

Bethlehem Moment: A trip to South Bethlehem, 1906

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Moments, Fun Stuff, Southside July 17, 2019

(Latest in a series of posts on Bethlehem Moments)

Bethlehem Moment 11

City Council

July 16, 2019

John Smith, 833 Carlton Ave

Read by Kate McVey, 1221 Lorain Ave.

[Video of July 16 City Council meeting, start at min. 33:50.](#)

Bethlehem Moment: Saturday, May 19, 1906

A trip through South Bethlehem's foreign district last night was a revelation. More than three hours were spent in the residential district of 5000 or more of South Bethlehem's foreign population. Every type of foreigner — men, women, and children — were observed. Their modes of living were noticed and their methods of recreation after a hard day's work were specially observed. With the illumination of only the house coal oil lamp the trip grew in interest step by step.

The men were sitting in parties beside beer kegs. Although it was now 9 o'clock many of the women were still doing housework. Some were

ironing, other were washing clothes, while others were baking or sewing. The children were allowed to roam about the yard and entertain themselves as best they could.

An evening party here in a room no more than 6×10 feet, in the midst of all its furnishings including bed, tables, chairs, etc., dancing was indulged in by at least four couples. The music was furnished by members of the party alternatively playing the mouth organ. The making of a “strudl,” a favorite dish, was keenly watched. The housewife makes what appears to be a dough. She then spreads a cloth over a 3×4 table, on which she places the dough and rolls it to the thinness of a drumhead the full length and width of the table. The dough prepared and rolled, she proceeds to place in the dough various kinds of vegetables and rolls, dough and vegetables into the shape of a sausage. This is placed in an oven, baked and served.

It’s beer from morning to night and sometimes from night to morning. While there are many who have their liquor at their homes, there are still many more who patronize the various saloons. The proprietor of one saloon said he had as high as 700 come into his place in one night, and he only keeps open until 10:30 o’clock.

What appeared singular was the fact that quiet reigned. There was no fuss, not even loud talking notwithstanding that at least a dozen or more nationalities elbowed past one another.

Another fact noticeable last night was the positive evidence that the low or objectionable class of foreigners, the class the public at large hears much about, is not in South Bethlehem to an alarming degree. There seems to be more of the better class that keep to themselves and hustle after the dollar day in and day out.

Edited from an article in the Bethlehem Globe-Times.