—Sharp Leadenhall

Continued from page 1

Moon was offered a mere $112 for what is known as "relocation benefits," which included helping her find a new place and finally moving in. Others after her were offered as much as $500. But one thing was certain: the tenants (most of them rented from white absentee landlords, she said) had no choice in the matter.

They were not asked if they would like to move; they were told they had to.

Those who could afford the better housing offered by the city at higher rental rates were lucky, Moon says. Those who could not were simply out of luck and had to learn to survive the best way they could.

The fact that most of the blacks in question were not landowners but in fact rented from whites was perhaps the biggest weakness the area had at that time, Moon said. But out of those first scary days grew a movement and a determination that, owners or not, dwellers of Sharp-Leadenhall were not going to be moved out like a herd of cattle.

Moon and others, organized in a group kn known at that time time as "Movement Against Destruction (MAD) learned that there was a federal project on the planning board, funds for which neared $19 million, for the area, including Sharp-Leadenhall, that was, at best, a revitalization scheme that included 1200-1500 federally sibsidized housing units for low income families on the property now known as Otterbein.

Under the Nixon administration, however, the project was frozen, and when it was revived, the plans and funds for the subsidized housing had somehow disappeared.

Moon and others realized then that they would have to fight to keep what they considered theirs. They began to monitor the city fathers and the city government, probing to see what was being planned for the historically predominantly black area.

Moon, finally, approached William Donald Schaefer, who was president of the city council at that time, and asked him why couldn't some of what was being done in other areas of the city be done in Sharp-Leadenhall, too?

"They didn't say no to whatever we asked," Moon remembered, "and as long as they didn't say no, I figured we had a chance."

MAD was successful in alerting the city that Sharp-Leadenhall did not intend to die, but that didn't happen until hundreds of black families had already been displaced to make room for the interstate highway, now near completion. Their efforts were enough to encourage the planners to move the highway a little to the left of where it had been originally designated, however, and that, at least, was better than total displacement for Sharp-Leadenhall residents.

Today, the area is thriving, evidenced by rows of newly-built homes and apartment buildings. The lawns are well-manicured; a playground sits right in the heart of the area. Looming in background is the interstate highway, but it seems far away in light of the progress in development Sharp-Leadenhall shows.

"If they think they're going to move us out," said Moon resolutely, "then they're crazy. We've' worked too long and too hard not to hold on to this land...and we're not moving."

"If you don't protect your community," she continued, "nobody will. One thing is for sure...we're not going to lose this land."

(AFRO photo by Mark Gail)

MILDRED MOON — director of the Sharp-Leadenhall PAC group, was displaced herself when revitalization in city began in late 1960s.

Among the many Black leaders who occupied high places in New Deal councils was Robert L. Vann, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier* and special assistant to the U.S. Attorney General.

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Social Security workers indicted for fraud

A federal grand jury returned seven indictments against six Social Security employees and a National Institute of Health employee last week.

According to Herbert Better, the U. S. Attorney, the indictments allege that the individuals charged received public assistance under the aid for dependent children program and they received the assistance fraudulently because they failed to advise the Department of Social Services that they were employed.

If convicted, those charged could receive a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a fine of $1,000 for each of the mail fraud counts and a maximum of five years imprisonment and a fine of $10,000 for each of the false statement counts.

Social Security employees who were charged are Joyce Lee McKnight, 32, 4500 block Freedomway West, charged with two counts of mail fraud and one count of false statement.

Cecelia B. Mitchell, 37, 2100 block Pulaski St., three counts of mail fraud.

Aleathia V. Bevans, 31, 5300 block Peerless Ave., two counts of mail fraud and one count of false statement.

Peggy L. Pleasant-Bey, 30, 100 block Willow Bend Drive, Owings Mills, Md., two counts of mail fraud and one count of false statement.

Mary J. Quinn, 43, 4200 block Bonner Rd., two counts of mail fraud and one count of false statement.

Norma A. Allen, 30, 7100 block McClean Blvd., two counts of mail fraud and one count of false statement.

Denise L. Haller, 25, 7600 block Maple Ave., is employed at the National Institute of Health and is charged with two counts of mail fraud and one count of false statement.

Civil rights, law officials clash

Klan strength increasing

Despite claims by a county police official that Klan activity in the state is not as great as many have assumed, federal and state authorities said this week that the terrorist group is increasing in size and stepping up its activities, prompting law enforcement.

E. Jay Miller, public information officer for the Baltimore County police, said this week in the wake of the recent cross burning at the Chadwick Elementary School in Woodlawn, that "it is not unusual that events of this kind increase after receiving publicity."

Miller said that county police have increased investigations of the Klan, with the endorsement of County Executive Donald Hutchinson, and have not found large numbers of Klansmen in the counties they have worked.

In Catonsville, for example, Miller said that, following infiltration of the Klan by members of the police detective units, "no more than 5, maybe 10 active and dangerous Klan memers" were uncovered.

He said that the Catonsville Klan is one of the "more dangerous splinter groups" in the state.

He also said that investigations of the Klan in the county have not been as great as they might because there has to be a criminal act, such as a cross burning, for an investigation to be initiated.

But Lane Bonner, spokesman for the FBI in Baltimore, said this week that "there has been a significant increase in the number of cross burnings and violent acts that may be associated with the Klan in the last fiscal year."

"Acting on the direction of the Justice Department," Bonner said, "we have initiated several investigations in recent months."

"There are more Klansmen active in Maryland now than a year ago," Bonner continued, saying that law officials are doing all they can to convince the public that klan activity is not something "we cannot control."

In addition, county police last month arrested four men believed to be involved in a cross burning on three sites in Woodlawn. A fifth member of that group, self-proclaimed KKK Imperial Wizard Richard Savina, has been charged with conspiring to firebomb the residence of Col. James Pennington, county NAACP president.

Pennington, enraged over the cross burning at Chadwick Elementary, urged County Executive Donald Hutchinson to take a strong stand against the Klan and cross burnings.

But Miller defended Hutchinson, saying that without his endorsement, the investigatory work of the county police could not be performed.

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