

THE "MIRACLE CITY"

PLANEVIEW, KANSAS.

BY E. EARL PAYNE, JR.

SUDDENLY, ON DECEMBER 7, 1941, THE CITY OF WICHITA, KANSAS FOUND ITSELF, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER CITIES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, MAKING DRASTIC CHANGES, MOBILIZING FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR EFFORT. UNTIL THEN, WICHITA HAD BEEN A TYPICAL MIDWESTERN CITY PREPARING FOR WINTER, WITH ITS NEARBY FARMS, PACKING HOUSES, GRAIN ELEVATORS, FLOUR MILLS, OIL REFINERIES AND OIL FIELD EQUIPMENT SUPPLY HOUSES. IT HAD THREE SMALL COLLEGES, TWO HIGH SCHOOLS AND A NUMBER OF COMMUNITY JUNIOR HIGH AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. THEN, TO THE EYES OF A TWELVE YEAR OLD, THE CITY SEEMED SMALL, ALTHOUGH WICHITA WAS THE SECOND LARGEST CITY IN KANSAS. IT HAD A RELATIVELY SMALL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY COMPOSED OF THE STEARMAN (NOW BOEING), CESSNA, AND BEECHCRAFT AIRPLANE FACTORIES. THEN, WITH THE ADVENT OF WORLD WAR II, THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY IN OUR TOWN FOUND ITSELF THRUST INTO "TOOLING UP" TO MEET THE PRODUCTION DEMANDS OF UNCLE SAM, AND IT BECAME APPARENT THAT WICHITA WAS TO BECOME AN IMPORTANT LOCALITY BECAUSE OF ITS AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY.

WHERE WOULD THE WORKERS COME FROM TO MEET THE DEMANDS PLACED ON THE FACTORIES? WHERE WOULD THEY LIVE WHEN THEY GOT HERE? THEY CAME FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY EXCEPT THE NEW ENGLAND STATES. THERE WERE FORTY-TWO MINISTERS, MOSTLY FROM RURAL COMMUNITIES, WHO WORKED PARTLY FROM PATRIOTIC MOTIVES OR BECAUSE THEIR SMALL CONGREGATIONS, DEPLETED BY WAR, COULD NOT PAY A LIVING SALARY. THERE WERE OTHER PERSONS, MOSTLY WOMEN, WHO CAME TO PLANEVIEW SOLELY FOR PATRIOTIC REASONS. ABOUT 90% OF THE WORKERS HAD RELATIVES IN THE ARMED FORCES."

TO PREPARE TO HOUSE THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO CAME TO WICHITA TO WORK IN THE AIRCRAFT FACTORIES WAS A TREMENDOUS TASK. THE CITY OF WICHITA COULD NOT PROVIDE ALL THE NECESSARY HOUSING NEEDED FOR FAMILIES ALREADY COMING TO LIVE IN WICHITA FOR REASONS OTHER THAN TO SUPPORT THE INCREASED DEMAND FOR LABOR FOR THE WAR EFFORT.

AS IT HAD TO DO IN MANY AREAS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR WAR WORKERS, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER 500 ACRES OF RURAL LAND, WHICH HAD BELONGED TO SIX OR SEVEN FAMILIES, BY THE FEDERAL CONDEMNATION, PAYING THE OWNERS A TOTAL SUM OF \$80,000.

THE LAND WAS LOCATED SOUTHEAST OF WICHITA AND HAD AT ONE TIME BEEN A HAY FIELD IN THE TOWNSHIP OF RIVERSIDE NEAR THE AIRCRAFT FACTORIES. PLANEVIEW GOT ITS NAME FROM ITS REASON FOR EXISTENCE WHICH WAS TO HOUSE WORKERS AT THE AIRPLANE PLANTS. THIS AREA OF LAND WAS BOUND ON THE NORTH BY PAWNEE ROAD, ON THE EAST BY GEORGE WASHINGTON BOULEVARD, ON THE WEST BY HILLSIDE, AND ON THE SOUTH BY THIRTY-FIRST STREET.

THE U.S. FEDERAL PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY (USFPHA), AFTER ACQUIRING THE LAND, PROCEEDED TO RECEIVE BIDS FOR CONTRACTS TO PLAN AND BUILD PLANEVIEW. IT WAS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, TO BE SELF-CONTAINED, AND EVEN THOUGH IT SEEMED TO SPRING UP ON THE 500 ACRES OVER NIGHT, IT DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN. A GREAT DEAL OF SKILLED PLANNING AND EFFORT WAS GIVEN, BUT EVEN SO, PLANNING OVERSIGHTS WERE MADE IN THE BEGINNING. EARL O. MILLS AND JOHN NOYES, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS-ENGINEERS OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI DID MUCH OF THE ORIGINAL PLANNING. BESIDES PLANEVIEW, TWO OTHER FEDERAL HOUSING PROJECTS WERE BUILT IN WICHITA: HILLTOP MANOR WITH 1,118 UNITS, AND BEECHWOOD WITH 500 UNITS. "ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS ASSOCIATED WITH MESSRS. MILLS AND NOYES IN THESE WICHITA PROJECTS WERE LORENTZ SCHMIDT AND ASSOCIATES, OVEREND AND BOUCHER, ARCHITECTS OF WICHITA; F.E. DEVLIN AND DON C. MOEHRING, ENGINEERS OF WICHITA.

THE HOUSES OF PLANEVIEW WERE BUILT BY TWO DIFFERENT CONTRACTORS, AND WERE OF DIFFERING DESIGNS. THE GROUP OF HOUSES BUILT FROM THIRTY-FIRST STREET AND ROOSEVELT NORTH TO THE HOUSES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ROSS PARKWAY WERE BUILT BY CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY. THIS COMPANY WAS FORMED BY FOUR WICHITA CONSTRUCTION MEN: ELLIS, VOLLMER, HAHNER AND FOREMAN. THESE LOCAL GENTLEMEN HAD NOT PLACED THEIR BID FOR A CONTRACT ON PLANEVIEW, HOWEVER, MR. CLARENCE E. VOLLMER WAS ASKED BY A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TO GIVE A BID ON THE HOUSES. THE HOUSES IN THAT SECTION WERE TO BE TWO-STORY, TWO AND FOUR FAMILY UNITS. WELL BUILT SIDEWALKS WERE PROVIDED BETWEEN THE UNITS WITH AMPLE OFF-STREET PARKING NEARBY. "THE CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY GAVE THE BID OF FIVE AND ONE HALF MILLION DOLLARS TO BUILD 2,200 UNITS OF THE TWO-STORY TYPE HOUSES, AND THEIR FEE WOULD BE \$165,000.

THE OTHER HOUSING UNITS IN PLANEVIEW WERE BUILT OVER THE REMAINING AREA, AND CONSISTED OF GROUND LEVEL ONE, TWO AND THREE FAMILY PRE-FABRICATED, DEMOUNTABLE UNITS. THEY WERE CONSTRUCTED BY THE GRIMSHAW CONSTRUCTION COMPANY OF OKLAHOMA. "THE COMMERCIAL CENTER WAS CONSTRUCTED BY LOEBL AND SCHLOSSMAN, CHICAGO; AND RESERVOIRS BY BLACK AND VEATCH, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI." THE GRIMSHAW COMPANY STARTED BUILDING THE PRE-FABRICATED UNITS A SHORT TIME BEFORE THE CONSOLIDATED GROUP BEGAN THEIR BUILDING. ACTUAL FIELD OPERATIONS OF THE CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY STARTED IN SEPTEMBER, 1942. MR. VOLLMER, AS THE ACCOUNTING ADMINISTRATOR, AND MR. FOREMAN AS THE ENGINEER, DID THE ACTUAL MECHANICS OF PLANNING THE PROJECT.

MR. VOLLMER SAID IN MY INTERVIEW WITH HIM, "THE SKILL WAS IN THE LOGISTICS OF THE BUILDING OF THE UNITS." THE FIRST THING THAT HE DID TO PREPARE AND PLAN WAS TO "WRITE UP THE BATTLE PLAN", (THE COMPANY'S LOGISTIC MANUAL) FOR THE JOB OF BUILDING 2,200 UNITS. IT TOOK TEN MONTHS TO BUILD THEM AND THEY WERE VERY WELL BUILT BY ANY STANDARDS. THE LUMBER WAS THE BEST AND THE WORKMANSHIP WAS OUTSTANDING. THIS OPINION WAS EXPRESSED TO ME OVER AND OVER DURING MY RESEARCH. BUT YET, THE

PEOPLE OF WICHITA DID NOT ACCEPT OR APPRECIATE PLANEVIEW BECAUSE OF IT'S TEMPORARY STATUS AND BARRACKS TYPE LOOK.

THE CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY EMPLOYED 4,000 WORKMEN AND OF THOSE, 93 WORKED IN THE OFFICE. THESE MEN WORKED FORTY HOURS PER WEEK AND NO OVERTIME WAS NECESSARY.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THE SPEED WITH WHICH PLANEVIEW WAS COMPLETED. ALL OF THE 4,382 DWELLINGS, THE COMMERCIAL CENTER, AND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS WERE COMPLETED IN FIFTEEN MONTHS AFTER THE GROUND WAS BROKEN. "FAMILIES BEGAN MOVING INTO THESE NEW HOMES ON JANUARY 16, 1943, AND THE MIGRATION HAS CONTINUED AT THE RATE OF TEN TO TWELVE FAMILIES PER DAY SINCE THAT TIME," AND PLANEVIEW WAS COMPLETELY OCCUPIED BY JANUARY 16, 1944.

THE TWO-STORY UNITS WERE EQUIPPED WITH BLOWER TYPE COAL-FIRED FURNACES, AND THE PRE-FABRICATED DEMOUNTABLE UNITS, WITH COAL-FIRED CIRCULATING HEATERS IN THE LIVING ROOMS.

MANY HAVE CALLED PLANEVIEW THE "MIRACLE CITY," AND IT WAS CERTAINLY EASY TO SEE WHY IF YOU LIVED IN WICHITA, KANSAS AT THE TIME IT WAS BUILT. IT BROKE INTO THE NEWS IN 1944. "THE ASSOCIATED PRESS CARRIED THE FOLLOWING STORY UNDER A PLANEVIEW DATELINE: WANT TO BUILD A "MIRACLE" CITY? HERE'S THE RECIPE: TAKE 1,635 RAILROAD CARS OF LUMBER, 280 OF BRICK AND FLUE TILE, 100 OF ROOFING, 60 OF PLUMBING, 70 OF FURNACES, 40 OF BATHTUBS, 17 OF HOT WATER HEATERS, 42 OF WATER AND GAS MAINS, 800 OF ROAD MATERIALS, 14 OF CEMENT, 245 OF WALL BOARDS, 15 OF SHOWER STALLS, 16 OF NAILS, 17 OF PAINT, 77 OF INSULATION, 50 OF REFRIGERATORS, 75 OF STOVES AND 4 OF ELECTRICAL WIRING AND FIXTURES. LOAD ABOARD A TRAIN 100 MILES LONG AND TRANSPORT TO SITE. ADD 4,500 TRUCK LOADS OF READY-MIXED CEMENT. THEN GO TO WORK. THAT'S HOW UNCLE SAM BUILT PLANEVIEW, KANSAS."

PLANEVIEW SUPPLIED A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE WORKERS AT BOEING AND CESSNA AIRCRAFT FACTORIES, BOEING BEING LOCATED ABOUT ONE MILE SOUTH AND CESSNA APPROXIMATELY TWO MILES TO THE EAST.

AS MENTIONED BEFORE, IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THE DESIGN OF THIS "MIRACLE" SELF-CONTAINED CITY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SIDEWALKS AND PARKING FACILITIES, WHICH WERE PARTICULARLY WELL-PLANNED FOR THAT TIME. SIDEWALKS WERE PLENTIFUL IN THE HOUSING AREA, CONNECTING ALL THE LIVING UNITS AND COMMERCIAL AREAS. OFF-STREET PARKING WAS PROVIDED FOR ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS SO THAT SPACES WERE AVAILABLE AT STRATEGIC LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE TWO-STORY HOUSING AREA, AS WELL AS AMONG THE PRE-FABRICATED DEMOUNTABLE UNITS WHICH HAD DRIVE-UP AREAS NEAR EACH COURT. THE OUTER "PRE-FADS" HAD SMALL PARKING LOTS AT THE ENDS OF THE CLUSTERS OF BUILDINGS.

CONVENIENT TO EACH UNIT WAS A THREE-SIDED CONCRETE BLOCK COAL BIN. ALSO PROVIDED WERE WHEEL BARROWS IN WHICH TO TRANSPORT THE COAL WHEN NEEDED. NEARBY WERE THE TRASH CANS AND ASH DISPOSAL RECEPTACLES.

INCLUDED IN THE RENTAL FEE WERE WATER, GAS, ELECTRICITY, COAL, TRASH PICKUP, AND GARBAGE REMOVAL. THE RENT VARIED BASED ON THE SIZE OF THE UNIT, WITH THE AVERAGE BEING \$32 PER MONTH; HOWEVER SOME UNITS RENTED FOR ONLY \$14. APPLICATIONS FOR HOUSING WERE MADE AT ANY OF THE AIRCRAFT FACTORIES, OR AT THE AREA HOUSING OFFICE THEN LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF ROOSEVELT AND ROSS PARKWAY.

AN INTERESTING NOTE TO INCLUDE HERE CONCERNS THE ACTIONS OF SOME OF THE CITIZENS OF WICHITA DURING THIS WARTIME PERIOD, CONSIDERING RATIONING AND THE NATURAL DESIRE TO SAVE A FEW CENTS. IT SEEMED THAT MANY NIGHTS IN PLANEVIEW, NOISES COULD BE HEARD OUTSIDE NEAR THE COAL AND GARBAGE COLLECTING AREAS. TO THE SURPRISE OF THE RESIDENTS, IT WASN'T FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS PUTTING OUT THEIR TRASH, BUT ALIENS FROM WICHITA, BRINGING THEIR TRASH OUT TO PLANEVIEW TO GET IT HAULED AWAY FREE.

MR. AND MRS. BEN F. SANDERS RENTED A UNIT IN PLANEVIEW IN DECEMBER, 1943. I INTERVIEWED MRS. SANDERS AND SHE HAD A NUMBER OF SIMILAR INTERESTING STORIES TO RELATE REGARDING THE HUMOROUS THINGS WHICH HAPPENED EARLY IN PLANEVIEW'S HISTORY. THESE STORIES ARE WELL DOCUMENTED, COMING FIRST HAND FROM MRS. SANDERS. SHE WAS THE FIRST PRECINCT COMMITTEE WOMAN IN PLANEVIEW AND AS SUCH, HAD MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO VISIT IN THE HOMES AND TO SEE AND HEAR MANY AMUSING INCIDENTS WHILE TAKING THE CENSUS, SURVEYS, ETC.

OCCASIONALLY SHE WOULD FIND AN ELECTRIC DEEP FREEZE, OR A WASHING MACHINE THAT DID NOT BELONG TO THE RESIDENT OF THE UNIT. THEY HAD ALLOWED FRIENDS FROM WICHITA TO BRING THE APPLIANCES THERE, THUS UTILIZING THE "FREE" ELECTRICITY AND ALLOWING THE PLANEVIEW RESIDENT THE USE OF THE MACHINES. ON OTHER OCCASIONS PEOPLE WOULD BRING THEIR AUTOMOBILES AND PARK THEM IN THE PARKING AREAS AT PLANEVIEW TO AVOID BEING ASSESSED TAXES ON THEM IN WICHITA.

ALL OF THE UNITS HAD ICE BOXES PROVIDED, AND FREE ICE WAS INCLUDED IN THE RENT AND DELIVERED DAILY. THE KITCHEN STOVES USED NATURAL GAS. NO TREES OR SHRUBS WERE ALLOWED. WHETHER THIS WAS INTENDED TO EXPEDITE MOWING OF THE HUGE AREA OF GRASS IN THE PROJECT OR BECAUSE THE AREA WAS TO BE RAZED AFTER THE WAR, IS NOT CLEAR.

MRS. SANDERS ALSO TOLD ME THAT BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT, RESIDENTS USED THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING TELEPHONES. A VERY FEW TENANTS ENJOYED TELEPHONE SERVICE IN THEIR OWN HOMES. "A SHORTAGE OF TELEPHONES PUT EXTRA DUTIES ON THE PEACE OFFICERS. THEY WERE FORCED TO DELIVER IMPORTANT LONG DISTANCE OR EMERGENCY CALLS IN PERSON, AS THE FEW FOUR-PARTY LINE TELEPHONES WERE BUSY WITH OUTGOING CALLS."

PLANEVIEW HAD, "A BASEBALL DIAMOND, SOFTBALL FIELD, TRACK, THREE LARGE PLAYGROUNDS AND TEN SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYGRQUNDS; THREE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS EACH WITH AN AUDITORIUM, THREE SOCIAL ROOMS AND KITCHEN FACILITIES; A COMMERCIAL CENTER CONTAINING A POST OFFICE, BANK, OFFICES FOR DOCTORS -

[PLANEVIEW'S FIRST DOCTOR WAS TOM HAGAN, M.D.], AND DENTISTS, A MOVING PICTURE THEATER, BOWLING ALLEY, CAFETERIA, DRUG STORE, TWO SUPERMARKETS, BAKERY, BARBER AND BEAUTY SHOP, LADIES READY-TO-WEAR SHOP, SELF-SERVICE LAUNDRY, SERVICE STATION, SHOE STORE, AND SHOE REPAIR SHOP, CLEANER, VARIETY STORE, TAP ROOM; A CENTRAL WAREHOUSE, A GARAGE EQUIPPED COMPLETELY TO SERVICE THE SEVEN PASSENGER AUTOMOBILES AND TWELVE TRUCKS REQUIRED IN THE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PROJECT. AMONGST THE TRUCKS ARE SPECIALLY BUILT VEHICLES, OR TRAVELING SHOPS, ONE FOR OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION REPAIR, ONE FOR PLUMBING REPAIR, AND ONE FOR ELECTRICAL REPAIR. OTHER EQUIPMENT INCLUDED A RUBBER-TIRED TRACTOR, A CATERPILLER TRACTOR, A STREET SWEEPER, AND ELEVEN POWER MOWERS. IN THIS SHOP ARE REPAIRED THE 240 LAWN MOWERS WHICH ARE ALLOCATED FROM TIME TO TIME AMONGST THE RESIDENTS WHO MAINTAIN THE LAWNS AROUND THEIR INDIVIDUAL HOUSES; A SHADE SHOP, CARPENTER SHOP AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE SHOP, MAKING THE PROJECT SELF-SUSTAINING IN-SO FAR AS IT'S MAINTENANCE AND MECHANICAL REPAIR ARE CONCERNED. THERE ARE THREE AREA MAINTENANCE SHOPS, EACH FULLY EQUIPPED TO MAKE ALL ORDINARY STRUCTURAL REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENTS."

ALSO, PLANEVIEW HAD IT'S OWN POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS, TO MANAGE, AND MAINTAIN THE "MIRACLE CITY," AND THE USFPHA HAD A LARGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, ALL OF WHOM WERE CIVIL SERVICE.

AFTER IT HAD BEEN COMPLETED, THE CITY OF PLANEVIEW HAD SHOPPING CENTERS, THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND ONE HIGH SCHOOL, AS WELL AS RECREATIONAL AND CHURCH FACILITIES, AND FOR THE 1940'S, EACH FAMILY HAD MODERN HOUSING WITH MANY MILES OF PAVED STREETS AND SIDEWALKS. "THE RESIDENTS HAVE AN INTENSE CIVIC PRIDE IN THE NEW COMMUNITY."

THE RULES AND REGULATIONS (WHICH BOUND THAT GREAT CROSS SECTION OF FAMILIES WITH VARYING ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS, FROM 42 STATES AND WHO HAD SUDDENLY BECOME MEMBERS OF A NEW AND IMPORTANT CITY IN THE UNITED STATES) WERE: "RESIDENTS- NOT TENANTS -ARE BOUND BY NO OTHER RULES AND REGULATIONS THAN THAT THEY BE GOOD AMERICAN CITIZENS, SUBJECT TO THE LAWS AND ORDINANCES OF THE STATE OF KANSAS AND THE COUNTY OF SEDGWICK, CONSIDERATE OF THEIR NEIGHBORS AND MAINTAIN AVERAGE HOUSE-KEEPING STANDARDS. FROM TIME TO TIME, BULLETINS ARE DISTRIBUTED, NEWS DISSEMINATED THROUGH THE RESIDENTS COUNCILS AND FLASHED ON THE SCREEN OF THE MOVING PICTURE THEATER, CONVEYING INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL MATTER DESIGNED TO INCULCATE A SENSE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY SO THAT THE PROJECT MAY BE KEPT IN ATTRACTIVE APPEARANCE AT THE LEAST POSSIBLE EXPENSE TO THE GOVERNMENT."

BUT TO GO BACK A LITTLE, PLANEVIEW WAS NOT WITHOUT PROBLEMS. MOST OF THEM REMAIN UNKNOWN, "BUT SOME ARE KNOWN, SUCH AS THE PROBLEM AT THE VERY START, INVOLVING SOME OF THE ORIGINAL FAMILIES WHO STILL LIVED ON THE LAND TAKEN OVER BY THE GOVERNMENT WHEN THE BUILDERS WERE READY TO MOVE IN. THEY HAD BEEN NOTIFIED

THAT THEIR LAND HAD BEEN TAKEN BUT NONE HAD RECEIVED ANY MONEY. THE CONTRACTORS WERE READY TO GO INTO THE AREA AND START WORK, BUT A NUMBER OF THE FAMILIES WERE STILL IN THEIR HOMES. WHEN ONE OF THE CONTRACTORS ASKED A USFPHA REPRESENTATIVE WHAT TO DO, THE REPLY WAS, "IF THEY ARE NOT OFF WHEN YOU ARE READY, HAVE A FEDERAL MARSHALL THROW THEM OFF." THE EMERGENCY POWER OF THE GOVERNMENT IS GREAT AND NECESSARY, HOWEVER THE POWER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS SEEMED TO EVAPORATE. IT WAS GOOD TO FIND OUT THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOT HANDLED IN THE MANNER SUGGESTED. THE LOCAL CONTRACTORS WERE PLACED IN A VERY AWKWARD AND EMBARRASSING POSITION, BUT TWO OF THEM VISITED IN THE HOMES OF THE REMAINING PEOPLE AND TACTFULLY DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM WITH GREAT SUCCESS, EVEN THOUGH STILL NO MONEY HAD BEEN RECEIVED FOR PAYMENT OF THEIR LAND. SOMEHOW THE PEOPLE COOPERATED AND THE BUILDING BEGAN.

THE "PROJECT PLANS INCLUDED SCHOOL BUILDINGS, BUT CONSTRUCTION OF THESE WAS NOT BEGUN UNTIL AFTER SEVERAL HUNDRED FAMILIES WERE SETTLED." ANOTHER EARLY PROBLEM BECAME APPARENT. A FIRE DEPARTMENT AND POLICE FORCE WERE NEEDED BUT NONE WAS AVAILABLE AND TENANTS WERE ALREADY THERE, SO IT FELL TO THE PRIVATE FIRM OF THE CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, AND THE FOUR EXECUTIVES TO EXERCISE THE POWERS OF GOVERNMENT FOR APPROXIMATELY TEN MONTHS. THEY BECAME FIRE CHIEF, CHIEF OF POLICE, MAYOR, OR ANYTHING ELSE FOR WHICH A NEED AROSE. DAILY AS THE FOUR GENTLEMEN REPRESENTING CONSOLIDATED CAME TO WORK, AND AFTER LOOKING THROUGH:THE REPORTS OF OVERNIGHT DISTURBANCES, ETC., THE FIRST QUESTION WOULD BE, "WE'LL, WHOSE TURN IS IT TODAY TO BE MAYOR?"

LACK OF OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT WAS NOT THE ONLY PROBLEM AS HAS BEEN MENTIONED EARLIER. WHILE THERE WERE A FEW HUNDRED FAMILIES ALREADY LIVING IN THEIR NEW HOME, THERE WERE NO SCHOOLS BUILT IN WHICH TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN. THE ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS BECAME THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NEW RESIDENTS OF PLANEVIEW. "SINCE NEITHER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NOR THE USFPHA IS EMPOWERED TO ORGANIZE AND ADMINISTER SCHOOLS, ONE OF THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL OFFICIALS AND RESIDENTS OF THE PROJECT WAS TO SET UP A SCHOOL. AT THE REQUEST OF USFPHA OFFICIALS, AND WITH APPROVAL OF THE RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN WHICH THE PROJECT WAS LOCATED, PLANEVIEW WAS ORGANIZED AS A COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICT. A SCHOOL WAS NAME AND, IN COOPERATION WITH THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT, IT MADE PROVISION FOR OPENING AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT NEITHER BUILDING NOR EQUIPMENT HAD YET BEEN PROVIDED."

THE CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY WAS GIVEN THE TASK OF PUTTING SOME OF THE TWO-STORY FOUR FAMILY UNITS TOGETHER AND REMODELING THEM FOR USE AS SCHOOLS. ALSO, ALL OF THE FURNITURE AND DESKS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WAS HAND CRAFTED BY MEMBERS OF THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY.

WITH ALL OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPROVISING, SCHOOLS WERE READY TO BE OPENED. HOWEVER, ANOTHER OVERSIGHT HAD OCCURRED: TEACHERS NEEDED TO BE

RECRUITED, AND MONEY NEEDED TO BE APPROPRIATED TO FINANCE THE SCHOOLS. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD NOT SUPPLIED ANY MONIES AS OF THE DATE AND THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE OF GETTING ANY FOR SCHOOLS. HOWEVER, SCHOOL OPENED WITH \$300 PLEDGED FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS.

MUCH WAS DONE IN A SHORT TIME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANEVIEW SCHOOL SYSTEM BY THE FIRST SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR PLANEVIEW, MR. FRANK K. REID WHO WAS ELECTED TO THAT POSITION IN EARLY 1943.

THE HOME OFFICE OF THE USFPHA WAS IN CHICAGO WHERE MUCH OF THE ORDERING AND RECORD WORK WAS MAINTAINED. BECAUSE THE WORKERS THERE WERE UNABLE TO READ AND INTERPRET SPECIFICATIONS AND CONSTRUCTION TERMINOLOGY, IT BECAME NECESSARY FOR THE CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY TO SEND A MAN TO CHICAGO TO TRAIN THE CLERK THERE HOW TO READ THE ORDER BOOKS AND UNDERSTAND WHAT TO PURCHASE. ALSO, IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE PAYROLL WOULD BE MET WEEKLY AND MATERIALS PAID FOR EVERY TWO WEEKS, BUT THREE MONTHS HAD GONE BY WITH NO MONEY COMING FROM THE GOVERNMENT. MONEY HAD BEEN FLOWING OUTWARD FREELY, WITH NO INCOME OR RETURN FORESEEN.

FINALLY, AFTER A TRIP TO CHICAGO BY MR. VOLLMER AND ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE FIRM, AND A CONFERENCE WITH THE USFPHA REPRESENTATIVE THERE WHO WORKED WITH GOVERNMENT FUNDING, ARRANGEMENTS WERE COMPLETED FOR THE FUNDS TO BE SENT TO PAY THE BILLS AND THE WORKERS.

AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT WAS FINALLY ESTABLISHED FOR PLANEVIEW AND CONSISTED OF "THE HOUSING MANAGER AND STAFF WHO, SINCE IT WAS NOT INCORPORATED, MADE EVERY EFFORT TO CONFINE THEIR ACTIVITIES TO RENTING AND MAINTENANCE. MANAGEMENT'S OBJECTIVE IS TO OPERATE THE PROJECT ON DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND TO ACHIEVE THIS PURPOSE THE RESIDENTS HAVE FORMED THREE COUNCILS FROM WHICH ARE SELECTED THE MASTER COUNCIL. THIS STYLE OF GOVERNMENT PRACTICALLY CORRESPONDS TO THAT OF A MAYOR WITH A CITY COMMISSION OR COMMON COUNCIL AND THREE WARDS, EACH WITH IT'S OWN COUNCIL. THESE COUNCILS ARE ELECTED TOWN MEETING STYLE AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND RECREATION, BEING ASSISTED BY MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT STAFF CALLED PROJECT SERVICES ADVISORS. ONE PROJECT SERVICE ADVISOR IS ASSIGNED TO EACH OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS."

"A POLICE DEPARTMENT CONSISTING OF A POLICE CHIEF, 3 SERGEANTS AND 16 PATROLMEN;" AND "A FIRE DEPARTMENT CONSISTING OF A FIRE CHIEF, DRILLMASTER, AND 2 LIEUTENANTS, AND 18 FIRST-CLASS FIREMEN" FINALLY WERE INSTITUTED TO MEET THE COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR THOSE SERVICES.

WHEN PLANEVIEW WAS FINALLY COMPLETED IN 1944, IT HOUSED A TOTAL POPULATION OF 20,000. IN MY RESEARCH, I WAS UNABLE TO FIND A REFERENCE GIVING THE TOTAL COST OF BUILDING THE CITY OF PLANEVIEW, HOWEVER, AS MENTIONED EARLIER, CONSOLIDATED CONSTRUCTION COMPANY'S BILL FOR BUILDING THE 2,200 TWO-STORY UNITS HAD BEEN FIVE AND ONE HALF MILLION DOLLARS. UPON COMPLETION, "ONE MILLION DOLLARS WAS RETURNED

TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, MAKING THE 2,200 UNITS COST A TOTAL OF FOUR AND ONE HALF MILLION DOLLARS." ALSO, A NOTE OF INTEREST IS THAT A TWO-STORY FOUR FAMILY UNIT COST \$7,600 TO BUILD IN PLANEVIEW, BUT THE SAME UNIT IN CHICAGO WOULD HAVE COST ABOUT TWICE THAT AMOUNT." MR. VOLLMER STATED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE INTERVIEW THAT HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE NOT OUT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT ALTHOUGH THERE MAY HAVE BEEN OTHERS IN THE COUNTRY AT THAT TIME WHO WERE; BUT THE PROJECT CONSTRUCTION WAS A CHALLENGE TO THEM IN WHICH THEY WANTED TO SUCCEED, WITH ONLY A BASIC FINANCIAL RETURN FOR THEIR EFFORTS. THIS FACTOR CERTAINLY WOULD ACCOUNT FOR THE MODERATE COSTS OF THE DWELLINGS IN PLANEVIEW. THE CITY HAD FINALLY COME INTO IT'S OWN WITH THE HELP OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND MANY DEDICATED AMERICANS WHO ASSISTED DURING THE 'LABOR AND GROWTH PAINS' OF THE CITY AT ONE TIME KNOWN AS THE 'MIRACLE CITY', PLANEVIEW, KANSAS. IT HAD EVERYTHING THAT A CITY OF 20,000 SHOULD HAVE, AND PERHAPS MUCH MORE IN THE WAY OF PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, AND RECREATION FOR THE THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN AND GROWNUPS WHO LIVE THERE.

IT HAD ADEQUATE SCHOOLS AT LAST. "THE THREE GRADE SCHOOLS BUILT IN PLANEVIEW WERE MACARTHUR, WILL ROGERS, AND BROOKSIDE, THE LATTER BEING THE FIRST ONE BUILT. MACARTHUR HAD A LARGER NUMBER OF PUPILS THAN ANY OTHER GRADE SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES. ALSO, THE ONE HIGH SCHOOL BUILT TO SERVE 750 PUPILS ENROLLED 1,500 STUDENTS IN CLASSES WHICH WERE STAGGERED TO PROVIDE FOR THEM ALL. THERE WERE THIRTY-NINE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND SIXTY-ONE OTHERS DIVIDED AMONG THE THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

PLANEVIEW HAD THE POLICE PROTECTION IT NEEDED, BUT MOST OF THE DISTURBANCES THAT BROUGHT POLICE TO THE SCENE WERE CAUSED BY DISPUTES AMONG THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHILDREN AND WERE PROBABLY DUE TO THE LARGE NUMBERS WHO WERE IMPROPERLY SUPERVISED BECAUSE SO MANY PARENTS WERE WORKING FOR THE WAR EFFORT.

PLANEVIEW HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND IT SERVED IT'S PURPOSE WELL. HOWEVER, MANY THOUGHT THAT THE 20,000 NEWCOMERS WERE LITTLE BETTER THAN SQUATTERS AND THAT THEY HAD, SO TO SPEAK, "TAINTED" THE FINE CITY OF WICHITA, IT'S CULTURE, PEOPLE, AND THE STATE OF KANSAS. ---CAN THAT BE TRUE? DID THAT HAPPEN? --WHAT ABOUT THE EARLIER WESTWARD MOVEMENT OF THE GREAT PIONEERS WHO SETTLED THROUGHOUT OUR WONDERFUL LAND AND USED THEIR CULTURED BACKGROUNDS, SKILLS, AND KNOWLEDGE TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREAT COUNTRY IN WHICH WE NOW LIVE? ARE WE NOT A BETTER PEOPLE BECAUSE OF MIXED HERITAGE?

IN AT LEAST ONE PERSON'S OPINION, "PLANEVIEW CITIZENS REPRESENT AMERICA AT IT'S BEST. THE POPULAR NOTION IS ABROAD THAT PEOPLE WHO MOVE TO FEDERAL HOUSING PROJECTS REPRESENT THE LOWER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEVELS OF OUR SOCIETY. NOTHING COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH, FOR THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT THEIR REGULAR OCCUPATIONS AND PROFESSIONS TO ENTER WAR INDUSTRY REPRESENT THE

CREAM OF AMERICAN CITIZENRY. THEY ARE THE SCHOOL TEACHERS, LAWYERS, BUSINESS MEN, SKILLED MECHANICS AND LEADERS FROM HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITIES. A SURVEY REVEALS THAT 225 OCCUPATIONS ARE REPRESENTED AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE PROJECT. THERE ARE NO SLUMS IN PLANEVIEW. LIKewise, THERE ARE NO UNEMPLOYED, NOR IS THERE A '400' CLASS."

ORIGINALLY, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED WITH THE CITY OF WICHITA, THAT PLANEVIEW AND THE OTHER TWO WAR HOUSING PROJECTS WOULD NOT BE LIQUIDATED UNTIL FIVE YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR II ENDED, BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE NEEDED DURING THE DEMOBILIZATION OF THE WAR EFFORT. HOWEVER, WITH THE CONTINUED SHORTAGE OF HOUSING IN WICHITA AND THE ADVENT OF THE KOREAN WAR IN 1950, THE TEMPORARY CITY OF PLANEVIEW REMAINED AND CONTINUED TO FILL A NEED.

IN NOVEMBER OF 1945, THE USFPHA SOLD 300 OF THE TWO-STORY UNITS AT THE "FAIR MARKET VALUE" OF \$200 EACH, TO BE MOVED FROM THE PREMISES. THE FIRST QUALIFICATION WAS THAT THE BUYERS WERE TO BE VETERANS. THE UNITS WERE MOVED OUT AND USED TO HOUSE SMALL COMPANIES, ADD ON TO COLLEGES AND BIBLE SCHOOLS, AND TO PERFORM MANY OTHER NEW TASKS.

THE USFPHA CONTINUED TO SUPERVISE PLANEVIEW UNTIL 1955 WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO "GET OF THE HOUSING BUSINESS" AND SOLD ALL OF THE REMAINING TWO-STORY UNITS TO BE MOVED FROM PLANEVIEW. ALSO, THEY SOLD THE PRE-FABRICATED DEMOUNTABLE UNITS, LAND AND HOUSES, FOR AROUND \$7000 EACH, WITH FIRST PRIORITY AGAIN GIVEN TO VETERANS, AND THEN TO ANYONE DESIRING THE HOUSES. THE LATTER GROUP OF HOUSES WAS ANNEXED INTO WICHITA IN 1955 WITH MANY ACCOMPANYING PROBLEMS FOR THE CITY. AT THAT TIME, THE REMAINING LAND THAT HAD BEEN CLEARED WHEN THE TWO-STORY UNITS WERE SOLD FROM SOUTHEAST PLANEVIEW, WAS SOLD TO THE CITY OF WICHITA FOR ONE DOLLAR, TO BE USED FOR A PARK AREA. HOWEVER, IN 1957, WICHITA SOLD 28 ACRES OF THE SAME LAND TO THE KANSAS TURNPIKE AUTHORITY FOR \$27,500.

ANOTHER GENERATION LIVES IN PLANEVIEW TODAY, EVEN THOUGH MANY OF THE ORIGINAL 1943 RESIDENTS ARE OWNERS OF THE HOMES. "THEY NO LONGER NEED TO BUY ICE, AND THEY HAVE TELEPHONES."

THE MAJORITY OF THE HOMES HAVE TAKEN ON UNIQUE LOOKS OF INDIVIDUALITY, AND ARE MUCH MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN THE OLD UNIFORM, UNINTERESTING FACADE OF WARTIME. ALL OF THE STREETS HAVE BEEN PAVED WITH CONCRETE, REPLACING THE OLD WORN OUT BLACKTOPPED SURFACES. HOWEVER, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY NO LONGER EXISTS IN THE FORMER AREA OF HUSTLE AND BUSTLE. MANY OF THE COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN RAZED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ROSS PARKWAY EAST AND WEST OF ROOSEVELT. NEW STUCCO APARTMENTS HAVE BEEN BUILT IN THEIR PLACES. THE BUILDING FORMERLY HOUSING THE MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT SHOPS AT HILLSIDE AND ROSS PARKWAY IS NOW IN USE AS A COMMUNITY NURSING HOME, AND THE REBUILT HIGH SCHOOL IS NOW JARDINE JUNIOR HIGH.

A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO:

DR. ROSS MCLAURY TAYLER

JULY 21, 1972

This booklet presented to the Class of 49, PHS. By William Webster's, brother Don.