



Pruitt-Igoe Action Program Report (S0409)

Collection Number: S0409

Collection Title: Pruitt-Igoe Action Program Report

Date: 1972 April 3

Creator: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

Abstract: This collection contains a 71-page unpublished report titled *Summary and Conclusions of Pruitt-Igoe Action Program Phase I & II*. The report, commissioned by Mayor Alfonso Cervantes's committee on the redevelopment of Pruitt-Igoe, proposed the addition of new families at Pruitt-Igoe, partial demolition, rehabilitation of existing units, and construction of parks and shopping centers.

Collection Size: 0.01 cubic feet
(1 folder)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Pruitt-Igoe Action Program Report* (S0409); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection by Edward Ruesing on March 12, 1980 (Accession No. SA2284).

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Historical Note:

The construction of Pruitt-Igoe began in 1951, with its first residents moving into the complex by 1954. Although Pruitt-Igoe was one of the costliest housing projects in the United States at the time, residents saw the project as a breakthrough in urban renewal. However, by 1958 the housing project was already facing deteriorating conditions because of skip-stop elevators, poor maintenance, vandalism, and teen delinquency. By the 1960s, rents could not cover Pruitt-Igoe's operating costs. Higher vacancy rates led to further vandalism of empty properties. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) started encouraging residents to leave the complex by 1968.

As a last-ditch effort to save the housing complex, St. Louis City mayor Alfonso Cervantes created the Pruitt-Igoe Task Force to redevelop Pruitt-Igoe. The task force consisted of members from Mayor Cervantes's office, HUD, residents of Pruitt-Igoe, and the St. Louis Housing Authority (STLHA). The committee agreed on partial demolition of the property in the winter of 1971. At the beginning of 1972, the committee had selected Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill, an Chicago-based engineering firm, to propose a redevelopment plan after the partial demolition. However, HUD secretary George Romney ultimately denied The Pruitt-Igoe Action Program because of cost and lack of city commitment to redeveloping the entire area around Pruitt-Igoe. The denial of the Pruitt-Igoe Action Program put redevelopment into limbo, and by August of 1973, the STLHA and Cervante's successor, Mayor John Poelker announced the official closing of Pruitt-Igoe. Pruitt-Igoe was fully demolished by 1975.

Arrangement:

The collection has been maintained in its original order.

Scope and Content Note:

The Pruitt-Igoe Action Program Report contains a 71-page unpublished report titled *Summary and Conclusions of Pruitt-Igoe Action Program Phase I & II*. Topics of interest in the report include the proposal to redevelop Pruitt-Igoe into a mixed-income public housing project with a mixture of low-rise and high-rise buildings, the proposed cost for the redevelopment project, and a community development program that would provide the construction of parks, commercial centers, and an urban living center that would provide training for management, maintenance, and security employees at the complex. The report was created on April 3, 1972, and has been maintained in its original order.

Container List:

- f. 1 Pruitt-Igoe Action Program, Final Report, April 3, 1972

Index:

Index Terms	Folder
City planning--Missouri--Saint Louis	1
Pruitt-Igoe (Housing project : Saint Louis, Mo.)	1
Public housing--Missouri--Saint Louis	1

Index Terms	Folder
Saint Louis (Mo.)--Buildings, structures, etc.	1
Urban renewal--Missouri--Saint Louis	1