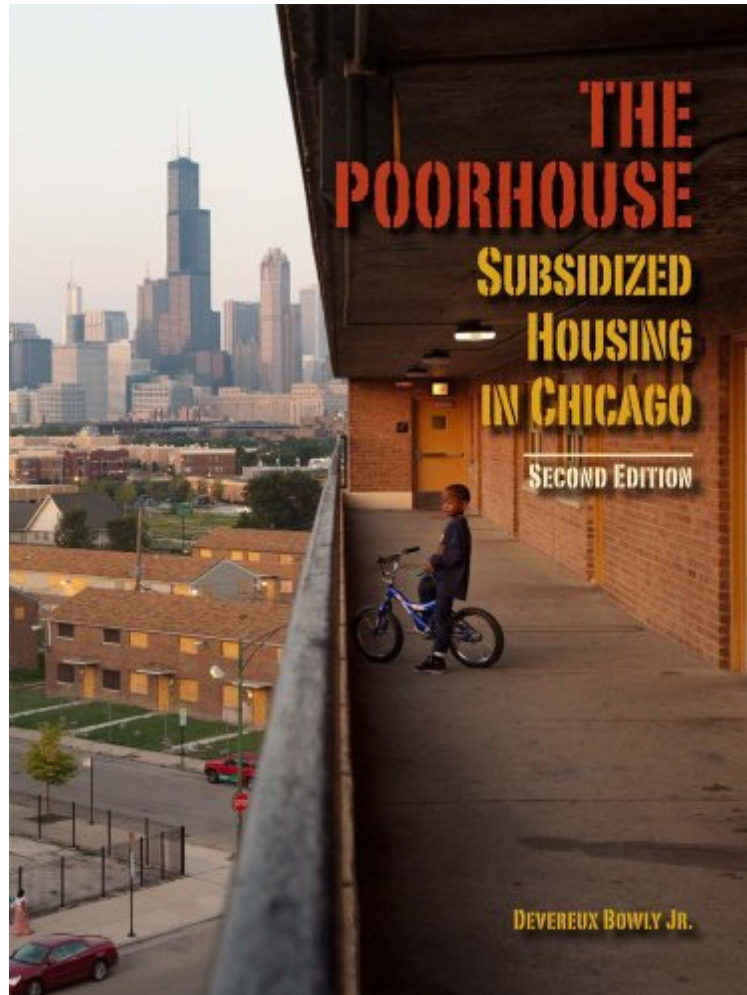


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The Poorhouse: Subsidized Housing in Chicago

Devereux Bowly

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Devereux Bowly : The Poorhouse: Subsidized Housing in Chicago before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Poorhouse: Subsidized Housing in Chicago:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A great book for anybody interested in creating livable cities!By Marcia Borst KlenbortThe surprising death of Dev Bowly Jr. at age 71 in August 2014 sadly cuts short his energetic lifework: as a neighborhood historian, as a Legal Aid lawyer, as a Chicago-wide public housing researcher and preservationist, as an extraordinarily active student and interpreter of architecture both in his native city and in a summer community on the shore of Lake Michigan, and -- his unfinished project -- as chronicler of Chicago's great philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. We are lucky to have this book, The Poorhouse: Subsidized Housing in Chicago, published in 2012 (a revised and updated version of his original book by the same name, which was published in 1978). This book adds three more decades, so we now see public housing from its advent in 1895 to the start of the 21st century. The subject is public multi-family housing in Chicago. Who notices the need for housing projects? Who

builds them? Who lives there? How long do they last? How do government agencies -- local and federal -- work with communities to establish housing projects? To tear them down? Which projects can count as "success for the city"? Which projects as "success for the poor people" who live there? It's a big story, fascinating to me as one who grew up on the South Side of Chicago, as Dev did, but it can fascinate city dwellers throughout the country who ponder the role of good public housing in creating livable cities. The very readable text (who'd have thought a book about public housing could be such a page-turner?) is augmented by dozens of period photographs. From the beginning story of Francisco Terrace, the first subsidized housing in 1895 (designed by Frank Lloyd Wright), to the destruction or reworking and restoring of failed projects, this is a book that's a pleasure to read. I hope there will be an effort to publish his unfinished writings about Julius Rosenwald, the Sears tycoon who saw the need for and built the first decent housing for Chicago's Black citizens in the late twenties at 47th St. and Michigan Ave. Rosenwald at that time also saw a need much further South, and, as Dev briefly tells, started building small rural schools for black children in the South for whom schools did not exist. And shops. And houses for teachers. Over five thousand of them, in fifteen Southern states.

Chicago seems an ideal environment for public housing because of the city's relatively young age among major cities and well-deserved reputation for technology, innovation, and architecture. Yet *The Poorhouse: Subsidized Housing in Chicago* shows that the city's experience on the whole has been a negative one, raising serious questions about the nature of subsidized housing and whether we should have it and, if so, in what form. Bowly, a native of the city, provides a detailed examination of subsidized housing in the nation's third-largest city. Now in its second edition, *The Poorhouse* looks at the history of public housing and subsidized housing in Chicago from 1895 to the present day. Five new chapters that cover the decline and federal takeover of the Chicago Housing Authority, and its more recent "transformation," which involved the demolition of the CHA family high-rise buildings and in some cases their replacement with low-rise mixed income housing on the same sites. Fifty new photos supplement this edition. Certificate of Excellence from the Illinois State Historical Society, 2013