

Free Screening of 'The Deer Hunter' **at St. Theodosius Church!**



By the Tremont History Project

The Tremont History Project is presenting a free screening of the locally filmed and award-winning 1978 classic 'The Deer Hunter' on Saturday, February 21st at 12:30 pm. The film will be shown at the banquet hall of St. Theodosius Orthodox Cathedral—the iconic Tremont church which was prominently featured in this film. This will be an exciting opportunity to view this legendary movie on the very grounds where portions of it was made!

The Deer Hunter was released in December of 1978, featuring a young star-studded cast including Robert De Niro, Christopher Walken, Meryl Streep, John Cazale and others. The film was directed and produced by Michael Cimino, and went on to win five Oscars at the Academy Awards, including 'Best Picture'. The film is set in the late 1960's in an industrial small town deep in the hills of western Pennsylvania, where a group of close friends work elbow-to-elbow at the local steel mill, unwind at their favorite local pub, and escape into the nearby mountains for spontaneous beer-soaked hunting trips. There is joyful preparation for a wedding amongst this group, in their community where Eastern European heritage and customs predominate. The film then follows these individuals and their relationships while they transition from this age of innocence and idealism, as several of them enlist and deploy for the War in Vietnam. The resulting story is a powerful dramatic illustration of the impact of war on a generation, and a nation.



The *Deer Hunter* was filmed in 1977 in numerous locations within Tremont, at sites across several other U.S. states in the region, and the cast also filmed scenes in Thailand to depict the environs of Vietnam. However it is clear in viewing the film that Cimino was enchanted with what he found in the Tremont neighborhood—the authentic values and sensibilities of the hard-working families within our blue-collar ‘village’, the strong overlay of ethnic ritual and culture of the Eastern European immigrant community, and the iconic industrial panoramic vistas in all directions. In fact, many Tremont residents were incorporated as ‘extras’ during the local filming of the movie. Cimino and the actors made strong efforts to immerse themselves in the Tremont community before and during the filming in order to emulate what they appreciated in the denizens of our community—and there are many accounts to be heard of informal encounters with ‘Bob’ De Niro and the others at local pubs and stores across Tremont. However Tremont’s immortalizing Hollywood legacy from the *Deer Hunter* is found in two unforgettable scenes: the stunning wedding ceremony scene filmed at St. Theodosius (featuring the actual Church choir performing), and the dazzling, fabled wedding reception scene filmed at Lemko Hall. The reception scene at Lemko Hall demonstrates its original use as a reception hall, and features many locals engaged in traditional ethnic celebratory dances.

The Tremont History Project, organizer of this event, hopes that this free community event will also attract locals who were either in the film or had memories or stories of the filming that they would like to share immediately following the movie. The Tremont History Project is hoping to ultimately gather these stories as a collection of oral history accounts from Tremont residents of this unique chapter of Tremont’s history.

This cinema event is free and open to the public, however children will not be admitted without parents due to R-rating for graphic violence content and adult language. Seating is limited, and will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis; the show-time is 12:30pm. Please be advised that this film has a run-time over 3 hours long; there will be a brief intermission at the half-way point. Coffee, popcorn, and light-refreshments will be provided. Donations to support Tremont History Project's expenses for this event are welcome and optional. For more information about this event, please contact Dan from the Tremont History Project, 216-272-5046, or dlotz9@yahoo.com.