

## The Akron Experience

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During the early years of the 20th century, Akron and Youngstown exemplified a phenomenon that was disrupting established neighborhoods through the Midwest--the growth of large scale industry and the arrival of newcomers whose values and standards of behavior were different from those of established residents of these communities.

The changes were more striking and dramatic in Akron, which went from a diversified industrial city with a native upper class and a central European working class to a brawling single industry city with a more complex ethnic composition in a single decade. Their impact on everyday life can be traced in the city's physical expansion, in efforts to create new neighborhoods and a new sense of community through city planning, and in the surviving record of ethnic and religious conflict. By the late 1920's the pace of change had slowed, a new social equilibrium had been achieved, and the city and its neighborhoods had assumed the character they would retain for the next forty years, until new disruptive forces--economic change and an accelerating flight to the suburbs--initiated another period of neighborhood disintegration and redefinition.

With a focus on Akron and references to Youngstown, other midwestern cities are examined for comparisons and contrasts.