

# LIFE

TIME & LIFE BUILDING  
ROCKEFELLER CENTER  
NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

August 1, 1940

The Honorable Marriner S. Eccles, Chairman  
Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System  
Federal Reserve Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Eccles:

For the second time, LIFE has presented a report on its small low income bracket houses, and a special reprint copy of this photographic essay is attached.

Inaugurated in 1938 with the building of 26 versions of the eight houses presented then in LIFE's pages (September 26, 1938), the program has grown this year into a total of 121 of the 1940 houses being built in seventy-eight communities in this country and Canada.

We are collecting technical data on the actual construction of these houses. We are checking costs and labor, after having watched the builders follow faithfully or invent necessary variations of the plans offered by eight prominent LIFE commissioned U.S. architects.

We are gathering reports from the 38 department stores in this country and Canada who decorated and furnished more than fifty of these houses, but we see more than just cold figures, more than carefully calculated dollars and cents.


LIFE has felt the growing consciousness of the need among Americans for many more homes to live in, and in today's hectic world that need seems to have burgeoned into an intense and practical making of plans to build on the part of American families.

Thus I hope that you may be interested in seeing the attached story of 1940's LIFE Houses, and hope likewise that we may have your reaction, not necessarily to the individual specific houses or their mechanistic details - but to the general over-all picture of these new homes being planned and built, of careful blueprints being translated into terms of land and lawns and flag-stone walks, into more comfort and privacy and into the precious sense of possession.

If you too feel as we do that LIFE has caught the spirit of this wish and purpose to build, I would greatly appreciate your letting us know just how you feel we have caught it, and to what degree. But whether you feel that we have missed the mark entirely - or that we should continue to report on what we feel is an increasingly important activity in the American scene, your comments and opinion will be deeply valued.

I do hope we may hear from you.

Sincerely yours,



*J. H. P. by J. H. P.*  
L. H. P.

August 13, 1940.

Mr. Otis Peabody Swift,  
Life Magazine,  
Time & Life Building,  
Rockefeller Center,  
New York City.

Dear Mr. Swift:

Let me say, in reply to your letter of August 1, that I think the work you have been carrying on for several years now in connection with housing for those in the lower income brackets is wholly commendable, and I hope you may see fit to continue it. By graphic presentation of typical, attractive small homes, together with reliable technical data, you have undoubtedly stimulated interest and actual construction, as the figures you report demonstrate.

Thank you for sending me the special copy of the current material.

Sincerely yours,

M. S. Eccles,  
Chairman.

ET:b

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EXECUTIVE OFFICES

August 16, 1940

Dear Mr. Eccles:

Thank you for your very kind letter of August 13.

You may be interested to know that since the publication of the LIFE Houses story on July first, fourteen additional houses are being built by contractors throughout the country, that over a quarter of a million people have already passed through these houses, and that all the houses that have been up for sale have been sold within at least the first forty-eight hours of their opening.

Sincerely yours,

  
Otis Peabody Swift

M. S. Eccles, Chairman  
Board of Governors  
Federal Reserve System  
Washington, D. C.