

Greenville In Transition

Text and Photos
by
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Laura Stwyer will have a drying shed at her new Dry Creek place due to the efforts of her nephew-in-law Warren McCraigie, who has been dismantling the vacant house next door to Laura in Greenville.

Change is only apparent to the passerby when he sees the red X's sprayed on the sides of houses and notices a few darkened, gaping windows. But those close to Greenville have seen and felt the subtle but profound changes — growing frustration with needed repairs, fewer children playing in the streets, lifelong neighbors packing their pickups and leaving.

Once teeming with life, the community is being enveloped in a sad, sometimes bitter stillness as people reluctantly gather up their belongings, or with folded arms and set jaws, play the waiting game with authorities whose mission it is to clear Greenville.

Clearance of the World War II vintage neighborhood, named "Greenville" after one

of its original inhabitants Si Green, has been part of the community blueprint for years. The area, which lies in the lush floodplain of Shitike Creek, has been condemned essentially since the disastrous flood of 1964. The constant danger of flood waters poses a threat to lives and property and makes home insurance nearly impossible to obtain, according to Tribal planners.

Most of the homes in Greenville fail to meet state sanitation standards, which the Tribes use as their code. A high water table does not allow for the proper drainage of sewage and outdoor toilets do not meet zoning standards.

Fire safety standards are not met by most of the structures, a fact that was tragically dramatized by the fire

deaths of two Greenville people in early 1976. The houses are "old and dry," said Uren Leonard of the Planning Department. They have also become overcrowded and cursed with faulty or worn electrical wiring.

For these reasons, residents of the aging neighborhood are being asked to vacate their homes. A series of emotional public meetings in 1976 forced homeowners and renters to face the reality of relocation, a specter which had hung over the community since 1964.

Because of difficulties resulting from residents' misunderstanding as well as legitimate concerns, the tribal planning and housing departments have made special efforts to effect as smooth a transition as

possible by negotiating with people individually.

Assessments were made of the private houses and sums offered to the owners. In addition, stipends of \$750 have been made available to each family to help cover moving expenses.

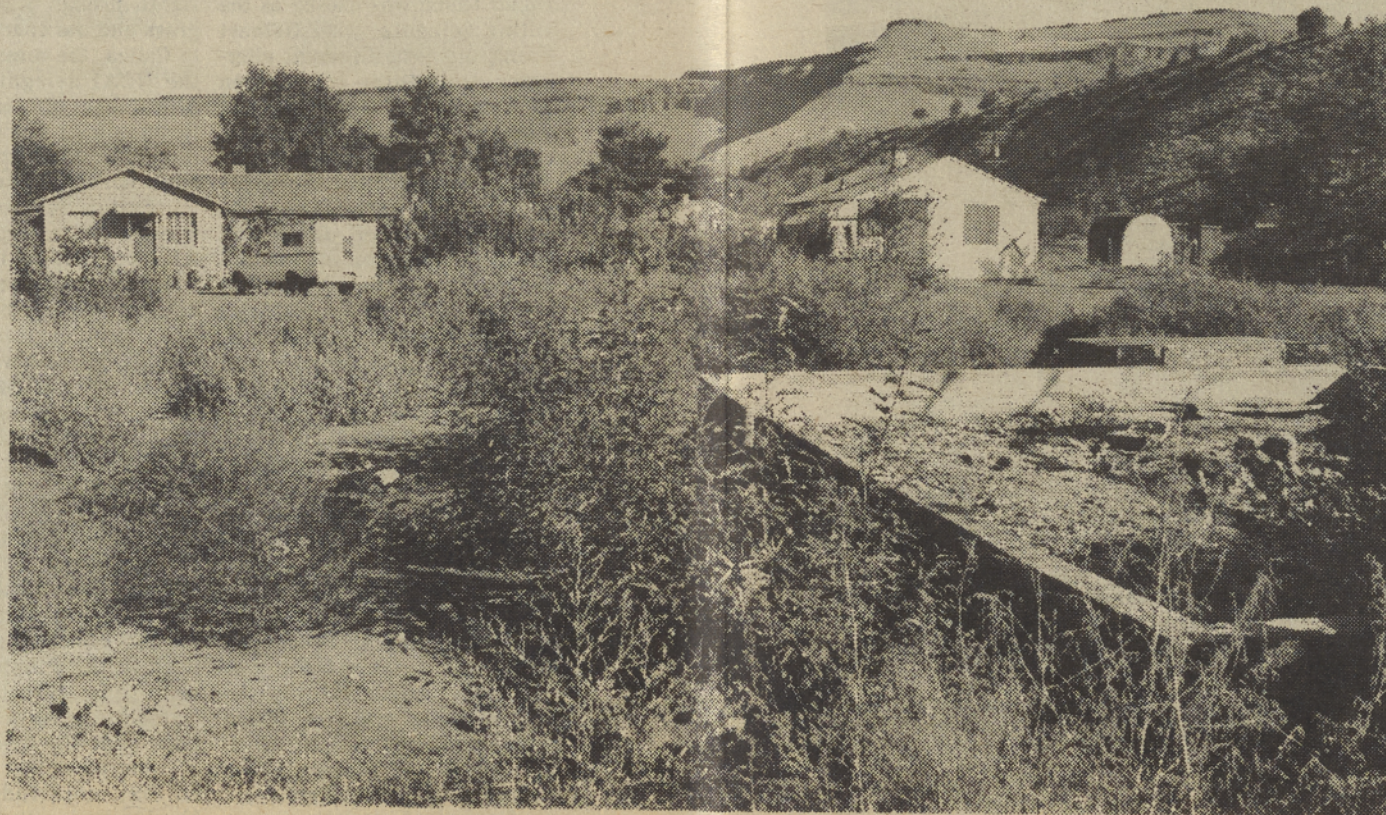
The two departments have been making alternative living arrangements with the families, giving Greenville folks priority in the several housing areas presently under construction. The main problem perceived by housing head Elton Greeley is that settled homeowners are having to leave their investments behind and begin anew with rent or loan payments. This is a particular hardship for the low income families.

Many Greenville people admit the Tribes' terms are reasonable, some feel they are being "ripped off," but all are finding the move difficult. "Home" is a word charged with emotion and the notion of leaving home is unthinkable to many.

Greenville is home to dozens of people who grew up there and are now raising children of their own in the same location. More than just a collection of houses, Greenville has been a district community bound by friendship and time.

Greenville through the years
The attractive plot of land by the creek was purchased by the Tribes from allottees around the time of World War II and five new homes were built, according to lifelong resident Elmer Quinn. Barracks were brought in from the

The look of transition: Greenville is characterized by change as this typical view shows. The foundation of a burned house gaps before a house marked for burning and a home still lived in.



Madras Air Base and the CC Camp at Peters' Pasture, and a community was born. The early residents were for the most part millworkers, said Quinn.

Right away Greenville had great appeal. It was convenient, close to the creek, shady, and the houses had modern conveniences such as running water and electric lights. The only other concentration of homes was in the Hollywood and Park areas and these were already getting old.

Greenville was the up and coming neighborhood.

The community grew. Generations came — and stayed. As people grew up together a strong sense of neighborhood developed. Kids were "shared" among families, the quiet streets were safe to play in, the people felt secure knowing their neighbors. So many people chose to stay that the houses soon became crowded.

When the high waters of 1964 caused the Shitike to rage through its valley, Greenville was a prime target. One house was lost and much property damaged.

It was then that the Tribes began to talk clearance. West Hills was built but houses promised to Greenvilleers were either unavailable or undesired because of the high rent and expenses, according to Greeley. The spirit of Greenville was not going to die easily.

The current effort to clear Greenville has been met with more success partly because of the availability of several housing options. Fortunately while this neighborhood dies, others are being born.

And still opposition to the clearance is strong. Some feel that the Tribes regard Greenville as an embarrassing "eyesore" — it lines both sides of Highway 26 and offers its state of disrepair to the public eye.

And if disrepair is the problem, then why haven't we been able to get loans for improvements, ask residents?

How can we afford to start over when we're only being paid for our houses and not the land they sit on?

And what of the plans for this land? Why is it any more suitable for an industrial operation than it is for my home?

The people of Greenville

The questions and concerns are as numerous as the people who have lived in Greenville.

The cold facts are that 20 families have signed agreements, to sell their homes and or receive relocation assistance, between 10 and 15 have moved, about 8 houses and trailers are still occupied. People can be found in all stages of transition.

Beulah Switzer is one who has made the move. She and her family have crowded into an apartment temporarily while waiting for their trailer hook-ups.

They were forced to move because problems with the Greenville house made it unlivable, and when Beulah's baby got sick she wasted no time in getting emergency housing from the Tribes. She is grateful for the housing but she would have preferred to stay and fix up the house that her father had helped to build years ago. "They weren't putting any money into Green-

ville, though," she said.

Fabian Sutterlee and his family have moved their trailer from his mother's trailer court in Greenville to the new Dry Creek development. They like the "quietness" of their new location. "I was glad to get out of Greenville but I'm not happy about the big bills," said Fabian.

He is quite bitter about the terms under which he and his mother Alice Florendo had to leave. He grew up in his mother's Greenville house, which Alice claims to have been one of the nicest houses on the reservation, and he helped his family make improvements through the years. "We put a lot of work into the place," he said.

They cleared the land, planted trees, set up the trailer court, laid sewerlines, all with their own money and time, said Fabian. Now they are being paid only for the house which he says was assessed right after the flood, and the moving stipend was not enough, he feels.

"I tried to voice my opinion at the public meeting but I couldn't get the people together. If we'd had more time to organize..."

Laura Stwyer is an elderly woman who, despite her mending hip, lives with no inside running water, uses an out-house, and cares for several grandchildren in her two-room place. She is in the process of moving into a trailer at Dry Creek which might be more convenient for the old woman but not as desirable as home. She and her late husband were among the first inhabitants of Greenville when they moved into their converted barracks in 1942.



Julia Wolfe has typically mixed feelings about leaving Greenville. "I really like this place and I hate to move but it will be nice to have a new place." She and her daughter Josie must be out by early '78 and are presently waiting for a house loan to go through.

"I don't like it," Laura said about moving. "The Tribe expects my relatives to help me move. If they really wanted me to move they'd help."

"I don't know why they're condemning these houses — they're solid," Laura maintained as she watched her nephew-in-law salvage good wood from the house next door to be used for a drying shed at Laura's new place.

Her house is a classic example of poor wiring and bad drainage and she'll be glad to get out.

"We don't have bitter feelings about Greenville. Maybe if we was old and didn't have nowhere to go we would be," said Ernestine. "If they need this space for expansion of the mill," she continued, "that's O.K. with us."

Verben "Beans" Greene and her sizable brood live at some distance from the heart of Greenville, but are close neighbors of the mill. Beans regrets not being compensated for their land and only for the house which it took 15 years to pay off.

Having no specific plans, but a tentative site at Dry Creek, Beans joked with a touch of seriousness: "I told the Tribes that when I turn sixty I'll put my stuff on my back and stroll off to the old age home."

Ray Scott and his family have lived in their "barracks"

since 1947. The Scotts, like the Greenes, have no definite plans for moving. Ray's stumbling block is that he must be close to the agency so he can respond to calls as the reservation's criminal investigator. Greenville has been convenient for him.

His wife Adonis feels a bit more strongly than Ray. "I don't give a hoot if I ever leave here." And pointing to the trees and shrubs her family had planted, she declared, "When I go, everything's going with me!"

The houses with red X's are ready to be burned by the Warm Springs Fire Department for drills. The remaining families are living in a different Greenville. What they cling to is not the close-knit neighborhood they knew, but principles.

Greenville is in transition for some very practical reasons. It may be a long process for some very deep-felt human reasons.



One day kids play in the yard and the next day a big red X signals another vacated house in Greenville. Ada Polk and her daughter move some of the belongings not sold in their yard sale.



Moving is a time for reminiscing. Trissie Fuentes (right) found some old photographs while helping move belongings out of a Greenville trailer shared them with her grandmother Ernestine Stevens.