

Tremont

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Tremont is a neighborhood that has gone through at least three distinct phases of development and may very well be entering a further phase.

Geographically isolated and bounded on two sides by the Cuyahoga River, Tremont in its early years was an upper class neighborhood and in the 1850's served as the site for the short-lived Cleveland University (hence street names such as College Avenue, Literary Avenue, Professor Street.) Through the 1870's, Tremont remained one of the city's finest residential areas and a number of prominent Clevelanders built mansion surrounding Lincoln Park which serves as the neighborhood's center. Beginning the 1880's, however, older residents began to flee the soot and fumes of the rapidly expanding iron and steel mills in the flats and by the early 20th century, thousands of Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Slovak, Greek, Syrian and other immigrants had poured into the area making it one of the most densely populated districts in the city.

The arrival of "new" immigrant groups transformed the physical geography of Tremont. Local residents shopped at small ethnic groceries, attended meetings at nationality halls and drank at local bars. Above all, the neighborhood became known for its churches and for good reason, a 1936 study of the area was entitled "Spires and Stacks."

During the flush times of the 1920's, many of the community's residents purchased small cottage-like homes and these former peasants often tilled their own gardens and kept geese, ducks and chickens in the backyards. By the 1950's and 1960's, the construction of interstates further isolated the neighborhood and at this

time, many second and third generation immigrants moved to the suburbs. In their place came new migrant groups including African-Americans, Puerto Ricans and Appalachians. On the other hand, the decline of mill employment since the 1950's has severed the connection between work and community that had been so vital in Tremont between 1880 and 1950.

Today, the neighborhood is home to an extremely heterogeneous population both in terms of income and nationality. The recent arrival of artists and the renovation of older buildings serves as an indicator that Tremont may well be entering a fourth phase of development.

The past is indelibly stamped on Tremont. Home to St. Theodosius Russian Orthodox Church, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Merrick House, the Ukrainian Museum and Archives, Lemko Hall and many other notable buildings and institutions, Tremont represents a test of how well a neighborhood developed in an earlier era can adapt to American urban life in the 1990's.