

In St. Louis, where did the people whose homes had been cleared by urban renewal go before the housing projects were built? Did they leave St. Louis?

Well, in most cases, they were forced to crowd into the apartments and tenements that were left. That was always one of the real weaknesses of the urban renewal program- what to do with the people whom were displaced. There was a government office, it's called a relocation office, but their offices were often very poorly staffed, and really were very little help to the people who needed it. So it was a real burden for the people who lost their homes.

How did the Brooke amendment affect St. Louis projects other than Pruitt-Igoe?

Well, it did limit the amount, the percentage of income that people had to pay. That was true throughout St. Louis and throughout the country. As the film mentions, sometimes people at Pruitt-Igoe wound up paying 50% of their income for these rather bad living conditions, though that made sure they would not have to pay more than 25 percent.

How did the availability of transportation in St. Louis affect the residents of Pruitt-Igoe?

Well, I think the problem with public transportation, which was still good in the 1950s and 60s, was that it was basically only within the city of St. Louis itself. And when the factories were still in the city, public transportation worked fairly well. But it was very difficult for people living in Pruitt-Igoe or near Pruitt-Igoe to get out to the suburbs, where so many of the new factories, the new jobs, were located.

Why was Igoe, a housing project that was supposed to be built for whites, built in a black slum area? Did it have anything to do with the anti-segregation suit filed against the St. Louis Housing Authority?

Well, initially, public housing was supposed to be for whites and blacks. Before 1956, and the [Brown v. Board of Education]...Before that decision, you had very explicitly segregated housing projects, and Pruitt and Igoe, they were supposed to be two separate projects- one for black people and one for white people. And, once they were integrated -I think the film makes this point- once there was the end of legal segregation, and the housing projects were open to both, what that meant was that the white people just left public housing, and it became completely segregated again.

What were the restrictions of Welfare policies on the residents of Pruitt-Igoe, as compared to people on Welfare who weren't living in Pruitt-Igoe? Was there a difference?

That's an interesting question. The Welfare system basically worked the same whether you were living in public housing or not. So, I hope the film didn't give the impression that it was only in public housing

that these inspectors would come around and make sure there weren't men living in the apartments and so on. Everybody who was on Welfare was subject to these restrictions. But, it was much more...I think one of the hard things to realize about the projects was just what happened when... you saw the scale of these buildings where, in 1965 or so, just about everybody is on Welfare. So, it's much more a concentration of the poverty, and, so, those areas were...everybody was subject to these restrictions, it just multiplied their effect.

So, people still came in to check whether or not males were living with the families if you weren't in public housing projects?

Yes, definitely. As long as you were on Welfare, you were subject to their restrictions. It just happened that most of the people who were on Welfare were in public housing.