

# Development of Neighborhoods

A sudden influx of the population of Camden occurred in conjunction with the rise of industry during the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century. The population Growth Chart illustrates the population trends in Camden from 1830, shortly following the incorporation of the city, to the 1980. The left hand column indicates Camden's population in thousands. The most dynamic growth period occurred between the years 1870 and 1920, rising from 20,000 to 116,000 people. Similar trends occurred throughout industrializing cities of the Eastern Seaboard, when rural populations and new immigration migrated to these cities which had ample employment opportunities.



The ethnic character of Camden changed radically between these decades. By the turn of the century, German, British and Irish immigrants dominated, while by 1920, Italian and Eastern European immigrants were the majority. These ethnic groups formed their individual insular communities within Camden with a church or synagogue as the center of social life.

The Polish community developed in the area surrounding St. Joseph's Catholic Church on Mechanic and Tenth Street in 1913. The dominating force of the church in this Polish-American community is reflected by the strong Baroque architecture of the church which includes a five story bell tower, a visual landmark for that community. A row of houses on Tenth Street leading to the transept of the Church are constructed of similar to that employed on the church facade, forming one of the best streetscapes in the city.

The Jewish community located in the Parkside area formed the Congregation Sons of Israel, the first Orthodox synagogue in South Jersey. This synagogue no longer remains and the congregation has long since removed to Cherry Hill. The only remaining vestige of the Jewish population in Camden is the Moorish-inspired Temple Beth El designed by architects Edwards and Green at Park Boulevard and Bellevue St.

The Italian neighborhood grew in the Bergen-Lanning area. Through the church and numerous social organizations, the Italian population of Camden had great influence on political and economic affairs of the city. Antonio Mecca's White House at the corner of Fourth and Division Streets is the best remaining example of the former character of this neighborhood. The White House, a two story Mediterranean Villa built in 1908 for realtor and mortician Antonio Mecca, is situated close proximity to two Roman Catholic churches, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, 832 South 4th Street, and the church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Spruce and St. John Streets. The Italian Baptist Mission at 252 Line Street is another historic remnant of the Italian community.