

***26 Fairmount Avenue* by Tomie dePaola**

When my mom and dad decided to build a house, friends told them that they were building “out in the sticks.” That meant way out where not many people lived. There wasn’t even a real street. Just a dirt road. But it wasn’t that far from our apartment on Columbus Avenue.

It was really great watching the house being built. First a steam shovel dug a huge hole for the foundation. Next a cement truck came, and workers poured the cement down a chute that looked like a long sliding board. I pretended that the concrete gushing down was lava coming out of a volcano (I had seen that in a movie with my mother).

After the foundation was set and the cellar was finished, the builders came to start on the house itself. They covered the opening over the cellar with wood, and that became the floor. Then they put up these things they called “studs,” which were pieces of wood called “two-by-fours” because they are two inches thick by four inches wide.

They had just finished this part of the house when the hurricane struck. It was a good thing the walls weren’t up yet, because the house probably would have blown away. A new house a few streets away was knocked down by the wind. All that was left was the cellar and a mess of broken wood. They had to start all over again. It was sad, but I was glad it wasn’t our house.

All our relatives were excited about the house at 26 Fairmount Avenue. I guess a new house with a big yard and a view of West Peak with Castle Craig on top was exciting. I know I thought it was.