

THE HISTORY OF

The Housing Division

1966

SINCE ITS EARLIEST DAYS Johannesburg has had a non-White population. When news spread of the discovery of gold some arrived driving wagons for their White employers; a handful came to trade but most walked in over the dry, hard veld with nothing but a will to work. At first they did not think of staying for long in the infant mining camp. All was temporary then and hardly anyone believed that the handful of tents and shacks would soon be a town—a place for a home and family.

Even after its future had been assured, it took Johannesburg nearly two generations to realise that virtually a new type of man had emerged in its midst—the Bantu city dweller—with no roots but those he had struck down in some servant's outhouse, location or slum. He had come only to work. But his labour had helped to transform bare veld into a city. And it had changed him too. Now he was here to stay, and one of his principal needs was that of a home.

At first houses for non-Whites were planned in tens, later in hundreds, then in thousands and, ultimately, in tens of thousands. Today there are some 60,000 homes of this type in Johannesburg. There is hostel accommodation for 24,000 and, with long family waiting lists for houses, the demand continues for five to six thousand new dwellings annually.

The founding of the City's Housing Division, its growth and striking record in meeting the home-building crisis has been one of Johannesburg's prouder achievements. From indecision to action, from miles of bare veld to the development of ordered and populous towns—behind this success is a great constructive effort in which White and Black have co-operated.

SEGREGATION

In the days of the South African Republic, it had long been recognised that Native locations

should form a part of the layout of townships. For example, the municipal constitution of Potchefstroom in 1884 placed the Council under legal compulsion to build such a location. But Johannesburg was not a township in the old easy-going sense, it was a mining camp and at first no provision was made for housing or residential segregation.

However, the presence of non-Europeans could not be ignored indefinitely. When the sale of stands in the newly laid-out village of Johannesburg took place on the 1st of June, 1887, areas were set aside by Mining Commissioner Jan Eloff for '... coolies and arabs'. Lying some one and a half miles to the West of the town, the 79 stands allocated to these people were valued at £8 10 0 each. But when it became known that the Government had provided for an 'Arab' reserve in Johannesburg, land values dropped in the neighbourhood of the reserved stands. The auctioneer estimated that this resulted in the loss of £1,000.

Natives were soon to be found in shacks on the land allocated to non-Whites and in November, 1887, an Anglican priest, the Reverend F. J. Brown, successfully applied for a site on which to build a church for their spiritual needs. During the following year, the Sanitary Board was empowered to construct a Native location and to raise a revenue by means of a poll tax on residents for whom it provided housing. Nothing, however, was done about this provision and no houses were ever built by the Board. But one of the regulations it enforced was a ban on the erection of reed huts. Thus the rudimentary dwellings that sprang up in what came to be known as the 'insanitary' areas of Newtown were saved from being as squalid as some of the early squatters' camps in mining towns such as Kimberley.

A survey carried out in 1897 under the authority of the *Stadsraad*, the then Local Authority of Johannesburg, showed that at this time there were three sections of land set aside for the town's non-Whites. Centred around the site of the present-day

municipal market, these sections had developed from the original 'Arab' reserve and consisted of the Indian location, the Malay location and the 'kaffir' location of 685, 553 and 971 stands respectively. The combined population of the three sections was 8,650 of whom 3,600 were Bantu dwelling in 477 shanties. Locations were under the supervision of the Inspector of Natives who combined these duties with those of Town Traffic Officer. The staff of the locations' section consisted of sub-inspector H. Shaw, one European and one Bantu sergeant, and five Bantu constables.

THE FIRST 'HOUSING SCHEME'

After the occupation of Johannesburg by British troops on the 31st of May, 1900, the military officer responsible for running municipal affairs, Major W. A. J. O'Meara, soon discovered the location slums. He drew attention to the '... appallingly insanitary conditions ...' prevailing West of the Brickfields area and a draft ordinance was prepared by the nominated Town Council to clear up the position. Owing to vigorous opposition the measure was dropped and superseded by a Government inquiry, a step which resulted in the condemnation and eventual burning of the slum shacks and the creation of Johannesburg's first 'housing scheme' at Klipspruit, afterwards named Pimville. Here, almost ten miles from the town centre and at first without any transport services for its inhabitants, the Council built a few iron barracks and some triangular hutments while the balance of the affected population were expected to erect shacks for themselves. During the ensuing two decades, Pimville developed into a running sore and its unsavoury conditions were for long a reproach to the town.

Until 1910, the settled Native population of Johannesburg was still comparatively small. Males numbered 91,522 as against some 4,000 women, an indication that the vast majority were migratory workers who returned to their homes after periods of service in and around the town.

But the rapid growth of Johannesburg itself, the development of local industry and the acute shortage of labour brought about by the First World War created significant changes. In the decade preceding 1920, the number of Bantu families settled here increased threefold. Slum conditions were building up with frightening rapidity and with the tragic

death-roll of the 1918 influenza epidemic the Civic Authority at last was stirred to action. Between 1918 and 1921 the new municipal location known as Western Native Township was established and in that period some 300 houses were built.

HOUSING AT A SNAIL'S PACE

In 1923 the Natives (Urban Areas) Act became Law. Since amended many times, this legislation empowered local authorities to embark upon schemes for the housing and accommodation of Natives employed in urban areas. At the time the Town Council applied for a £200,000 loan for European dwellings. This was an irresponsible action and the Rent Board, stating that '... the necessity for assisted White dwellings, whatever it might be, was relatively negligible compared with the urgent necessity for the segregation and decent housing of Natives ...', had no difficulty in discrediting the move. The Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Charles Porter, who for long had been urging the Council to action over the slums supported this view. He added that public health would be improved greatly by the provision of adequate location housing for Natives and their removal from close residential association with poor whites.

In spite of repeated warnings and the development of obvious dangers, slum clearance and house-building schemes proceeded at a snail's pace. So much so, that in the 26 years between 1901 and 1927 a total of only 1,585 sub-economic dwellings for non-Whites were built. In the latter year, it was estimated that some 80,000 Bantu were in need of homes. At this time there were 22,814 Native women living in Johannesburg out of a total Black population of 136,695. This meant that the number of males to one female had dropped from 23 in 1910 to five in 1927, a clear indication that Bantu family life was rapidly becoming established here.

By now other cities in South Africa had begun a scheme whereby loans were advanced to Natives to build their own houses in accordance with approved plans. Johannesburg's Native housing, on the other hand, was carried out under contracts which necessitated the execution of all skilled work by expensive White labour. As a result, a Bantu tenant here paid a monthly rent of 25/- to 30/- while in Bloemfontein, for example, a householder was charged 6/8d. as rent for the land and a small fee for municipal services.

Also in 1927, Eastern Native Township was established. 400 houses were put up there and the Municipality's first manager of Native affairs, Mr. G. Ballenden, was appointed. In the following year the Council at last took the forward step of setting up a separate Non-European Affairs Department.

ORLANDO AND MOROKA

In 1930 the City Council resolved to establish a model township at Orlando, twelve miles to the southwest of the central area. Planned to take up the backlog of slum-dwellers and homeless people, this was to be an undertaking capable of housing 80,000 people.

The ambitious plans for Orlando embraced shopping centres, a market and a community store, a public hall, a hospital, central and branch police stations, central and district post offices, a fire station, ten schools and a similar number of churches. Building started in 1931 and four years later nearly 3,000 houses had been completed. While most of the amenities had to be postponed, a further 4,000 homes were erected by 1936. In addition, the commodious Wolhuter hostel for single men had been opened. In the magisterial district of Johannesburg there now was an estimated Bantu population of 240,805, of whom 65,087 were females.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the provision of housing for non-Whites in Johannesburg received a tremendous setback. As a consequence of shortages in labour and materials only 1,000 houses could be built between 1939 and 1946. In that period, demand was at a maximum owing to the influx of masses of new workers which resulted in the local Native population having increased to 395,231 by 1945. And the number of males to females had dropped to 1.8.

Meanwhile, the bursting point had come in 1944. Almost overnight a huge mass of squatters flowed out from Orlando and other areas, and set up what came to be known as Shantytown, a great and squalid slum with a population at its peak of some 51,000. In the following three years further large shack-towns sprang up illegally near Orlando West, Pimville and Alexandra, and in four other districts communities of squatters were formed in the neighbourhood of municipal ground.

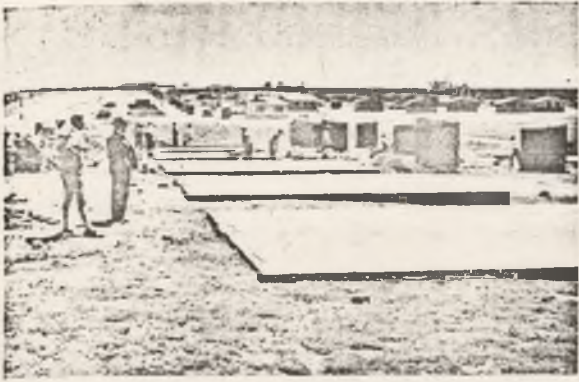
The squatting movement was seen as a serious danger to public authority and a hazard to the health of the whole of Johannesburg. Conditions were



Constructed from materials used for the 'building' of shacks and lean-to's in Shantytown, the Oppenheimer Memorial Tower, Soweto, erected to the memory of the late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer.

deplorable. Even water had to be begged from the nearest inhabited area; there was no sanitation and refuse accumulated to a shocking extent. Shantytown, where more than 9,000 families dwelt under flimsy covering, was the scene of organised racketeering, and the ruthless exploitation and intimidation of the inhabitants by their self-appointed 'leaders'. Floggings, the imposition of heavy fines by illegal 'courts' and the burning down of huts were frequent occurrences.

As a result of urgent steps taken in the matter by the City Council a controlled settlement of an emergency nature was started in 1947 at Moroka. Here, more than 12,000 families numbering about 68,000 people, were provided with ground on which temporary shacks could be erected. Communal sanitation, water taps and refuse removal services were provided, and large health clinics were established. As a temporary expedient the Moroka settlement was not expected to last more than five years, but the backlog of houses was so great that it was only in 1959 that the last family could be moved out to a permanent house.



Laying the foundations of some of the thousands of houses which the Department builds annually in Soweto.



Native building workers erecting houses at Soweto.

Between 1947 and 1951, 5,233 houses, mostly financed on a sub-economic basis, were constructed in an effort to alleviate the crisis. By this time, however, the annual loss to the Government and the Council as a result of such activity was almost £300,000 and soon the entire programme was virtually at a standstill. This reverse came at a time when it was estimated that some 50,000 families and large numbers of single men were in urgent need of accommodation. The situation was explosive, but three new vital developments were soon to radically alter the face of affairs.

A TRIPLE IMPETUS TO HOUSE BUILDING

In 1951, Parliament enacted the Native Building Workers' Act. This measure had the twofold effect of meeting the labour shortage and bringing down the cost of building as it now was possible, for the first time, to train Native artisans for skilled work in the building of houses for their own people.

In the following year the Native Services Levy Act became law. In terms of this legislation, it became incumbent upon employers of Bantu labour to contribute a weekly sum for each worker for whom accommodation was not provided. In this way £720,000 a year became available for the provision of houses and services in the townships.

The third development was the Site and Services Scheme of 1953. Under this scheme serviced sites were made available on which families were enabled to build their own temporary dwellings.

The City Council was now in a much stronger position to tackle its major housing tasks. In October,

1952, it was resolved to reappoint a special housing committee of the Council and it also was decided to create the post of director of housing. Mr. A. J. Archibald, former town engineer of Springs, was appointed and in the following year he took charge of the housing branch which then formed part of the City Engineer's Department.

THE FORMATION OF THE HOUSING DIVISION

In January, 1954, the Council decided to set up a separate housing division under the control of the director of housing. In this way the Division came into existence to undertake building which formerly had been done by contract.

It was a step forward, but the housing problem was not to be overcome easily. Soon houses were being constructed at a rate of 3,000 a year, but the annual natural increase in Native families was estimated at between two to three thousand. Thus the rate of building, although abreast of normal demand, was making very little impression on the enormous backlog which reflected the urgent need for some 35,000 homes for sub-tenants in established townships, as well as for the numbers of people living in Moroka, Shantytown, Albertynsville and Nancefield brickyards.

The National Housing and Planning Commission and, later, the Bantu Housing Board, established by the Government to speed up the granting of housing loans, made £5,909,000 available to Johannesburg from 1949 to 1959. In addition to this not inconsiderable sum South Africa's seven great gold-mining houses, Anglo American Corporation, Goldfields of



Recently completed houses in Soweto.

South Africa, Rand Mines, Anglo-Transvaal Consolidated Investment Company, Union Corporation, Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company and General Mining and Finance Corporation, all acting on a lead given by the late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, lent the Council £3 million in 1956 for Bantu slum clearance purposes.

This was a distinctive action on the part of the gold mining industry and one, moreover, which was enhanced by the loan of a further £1 million on condition that an immediate start was made on building homes in order to clear up Moroka and Shantytown. It was stipulated that these loans were to be utilised in addition to monies expended on the Council's normal housing campaign.

At a greatly stepped-up rate of construction, the Housing Division during the next two years was able to complete more than 13,000 houses and also two hostels with accommodation for 10,128 single men. Dube hostel, the first of its kind in the new Bantu areas of cottage-type houses, was opened at this time. So, too, was Nancefield Hostel, erected for

men prohibited by law from living in the so-called 'locations in the sky', dormitory-type rooms constructed on the roofs of blocks of offices and flats in the White areas. In 1958 alone, 9,000 houses were completed and a peak production was reached of 61 units a day. In great numbers the slum-dwellers began to stream out of their flimsy shacks into proper homes.

Although the estimates provided for another 8,400 houses in the 1959/60 operating year, the rate of building decreased to less than half the target figure. When Mr. Archibald retired in 1960, the City Council redesignated the principal post in the Division to that of Chief Housing Engineer. The previous deputy-director, Mr. C. S. Goodman, was appointed. Mr. D. C. Simpson became his principal assistant. Mr. Goodman holds the degree of Bachelor of Science in engineering and he is an ~~Associate~~ ^{FELLOW} Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers. He joined the Johannesburg Municipal Service in 1954, having previously been employed by the Municipality of Durban. In an earlier period of his career, he had worked for

MICE



The Moletsani bar lounge built by the Housing Division for the people of Soweto.



Blocks of flats erected by the Housing Division at Mofolo, Soweto.

the Springs Municipality. He continues as head of the Johannesburg City Council's Housing Division.

At the end of June, 1960, 5,863 families still lived in shacks at site-and-service schemes. But a year later, housing had been completed for them and with their proper accommodation the former emergency measure was ended.

Despite the great achievement of the crash building programme, however, much remained to be done. Some 7,000 families living in slum conditions in Pimville required decent housing and by 1962 there were more than 9,000 families on the waiting list. To properly house all these people and provide also for their natural annual increase, the Division estimated that between five and six thousand units would have to be built every year for up to ten years. Even after that period, the rate of construction could not be dropped.

In the meantime, an added task was imposed in 1961 with the removal of some 15,000 residents from the old Western Native Township to Moroka. When the last of the Native families had been moved out, the old township was proclaimed an area for Coloured people in terms of the Group Areas Act.

LOANS ARE RESTRICTED

Following a seven-year period of intensive activity, loans from the Bantu Housing Board were restricted considerably. As a result, the building programme tapered off sharply and fewer than 2,000 houses were completed in 1962. The position improved slightly during the 1963/64 operating year

when 2,355 dwellings were constructed, but house production was still far short of estimated annual requirements.

Another source of anxiety lay in the fact that by 1964 hardly any more land was available in the vicinity of Johannesburg for non-White housing. In the circumstances, the Division faced a new and important departure in its building activities for non-Europeans. Instead of only spreading outwards in keeping with past practice, vertical development was now envisaged. Small blocks of flats are currently planned as an experiment at Emdeni. Initially, these will be two-storey structures, each containing four to six units. However, flat-life will be a new experience for Bantu and their reaction to this innovation in their living conditions has yet to be gauged.

A GROWING MIDDLE CLASS

Notwithstanding the great size and apparent permanence of Soweto, the large 26 square-mile complex of townships to the south-west of the City, the Government has laid down the principle that the Native is not regarded as a fixed part of an urban population. Accordingly, it is a policy determined by legislation that he may not acquire freehold land in these areas. Ground leases, however, are for 30 years and are renewable, and a house on a leased site becomes the asset of its owner who can dispose of it or retain it for himself and his heirs.

Most of the cottage-type housing provided by the Division is of a basic utility nature with little or no

refinement. But a growing middle class who can afford something better is rapidly emerging. In recent years, people in this category have been responsible for the building of some 2,500 privately-owned houses that have ranged from fairly simple cottages to large double-storey residences valued at more than R20,000. Side by side with the construction of thousands of houses, the City Council has kept pace with the demand for such key services as water reticulation, roads, sewerage, street lighting, and health. Shopping centres and many schools have been built in the townships where people also enjoy facilities for indoor recreation and a wide variety of sports. The supply of electricity is available to individual properties, but as the cost of wiring a house is relatively high for the average Bantu family, there were only 7,077 private consumers of current in Soweto by June, 1964.

HOUSING FOR COLOURED PERSONS

Although the Coloured population of Johannesburg is relatively small, the sub-economic housing needs of this section of the people were seriously neglected until 1961. In that year, the National Housing Commission made a loan of nearly R1 million for a scheme for 623 families in Riverlea. This project was completed in the following year, and in 1964 and 1965 the Housing Division built an extension to the suburb for the accommodation of a further 788 families.

Brick-veneer timber-framed houses at Riverlea Township erected for ownership by Coloured people.



The Chief Housing Engineer, Mr. C. S. Goodman, B.Sc., M.I.C.E. F.I.MUN.E.

A new development in the area has been the construction of timber-framed houses. In 1965 the then Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Pieter M. Roos, officially opened an experimental group of eight homes of this type. These are the first of the kind to be built by a local authority in South Africa. A further group of 100 as well as a shopping centre, a hall and clinic, and an administration block are being put up by the Division for the Coloured community of Riverlea.

The great majority of Johannesburg's Asian population is being housed in the township of Lenasia. This project is being undertaken by the Group Areas Development Board and not by the City Council which is precluded from embarking on any housing schemes within the City limits for these people. The Council, however, plans to develop a major Indian commercial and market complex at Fordsburg.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Into the building of tens of thousands of sub-economic houses has gone the idealism of dedicated men and women who set themselves the task of solving the housing problems of a hard-working and often disregarded section of the population. Hard necessity and the urgent need for practical results in the minimum period of time dictated severe limitations. But the achievement which is Soweto provides healthy conditions of life and a measure of comfort to its populace on a scale they never previously experienced. And it gives them the prospect of a brighter future.

this move is Queenshaven, the counterpart of Randjeslaagte. Queenshaven is situated to the south-east of the city and its establishment brings the number of homes for aged persons of limited means in Johannesburg to nineteen with accommodation for 1,200.

Some 500 of Johannesburg's elderly people reside at the magnificent Jewish Aged Home in Sandringham which was opened on the 16th of August, 1958, after a move had been made from premises at Doornfontein. Erected and equipped entirely by the Jewish community, the Sandringham home is a showpiece of its kind.

In January, 1954, the Johannesburg City Council decided to set up a separate Housing Division to undertake the enormous task, previously handled by contract, of providing houses and other forms of accommodation for the City's Non-White population. As long ago as 1897, a survey carried out by the *Stadsraad* had disclosed that three sections of land had been set aside for these people, but the Government of the South African Republic took no steps to enforce residential segregation in Johannesburg, nor did it make any provision for housing these people, a task which was beyond the limited means and authority of the *Stadsraad* and its predecessors, the *Gezondheids Comité* and the Diggers' Committee.

It was this state of affairs that led to the development of the 'insanitary area' at Newtown which was burnt to the ground on the instructions of the Town Council in 1904, while the bulk of the inhabitants were moved to makeshift accommodation at Klipspruit where a new slum promptly developed. Six years later, however, the first Union Government began to define more clearly its interest in the regulation of the Native population and since then local authorities have become more closely concerned with the administration of laws relating to the Non-Whites.

One of the measures which created considerable difficulty for some town councils was the Native Land Act of 1913 which had the effect of driving thousands of Bantu from the rural areas, where they had been squatting on farms, to the towns. Johannesburg, with its comparatively high wage standards, was a magnet to these people who flocked to the town during the ensuing four years. As a result of this influx, the Government urged the Council to provide more municipal locations. Nothing, however, was done and it was only after the appalling death rate in the slum

areas during the influenza pandemic which reached its height in October, 1918, that the Council resolved to concentrate on the development of a new housing area known as Western Native Township. Meantime, the Railways had been approached and plans drawn up to make good the lack of transport facilities from Klipspruit, now Pimville, to the central area through the construction of a special branch line.

Between 1919 and 1921, work went ahead on the construction of 300 houses at Western Native Township. At the same time, a few disused mine compounds were converted into hostels, but years of neglect had put Non-White housing at a premium and led to the exploitation of thousands by slum landlords who resisted change and reform.

In terms of the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, town councils received powers which they had long requested. Since amended many times, this legislation empowered local authorities to undertake development projects for the housing and accommodation of Non-Whites in urban areas. Under the original Act, Bantu could be compelled to live in locations or hostels, but a town council, in turn, was obliged to provide sufficient land where Natives legitimately living within its boundaries could be domiciled under approved conditions.

In these circumstances, Johannesburg went ahead with its slum clearance drives, but four years later a setback was encountered when the Supreme Court ruled that Natives could not be ejected from premises occupied by them until alternative accommodation of an approved kind had been provided. In the meantime, an effort had been made to house part of the slum population. The large Wemmer Hostel for Bantu males had been opened and a new location, Eastern Native Township, had been established while Western Native Township had been enlarged considerably.

On the 1st of May, 1927, the Council's Native Affairs Department, now the Non-European Affairs Department, was established and in its first two years it built 850 houses in the Western and Eastern Native townships. One of the objects of the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 had been to limit the ingress of Bantu into the urban areas. This intention, however, had failed completely by 1936 and although amendments to the original Act had extended considerably the slum clearance powers of local authorities, Native housing in Johannesburg had continued to fall far short of demand. As one slum was cleared others

sprang up and as early as 1930 places such as Sophiatown, Newclare, Martindale, Prospect Township and the Malay location were regarded as health hazards. Reports by the Medical Officer of Health described the 'fearful squalor' in these areas and, incredible though it may seem, on one stand alone of only 2,500 square feet no fewer than 161 families numbering some 800 people were found to be living. In some slums no water at all was available and there was no sewerage system, the inhabitants having to depend on municipal carts which collected pails three times a week, and transport was inadequate. Such, indeed, was the lack of amenities that a commission of inquiry in 1934 concluded that it '... knew of no city in the world where so large a part of the working population was so badly served'.

Meanwhile, a new municipal location had been planned at Orlando some eight miles to the west of the central area. This was to be a model township for 80,000 people, but building was slow and by 1936 its population numbered only 18,000. Houses were being erected at the rate of 1,000 a year and an additional 955 acres of neighbouring land was acquired for an extension, but the promised amenities were sadly lacking. Before a Government Commission of Inquiry held that year, the municipalities contended that their task had been made impossible by the policy of the Government itself. In support of this view, the heavy taxation of Bantu in the reserves and country districts was cited as well as the inadequate land available for their support, a state of affairs which tended to drive large numbers to the towns where they confronted local authorities with a massive and insoluble housing problem.

By 1939 the City Council was tackling the task of providing housing and amenities for the City's 244,000 Native population with a measure of success, but soon after the outbreak of war the situation underwent a dramatic change. Tens of thousands of Whites joined the Armed Forces or were drawn into war industries at a time when the country's commercial and industrial development was entering a period of growth unparalleled in its history. This led to an enormous demand for Native labour and as virtually no check existed on the ingress of these people into the urban areas, the Bantu population of the magisterial district of Johannesburg rose to 400,847 by June, 1944. All available accommodation provided by the Municipality was soon occupied to capacity, and in that year the bursting point came when almost

overnight a great mass of people streamed out of Orlando and other townships on to vacant land where huge squatter camps were formed. Sanitation was non-existent and the foulness of the shantytowns became indescribable.

In these places, self-appointed 'leaders' took the law into their own hands and imposed their own 'authority'. Among them were gangsters who preyed upon the ignorance and latent violence of the people swarming in the camps. Illegal courts were set up, crippling fines and brutal beatings were commonplace, and in many known cases reprisals against those who refused to submit to gang rule did not stop short of murder.

The squatting movement was seen as such a serious danger to public authority and the health of the whole of Johannesburg that the City Council took urgent steps in the matter in 1947 when a controlled settlement of an emergency nature was established at Moroka, named after the wellknown Native leader. There, more than 12,000 families numbering some 68,000 people were provided with ground on which temporary structures could be erected. Communal sanitation, water taps and refuse removal services were provided, and large health clinics were established. As an expedient, the Moroka settlement was not expected to last more than five years, but the backlog of houses was so great that it was only in 1959 that the last family could be moved out to a permanent house.

Even so, 5,233 houses had been erected between 1947 and 1951, a not inconsiderable achievement on the Council's part considering the acute shortages of raw materials and manpower during the post-war years. In the latter year, Parliament enacted the Native Building Workers' Act which had the twofold effect of meeting the labour shortage and bringing down building costs as it was now possible, for the first time, to train Native artisans for skilled work where the construction of houses for their own people was concerned.

Another factor which greatly facilitated the provision of Native housing was the Native Services Levy Act of 1952. In terms of this legislation, it became incumbent on employers of such labour to contribute a weekly sum for each Native worker for whom accommodation was not provided. In this way, £720,000 a year became available at a time when schemes of this nature were slowing down partly as a result of a shortage of capital funds. However, this

Squatting
↓



Completed houses for Bantu in Dube Township.

measure and the Native Building Workers' Act imparted a new impetus to activities, and to alleviate the housing shortage the City Council established the Site and Services Scheme in 1953 which enabled families to build their own temporary dwellings pending the erection of permanent houses.

Thus, when the City Council formed its Housing Division in 1954, it was in a strong position to tackle the problem. Houses were soon being constructed at the rate of 3,000 a year, but owing to the natural increase in Native families this rate was only abreast of demand and very little impression was being made on the enormous backlog of 35,000 units. However, the National Housing Commission and, later, the Bantu Housing Board established by the Government to speed up the granting of housing loans, made £5,909,000 available to Johannesburg from 1949 to 1959. In addition, the seven great mining-finance houses, Rand Mines, Gold Fields of South Africa, Union Corporation, the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company, General Mining and Finance Corporation, the Anglo American Corporation and Anglo-Transvaal Consolidated Investment Company, all acting on a lead given by Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, lent the Council £3-million in 1956 for Native slum clearance and housing programmes. This generous action on the part of the gold-mining industry was enhanced by another loan of £1-million conditional on an immediate start being made on the building of houses in order to clear up Moroka and Shantytown. It was stipulated further that these loans were to be utilised in addition to moneys expended on the Council's existing housing programme.

More than 13,000 houses were completed during the next two years. So, too, were Dube and Nance-

field hostels with accommodation for 10,128 single men. The former, the first of its kind in the new Bantu areas of cottage-type houses, was erected for men prohibited by law from living in the so-called 'locations in the sky' which were dormitory-type rooms constructed on the roofs of blocks of flats and offices in the White areas.

For all practical purposes, checks on the influx of Bantu into Johannesburg were nominal until 1952. Thereafter, restrictions were increased by legislation until, in 1958, influx control was applied so rigorously that the numbers of Native men allowed to enter an urban area from the country districts were reduced considerably. In the following year, control was extended to Native women.

By 1960, the last of the slum-dwellers had left their flimsy shacks for proper homes and by the 30th of June of that year, only 5,863 families were living on site-and-service ground. Then, when proper housing was completed for them a year later, the last vestiges of the former emergency came to an end.

At the same time the Housing Division completed another major task by moving the 15,000 residents of the old Western Native Township to Moroka. When this had been done, the old township was proclaimed an area for Coloured persons in terms of the Group Areas Act.

Following a seven-year period of intensive activity, loans from the Bantu Housing Board were considerably restricted. As a result, fewer than 2,000 houses were completed in 1962. The position improved slightly during the 1963/64 operating year when 2,355 units were erected, but building was still far short of estimated requirements.

Another source of anxiety lay in the shortage of land for Non-White housing in the vicinity of Johannesburg. In the circumstances, the Housing Division embarked on a new and important departure in its activities. Instead of spreading outwards in keeping with past practice, vertical development was undertaken with the erection of small blocks of flats at Emdeni. These are two-storey structures, each containing four to six units, but the reaction of Natives to this innovation in their living conditions has yet to be gauged.

Today, Soweto, the great 26 square-mile complex of Native townships to the south-west of Johannesburg, is a credit to the City's social conscience and a living example of how a positive programme can overtake a massive backlog of past neglect. Hand-in-



The tower erected to the memory of the late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer at Soweto. In 1956 South Africa's seven great mining-finance houses, acting on a lead given by Sir Ernest, lent the Johannesburg City Council £4-million for Native slum clearance and housing programmes.

hand with the construction of more than 60,000 houses for a community of some 600,000, has gone the provision of such key services as water reticulation, sewerage, roads, street-lighting and public health. Shopping centres and many schools have been built and residents also enjoy facilities for indoor recreation and a wide variety of sports.

Although the Coloured population of Johannesburg is relatively small, the National Housing Commission made a loan of nearly R1-million in 1961 towards the cost of a scheme for housing 623 families in Riverlea. This project was completed in the following year and in 1964 and 1965 the City Council's Housing Division built an extension to the suburb for the accommodation of a further 788 families.

In the latter year the Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Pieter M. Roos, opened an experimental group of eight timber-framed houses in Riverlea. These houses are the first of the kind to be erected as part of a sub-economic housing scheme in South Africa and a further group of 100 as well as a shopping centre, a hall, a clinic and an administration block are in course of construction.

Then there are the Asians who earn their livelihoods in the City. The great majority of this section of the population is housed in the township of Lenasia by the Group Areas Development Board, as the City Council is precluded from embarking on housing schemes within the City limits for these people. The Council, however, plans to develop an Indian market inside the municipal area.

The considerable achievements of the Municipality constitute much of the history of Johannesburg.

Accordingly, the histories of all twenty-two municipal departments and branches are recorded elsewhere in this volume.

The Witwatersrand Agricultural Society celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1955 when the Rand Easter Show was opened by the Right Honourable Lord Llewellyn, G.B.E., the first Governor-General of the short-lived Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Present on that occasion was the Honourable F. E. T. Krause, who had attended the opening of the 1899 Show by General Piet Joubert and who had saved the gold mines shortly before he surrendered Johannesburg to Lord Roberts on the 31st of May, 1900. After tracing the Society's growth and development, Judge Krause described the Rand Easter Show, which was visited that year by 558,201 people, as one of the most important annual events in Southern Africa.

At the time, the City Council began making preparations to mark the 70th anniversary of Johannesburg in 1956. It was decided to hold a cultural festival on a scale unparalleled in the history of the City. Britain's famous conductor, Sir Malcolm Sargent, accepted an invitation to give a series of concerts with the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Orchestra. Joseph Krips conducted the famous London Symphony Orchestra which was brought out for the occasion as was the renowned La Scala Orchestra of Milan which appeared under the baton of Guido Cantelli, Toscanini's protégé, while music lovers also had the unforgettable experience of hearing Rome's magnificent chamber orchestra, I Musici.

Among the world's great artists who gave performances during the festival were Margot Fonteyn who danced *Swan Lake* with Michael Soames, Giuseppi di Stefano who appeared in *Così fan Tutti* with Nicola Monti, Rosanna Carteri, Graziella Fciutti, Elizabeth Gruemmer, Nan Merrina, Etori Bastiannini, Nicola Rossi-Lemini and a number of wellknown local artists. Then there were the unforgettable recitals by South Africa's own Mimi Coertze, by Yehudi Menuhin, Pierre Fournier, Claudio Arrau and Andres Segovia.

At the Zoo Lake on the 18th of October, the Mayor, Councillor Max Goodman, opened a carnival which began with a mammoth display of fireworks. Buildings in the central area were illuminated and the City's pioneers were entertained at a Civic tea party.

According to the estimates of the Director of Census and Statistics, Johannesburg had a popula-

Collection Number: A1434

Colin Goodman Papers, 1930-1972

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2014

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.