

# **THE JOKE ABOUT HOUSING**

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The Joke About Housing by Charles Harris Whitaker

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**CHARLES HARRIS WHITAKER**

**THE JOKE ABOUT  
HOUSING**



## THE JOKE ABOUT HOUSING

THE JOKE  
ABOUT HOUSING.

BY  
CHARLES HARRIS WHITAKER



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CULTURE

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## PREFACE

**I**N THE summer of 1917, when the housing problem had attained nation-wide prominence in the United States, and when rumblings of the oncoming disaster, in the shape of an acute shortage of houses in the United States, were plainly audible, The Journal of the American Institute of Architects and the Ladies Home Journal joined in holding a competition for "The Best Solution of the Housing Problem." The terms of the competition were unique and provided for the submission of two written theses, one upon the social purpose which any solution should seek to accomplish, and the other upon the economic method by which such a solution could be accomplished. In addition to these requirements there was a third, which embraced a simple drawing of the physical plan that should illustrate the application of the principles set forth in the two theses.

The competition was open to all citizens of the United States and Canada, and the

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jury was as follows: Thomas R. Kimball, President of the American Institute of Architects, Chairman, Omaha; Louis F. Post, Assistant Secretary, Department of Labor, Washington; Thomas Adams, Town Planning Adviser, Commission on Conservation, Ottawa, Canada; Herbert Quick, Farm Loan Board, Washington; Lawson Purdy, Chairman Committee on New Industrial Towns, New York; James Sullivan, Representative of the American Federation of Labor on the Council of National Defense, Washington;\* Edith Elmer Wood, Writer on and Student of Housing Problems, Philadelphia; Frederick L. Ackerman, Architect, New York; Milton B. Medary, Jr., Architect, Philadelphia.

Due to the arduous task imposed upon the jury, which involved the reading of all the manuscripts submitted (about forty), the award of the prizes was not made until May 1919. The first prize was \$1,000, but due to the fact that neither of the two winning theses was supplemented by drawings which the jury considered to be adequate, no first prize was awarded. Instead, the jury awarded two second prizes of \$500 each, one

\* Mr. Sullivan did not participate in the award, owing to absence in Europe.

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to Robert Anderson Pope and one to Milo Hastings, both of New York City. But this award should not in any way militate against the quality of the winning theses. Each embodied a fundamental plan around which qualified experts can construct a physical community. Both of the winning theses are published as an appendix to this volume, which is itself an effort to clear up the basic questions involved in the housing problem and to put an end, insofar as possible, to so much hasty and loose thinking on so vital a subject.

The author asks the indulgence of his readers in the use of certain figures and statistics previously published in "The Housing Problem in War and in Peace"; they seem too forceful and pertinent to be omitted.

