawsuit**

In the 1980's, despite the general turnaround of the Albany Housing Authority, a few frustrating setbacks occurred. The first involved the fifty units of solar powered housing. The Housing Authority had already been awarded 2.2 million dollars to construct housing that would utilize passive solar energy.<sup>82</sup> The problem lay with the site. The Albany Housing Authority had chosen a 9.8-acre ravine site just west of the Thruway Bridge on Delaware Avenue.<sup>83</sup> The site was chosen because the slope would allow for the long roofs necessary to accommodate effective solar panels. Sketches of the project depicted modern looking homes with enclosed yards. The owner of the site, Mary Breiton, had entered into a tentative agreement to sell the land to the Housing Authority. Soon after plans were announced, the Delaware Area Neighborhood Association (DANA) began actively protesting and gathered over 2,000 signatures in opposition. In an effort to calm the situation, Laden opened the Housing Authority files to DANA representatives. The project was innovative, and a new low-rise low-density project for families was sorely needed.<sup>84</sup>

DANA was not interested in any kind of compromise and gave many reasons for protest. They included soil instability, pressure on infrastructure, and the fact that Mary Breiton had second thoughts and withdrew her offer to sell.<sup>85</sup> In addition to these official reasons was a message sent by several anonymous residents that they were concerned about the people who would be moving into the neighborhood. Laden fought hard, but ultimately HUD rescinded funding as there was no feasible way that the AHA could acquire title to the land in light of the

vehement opposition.<sup>86</sup> DANA had won its battle, but the cost was high. With the funding lost, Albany would never see those fifty units of public housing, especially as the Reagan administration would slash HUD's budget in the ensuing years.

In early 1985, the Housing Authority saw the end of a legal battle that had been raging for several years. In the late 60's, state highway engineers had planned the route of the new Interstate 787 alongside the Hudson River. In doing so, the road passed adjacent to the 159 Church Street Tower of the Thacher Homes. The noise from the road, particularly at night, was a considerable nuisance. In 1974, shortly after the completion of the highway, the tower was designated non-housing. The noise level was unacceptable even in the towers that were further away from the busy highway. In response to the loss of a building and the nuisance of the noise, which intensified the problems of the Thacher Homes, the AHA sued the State Department of Transportation for 15.9 million dollars. In 1978 the State Supreme Court, stating that it needed to be heard in the Court of Claims, rejected the case.<sup>87</sup> In 1983 the Court of Claims ruled that the Albany Housing Authority could not sue because it had filed more than three years after the completion of the highway. The AHA appealed on the grounds that the disturbance was ongoing. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court rejected the appeal in January of 1985, upholding the lower court ruling.<sup>88</sup>

The final painful blow came over a 22 unit duplex project that was to be built near Central Avenue. Following HUD's mandate to offer scattered public housing in economically stable neighborhoods, the AHA had planned to build 11 duplexes on Quail St. and in the surrounding area.<sup>89</sup> Shortly after the announcement, opposition rose again. This time, however, from commercial interests. The vacant lot where the bulk of the housing was to be built happened to be an undesignated and "unofficial" parking lot for local businesses. Although used without the

permission of the owners, a local construction firm, opponents of the housing were convinced that without the parking, congestion would plague the area. At the head of the opposition was Alice Baker, president of the Central Avenue Civic and Merchants Association.<sup>90</sup>

The purchase of the land presented no problem. The difficulty was that in order to build housing, the land would have to be rezoned as residential. Whether or not the housing would be built rested on one vote in the Albany Common Council meeting. Both sides attended the fateful meeting. The Common Council voted against changing the zoning, and only two aldermen voted for the change. One of them was Nebraska Brace, a noted black civic leader in Albany. Triumphant, Alice Baker tried to soothe the situation by saying, "These people will thank us down the road... ..when they wind up with a better place to live".<sup>91</sup> Her words were hollow. The 2.8 million dollars for the project was lost, and the prospect of new family housing in an easily accessible area of the city was lost with it. Saddened by the whole affair, Laden would later comment that he never thought he would see the day parking would be chosen over housing.

In 1990, ready for a well-deserved retirement, Joseph Laden resigned from his position as Executive Director. He had worked for the city since 1966, and had been Executive Director of the Housing Authority since 1974. As Director, he had brought in approximately forty million dollars of federal funding. He had overseen the rehabilitation of two of the city's most distressed projects. He had also garnered the reputation of a concerned leader who turned around the struggling Authority, saving it from the fate of many other Housing Authorities across the country.<sup>92</sup> Laden's involvement in housing had extended to the national level. He served as president of the Public Housing Authority Directors Association, and in the mid 80's, when rapidly rising premium costs threatened many housing authorities nationwide, he helped found

the Housing Authority Insurance Group, a public housing industry-owned captive insurer that issues a broad range of policies covering over fifty percent of the traditional housing stock in the United States. In 1988, HUD honored Laden for his work on an initiative to deregulate housing authorities.<sup>93</sup> The initiative focused on bringing both autonomy and responsibility to local housing authorities, granting them more flexibility in identifying local solutions to local problems.<sup>94</sup>

### **The 90's and Steven Longo: Service and the New Face of Public Housing**

Laden was succeeded in the spring of 1990 by Steven T. Longo. At 32, Longo was the youngest Executive Director in the Albany Housing Authority's then 44 year history. He had proven himself as the director of the Albany Community Development Agency for the previous three years and this experience made him a solid choice based on his resultant familiarity with the AHA's operation and that of its federal overseer, HUD.

In many ways, the 1990's represented a return for the Albany Housing Authority to its original mission. In July of 1990, as individual electric meters were being installed in Ida Yarbrough, Longo commented, "It is a goal of public housing to prepare its' resident for the private sector."<sup>95</sup> Many of the programs offered by the Housing Authority reflected this goal. In October of 1990, a cooperative program was unveiled in conjunction with Key Bank.<sup>96</sup> More than simple financial counseling, it included a component designed to aid twenty-five tenants facing impending eviction in negotiating a re-payment agreement with the Housing Authority to avoid dispossession.

The Albany Housing Authority also continued to garner grants for various pilot programs. In December of 1990, the AHA announced that it had been selected to participate in a HUD

research grant to determine the best method of abating lead paint exposures.<sup>97</sup> In January of 1991, the Housing Authority announced that it was preparing a grant to move the adult learning program, Project Momentum, to public housing, providing it with more space for classrooms and day care.<sup>98</sup>

In the early 1990's the Albany Housing Authority also embarked on an experimental and innovative approach to enhancing the security of the projects and their residents. Police officers were offered reduced rents to reside in public housing. The hope was that having police officers in residence would improve the image of the projects and discourage crime. Most of the tenants readily accepted the idea, although there was some concern among tenant leaders that the officers would be receiving excessive rent abatement.<sup>99</sup> By October of 1991, nine officers were living in the Prentice, Lincoln Park, and Yarbrough Homes, and paying \$100 dollars a month in rent. Two federal grants provided for police officers to begin walking beats inside the projects themselves.<sup>100</sup>

In the summer of 1993, the AHA was awarded 2.4 million dollars in modernization funds by HUD.<sup>101</sup> Although the funds were to be divided among several of the projects, the money subsidized a much-needed external and internal renovation at the Yarbrough Homes. This included linking the two towers to accommodate seniors with disabilities and allow them to go between buildings without having to go outside.

In the spring of 1994, discussions began to establish a small store on the ground floor of one of the Yarbrough towers to serve the community. It lacked an affordable location to buy necessities.<sup>102</sup> The goal of the store was to provide a needed service for the community, but more importantly, to provide a training program for tenants of the development, giving them jobs and an opportunity to gain practical experience.

Father Peter Young approached Steve Longo with a novel idea. Rather than simply open the store under the aegis of a private for-profit company, why not combine the store concept with the Altamont drug rehabilitation program? The AHA would get more than just a store. It would also get individuals with a desire to belong to the community. Yarbrough was beginning to experience troubling security problems and vacancy was high. Father Young's proposal, in addition to the store, would place members of the treatment program into Yarbrough as tenants. These tenants would have their own organization, the Recovering Tenants Association or RTA. The benefits of the arrangement would help both the AHA and the Altamont program. The RTA tenants would staff the store as well as monitor the security of the building. The idea met with opposition from some tenants and members of the community who were uneasy at the idea of having recovering substance abusers in the building. Tyler Trice, president of the Yarbrough Tenant Association and the Tenant Leadership Council, explained, "Initially there was a lot of opposition to Father Young getting those apartments. I think it was some of the stereotypes that are associated with people who use drugs and people that come out of prison, but there's a big difference between the people that Father Young was attempting to provide housing for and the average person that comes out of prison. They've already made the decision that they want to change their life." That difference has carried the program a long way.

The Board of Building, Zoning and Housing Appeals approved variant use in June of 1995, and the store opened in 1996.<sup>103</sup> The new tenants also worked hard to make Yarbrough a more pleasant place to live. From patrolling floors and helping police the development to creating a local chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous, the RTA strove to make itself an asset to the community.

The human capital provided by the RTA has also gone a long way towards helping to unify the Yarbrough Homes. Just by nature of their design, it has been difficult in the past for the individuals living in the high-rises to get to know and be involved with the families living in the low-rises. Tyler Trice and other members of the RTA have assumed a major role in the leadership of the Yarbrough Homes. One of the primary events in recent years has been an annual block party. Now in its fifth year, the party provides a venue for residents of the high-rise to mingle with the families of the low rise and gives the tenant leadership an opportunity to recognize and appreciate the two factions they represent.

The program has largely been successful. As a transitional program for those recovering from substance abuse, it has provided an important component of recuperation, a stable affordable home. For the other residents of Yarbrough, it has provided a group of dedicated tenants who have helped make it a safer place to live. The members of the RTA have a unique perspective on the problems that a community with a strong drug presence experiences. They also command a certain respect as individuals striving to live a clean and sober lifestyle. This respect has allowed them to take a stand on Yarbrough as an environment they want to keep drug free.

During its renovation, a small retail store was also opened at the Westview Homes, but it is operated by a private, for-profit entity. The store provides a convenient location for seniors to purchase the occasional needed item in between shopping trips as well as another opportunity for the residents to interact with their neighbors.

By 1996 the Albany Housing Authority had grown enough in its scope and diversity that a Deputy Director position again became necessary to the operation. By re-creating that position, which had been cut during the financial crisis of the mid-70's, Steve Longo was able to



dramatically reduce the demands on his time for oversight of some of the day-to-day operations and shift focus to planning for the future of the AHA. Then fifteen-year employee and Director of Operations, Barry J. Romano was chosen for the position.

On August 3, 1998, the Albany Housing Authority opened the Joseph F. Laden Professional Development and Teleconference Center. The center offers a wide variety of training programs. These include interactive, long distance learning, satellite based career and management extension courses such as those offered by the Housing Television Network, and site-based practical courses that support skill enhancement. These courses are offered to both AHA employees and tenants, and cover a variety of topics, from basic maintenance procedures to management strategies for modern housing authorities. By taking courses at the Laden Center, tenants have an opportunity to gain employment skills while current employees can continue to hone and update their abilities, making them eligible for promotion and other opportunities. The center can also be used as a conference location that can be rented by outside agencies or groups. Equipped with a modern kitchen, the AHA facilitates catering and other required services for lessees. The center has become another innovative asset for the AHA.

In January of 1999, the Housing Authority opened the WAGE (Working to Achieve Gainful Employment) Center in Steamboat Square at 200 Green St. Funded by a half million dollar, two year HUD grant, the center was designed to provide both job and computer education. Its location in the project made it easily accessible to families living in the community, encouraging higher attendance at its programs. Combined with the Laden Center, they provide another outreach program aimed at improving the quality of life for residents of AHA. . Helping raise the standard of living for residents does more than just improve the living conditions and resources of the tenants. It also helps improve the fiscal viability of the AHA. Barry Romano

points out, “As we improve their earning capacity, under the federal formula, their rent is increased proportionately.” In this kind of symbiosis, improvements to tenant resources expand the resources of the Authority. In turn, those expanded resources can be applied to the benefit of more clients.

The 1990’s brought more than just new programs. They also brought a new vision for public housing. Tied to these ideas were the notions of defensible space and a feeling of community attachment. Defensible space is a phrase that was coined in the 1970’s by architect Oscar Newman. The principle behind it is simple. Newman believed that as an individual came to feel a sense of ownership over a space, they would move to protect it and care for it.<sup>104</sup> High-rise developments make it difficult for tenants to feel ownership of areas that they share with so many people, whereas low-rise developments with features like private entrances and front yards provide tenants and owners a sense of control. Moving beyond individual feelings of ownership, it is also important that individuals feel like they have a stake in the community. With these two dimensions in place, people feel doubly bound to the space they call home.

With these ideas in mind, in 1992, HUD unveiled the Urban Revitalization Demonstration, which, along with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, became the HOPE VI program. It was designed to help replace “distressed” public housing across the nation. A direct outgrowth of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, it encourages housing authorities to work with private entities to develop replacement housing that is more than a simple substitute for that being replaced. Its ultimate goal is the construction of mixed income communities that are both viable and nurturing.

Regrettable, but noteworthy from a historical perspective, in April of 1997, the Corning Homes had their first fatal fire in 44 years. Killed in the blaze were Maria Weaver Washington and her three-year-old daughter, Arnetha.

In October of 1997 the Housing Authority announced that it had again applied for a HOPE VI grant, this time with an emphasis on replacing the Corning Homes.<sup>105</sup> Fortunately, Mayor Gerald D. Jennings had a strong commitment to housing issues, was a staunch ally of the housing authority and was well respected by then HUD Secretary, Andrew M. Cuomo. With the Mayor's support, the grant was awarded.

The AHA worked with the New Jersey based Michaels Development Company to draw up plans. Although the initial idea was to replace a portion of the Corning Homes, it soon became apparent that the whole housing project should be torn down. Barry Romano points out that the Corning Homes were "...post-war baby boom housing. They were never designed to last as long as they did." Characterized by dark narrow stairwells and cinderblock walls in the living and dining rooms, they reflected the distressed and antiquated nature of the project. The demolition of all 292 units expanded the HOPE VI project into a multifaceted program of investments in housing and community building.<sup>106</sup>

HUD requires one-for-one replacement of occupied housing units when a public housing project is demolished. This is to protect tenants of public housing from being permanently cut off from aid. In the footprint of the Corning Homes, the Housing Authority and Michaels Development Company planned to build 160 units of semi-detached housing. This left roughly 200 units to be built elsewhere in order to ensure that there would be enough low-income housing for the displaced families. In a combined project with the Urban League of Northeastern New York, the Dudley Park Apartments were purchased and renovated into a 140 unit, duplex

development. Renamed Capital Woods, the apartments are now owned and managed by Schuyler Heights Housing Development Fund Company, a wholly owned subsidiary not-for-profit arm of the housing authority.<sup>107</sup>

In another creative venture, the Albany Housing Authority joined forces with Norstar Development USA to initiate a massive rehabilitation of North Swan Street, between Clinton and Livingston Avenues.<sup>108</sup> The idea was to use a portion of the 28.6 million dollars awarded for the HOPE VI redevelopment, combined with money raised by Norstar through private investment, to build new housing, as well as rehabilitate a few homes. The project met with opposition in the community, but there remains hope that it can be integrated into a plan to redevelop the Arbor Hill area. A Boston-based firm, Community Builders Inc., has been awarded a contract to develop a master plan for the improvement of Arbor Hill. Even though AHA plans are on hold, the delay has provided an opportunity to the AHA tenants who live in Arbor Hill. The leadership of the Yarbrough Tenant Association has been attending community-planning meetings, and one of the planners from the Community Builders has been invited to speak to residents of Yarbrough about becoming involved in the process. Pleased with the success of the Tenant Association block parties in unifying the Yarbrough Homes, the hope is to foster an attachment to the larger Arbor Hill community.

The style and scope of public housing is not the only thing that is changing. The outlook toward the clients of the Albany Housing Authority has changed as well. The base clientele of the AHA is largely governed by federal guidelines. Federal laws like the 1969 Brooke Amendment and subsequent legislation, cap the percentage of tenant income the AHA and other housing authorities can charge for rent. In the mid to late 70's, HUD's federal preferences included a mandate that housing was to be reserved for those families and individuals who

earned less than one third the median income of their region and also required focus on families that had no employed members, were homeless or in substandard housing. Not only did this concentrate poverty in public housing projects across the US, but it also prevented housing authorities from renting to working families who were income qualified, but did not meet federal preferences. Steve Longo explained, “What happened was that around the country, two waiting lists were created, the federal preference list and the non-preference list... Congress never intended for public housing to be an entitlement program like Medicare or Medicaid. By design there is not enough for everybody. They never said they were going to provide housing for everybody, so enormous waiting lists came to exist in each city and no one was ever reached on the non-preference list.”

In 1996, during the drawn out federal budget negotiations, the first moves were made to abolish federal preferences. In 1998, section 514 of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act (QHWRA) finally removed the preferences once and for all.<sup>109</sup> This allowed public housing authorities to rent the bulk of their housing stock to families who were working and earning more than 30% of the median income for their area. This has supported the Albany Housing Authority in encouraging greater economic diversity among its residents.

New programs available through Section 8 have also provided unprecedented opportunities to participants. One of these programs is the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program. This allows eligible families participating in the Section 8 program to be rewarded rather than penalized for making progress toward their employment and housing goals. In normal circumstances, participants in the Section 8 program have their rent subsidies reduced as they earn more income. This can be discouraging to those endeavoring to live completely unsubsidized and in the private market. With the FSS program, a person whose income

increases remains subject to a reduction in their monthly rent subsidy, but rather than lose that money into the system, it is placed in an account on their behalf each month for four years. If the individual in the FSS program meets certain pre-agreed personal goals at the end of that time, they graduate from the program and the money in the account is given to them. While there are no restrictions on how the money is to be used, the hope is that FSS program graduates will use the money as a nest egg to facilitate private home ownership or some other significant enhancement to their quality of life. Martin Duffy, Section 8 Program Administrator for the Authority enthusiastically comments, “You can’t beat that!” Similar changes to Section 8 legislation provides for the transfer of vouchers towards mortgages, thereby further enhancing opportunities for home ownership.

On Saturday July 13, 2002, a block party was held to celebrate the first tenants of the new townhouses on the former Corning Homes site. Seventy-two of the one hundred and sixty homes were occupied by working families. The party on Jennings Drive and Rooney Road was a different kind of inaugural for a different kind of project. For the first time in Albany, public housing was erected without a general designation being assigned to the development. Orville Abrahams, the site manager for the project, explained, “We didn’t want to stigmatize it by calling it Corning Homes or anything else. We just want it to be part of the North Albany neighborhood.”<sup>110</sup>

### **Conclusions and the Future of the AHA**

When asked about what he feels has been his greatest success, Steve Longo replied, “I would have to say, although not quite complete, it is the North Albany HOPE VI. Thanks to Mayor Jennings, the demolition of Corning Homes created a blank canvas. The opportunity to read all

the different theories and philosophies espoused on urban living as well as work with creative people who understand that buildings alone don't make a neighborhood. I think that has been the most rewarding and exciting thing I've done.”

In the eyes of many, the Albany Housing Authority stands at a crossroads. It is a crossroads that lies ahead for many housing authorities. It has arisen in response to HUD's comprehensive reevaluation of its mission and methods in recent years, as well as nationwide changes in how lawmakers and citizens view the role of public housing. As with other housing authorities, the AHA is bound to a great extent by federal policy and federal funding. Legislation and policy decisions at the federal level will continue to have a huge impact on the direction the AHA can and will take in future years.

Nonetheless, the Albany Housing Authority has much to be proud of. Unlike many other public housing authorities, the AHA's housing stock is in good, marketable condition and all of the developments are viable and in demand. Having survived the financial crisis of the 1970's, the Authority has managed to set aside a modest budget reserve that continues to buffer it against an uncertain future. The AHA also benefits from a core group of loyal, dedicated and long-tenured employees. These individuals pass on a sense of stability to those who follow. Human Resource Director Brenda Brooks points to this "...common thread..." that winds through both veteran and new employees. She says, "People have earned their right to be here." This feeling of job ownership helps support the AHA, and provides it with one of its strongest resources.

The AHA's future will hinge on its ability to remain connected with housing events on the federal level, both anticipating and reacting to trends. With the federal funding cuts for new housing in the 80's there was also the creation of a new mindset at the federal level. This new mindset calls for a more business-like approach to public housing. In the early 1990's the

National Commission on Distressed Housing began making suggestions that led to the inception of the HOPE VI program. Housing authorities are now encouraged to look at their properties as assets. With this new approach comes a new challenge to provide for clients while maximize the value and use of those vital assets. To succeed, the AHA must continue to ride the crest of the wave, ready to retool and rethink its options if need be.

In October of 2001 the Albany Housing Authority broke ground for a new 3.8 million dollar office complex.<sup>111</sup> The new offices at 200 South Pearl Street encompass roughly 30,000 square feet of office space and consolidate the offices at 159 Church Street and 4 Lincoln Square into a single location. The cost and physical characteristics of the building belie a deeper symbolism of the move. The shift to South Pearl Street places the offices in an area surrounded by private development. Away from the formidable towers of Lincoln Square, the building becomes a part of one of the communities it is designed to serve. Even the design of the building reflects this mentality. Rather than simply a building block structure, consistent with many office buildings of this type and size, the new AHA offices are stylized to reflect the Dutch row housing that is indigenous to the area. The building is a reminder that the AHA's focus is community, not simply housing, and that Albany is an historic city with a growing pride in its heritage.

With its nameless HOPE VI project and new office building, the Albany Housing Authority has entered a new chapter in its history. The days of building conspicuous public housing are gone. Driving by the new houses where the Corning Homes once stood, visitors to Albany are unaware that the neat and beautiful homes with yards and driveways are also public housing. In its new offices, no longer isolated from the traditional neighborhoods by distance and contrasting design, the AHA is poised to integrate its efforts toward the creation and sustained marketability of affordable housing, into the communities it serves. With the emphasis on new, mixed-finance



housing and increased availability of rent subsidies, the AHA is committed to removing the stigma of public housing from those who rely on them for assistance. Shared vision defines future reality and the vision that Albany Housing Authority seeks to share is of communities that embrace their residents for the benefit of all.

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> The Mayor maintained this booklet among his public papers until the time of his death. It can now be found in the Corning Papers at the Albany County Hall of Records.
- <sup>2</sup> Proceedings of the Common Council, v. 2 1945, p. 7
- <sup>3</sup> *Times Union*, March 31, 1946
- <sup>4</sup> Chapter 95 §1284 Consolidated Laws of the State of New York
- <sup>5</sup> Minutes of the Albany Housing Authority 1946-1950
- <sup>6</sup> Proceedings of the Common Council, v. 2 1946
- <sup>7</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, July 23, 1946
- <sup>8</sup> Vale, Lawrence, 2000. *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Mass.
- <sup>9</sup> AHA Minutes 1946-1950
- <sup>10</sup> *Times Union*, January 24, 1952
- <sup>11</sup> Historical sidenote: Whalen was also the attorney of famous Albany political boss Dan O'Connell. For more information see Kennedy, William, 1983. *O Albany*. Viking Penguin, New York.
- <sup>12</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, 15 January 1953
- <sup>13</sup> *Times Union*, October 30, 1953
- <sup>14</sup> *Times Union*, Oct 30, 1953
- <sup>15</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 15, 1954
- <sup>16</sup> New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal. 1962. *Survey of Middle-Income and Low-Rent Housing Need and Demand in Albany, New York*. Albany.
- <sup>17</sup> Plunz, Richard, 1990. *A History of Housing in New York City*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- <sup>18</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, September 18, 1958
- <sup>19</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, December 16, 1958
- <sup>20</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, August 8, 1958
- <sup>21</sup> *Times Union*, July 22, 1959
- <sup>22</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, January 4, 1961
- <sup>23</sup> AHA Minutes 1966-1968 The Albany Housing Authority would eventually have to hire a maintenance company available 24 hours a day to make emergency repairs.
- <sup>24</sup> *Times Union*, March 13, 1963
- <sup>25</sup> AHA Minutes 1966-1968
- <sup>26</sup> AHA Minutes 1966-1968, 1969-1970
- <sup>27</sup> *Times Union*, Sept 13, 1969
- <sup>28</sup> AHA Minutes 1966-1968
- <sup>29</sup> AHA Minutes 1968-1969
- <sup>30</sup> *Times Union*, May 14, 1969
- <sup>31</sup> *Times Union*, Sept 19, 1969
- <sup>32</sup> *Times Union*, April 13, 1972
- <sup>33</sup> *Times Union*, August 23, 1973
- <sup>34</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, February 2, 1977
- <sup>35</sup> Isadore Candeub & Associates. 1958. *Albany, N.Y. Planning Report 2 Urban Renewal Plan*. Albany.
- <sup>36</sup> Candeub, Fleissig and Associates. 1963. *Rebuilding a City*. Albany.
- <sup>37</sup> New York State UDC Brochure. Ten Broeck Manor.
- <sup>38</sup> *Times Union*, June 8, 1986
- <sup>39</sup> Blau, Peter, 1994. *Structural Contexts of Opportunities*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- <sup>40</sup> AHA Brochure. *From Our Point of View*.
- <sup>41</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, February 2, 1971; March 2, 1971 *Times Union*, Feb 5, 1971. One of the main complaints against billing was that damages due to vandalism were assessed to the family who owned the unit. The complainants said this was unfair as a large portion of vandalism was external to the unit and anonymous.
- <sup>42</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 11, 1971 *Times Union*, June 11, 1971
- <sup>43</sup> *Times Union*, Oct 29, 1971

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- <sup>44</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, March 1, 1972
- <sup>45</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, February 3, 1972
- <sup>46</sup> *Times Union*, Oct 14, 1971
- <sup>47</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, May 23, 1972 *Times Union*, May 24 1972
- <sup>48</sup> *Times Union*, Sept 6, 1973
- <sup>49</sup> *Times Union*, April 5, 1973
- <sup>50</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, Sept 18, 1974
- <sup>51</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, May 1, 1973
- <sup>52</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, January 28, 29, 31, 1974. *Times Union*, January 31, 1974 During the trial Granger admitted that whites were often not shown the Thacher Homes. His reason was that those who had seen them universally refused to live in them. Granger further admitted that the AHA knew that this would result in a Black Ghetto at Thacher, but no other solution readily presented itself.
- <sup>53</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 3, 1974
- <sup>54</sup> *Times Union*, Oct 6, 1974
- <sup>55</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, December 19, 1974
- <sup>56</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, January 8, 1975 A short, but thoughtful biography of the life of Edward Kennell by Julian Parrish can be found in the Albany County Hall of Records in the Urban Renewal collection.
- <sup>57</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 4, 1976
- <sup>58</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 9, 1976, August 10, 1976
- <sup>59</sup> *Times Union*, May 27, 1976
- <sup>60</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, Jan 11, 1978
- <sup>61</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, Oct 14, 1977
- <sup>62</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, May 22, 1978
- <sup>63</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, Aug 10, 1979 The AHA actually obtained three parcels of land around the time the original NYS-137 was being planned and partially constructed. One parcel was donated to a private foundation were the South Mall Towers were constructed to be low-income housing for senior citizens. The second parcel was leased to McDonalds in a 40-year deal with increases every five years. It is the final six-acre parcel that was eventually sold to the state for 1.2 million.
- <sup>64</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, August 22, 1979
- <sup>65</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, November 13, 1979
- <sup>66</sup> *Times Union*, February 5, 1998
- <sup>67</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, May 23, 1980
- <sup>68</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, April 3, 1981
- <sup>69</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, September 16, 1981
- <sup>70</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 2, 1978
- <sup>71</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 2, 1978.
- <sup>72</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, December 10, 1981.
- <sup>73</sup> *Times Union*, December 3, 1982.
- <sup>74</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, July 5 1983
- <sup>75</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, November 3, 1982.
- <sup>76</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, August 24, 1978, Sept 19, 1978
- <sup>77</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, December 22, 1982
- <sup>78</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, April 19, 1983
- <sup>79</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, Mar 24, 1983
- <sup>80</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, December 3, 1980
- <sup>81</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, May 13, 1980
- <sup>82</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, July 1, 1981
- <sup>83</sup> *Times Union*, July 1, 1981
- <sup>84</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, Sept 8, 1981
- <sup>85</sup> *Times Union*, July 16, 1981
- <sup>86</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, March 9, 1982
- <sup>87</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, June 12, 1979
- <sup>88</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, January 4, 1985
- <sup>89</sup> *Times Union*, March 26, 1985
- <sup>90</sup> *Knickerbocker News*, April 11, 1985

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- <sup>91</sup> *Times Union*, April 30, 1985
- <sup>92</sup> *Times Union*, May 1, 1990
- <sup>93</sup> *Times Union*, March 28, 1988
- <sup>94</sup> *Times Union*, March 29, 1988
- <sup>95</sup> *Times Union*, July 10, 1990
- <sup>96</sup> *Times Union*, Oct 23, 1990
- <sup>97</sup> *Times Union*, December 6, 1990
- <sup>98</sup> *Times Union*, January 16, 1991
- <sup>99</sup> *Times Union*, December 19, 1990
- <sup>100</sup> *Times Union*, Oct 2, 1991
- <sup>101</sup> *Times Union*, July 2, 1993
- <sup>102</sup> *Times Union*, May 11, 1994
- <sup>103</sup> *Times Union*, June 2, 1995
- <sup>104</sup> Newman, Oscar, 1973. *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design*. Macmillan Publishing Co., New York.
- <sup>105</sup> *Times Union*, October 3, 1997
- <sup>106</sup> *Times Union*, August 19, 1999
- <sup>107</sup> *Times Union*, November 24, 2000
- <sup>108</sup> *Times Union*, July 27, 2000
- <sup>109</sup> Vale, Lawrence, 2000. *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Mass.
- <sup>110</sup> *Times Union*, November 25, 2001
- <sup>111</sup> *Times Union*, Oct 30, 2001