

WRITING ABOUT A CLEVELAND NEIGHBORHOOD

The South Side

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The South Side, the Tremont Area, is a hillcrest neighborhood five minutes south of downtown Cleveland. North, south and east of it is The Flats, the industrial valley of the city.

The South Side was home. It was immediate family. It was aunts, uncles and cousins. It was schoolmates whose parents were Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, Slovak, German, Irish, Greek and Syrian. It proved to be a stage deep and wide enough for any dream.

The South Side was St. Augustine's Catholic Church, St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Church, Pilgrim Congregational Church--and fourteen others. It was Tremont Elementary and Lincoln High. It was the Merrick House, one of the oldest settlement houses in the city. It was the Dinky, a yellow trolley pretty in memory as a toy. It was Lincoln Park, a square block of grass, trees, playgrounds and benches. A man named Dominic used to sit on a bench, smoke his pipe and talk about the old country, dream about it, as he must have talked and dreamed about the new. It was Fairfield Hill with three and sometimes four layers of children on a sled whistling down the January dark. It was the Jennings Theatre with nickel movie matinees every Saturday and Sunday afternoon; with love and innocence conquering all in double features every night; with dishes on Wednesday; with Bank and cash prizes on Saturday.

The South Side was the men who worked in The Flats. It was the men who worked on the railroads, the men who worked in the forges, foundries and mills. It was the women who worked to make ends meet. It was Father Walsh at St. Augustine. It was Miss Bloomfield and Miss Alexander at Tremont. It was Miss Glick, Miss Palmer and Miss Dickerson at Lincoln. It was the grocer, John, who extended credit like a hand all through the Depression. It was Angelo the Jeep, who used to say, even at weddings and funerals, "Where is everybody?" It was TT, who had traveled with the circus, who had survived two wars and two marriages, a solid keg of a man who delighted friends by turning sudden backflips and saying, 'Yo!' 'One of these days you might land on your head,' a woman said. 'That's the least of my worries,' he said. It was Alex, the owner of a small confectionary, a man who took on all comers at two-hand

