

Subject: Pricilla Treska
Interviewer: Ellen Anderson
17 March 2003

Ellen Anderson: Please state your name and spell it for me.

Pricilla Treska: Pricilla Treska. P-r-i-c-i-l-l-a T-r-e-s-k-a.

EA: How long have you lived here in Tremont?

PT: Its almost twenty-nine years.

EA: Why did you decide to move here?

PT: We choose to move here, partially because our church St. Augustine church and it seems so diverse and we like it.

EA: What are some of your first memories of being in Tremont?

PT: one of my first , very first memories I just remember riding around and seeing so many churches here in Tremont. So many and I felt it was a little unsafe here and just wondering about the area. Some areas looked a little depressed and I wondered about it being safe. I remember one funny incident, it was the day after we moved in and someone, I think someone who was under the bridge backfired and you know with it under the bridge it was a loud sound and I thought it was gun shots (laughter)

EA: So did you have children when you moved here?

PT: Yes, we had ten children.

EA: Ten children?

PT: Yes we did, they went to St. Michael's Catholic school.

EA: Is that school in Tremont?

PT: It's not exactly in Tremont, it is on Scranton which is not officially in Tremont, about a mile out.

EA: Did you go to church here?

PT: Yes, that was one of the reasons we moved here, St. Augustine church.

EA: Are you happy living here in Tremont?

PT: Yes, it was a nice place to raise my children.

EA: Why?

PT: Because they really had a chance to meet and associate with all kinds of people, not just a certain ethnic group or racial group, really had a chance to make friends with a lot. Actually, at our parish we have a lot of disabled people, people who are deaf, people who are blind, the center for people who are mentally ill. They had a chance to meet people.

(tape was stopped then restarted because sound was very poor)

EA: I asked before if your children went to the movies and you said no, there were no movie theaters, correct?

PT: Yes.

EA: Why don't you tell me again how many children you had?

PT: Yes, we had ten children when we moved here and then five more were born after we moved.

EA: Alright and you said they were all educated at what Catholic school?

PT: Yeah, ah, well they all went to local schools for grade school, it was St. Michaels on Scranton for a while. Then they grouped together and then it was Metro catholic, then in St. Steven's area, St Steven's actually, and then for high school they had a choice. Some choose Central Catholic, which is in walking distance and some choose other schools. Again, they went to Catholic high schools.

EA: OK. Now you said some of the activities that they participated in were sponsored by the Merrick house?

PT: Some worked there and some of them worked for Rainbow Camp, which was connected with our church.

EA: OK. Can you tell me why you moved to Tremont?

PT: Well, we moved with a group of other people from all parts of the city to form a kind of intentional community here to live closer together and share our lives here. But the reason why the community choose St. Augustine was because of St. Augustine's church and St. Augustine's cultural diversity.

EA: OK. Now you said when you moved here you felt it would be a good place to live because of diversity, but you worried a bit about the possible crime that was here?

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PT: Yeah, I had not really experienced any before. We had been coming down here for a while to St. Augustine, but we were aware it was suppose to be a high crime area and we worried a little about that until we settled in and got to realize what it was like when we lived here.

EA: OK.

PT: We have experienced some, ah, a little crime, but not much.

EA: What kind of crime have you experienced, theft?

PT: Yes, we've had two, three break-ins probably.

EA: Around what year was that, recently or years ago?

PT: I would say years ago, at different times. Nothing recent, not recent, nothing within the last ten years or so.

EA: Would you say Tremont has changed a lot since you moved here?

PT: Its hard to just put a name on it some things have changed a lot some things are the same. As far as the safety issues, definitely, it has changed, but as far as the cultural diversity, no that is still here. In fact, we have a new kind of segment of people, the yuppie people make another part to our many faceted community.

EA: Do you participate in any neighborhood groups?

PT: They do have the block clubs, but somehow I never got involved in that.

EA: Do they give block parties?

PT: Not that I know of, well I know they do but I have not been aware of them or been to one.

EA: OK. I notice Lincoln Park is very close here to you, did your children ever go there?

PT: Oh yes, all the time. They swim there, everybody swam there. Some of the kids were lifeguards. Lincoln Park was a big part of their life.

EA: Is Lincoln Park still popular and do you see a lot of children over there in the summertime?

PT: Oh yes and the swimming pool is definitely in use. And Rainbow camp makes full use of it. They take the kids swimming from camp and make full use of the park.

EA: do you know anything about the public schools in Tremont?

PT: Well, three of my grandchildren went to Scranton school and I have had some contact there. Picked them up some days and I have been a part of some of their activities and it seemed wonderful to me. Like a wonderful school to me.

EA: And what about Lincoln high school.

PT: We have had a little contact with Lincoln high school. Not terribly pleasant. I had one daughter that did not fit in. She was going to Central Catholic and it did not work out for her so she tried Lincoln. She is twenty-eight now, so it was a while ago. I was just appalled. I kept going up there and I one time I went in on a class and she was the only one in class that was awake. Maybe, she was awake because I was coming in but, everyone slept through the class. It was quite appalling and she did not go there very long. And I had a recent contact because I had a son try it out and he's a kid that doesn't fit either, but it seemed to be much better than it was with our first experience, much better, more organized. Kids seem to be more interested in their schoolwork and everything. But, it did not work out for him, he only went for about a month. So, that is the little contact.

EA: OK. Alright. Now were any of your children involved in sports?

PT: Yeah, some of them played baseball for a, well, our community sponsored a baseball team, also bowling, plus when they were older they played baseball for some team. I don't even know what, and then some of the younger ones went to Michael Zone's recreation. And my one son now is enrolled in West Dennison league baseball. There are some sports opportunities here and then some basketball for school. I had a few basketball players.

EA: Were they also interested in professional sports, did they go to see the Indians or Browns?

PT: Oh yeah, oh definitely and this is a good place to go from. You can even go on the bus and leave your car here.

EA: How long does it take you to go to Stadium from here?

PT: From here? Ten minutes.

EA: So it is very close, OK.

PT: Yes, it is a wonderful location from things downtown and its central to west and east really.

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EA: OK, now a little bit about the businesses. I hear that there are quite a few restaurants that are coming up here in Tremont?

PT: Yeah, coming up is the word because years ago we did not have restaurants like this in Tremont. We were just talking about it yesterday. We went to one of the coffee shops. We were enjoying it. It was the first time we went to that particular coffee shop, Lucky's, I think it was called. Anyway we were saying most of the restaurants are overpriced for the people who live here. Like I wouldn't want to spend thirty dollars for a dinner for myself, you know.

EA: Yeah, that's high. Pretty expensive restaurants.

PT: Yeah.

EA: Are these seafood places, ethnic restaurants ?

PT: No, not really, more gourmet food I would say but, I, a couple of years ago, a few of us who were in this community, we decided to go out to dinner and we walked into one restaurant, looked at the menu and walked right out. (laughter)

EA: Now do you think it adds to Tremont or takes away from Tremont to have expensive restaurants like that?

PT: Of course it attracts people from outside the area and I don't think that's bad. Its fine with me, someone else may object. I see Tremont as a wonderful place and I say well, ok, you see it to, but in different aspects, ok. Oh well.

EA: Now I noticed that Tremont has a lot of highways that go thru it. Now were you around when some of these highways were being put in?

PT: No, this happened before we moved here, but now they are talking expansion and its definitely a worry because, well we are living right next door to one and definitely experience noise and shaking of our house and they are talking about moving the highway twelve feet closer.

EA: Here, to this house?

PT: Yes, twelve feet closer cause they have to expand here. The volume of traffic is much too much, especially during rush hour, to handle. So, I am really worried that it is not going to be livable if they do that.

EA: How many houses would that affect? I know that there are quite a few houses around here. Other blocks?

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PT: Yeah, down this block. I have no idea how many houses but, they are promising that they won't take anything out. At first, they said they were, including our church property and people were pretty upset about that. And now they say they are not going to take anything out. They are just going to move the highway closer. I don't know what that will do to the livability of the house cause we are already shaking.

EA: Has the house always shaken like this?

PT: Yes, as long as we have lived here.

EA: And this gets worst during rush hour?

PT: The noise yes, the shaking I don't know. Well, the person, persons with their bedroom on the third floor experiences the worst of course.

EA: Have you ever had anyone look at that shaking to see if it has been damaged?

PT: I suppose that might be something to do, but we have not.

EA: OK, now the businesses again, I asked you earlier where you would go shopping for groceries and you said not to the smaller stores.

PT: I try to avoid them because they are just overpriced. I go to the closest supermarket.

EA: Is there any kind of a five and dime store to go to? Let's say you want to get a spool of thread or something like that. Where would you go to get that?

PT: Not close by. I might find it over on Professor. There is a little store over there. Or I could walk on up the hill and go over to Twenty-fifth Street, over there.

EA: What about fast food? Is there any fast food places in Tremont?

PT: Not really. There is a sandwich shop, but that is not fast food. As far as the major fast food operations, they are a good mile away.

EA: OK. If someone wanted to move to Tremont and raise their family here, would you say this is a good place to come now?

PT: I guess I would do it with caution because there are pitfalls here. But, a couple of my daughters have moved out to the suburbs bad they are finding some really hard things out there so - -

EA: What would the pitfalls be? If I were going to move here with a young family what would you say to be aware of?

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PT: With a young family?

EA: Yes, with children starting in elementary school.

PT: Well, of course I can't speak for the local public grade school too much except my experience with my three granddaughters but, I would say getting in with the wrong crowd. But, like I said that is everyplace. My granddaughters in Strongsville have gotten in with the wrong crowd. I guess that's with everybody.

EA: So I guess you don't see Tremont as so much worst or better than these other places?

PT: I think that, well I don't know what this problem is like in the suburbs, but the marijuana problem has affected our family somewhat because kids doing a lot of marijuana they lose their incentive and they claimed it too. When they got older it was a real problem to for a period of time, but again I don't think that's limited to here. The safety issues you pretty much feel comfortable, but maybe someone else wouldn't. A young family who would want to move here should do a good assessment of whether they would be comfortable or not. Because the diversity of people here includes people who are marginal, people who have been in jail and so on. And I guess you need to know if you are comfortable with that.

EA: Right. OK< do you see children walking to school here?

PT: Well, our kids always walked to school. They walked a mile.

EA: So you still see children now?

PT: I don't know. Yeah, I see kids around, but I see kids waiting for buses too.

EA: OK. When you were raising your children did you work outside the home.

PT: No, I was home.

EA: Did most of the mothers work outside the home or stay home?

PT: Most of the mothers stayed home. I don't remember to many working Moms.

EA: Did your husband work outside the home?

PT: Yeah, he worked downtown, which was very convenient for us.

EA: OK. He did not work in any of the industries here in Tremont?

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PT: No, although we had kids that worked in some of the local places.

EA: Do you have children that still live in Tremont area or did they all move away?

PT: Well let's see, of course I have some that live at home you know, and five at home. Let's see, one daughter and grandson are sharing an apartment on West Fourteen in Tremont. My other daughter looked in Tremont, so she moved out to Franklin, but its temporary, she is trying to move back. I have two in Metro hospital area which is out of Tremont, but still kind of central city and a couple farther out on the west side, West Park.

EA: OK, you mentioned the hospital. What hospital would you go to if you went to the hospital, coming out of Tremont?

PT: I would probably go to Lutheran, Metro is good but, you have to wait so long in the emergency room.

EA: Is Lutheran in Tremont?

PT: No, grace hospital is in Tremont, but I would not go there.

EA: Why?

PT: I don't know right now. I know years ago the quality of care was not as good as it should be.

EA: What about your doctors, do you go in Tremont?

PT: Actually, or HMO, the closest place is not Tremont.

EA: Oh. OK.

PT: Not even close . You can't even walk there. We love Tremont health center but, because we have insurance we can't go there. But we went there for years.

EA: So there was good health care in Tremont, you did not have to go out?

PT: Yes.

EA: Your HMO forced you into that direction.

PT: Yes and Tremont health center was a great place you know.

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EA: Now a little bit about the politics. I know that Dennis Kucinich was from Tremont, do you know anything about Kucinich?

PT: Dennis Kucinich, yeah I have followed his career since he was a council person.

EA: Really, ok.

PT: Oh yes, I like Dennis Kucinich very much I mean not that I approve of every single stand he ever took, but I think he is right on right now and I'd vote for him for President even though I know it would be wasting a vote because I don't think he has enough of a following. Yeah, Kucinich is one of my favorite politicians.

EA: Why is that? Is it mostly because he is from Tremont?

PT: No, that makes no difference at all its his stand, his stand. He is against the war, he is for health care and other issues that are pro life, although he has taken a stand against life as far as

abortion is concerned but, as far as war and capital punishment and money for basic human needs he has- -

EA: What about when he became Mayor of Cleveland, I know he had problems then, did you follow his campaign?

PT: Not real close, but I feel that he took a stand and he believed he should take no matter what it did to him politically and actually it ruined his political career for a while especially about the Muni light thing he turned out to be right about. And he fought big business and I thought I'll go with that all the way.

EA: He seems to be well liked in Tremont. Is he well liked?

PT: Everybody I know likes him.

EA: Would he have a good solid base here in Tremont if he decides to run?

PT: Probably.

EA: What about Stokes when he became Mayor, do you remember any of that?

PT: Oh yeah. Well, I was really excited to have our first Black Mayor. I thought it was about time and I thought Cark Stokes was good enough. I don't have any real strong opinions about his time in office, or what he did. I liked him though.

EA: What about Mike White? Was he real popular in your eyes?

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PT: Some of my kids disliked him, but I didn't. He did what he needed to when he was in.

EA: Do you plan to stay in Tremont?

PT: Yes, were just wondering , we have this big house and eventually there is just going to be the two of us, just wondering how we can do it.

EA: Are the taxes going up in Tremont?

PT: They are pretty good.

EA: So its just the size of the house?

PT: Yes, the size, that's the problem and the fact that it is an old house and always in need of repair.

EA: Are most of the houses in Tremont older? Are there any newer houses you could move into?

PT: Yeah, there are some newer houses but, I don't think we could afford them.

EA: How much are the newer houses in Tremont going for?

PT: Oh, over two hundred thousand. We paid, I'll tell you what we paid, we paid fourteen thousand five hundred for this house.

EA: Wow and what year was that?

PT: That was in 1974.

EA: So you know what it would go for now?

PT: No.

EA: But, it would be well over that.

PT: Oh, well over yes.

EA: Is there anything else that you feel is important for people to know about Tremont?

PT: Well, I mentioned the cultural diversity and if you really involve yourself in it, it is so enriching. That is what I recommend most. Probably the accessibility to any place in

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the city, especially downtown. I recommend our church. That is the big thing that would keep us here in Tremont.

EA: Now you say it is very diverse are there a lot of Blacks in Tremont?

PT: I wouldn't say a lot of Blacks, there are some.

EA: And would you say they intermingle and say everybody gets along?

PT: As far as I can see but, that may change because they keep talking about taking out the projects. And I was with a Black friend yesterday who lives on West Tenth, its integrated.

EA: How long has she lived there?

PT: On West Tenth, not long but, she has been in Tremont longer than I have. Raised her children here as a single Mom to, her husband died.

EA: Are here children still here?

PT: A couple are here, one is way out East and one in the service.

EA: Oh, but she has made her stand in Tremont, this is her home?

PT: Oh yeah. I think so.

EA: Would you say that Tremont is an Average American city especially on Ohio, the Cleveland area?

PT: I don't know. I could compare Garfield Heights but, well let's see I lived in Garfield Heights I was more involved with my neighbors on my street. I hardly have any neighbors here. The way the set up, kind of cut off by the highway but, I hardly have any neighbors.

EA: Do you know your neighbors here?

PT: Well, the renter upstairs I don't know them. I do know the owners of the house who live downstairs, slightly but, they are a young couple and we don't have much in common. I know the people across the street and I know the kids names, but we barely talk. We don't see each other.

EA: Did your children play with the neighborhood children when they were growing up?

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PT: Well, there is a little alley that ran down here and they always played with the kids down there and in fact one boy was my son's best man, they have been friends since they were little kids and he practically lived at our house. So different things like the house right behind us, people move out so there have been number of different families since we've lived here. Sometimes they have children and the kids played and they would move away.

EA: OK. What about city services, police, fire department, have you had any experiences with them?

PT: We had to call the police a few times and they came quickly. I don't think we have ever had to call the fire department or an ambulance that I can recall.

EA: OK. Is there anything else you would like to add. Anything else you think one should know about Tremont?

PT: Well, I think I have covered all the things I feel the strongest about. I guess I have to say that it is St Augustine Church that really keeps us here, but we love living here in Tremont. My husband had a little trouble adjusting. He felt like he was living with one leg in two worlds because he worked downtown in an office and he felt like his bus ride, he took a bus to the

office, in his bus ride he was going from one world to another. So it took him awhile to integrate that. Right now he feels very comfortable.

EA: You made the switch a lot easier?

PT: Well, being a stay at home Mom is different you know.

EA: Does he also socialize with people in the church?

PT: Definitely.

EA: OK. Well that's about it, let me look through my notes to see if there is anything- -What about juvenile crime, have any experiences with that at all?

PT: Yeah, some yeah, even one of our kids participated once in something one time. Thank goodness just that influence of a friend that was going in that direction. No, he had another incident with a different friend to, but I don't think he was actually arrested there but, he did get into trouble. That's all. Well, the break ins could have been juvenile too.

EA: Well, ok that's about it. Thank you.

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