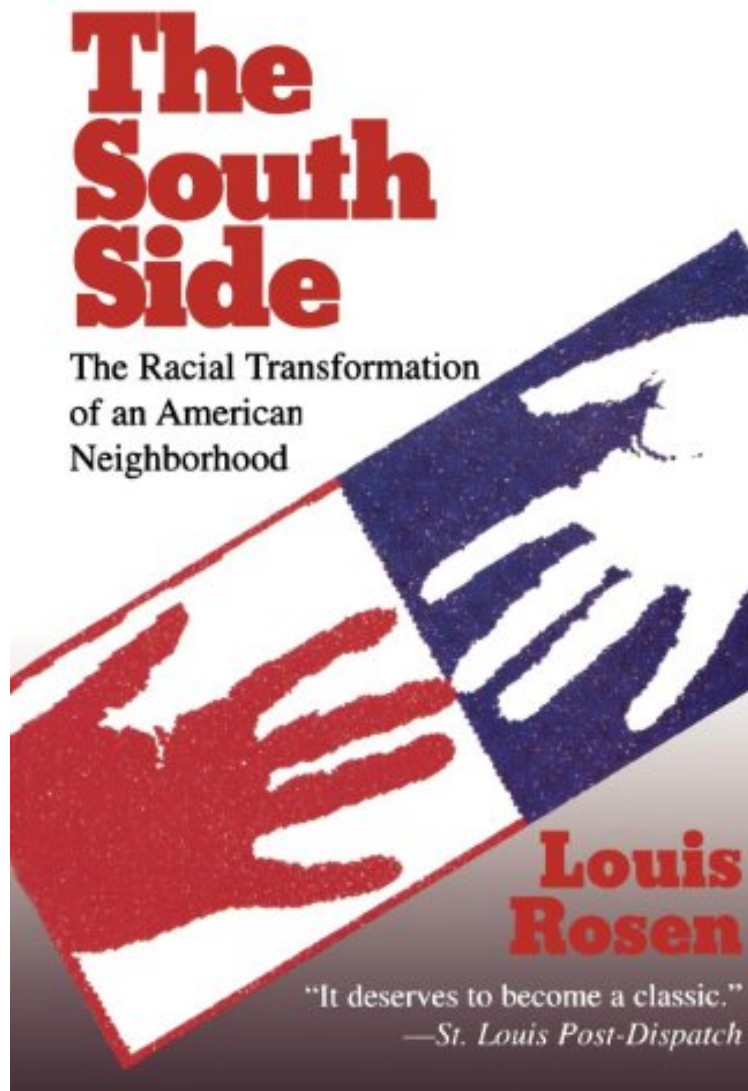


(Mobile library) The South Side: The Racial Transformation of an American Neighborhood (Glas, 21)

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Louis Rosen

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Louis Rosen : The South Side: The Racial Transformation of an American Neighborhood (Glas, 21) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The South Side: The Racial Transformation of an American Neighborhood (Glas, 21):

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. My old childhood nieghborhoodBy Edward F. MikanI lived there I went thru the change shortly after I got back home from the ARMY . My father built our big 2 story Georgian frame

house by himself, 1949 to 1951, IN the PRAIRIE! Rosen remembers the area as it once was, it "Was" a great place to grow up. WE moved out in 1970 because The gangs were starting to take over with the robbing, drugs, rape murdering ALL, going on on the south side. I am not Jewish, many of my friends neighbors were, I also went to Warren school when it was a large gothic 4 story building "was" a great school! I remember South shore when it was a "great" place to live. "I would "not" live there now"!! ROSEN DIDN'T GET THE WHOLE STORY OF WHY THE PEOPLE MOVED OUT!! There was a lot more going on than his book tells!! 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Two Stars By Customer Not very good. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. My Fast Assessment By L. Rothman Having grown up in "The Manor" during its good days (mid 50's through mid late 60's) indeed there were so many wonderful things to talk about growing up dealing with the South Shore and SE Side in general. But indeed things were headed downhill by 67. I was about to be entering Bowen High School which from the experiences of my older brother who had been there a year, it was fraught with many a rough edge. My parents didn't want me exposed to that so when my parents best friends moved to the North Shore that summer, my parents also sold our home and we relocated to the North Shore for the beginning of my High School. Unlike some of my counterparts, that felt somehow ripped from their beloved neighborhood, I felt "liberated". I came out of my shell, joined a rock band in school and had many more friends. Indeed I left the South Side behind and keep my good memories in my head filtering out the bad. My last CTA bus trip in the spring of 67 2 drunk black guys got on the bus as we went through Hyde Park. One grabbed me by the throat and called me some very unsavory names (at the ripe age of 13). I fortunately survived that experience. So my later memories of the South Side were it was headed downhill fast. You can romanticize it all you wish, it is certainly was NOT glorious any further beyond that point. Needless to say 1968 with the death of MLK was the nail in the coffin.

The South Side is a quietly powerful story of how a white, middle-class, and largely Jewish neighborhood, built from prairie on Chicago's far South Side in the optimistic years after World War II, rapidly and dramatically changed to a middle-class black community in the 1960s. It is a tale of two communities that collided almost by accident at a moment in America's history when race relations were starting to explode, and the profound impact this wrenching collision had on the lives of families and individuals on both sides of the event; a tale of how dreams were both realized and shattered in the confrontation between moral courage, spiritual ethics, and personal fears. The story is told in memoir and oral narrative by fifteen composite characters—two generations of former and current residents of the community, both Jewish and African American. Louis Rosen has made nothing up: the memories, thoughts, and feelings of the characters reflect exactly what was spoken during his extensive interviews. The names are fictional, but The South Side is essentially a work of nonfiction. It speaks to universal concerns: what it is like to grow up as part of a group that is outside the mainstream of American life; why the search for home is so difficult in late-twentieth-century America. The South Side is a story without obvious heroes or villains. It transcends the boundaries of specific individuals, place, and time to offer a vivid description of a struggle that is still very much a part of American life, and one that is likely to be with us for some time to come.

From Publishers Weekly In the 1960s, Chicago's South Side changed from a predominantly Jewish to a mainly black neighborhood. Having grown up there, Rosen experienced this white flight and decided to conduct a series of interviews with former neighbors and friends, asking them how fear had spread so rapidly and why liberal people appeared to have become bigots. The author is a composer for the theater, and he draws on this career to format the interviews into a type of play, featuring 15 composite characters from both the black and the Jewish communities. Especially interesting are stories of how the first synagogue got started and why it faltered during the racial changes in the neighborhood and had to be relocated. The Jewish residents passionately describe their feelings of betrayal and hurt from the synagogue's loss. Also fascinating are reactions from the black community, past and present, who felt a mixture of confusion, rejection and anger when their white neighbors claimed to be moving because they wanted "better schools." After these admissions, however, the book suffers from repetition, and the 15 characters are not distinguished enough from one another. Each time Rosen identifies a factor for the change, such as whites' suspicion of increased crime from black neighbors, each character comments on the issue without always adding something meaningful to the debate. Although the author's intentions are noble, his method is questionable and, ultimately, unsatisfying. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Rosen examines the phenomenon of white flight in a small neighborhood on the south side of Chicago in the late 1960s. Currently a writer for the musical theater, he was in high school when these wrenching changes took place. In an attempt to understand what happened, he interviewed his former neighbors 30 years later. The result is a composite of narratives detailing the fear, sense of betrayal, and confusion that took place when middle-class blacks moved into a white, middle-class, largely Jewish neighborhood. The oral-history format lends a sense of action and movement to the material and conveys the emotional aspects of this situation. However, presenting personal accounts in a drama format limits the book's usefulness as a research tool. This would complement other, more substantive sources such as Michael Lerner's *Jews Blacks: A Dialogue on Race, Religion, and Culture in America* (Dutton, 1996). For larger public libraries. ?Deborah

Bigelow, Leonia P.L., Little Falls, NJ Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist In the 1960s, the blockbusting of predominantly white neighborhoods, turning them virtually all black overnight, was emblematic of the turbulence of U.S. race relations. The transformation, often accompanied by violence, unconscionable profiteering, and neighborhood deterioration, fed racist stereotypes about what happens when blacks move into a neighborhood. Rosen offers insights into the role that those who fled played in the failure to integrate neighborhoods. Interviewing black and white men and women who experienced the racial change of Rosen's own mostly Jewish, middle-class Chicago neighborhood, he offers a personal perspective on the change when the first black families moved there in the midst of the racial unrest and riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Rosen provides vivid memories of the way the community was, and he muses about what could have been had the white families stayed. Rosen's own family was among the last to leave. He has since revisited the community and found a stable, though now completely black neighborhood. Vanessa Bush