

Application for Landmark/Landmark Site
Local Historic District Application
May 17, 2010

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

South side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets
City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York 14203



Charles Burchfield "Street Scene" (1940-1947)

Prepared by:



Clinton Brown Company Architecture ReBuild
The Pierce Building in the Theater Historic District
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Buffalo, NY 14203
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CBCA PN 09-049

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APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK/ LANDMARK SITE

Applicant Form

Form LS-1

Application for Landmark/Landmark Site

**Buffalo Preservation Board
901 City Hall
Buffalo, New York 14202
Telephone: (716) 851-5029
Fax: (716) 851-4388**

Instructions to Applicant:

The following information is required, at a minimum, prior to the Buffalo Preservation Board considering an application complete:

- a) Three (3) copies of this application;
- b) One complete set of quality photographs, (Preferably 8" x 10"), of all exterior elevations of the building. Interior photographs may also be submitted;
- c) A site plan, map or survey that indicates in sufficient details what building/properties are being proposed for designation;
- d) Any additional information you can furnish that substantiates that the property is deemed to be of architectural, historical, geographical, cultural or aesthetic significance.

Failure to submit the required information may result in an incomplete application and delay the review process:

****** check in the amount of \$500.00 made out to the City of Buffalo Preservation Board must be submitted at time of application for non-owner occupied structures/sites.**

Please provide the following on the property for which landmark consideration is requested.

- 1. Address of Site South side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets (85-125 Genesee Street)
- 2. Name of Property (if any) Genesee Gateway Historic District
- 3. (A) Name of Present Owner Genesee Gateway LLC
Address 726 Exchange Street, Suite 825

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City Buffalo Zip 14203 Phone (716) 362-2678

Contact person Doug Swift, Member Phone same

(B) Name of Present Owner Edward P. Brady

Address 97 Genesee Street

City Buffalo Zip 14203 Phone (716) 854-7017

Contact person Edward P. Brady Phone _____

Note: If property is in multiple ownership, list the names/addresses of other persons having legal or equitable interest in property:

4. Has the owner, if other than applicant, been contacted?

Yes X No _____

If yes, is owner in favor of landmark designation?

Yes X No _____

If yes, submit a signed statement/affidavit by owner supporting designation.

5. Present use of property Vacant (under construction); bar and restaurant

6. Year of Construction Multiple (see attached)

Information Source _____

7. Architect Multiple (see attached)

Information Source _____

8. Is property endangered? Yes _____ No X

If yes, explain: _____

9. On separate pages, please describe the architectural, historical, geographical and cultural significance of this landmark and/or landmark site. Please indicate the sources of information.

10. Please attach any additional material which might be useful in considering the site for landmark designation, i.e.; newspaper clippings, magazine articles, photographs, etc. Please list below, which of these materials you would like returned. If you would like to present additional materials at a meeting of the Preservation Board, please indicate nature of such materials.

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11. Name of Applicant Jennifer Walkowski, Architectural Historian

Organization, (if any) Clinton Brown Company Architecture, pc

Address 653 Main Street, Suite 104

City Buffalo Zip 14203

Phone 716-852-2020

I hereby certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Applicant

Date

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The Genesee Gateway Historic District

South side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets
Buffalo, Erie County, NY 14203

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Genesee Gateway Historic District encompasses all buildings on the south side of Genesee Street between Ellicott Street to the west and Oak Street to the east.

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY District

NUMBER OF RESOURCES 9
CONTRIBUTING 8
NON-CONTRIBUTING 1

PROPERTIES IN THE DISTRICT

Genesee Street 85-87-89, 91-95, 97, 99, 101-103, 109, 111, 113-125
(105-107 Non-contributing)

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE ca. 1840s - 1965

INTRODUCTION

The Genesee Gateway Historic District is significant as a rare remaining largely intact commercial block with a mix of architectural styles dating to between ca. 1840s to 1915. This significant commercial group is a largely intact portion of the once-thriving Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood which grew up around the Washington Market in the nineteenth-century. The historic district encompasses all contiguous properties along the south side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak streets.¹ Following the demise of the market in the 1960s and the devastating effects of Urban Renewal-era projects in the area, much of the historic neighborhood has been lost, making the Genesee Gateway block a rare survivor from this early era in Buffalo's history. The Genesee Gateway Historic District features works by some of the City's most prominent architects including

¹ While the Genesee Gateway Historic District defines the most intact, contiguous group of buildings in this neighborhood, the larger surrounding area also includes several other contemporary historic buildings. Future study of this area may identify additional buildings which could be incorporated into a larger Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood district; however this is beyond the scope of this present project.

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Esenwein and Johnson, Richard A. Waite and F.W. Caulkins among others. The historic district is also significant for its associations with the history of commercial development in Buffalo, as well as its ties to Buffalo's German community which would give rise to many notable politicians, businessmen and community leaders.

This neighborhood, which grew and flourished thanks to its proximity to the Washington Market (1854, demolished 1965) contains one of Buffalo's last remaining collections of historic commercial buildings spanning the earliest pre-Civil War era to the modern age. Architecture in the neighborhood reflects the changing trends in retailing spanning over 100 years, and features examples designed by some of Buffalo's most prominent architects. This neighborhood faced hard times, both architecturally and economically, following the opening of the Kensington Expressway and the Oak-Elm Arterial just to the east of the proposed district. The resulting highways funneled both residents and businesses out of the area, leading to the neighborhood's general blight and neglect. Several buildings have already been demolished, with several others threatened with demolition, and the neighborhood remains in a precipitous state on the verge of being lost. Over the past few years new development projects including the Washington Market café and grocery store as well as the ambitious Genesee Gateway project have spurred new hope for this neglected neighborhood. The most prominent group of buildings in this neighborhood is the Genesee Gateway block which literally serves as a gateway into Downtown Buffalo from the Kensington Expressway and the suburbs further east.

Genesee Street is a primary radial artery leading from Niagara Square at the heart of Downtown Buffalo on a north-east path through the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood. Ellicott and Oak Streets run north-south, intersecting the diagonal of Genesee Street. The Genesee Gateway Historic District encompasses the south sides of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets. This is primarily a neighborhood of commercial development, both historically and presently, which is adjacent to large swaths of surface parking lots to its west (at the site of the former Washington Market) and to its east (created by the clearing of land for the Kensington Expressway). The Genesee Gateway Historic District is located in close proximity to the Main Street commercial area and the local Theater Historic District, both located west of the neighborhood, as well as the "500 Block of Main" Local Historic District which has been certified for tax purposes.

The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood developed as a early commercial neighborhood, primarily comprised of German and German-American residents and business owners. Genesee Street was one of the earliest streets in Buffalo, laid out by Holland Land Company agent Joseph Ellicott in his 1804 street plan for the then-village of Buffalo. Genesee Street is a diagonal, radial street which crossed through Niagara Square, the centerpoint of the village of the time, and connected the hinterland to the east. The neighborhood began its history in the

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early 1800s as an area of transition between the settled Village of Buffalo and the rural fringe further east, with sparse settlement along the Genesee Street spine. This area was located in an area known as the “Outer Lots,” meaning it was not a part of the innermost core of the settlement, which was centered on Niagara Square. The “Outer Lots” were in the early 1800s a transitional area between the “Inner Lots” and the vast, rural eastern regions of Western New York.

Commercial development began in earnest in the pre-Civil War era, quickly boosted by the opening of the Washington Market in 1856. The commercial enterprises drew patrons and customers from the thriving Market, catering to a wide variety of consumer needs. It was a neighborhood where many business owners and their families lived above the store, adding a vibrant self-sufficient residential component to the neighborhood as well. The Washington Market, known as the largest Market in New York State west of the Hudson River, drew thousands of people to this neighborhood throughout the nineteenth-century. As tastes and incomes changed, many early Civil War-era buildings were replaced by a variety of large and small commercial buildings during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Several of Buffalo’s most prominent architects, including the firm of Esenwein and Johnson and Richard A. Waite, created elegant commercial structures in the neighborhood, indicating the high status of the neighborhood at the peak of its prominence.

Historically, this thriving commercial area stretched across Main Street and continued further east to Buffalo’s East Side neighborhoods. Sanborn maps indicate the presence of thousands of similar small-scale mixed-use commercial and residential buildings throughout the nineteenth-century, especially prominently located along the primary Genesee Street artery. The decisive moment in the history of the neighborhood came in the 1960s when the Kensington Expressway and Oak-Elm Arterial, under the aegis of “Urban Renewal,” cleared and divided many of Buffalo’s historic neighborhoods in this area, physically removing thousands of houses and commercial buildings along its route. As traffic in the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood shifted from the pedestrian-oriented to the car-oriented lifestyle of the late twentieth-century, residents and businesses left the area for Buffalo’s eastern suburbs. The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood and the Genesee Gateway Historic District suffered from disinvestment, neglect, urban decay and blight through much of the 1970s and into the 1990s. Misguided rehabilitation attempts which began in the 1980s also contributed to some of the issues with buildings in the proposed district. Many buildings in the neighborhood and in surrounding areas were demolished, replaced with parking lots in many cases. Those buildings in the area which survived decades of neglect, vacancy and even the wrecking-ball in many cases have been modified with features such as vinyl windows, boarded up storefronts and some removal of historic features.

The buildings located within the boundaries of the Genesee Gateway Historic District are all excellent examples of their respective architectural styles and

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present a substantially intact streetscape along Genesee Street. These buildings all have fascinating stories to tell about the lives of business and tradesmen in Buffalo; some became prominent local figures, while others were just common, every-day people who worked hard to make a life for themselves. Walking down these streets gives the sense of stepping back into time; the buildings of the Genesee Gateway Historic District are unique as a part of an extremely rare collection of generally intact, contiguous buildings of commercial nature.

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CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The buildings of the Genesee Gateway Historic District meet the following Criteria for Designation for the City of Buffalo:

(1) It has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, state or nation.

The Genesee Gateway Historic District buildings represent the commercial heritage of the City of Buffalo from its early pre-Civil War era to the early twentieth-century when the City was at the height of its international prominence. Many of the buildings were constructed by and for Buffalo's prominent German community; a group which contributed mayors, business tycoons, judges and other elected officials to the Buffalo political landscape.

(3) It exemplifies the historic, aesthetic, architectural, archaeological, educational, economic or cultural heritage of the City, state or nation.

The buildings of the Genesee Gateway Historic District range from utilitarian, vernacular designs to high-style architect-designed buildings. The collection of buildings spans a century of commercial development in Buffalo and highlights the shifting functions and needs for commercial architecture as well as the increasing desire to express commercial prowess through ornate, lavish exterior appearances.

(5) It embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.

The Werner Photography Building (101-103 Genesee Street) is perhaps the sole remaining daylight photography studio building remaining in Buffalo. As a building specifically designed for photography in the late nineteenth-century, it embodies a unique architectural style which expressed its function on its decorative primary façade.

(6) It is the work of a master builder, engineer, designer, architect or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the City, state or nation.

While some of the buildings in the Genesee Gateway Historic Districts were likely owner-built, several were designed and constructed by some of the area's most prominent architectural firms. Noted international architect Richard A. Waite designed the Werner Photography Building (101-103 Genesee) which is a rare survivor of his once-prolific work in Buffalo, while the prominent local firm of Esenwein and Johnson contributed the Baldwin Building at 109 Genesee Street.

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F.W. Caulkins was responsible for the Caulkins Building located at 85-87-89 Genesee Street.

(7) It embodies elements of design, detailing, materials or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant.

Each of the buildings in the Genesee Gateway Historic District is unique in its design, details and construction. Portions of the H. Seeberg Building date to the 1840s-1870s, making it among the oldest commercial buildings left in Buffalo, and also an excellent example of pre-Civil War brick architecture. It retains simple stone sills and lintels which were common in its late Federal style design. At the other end of the spectrum are buildings such as the Werner Photography Building (101-103 Genesee Street) and The Baldwin Building (109 Genesee Street). The Werner Photography Building is a colorful Commercial Neoclassical building with a yellow brick façade, red sandstone details and a prominent cornice. Perhaps its most recognizable feature is a concave “waterfall” window which appears to be the last remaining “photo light” in the City. Similarly, the Baldwin Building is an excellent, small-scale example of the masterful use of Classical ornament by prominent architects Esenwein and Johnson.

(9) It is a unique location or contains singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature within the City.

The Genesee Gateway Historic District is among the most recognizable commercial streetscapes in all of Buffalo. Captured by noted artist Charles Burchfield in his “Street Scene” (1940-1947), this unique contiguous row of commercial buildings has long been an iconic and identifiable location in the City of Buffalo. It once would have been similar to the streetscape along much of Genesee Street and other streets in Buffalo; today it is a rare surviving and largely intact block of commercial buildings spanning a century of design and commercialism. It is prominent today as the literal gateway into the City of Buffalo for the thousands of people who take the in-bound Kensington Expressway to enter downtown daily and is the first group of buildings they see.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GENESEE GATEWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Genesee Gateway Historic District represents a unique and rare, remaining collection of commercial buildings which spans a century of Buffalo's history. It contains a wide variety of architectural styles and construction techniques, ranging from the utilitarian brick commercial buildings of the pre-Civil War era to high-style Victorian-era commercial buildings to more restrained, academic Classical ornamented buildings. Many of the building types found in the Genesee Gateway Historic District can no longer be readily found in Buffalo, and are typically not found in such a contiguous group.

The H. Seeberg Building located at 113-125 Genesee Street is a rare remaining example of mid-nineteenth century commercial architecture in the Genesee Gateway Historic District. The H. Seeberg Building contains portions which are among the oldest architecture in the neighborhood and in the City of Buffalo. Based on the 1854 fire insurance map and city directories, portions of this building appear to date to ca. 1845, making this building a rare example of pre-Civil War commercial architecture in Buffalo. Clues now visible on the building's interior indicate that the building which is now 123-125 was originally configured as a two-and-a-half story side-gabled building dating to the 1840s and was later enlarged, modified and altered. Maps indicate that this may have occurred ca. 1872 when the building was enlarged to a full three stories with a slate covered mansard roof on the fourth floor. This type of alteration is not rare in both commercial and residential architecture; it was not uncommon for older "outdated" buildings to be renovated and altered to make them more functional and fashionable, and one of the most common alterations is the addition of Second Empire mansard roof levels to buildings in the 1870s and 1880s when this style was popular. Like many commercial buildings during this period, it appears to have served both as a commercial space and also as a residential building as well. The 1854 fire insurance map for Buffalo describes it as a "first class brick dwelling, walls coped, part store, shingle roof." In the 1930s the H. Seeberg Company transformed the series of small individual brick commercial buildings at the eastern corner into one large commercial space, uniting the façade with large bands of signage and a modern new storefront.

Eddie Brady's Tavern located at 97 Genesee Street dates to approximately the early 1860s. Constructed by local saddler and harnessmaker Nicholas Losson ca. 1863, the three story brick commercial building features a ground floor commercial space for the harness shop with what once was used as the Losson family home on the upper floors. 97 Genesee Street is a very rare remaining and largely intact example of 1860s-era brick commercial architecture, retaining its round-arched windows on the upper stories and its unique cornice which is oblique to fit within the angled lot lines of the property.

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Constructed ca. 1870, the Denzinger-Sigwald Building at 91-95 Genesee Street is an excellent example of the Second Empire style which was very popular for commercial buildings during the 1870s.² Although the building has a large, unified façade which gives the impression that this is one building, it is actually divided into two halves which originally were under separate ownership but which are treated with a continuous northern elevation. While the 91 Genesee commercial space at the west was eventually constructed to the southern extents of the property, the 95 Genesee space at the east featured a smaller northern block with a narrower three-story block at its south. Each building historically contained wood-framed porches on the southern facade; popular features for buildings which contained residential spaces on upper floors. Although the building presents a continuous and regular northern façade to the primary artery of Genesee Street, the actual mass of the building to the south is angled and irregular, conforming to the angled lot lines. Despite a partial collapse in 2007, the Denzinger-Sigwald Building retains much of its exterior envelope, a majority of the primary northern façade, side walls, and even retains several of the building's 1870s cast iron interior columns. Like many of the buildings in the Genesee Gateway, the primary façade was the architectural focus in the design of the building, with secondary elevations being of more utilitarian and inexpensive construction.

The Schwinn-Mandel Building is a rare mostly intact remaining example of late-nineteenth century commercial architecture in the Genesee Gateway Historic District. Constructed ca. 1878 by an unknown builder, the Schwinn-Mandel Building replaced an earlier 1850s-era building at 111 Genesee Street. The exterior of the building remains an excellent example of Italianate commercial architecture from the post-Civil War era; an architectural era which is becoming increasingly rare in representation in Buffalo. Built for owner Louis P. Adolf, the building would serve as the long-time home of Jacob J. Schwinn who ran one of the City's only cane, umbrella and walking stick shops in the building between 1878 and 1889. The Schwinn company was succeeded by the umbrella maker Henry L. Mandel around 1893, running the shop until 1940. Throughout its over 120 year history, spanning four generations, the Schwinn-Mandel Building has served as a vital commercial location and has served a wide variety of purposes.

Designed in 1886 by prominent Buffalo architect, Franklin Wellington (F.W.) Caulkins, the Caulkins Building at 85-87-89 Genesee Street was constructed at a time of enormous success, prosperity and commercial growth in the Genesee

² Like many Second Empire style buildings, there is a possibility that the Denzinger-Sigwald Building retains portions of its ca. 1850s original structure in the 95 portion with a ca. 1870s addition of the mansard roof. The 1854 fire insurance map for Buffalo indicates a "second class" brick building located at the 95 address. This building, or portions of it, may have been incorporated into a new larger building in the 1870s. The fenestration and scale of the individual commercial buildings resembles closely the appearance of the neighboring ca. 1850s Eddie Brady's Tavern at 97 Genesee Street. It appears possible that in the 1870s the building was "updated" with a resurfaced, continuous, patterned brick façade and the addition of the mansard fourth-floor. Since no concrete evidence such as plans, images or permits have been located to bear evidence of this alteration, the Denzinger-Sigwald Building will be considered as dating to the 1870s based on existing documentation and information.

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Gateway Historic District and the neighborhood. The unique triangular footprint of the building was camouflaged by a large four-story street-front façade in a Romanesque Revival style. The signature feature of the building was its prominent central concave “photo light” window which illuminated the interior photography studio. The stately building was constructed as a mixed-use commercial and residential building for Louis Bergtold for a cost of \$5,000. Like many of the other buildings in the Genesee Gateway group, the Caulkins Building replaced two earlier ca. 1850s miniscule brick buildings. By the 1880s, Bergtold purchased the property at 85-87-89 Genesee Street and had the elegant Caulkins Building constructed. The earliest known tenants of the building were the Queen City Hat Manufacturing Company and Frederick Joseph Dorn’s jewelry shop. Fred Dorn, as he was known, would become the longest occupying tenant of the Caulkins Building running his jewelry store in the large 87 Genesee storefront from 1886 until the 1950s. Dorn was such a beloved and significant figure in Buffalo at the time of his death that the honorary pall bearers at his funeral included the mayor of Buffalo at the time, Mayor Charles E. Roesch, former mayor Frank X. Schwab, Surrogate Judge Louis B. Hart, and Judge Louis Braunlein among other prominent men.³

The Werner Photography Building located at 101-103 Genesee Street is a striking, four-story Commercial Neoclassical building which was constructed in 1895. Designed by prominent architect Richard A. Waite for Mrs. Fredericke Giesser, the Werner Photography Building is perhaps the centerpiece of the entire Genesee Gateway Historic District. The asymmetrical yellow brick and Medina sandstone façade features a ground floor storefront below a two-bay upper façade. The eastern bay features three stories of segmental and round arched windows, while the western bay contains a second story of round headed windows surmounted by a unique concave “waterfall” window, called a “photo light” on contemporary Sanborn maps, which curves southward into the building mass. Above the waterfall window is a recessed frieze of verdigris-colored pressed metal with three oculus windows. The building’s parapet is crowned with elegant verdigris cresting. The continuous corner and center piers, which project above the cornice line, are topped by sandstone plinths which appear to have once been topped by ornamental pinnacles in a classical mode.⁴ The elegant new building served as the home of the Giesser family until at least the early 1900s and originally featured two commercial spaces on the ground floor (these appear to have been combined into one space by 1925). In addition to its residential use, the location of the building, oriented facing north, created the opportunity for the building to be used for a very specific purpose. The Werner Photography Building was specially designed to accommodate the thriving

³ Active pall bearers included Charles and Fred Denzinger, who appear to be related to William and Charles Denzinger who owned the neighboring 91 Genesee Street for many years at the end of the nineteenth-century. While the exact relationship is unknown, this seems to be an indication that Dorn was not only well known amongst a virtual “who’s- who” of Buffalo’s political sphere, but was also well regarded by his neighbors and local community.

⁴ These sculptural pieces appear in the Charles Burchfield painting “Street Scene” which depicts the center portion of the current Genesee Gateway buildings, dating to 1940-1947.

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photographic industry as a daylight studio; since the primary façade of the building faced due north providing the clear, even lighting desired by studio photographers to this day, the building was designed featuring a large glass skylight as a primary architectural feature on the primary façade. In the hands of a skilled architect such as Waite, the large copper ornamented skylight became an elegant and signature feature for the Werner Photography Building, a light, airy element which contrasted with the otherwise simple solidity of the masonry building. Today, the Werner Photography Building appears to be the only extant example of a historic nineteenth-century daylight photography studio building, designed in the highest style, remaining in Buffalo.

Designed by the prominent Buffalo firm of Esenwein and Johnson in 1905, the Baldwin Building at 109 Genesee Street is a small-scale and overall restrained example of the Commercial Neoclassical vocabulary of form which the firm helped popularize in Buffalo. Like other buildings in the Genesee Gateway Historic District, the Baldwin Building replaced an earlier commercial structure. Maps indicate that a ca. 1850s building once occupied the parcel at 109 Genesee Street. In 1903, the previous building at 109 Genesee Street was demolished by the Baldwin Specialty Company for the construction of the present Baldwin Building. Given that the footprint of the existing building was nearly identical to the new construction, it is possible that the Baldwin Building was constructed utilizing portions of the smaller two-story building, especially the existing stone foundation. Oliver J. Beyer, secretary for the Baldwin Specialty Company, enlisted the prominent architectural firm of Esenwein and Johnson to design the new commercial building. Among the more decorative buildings along this strip of Genesee Street, the Baldwin Building's classical details make it a contributing building to the overall streetscape and Genesee Gateway building collection. The beige face brick, graceful arched enframed façade and ornate metal brackets and cornice make the Baldwin Building a unique and largely intact example of turn-of-the-century commercial design. While Buffalo retains many large, spectacular examples of Commercial Neoclassical commercial buildings, including Daniel Burnham's high-style Ellicott Square Building (1895-96, contributing to certified Joseph Ellicott Historic District) and Esenwein and Johnson's General Electric Tower (1912-13, NR 2008) located a stone's throw from the Genesee Gateway buildings down Genesee Street, the Baldwin Building is an example of a more restrained and modest use of the style.

The final building to complete the Genesee Gateway Historic District is the Giesser Building at 99 Genesee Street. Designed by architect, Edward G. Henrich, who had a relatively brief architectural career in Buffalo, the Giesser Building is a modest, two-story brick commercial building with vaguely Craftsman accents built ca. 1915. The ground floor is comprised entirely of a storefront, with a yellow-orange colored brick second story above. Although the building presents a regular, rectangular façade to Genesee Street at its north, the angled lot lines present in this portion of the block create a long, narrow building which is not perpendicular to its north façade. Like other buildings in this historic district, the

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Giesser Building replaced an earlier ca. 1850s frame structure which was also owned by the Giesser family. The present building was constructed for Charles Giesser who inherited his father Gabriel's cutlery and razor sharpening business which he continued to run from the building until the 1940s. Following this, the building along with the adjacent Werner Photography Building was occupied by the Charlie Baker clothing store until the 1970s.

Architectural Responses to the Radial Street Plan

Because of the city's radial street plan overlaid on a traditional street grid, Buffalo has a series of oddly shaped, irregular blocks which result from Joseph Ellicott's Baroque city plan of 1804. Ellicott's plan utilized the traditional Roman grid street plan of regular rectangular or square blocks, and overlaid a series of radial arteries which had been typical of Baroque European city planning. The street plan of Buffalo was inspired directly by the plan for Washington D.C., as Joseph Ellicott had served as an assistant to his brother Andrew Ellicott who surveyed and laid out the new national capital. These triangular and pointed city blocks create unique challenges to the architecture and built landscape of Buffalo, both historically and still to this day. Often as a result of these irregularly shaped blocks, individual parcels or plots within were also oddly shaped. Parcels could be regularly created along one street, but then forced to alter their direction or shape when confronted with an intersecting street which ran at an oblique angle.⁵ Buildings in Buffalo have been forced to deal with these non-rectangular, non-uniform blocks in their architecture. These unusually shaped urban blocks create odd parcel and plot boundaries. They force an architectural response in the overall form and design of buildings since a building has to vary from the typical square box design. These radial streets shape how a building is orientated to the primary street, particularly how the building responds to the oddly shaped corners which were often sharply angled rather than at a right angle. In the 1800s when typical commercial and residential architecture was based on a similar rectilinear "box" construction and orthogonal spatial system, many of Buffalo's buildings had to be constructed at odd angles fit to the confines dictated by the radial street plan. The result of this negotiation has been some of Buffalo's finest architectural treasures, many of which are State and National Register listed. By following along Genesee Street, such buildings include the Electric Tower (1912, NR 2008), the Buffalo Savings Bank building (1901, NRE), and the former Genesee Building (1922-23). The Statler Building (1925, NRE) at Delaware and Genesee Street responds to the angled street by creating a wedge-shaped first

⁵ An 1847 map of the City of Buffalo depicts the south block of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets as being bisected by a small street called Blossom Street, north to south. Blossom Street is still partially extant as an alley running between East Huron and Broadway Streets but has disappeared further north. The presence of a right-of-way may account for the form of the parcels along this portion of Genesee Street. Parcels to the west and eastern corners appear to run parallel or nearly parallel to Ellicott and Oak Streets, but parcels in the middle of the block run perpendicular to Genesee Street. This may reflect that the parcels were divided during two different times; one early, perhaps in the 1820s-30s when settlement of the area first occurred, and one later, perhaps in the 1850s when this small alley disappears and was turned into valuable Genesee Street commercial property.

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story. Even Buffalo City Hall (1929-31, NR 1996) reflects the negotiation of Ellicott's street plan in its octagonal footprint, created by combining two parcels at the western edge of Niagara Square.

Buildings in Buffalo which are sited on these oddly shaped blocks typically exhibit one of two responses. One response is that the building embraces the corner or angle, acknowledging the situation of the unique form of the block in its architecture or design. Buildings which exhibit this approach often have architectural features such as columns, moldings, porches or other elements which are pointed directly at the corner. In some cases the building is turned slightly to present a primary or secondary façade to the corner. This is the response which the neighboring H. Seeberg Building presented at the corner of Oak and Genesee Streets. The 123-125 unit of the H. Seeberg Building embraced the corner location. The chamfered corner of the building contained a small but remarkable entrance into the building, marking the importance of a corner location by recognizing and conforming the building to the location. This was further augmented by the placement of the mansard roof at the corner of the 123-125 unit in the 1870s which emphasizes the prominence of the Genesee-Oak Streets location. This chamfered edge becomes a small façade which, because it alters the form of the building away from the box, becomes notable. This cut-away turns the profile of the H. Seeberg Building slightly towards the east, heightening the sense of perspective since the viewer wants to examine the building from the corner rather than straight-on, drawing the emphasis away from the larger northern façade and placing more emphasis on the corner.

An opposing reaction is to deny the presence of the odd angle or sharp corner and attempt to regulate and normalize the appearance of the building. Buildings which deny the irregular angles typically present an "ordinary," rectilinear façade to the street, regardless of the shape of the parcel or plot on which the building is sited. One could stand on the street and view this building and not immediately understand that the building was at an unusual angle or irregularly shaped plot. An example of this phenomenon is exhibited by the building at the western end of the Genesee Gateway buildings, located at 85-87-89 Genesee Street and known as the Caulkins Building. When viewed from Genesee Street, this building appears to be a typical, three-story rectangular brick building, and it is assumed that the walls of this primary façade are perpendicular to the elevation, creating a rectangular box-like building behind. In reality, this building was a miniscule building, with a triangular plan. The small building was forced to adjust its perimeter to the small, wedge shaped parcel formed by the boundaries of lots to its east which ran nearly parallel to Ellicott and Oak Street along Genesee Street, with the abrupt meeting of the boundaries of parcels which ran perpendicular to Ellicott Street. Because of the knife-edge western corner of the building formed from its unique triangular form, the western bay of the building was forced to accommodate an internal stair, concealed behind a continuous storefront façade, relegating dwelling space to the eastern portion of the building. Because commercial space in this area was at a premium in the 1880s when the building

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was constructed, the Caulkins Building presented as large a commercial façade as possible to the busy street, a sort of “false-front,” denying the form of the building behind.

ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS OF THE GENESEE GATEWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Franklin Wellington (F.W.) Caulkins, Architect

Franklin Wellington Caulkins was in the late nineteenth-century one of Buffalo’s most prominent and well-known architects, yet today few of his works remain. Obviously proud of his creation, F.W. Caulkins had his name and role as architect molded into the cast iron decoration of the Caulkins Building, forever marking his role in the building’s history.⁶ Little is known about the elusive architect, and many of his architectural creations have been demolished and forgotten, yet Caulkins was once one of Buffalo’s most respected and prolific architects in the nineteenth-century.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1855, F.W. Caulkins established his architectural practice in Buffalo in 1878 in the Townsend Block at Main & Swan Streets. An adept practitioner of nearly any style of the day, Caulkins designed several homes in Buffalo including the Elizabethan-style James Smith House at 741 West Ferry Street (ca. 1880s, demolished), the Romanesque Forsythe House at 410 Delaware (unknown date, demolished), and his own intricate Stick Style house at 415 Franklin Street (1882, contributing to the Allentown Historic District). His series of eclectic Queen Anne-style residences at 69, 51 and 55 Symphony Circle along with 430 Delaware Avenue are all contributing buildings to the Allentown Historic District (NR 1978). Caulkins was also noted for his commercial projects which included the oddly-shaped Chapin Building at the corner of Pearl and Swan Streets (ca. 1880s, demolished), the seven-story White Building (1881, now significantly altered) and the Richardson Romanesque style State National Bank building in North Tonawanda (ca. 1880s-1900). He also designed the Sloan Malt House (date unknown, demolished), which was located on Exchange Street on the same block as the Kamman Building. Caulkin’s unique brick Gothic Revival style Prospect Avenue Baptist Church (ca. 1880s) is a contributing building to the West Village Historic District (NR 1978).

While many of Caulkins’ buildings are no longer standing, perhaps his best known contribution to Buffalo’s architecture is his extensive renovation to the Austin Building at 110 Franklin Street (1833, altered 1880); Caulkins demolished much of the former Unitarian Church building built by Buffalo-icon Benjamin Rathbun, completely rebuilding the edifice from the ground floor upwards. The

⁶ While this is generally an uncommon practice, it was not the only time that Caulkins had installed such an advertisement on one of his buildings. On a similarly four-story commercial building at 755-757 Seneca Street known as the Kamman Building (ca. 1883-1884) in Buffalo, Caulkins also placed such a cast iron panel on its primary façade.

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Kamman Building (ca. 1883-84, SR 2009, NR pending) is another excellent example of Caulkins' work, and with its brick and sandstone Romanesque commercial façade like the Caulkins Building, the two contemporary buildings appear to be almost "sisters." After a prolific and diverse career, Caulkins left Buffalo in 1903, living and working in Missouri, Texas and Louisiana before passing away in Bedford, Virginia in 1940.

Colson-Hudson, Architects

The architectural firm of Colson-Hudson was responsible for the 1914 storefront redesign of the Caulkins Building at 85-87-89 Genesee Street, which was undertaken for building owner Mrs. Louis Bergtold. Founded in 1905, both partners Ellicott R. Colson (1871-1923) and Harry F. Hudson (1878-1963) were Buffalo natives, and both received most of their professional training in local offices. Colson worked for eight years in the office of Esenwein & Johnson, designers of the neighboring Baldwin Building at 109 Genesee Street, while Hudson worked for Green & Wicks, as well as for D. H. Burnham & Co. of Chicago. The office of Colson-Hudson was active and produced a wide range of projects in the Buffalo area during the early twentieth century. Their residential designs included homes for Dean R. Nott at 556 Lafayette Avenue (1908), James A. White at 110 Oakland Place (1909); and Charles Rohlf's at 156 Park Street (1912) designed in association with the prominent Arts and Crafts furniture craftsman. Among numerous commercial and office buildings designed and renovated by the firm are the reinforced concrete warehouse for Adam, Meldrum, & Anderson Co. at 210 Ellicott, 996-1004 Elmwood Ave. (1908), conversion of a former livery stable into a Hupmobile dealership at 401 Franklin Street (c.1920s altered, contributing to Allentown Historic District) and 515-517 Main St. (1911). The Republic Metalware Co. (1905-1913, demolished) at Republic & Alabama Streets, the Cyphers Incubator Co. (1913, altered) at 67 Dewey Avenue, and the Sowers Manufacturing Co. (1913-1920) at 1300 Niagara St., were some of the firm's industrial complexes. The firm also completed additions to the E. & B. Holmes Machinery Company Building located at 55 Chicago Street in 1910-1912 (NR 2009). After the death of Colson, Hudson formed a partnership with his younger brother and former Colson-Hudson architect, Chauncey Hudson, to create the firm of Hudson and Hudson. This firm continued to produce works in the Buffalo area, including the art moderne Lancaster Municipal Building (1940, NR 1999).

Esenwein and Johnson

The firm of Esenwein and Johnson was one of Buffalo's most successful and prolific architectural partnerships in the city around the turn of the twentieth-century. Headquartered in Burnham's Ellicott Square Building, the office of August Esenwein and James A. Johnson was a skilled practitioner in many popular architectural styles of the time including Classical, Georgian Revival and Art Nouveau styles.

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Born in Esenwein-Virnsberg, his family's ancestral homeland in southern Germany, August Esenwein attended the University at Stuttgart and later the Stuttgart Polytechnic University, graduating in 1879. At the time, German schools were known to provide excellent education in engineering, and the technical, construction-related aspects of architecture. Esenwein then went to Paris where he trained as a draftsman in an architectural atelier. While he may not have received Beaux-Arts training in Germany, it is likely that the method and philosophy would have been presented to him in France. Esenwein arrived in Buffalo around 1880 where he found work as a draftsman and worked as an engineer in the office of the Delaware & Western Railroad. In this office, he won an architectural competition for his design of the first Buffalo Music Hall in 1882.

Johnson was also not a Buffalo-area native, having been born in Syracuse, NY in 1865. Like his partner, he trained in several architectural offices including the offices of Buffalo architects Edward A. Kent and Joseph Lyman Silsbee as well as the New York City offices of Richard Morris Hunt and McKim Mead and White in 1890. Johnson arrived in Buffalo in 1892 where he soon partnered with James Marling (the former partner of Silsbee) where he designed the Alexander Main Curtiss House at 780 West Ferry Street in 1895 (potentially NRE).

The firm of Esenwein and Johnson was formed in 1897. While Esenwein specialized in construction and engineering, it appears Johnson focused on the ornamental aspects of the firm's designs. Together, the firm designed a wide-variety of buildings including the infamous Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition in 1901 where President McKinley was assassinated. Other buildings include the Art Nouveau-styled Ansonia Building (1905, contributing to the certified Theater Historic District) and Calumet Building (1906) in Buffalo, Lafayette High School (1901, NR 1980), the elegant General Electric Tower (1912, NR 2008), the Niagara Hotel in Niagara Falls, NY (1923, NR 2008), and the daylight factory the M. Wile and Company Building (1924, NR 2000). In addition, the firm designed numerous residences for prominent local clients and other buildings throughout Western New York.

In 1903 according to a building permit, Oliver J. Beyer hired the firm, fresh from their success at the Pan-American Exposition, to design the new Baldwin Building at 109 Genesee Street. During this same period other projects in Buffalo included many which featured a classical-derived ornamental design program. Notable projects going on include the construction of the Beaux-Arts Classical Charles W. Goodyear House at 888 Delaware (Green & Wicks, 1902), the Renaissance Revival Lafayette High School (Esenwein and Johnson, 1901-03, NR 1980), and Green & Wicks' temple fronted Highland Lodge #835 / Central Presbyterian Church Community Center at 2456 Main Street (1904-05). Perhaps also, given the strong German ethnic background of the local community (refer to the next section), the German-native August Esenwein was commissioned. Having one of Buffalo's most prominent architectural firms design a relatively

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small building on Genesee Street reflects the neighborhood's prominence in the early 1900s. This was a building which was highly visible to the throngs of market shoppers, and only an elegant and stylish building- no matter the size- would suit the high-profile commercial location, it would appear.

Esenwein and Johnson were among the elite architectural offices in Western New York at the turn of the twentieth-century, and had many reputable projects to their name. Esenwein died in 1926 after a year-long illness, and Johnson continued the firm, partnering with Frank B. Kelly. After Johnson's death in 1939, Kelly finally dissolved the company in 1942.

Richard A. Waite, Architect

Richard Alfred Waite was one of Buffalo's most prominent architects of the mid to late nineteenth-century. Waite was responsible for many of Buffalo's most recognizable buildings of the late 1900s, and also achieved international fame as an architect of several major projects across Canada. Today few of Waite's masterpieces remain standing in Buffalo, and in fact all of his most prominent public buildings have been lost. Many of his elegant cast iron designs succumbed to later urban development in the twentieth-century, yet the appreciation of Waite as one of the masters of architectural design in the Great Lakes region is growing.

Born in a poor neighborhood in London, England in 1848, Waite and his family emigrated to the United States in 1857, choosing to make their home in the growing City of Buffalo. Waite's father, Charles, was employed as a partner in the firm of Clapp, Matthews and Waite, a printing house responsible for the *Buffalo Morning Express* newspaper. Following the untimely death of his mother in 1862, the Waite family suffered a downturn and Charles lost his partnership in the printing company. Given his family's difficult personal and financial status, young Richard was forced to seek employment working as a brass finisher, rather than pursuing education, as a means to support his struggling family. Richard was forced to give up the dreams of his father who had wanted his son to become an engineer.

By 1866, Richard Waite had moved to New York City. Despite his lack of formal education, Waite would soon be given the opportunity to learn about engineering as an apprentice, securing a position working for John Ericsson, a prominent maritime engineer and designer of the famous iron-clad ship the *U.S.S. Monitor*. This experience encouraged Waite to pursue the field of architecture, and Waite would then become employed as a draftsman in the office of architect John Kellum, one of the most prominent architects in New York City during the 1860s. Kellum was especially adept in designing iron-front buildings; a method which applied a decorative cast iron cladding to a brick constructed building. The cast iron was then painted to resemble fine stone, making it a relatively inexpensive surface treatment with unlimited decorative possibilities. Kellum was particularly

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fond of using classical elements in his designs, which he created for several prominent banks, insurance companies, office buildings and other structures around the city.

By early 1868, Waite returned to Buffalo, bringing his new experiences with engineering and architecture with him. Waite initially was unable to open his own architectural office in Buffalo, and it seemed that Waite's career was off to a slow start. His fortunes would change, however, with his 1869 marriage to Sarah Holloway, daughter of prominent local contractor Isaac Holloway who had substantial contracts and connections with the City of Buffalo. Through Holloway's connections, Waite was given commissions to design several schools, firehouses, police stations and other city buildings. Waite's earliest known project was the Public School 32 on Cedar Street designed in the late 1870s, and eventually Waite was able to establish his own architectural practice in the American Block at 402 Main Street.

In 1872 Waite won a design competition for the new Trinity Episcopal Church at Delaware and Johnson Park, beating out several prominent architects including architectural superstar, H.H. Richardson. Although this building was never constructed, this competition did bring new attention to Waite's work. Waite was also hired by the Commercial Advertiser newspaper to prepare an alternate design for the new City and County Hall Building (1870-1876), which was already under construction, after the design of Rochester architect Andrew J. Warner faced growing opposition. Although the construction of the building continued according to Warner's design, this gave Waite an initial experience with the design of large buildings.

Waite's reputation was growing quickly in the 1870s, and Waite was awarded the contract to design the German Insurance Building (1874-75, demolished 1957), the largest office building in Buffalo at the time of its design. Showcasing Waite's training with Kellum, the German Insurance Building, located on a prominent site overlooking Lafayette Square, was a frothy, multi-layered six-story building which introduced the fashionable Second Empire Style to Buffalo. Constructed of brick, what could have been a solid mass of masonry building was lightened with the textural play of cast iron columns, pilasters and arches across the building's two primary street facades. A stylish mansard roof with elaborate dormer windows and delicate cast iron cresting, created a signature silhouette for the building on the Buffalo skyline. This statement piece of modern architecture in the 1870s cemented the young Waite's identity as one of Buffalo's most popular architects.

Soon after the building's completion, Waite moved his offices to Room 13 of the German Insurance Building, which he would occupy for two decades. In this office, Waite established a small architectural office which would be responsible for his subsequent prominent work. His younger brother William T. Waite worked in the office, but perhaps Waite's most famous draftsman was Louise Blanchard. Blanchard spent five years working for Waite and learning the architectural trade,

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before leaving the office to establish her own practice in 1881. After marrying fellow Waite draftsman, Robert A. Bethune, Louise Blanchard Bethune became a partner in the firm of Bethune, Bethune and Fuchs with her husband and became the first professional woman architect in the United States. Louise Blanchard Bethune was responsible for the design of several prominent projects across Buffalo, most notably the elegant and modern Lafayette Hotel (1904, NRE) which faced Lafayette Square catty-corner to the German Insurance Building.

Waite designed a wide variety of buildings following the German Insurance Building. Although the massive Pierce's Palace Hotel (1876-78), another masterpiece of Second Empire cast iron design, was destroyed by fire in 1881 shortly after its construction, Waite had many other buildings throughout the city. The five-story W.H. Glenny & Sons Building (1877, contributing building to NPS certified local Joseph Ellicott Historic District, 1979) located at 257 Main Street is the last remaining cast iron fronted building in Buffalo. Waite, with the help of his brother-in-law John A. Holloway, constructed three small mansard roof cottages on Pennsylvania Street (extant in modified condition), one of which served as Waite's own home for over twenty-five years. Waite also designed several stately Second Empire mansions including the Farrar House at 506 Delaware Avenue (1877, contributing to Allentown Historic District, NR 1980) and the Frank Hamlin House at 420 Franklin Street (1877, contributing to Allentown Historic District). Waite also designed one of the city's rare examples of the Stick Style in the George Williams House at 249 North Street (1877, contributing to Allentown Historic District). Waite returned to his love of brick construction in the Phillip Becker Mansion at 534 Delaware Avenue (1887-88, contributing to Allentown Historic District) which was designed in a vaguely Queen Anne and Italian Renaissance style. Becker was then serving as Mayor of the City of Buffalo. In 1885, Waite also designed the spectacular Walden-Myer Mausoleum located in Buffalo's Forest Lawn Cemetery (1850, NR 1990) which featured a unique spherical globe pinnacle crowning the stone building.

While Waite was a popular residential architect, he also continued his work on larger civic buildings, and the architect would soon gain an international reputation. He turned to the Richardson Romanesque style for his design for the new Buffalo Music Hall (1885-87, demolished) which served as a concert venue and was noted as a social center for the German community. Waite soon gained the attention of Canadian officials by designing several commercial buildings in Toronto, and was hired to design the Ontario Parliament Buildings (1886-1892) in Queen's Park, Toronto.

While his career took off in Canada, Waite also continued his work in Buffalo. In 1889 Waite was charged with the design of the White Brothers Livery Stable on Jersey Street in Buffalo. What could have been a simple, utilitarian building, in the hands of a master like Waite, became a unique building with a rusticated first floor, gabled corner bays and a decorative panel inscribed with the owner's names flanked by horse heads. Waite also designed the Grosvenor Library

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(1892-95, demolished) at the corner of Franklin and Edward Streets. The stately Italian Renaissance styled brick and stone building featured a prominent round corner tower. Waite also was charged with the design for the Women's Education and Industry Union Building (1892-94, demolished) which stood at the corner of Niagara Square and Delaware Avenue. During this same period, while Waite at the height of his career designing and constructing the Grosvenor Library and Women's Education and Industry Union, he was also hired by Mrs. Frederike Giesser to design the mixed-use commercial and residential Werner Photography Building at 101-103 Genesee Street in 1895. Although the architect had a large and thriving office at the end of the nineteenth-century, it was remarked that it was "Mr. Waite's safe rule to undertake no more than he can personally perform or supervise," indicating his high level of involvement in all his office's projects.⁷

Waite continued to receive several large commissions including the Canada Life Assurance Building (1895-96) and the Grant Trunk Railway Building (1899-1902) in Montreal, Canada, but his career had reached its zenith in the 1890s and projects were harder to come by after the turn of the century. Personal and financial troubles forced Waite to sell his Pennsylvania Street home and relocate his office into a less expensive space in the German Insurance Building which he himself designed. Waite relocated briefly to New York City about 1905 to work as a map draftsman, perhaps as a chance to start over. On January 7, 1911, Richard A. Waite died of pneumonia at the age of 62, and was returned for burial in Buffalo's Forest Lawn Cemetery (1850, NR 1990).

Today, few of Waite's buildings remain standing in Buffalo and Toronto, and glimpses of his architectural genius are relegated largely to photographs. As building technologies and architectural tastes changed, steel framed skyscrapers and modern development replaced his more diminutive Second Empire and Victorian-era buildings. The Glenny Building at 257 Main Street remains as the sole heir of Waite's mastery of cast iron architecture, and although he was dubbed a "dreamer in iron" by his own son, Waite's numerous cast iron buildings have now been lost. Several of Waite's residential works remain, protected by the Allentown Historic District in Buffalo, and the Ontario Parliament Buildings also remain in Toronto. Buffalo is fortunate to retain one of the few examples of Waite's commercial architecture in the Werner Photography Building at 101-103 Genesee Street, which although a relatively modest yet unique example of the architect's work, remains largely intact and serves as a reminder of one of Buffalo's greatest architects.

⁷ Untitled newspaper clipping from the Courier Express, dated September 1888 located on page 183 of Buffalo Scrapbook R: 91 B-5 series 6, volume 3. Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Scrapbook Collection.

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Louis Greenstein, Architect

Louis Greenstein was a well-known and respected architect who worked in Buffalo during the early and mid-twentieth-century. Like many architects of the time, Greenstein was a sort of “journeyman” architect, working on primarily smaller, less high-profile projects yet building a solid reputation throughout the community. Born in Buffalo on November 10, 1886, Greenstein worked as a junior draftsman in the office of McCreary, Wood and Bradney in Buffalo in 1907, as well as working as a senior draftsman with Green & Wicks in 1908. In 1908 Greenstein took a position as Chief Draftsman, Associate Designer and Superintendent of Construction with the firm of Edgar E. Joralemon who had offices in Niagara Falls, Buffalo and New York City. Greenstein appears to have transferred to Joralemon’s New York City office (where he worked until 1913), as he attended and graduated from Columbia University’s School of Architecture in 1909. Between 1913 and 1914, while continuing work at Columbia University, Greenstein was a part of the Columbia Atelier of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects, an organization in New York City which trained architects in the same atelier manner as the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. By 1914, Louis Greenstein returned to Buffalo to establish his own practice, setting up his office in the Adler and Sullivan-designed Prudential (Guaranty) Building (1895, NR 1973, NHL 1975).

Like many of his time, Greenstein was active in the Buffalo-area architectural scene. He was an active member of the Buffalo and Western NY Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), joining as a member in 1920 and serving as Secretary in 1920, Treasurer in 1922, and President in 1923-24. He also served on the Buffalo AIA chapter’s executive board for several terms and was the chapter’s historian for over 20 years. Greenstein published work on architecture for the Buffalo Torch Club, and in the New York State Architect magazine. He was a member of other organizations outside of architecture as well, including the Buffalo Consistory, Buffalo Torch Club, Buffalo Construction Club, Grand Lodge Free & Accepted Masons (F & AM) and several others. Greenstein was also an organizer of the Buffalo Rectagon atelier, a part of the Society of Beaux-Arts organization at which he had trained in New York City. The Rectagon atelier was led by several prominent architects in Buffalo between 1923 and 1940 and revived at the University at Buffalo following World War II in 1947-48, and helped to educate young Buffalo-area architects who could not attend an architectural college program or a Parisian or New York City-based Beaux-Arts program.

Greenstein’s work can be found throughout Buffalo and Western New York. Notable projects include the Coplan Mansion in Amherst, NY (1918-1919, Amherst Local Landmark 2007), Willowdale Country Club in Williamsville, NY now known as Westwood Country Club (1923), the Medical Arts Office Building in Buffalo (1925), Bryant & Stratton Business Institute/Tapestry Charter School (1925), Buffalo’s Temple Beth-David on Humboldt Parkway (1926), the Art Deco

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Lederman's Furniture Store building (1929) and the Niagara Memorial Park Chapel and Gates in Lewiston, NY (1937-38). Greenstein was also involved in the Kenfield Housing Project (1935-36), and the construction of Buffalo's Memorial Auditorium (1938-40, demolished). Beyond new construction, Greenstein worked on several early rehabilitation projects on historic buildings throughout Buffalo including work on the Stewart and Benson Travel Service Building at 501 Main Street (1957, building dates to ca. 1870s, contributing building to NPS certified 500 Block of Main local district) as well as his 1944/45 work to the H. Seeberg Building. Working in a time before historic preservation standards were written and where many small-scale historic buildings were demolished for new construction, Greenstein's work on rehabilitating and adapting historic buildings during the 1940s and 50s makes him perhaps an early preservation advocate.

Louis Greenstein also appears to have made other contributions to Buffalo, beyond his architectural work. He designed the flag and logo used during Buffalo's Old Home Week celebration in 1907. In 1924 a contest was held for a new flag for Buffalo, and out of seventy-three designs, Louis Greenstein's was selected. In 1925 he designed the official seal of the City of Buffalo. Louis Greenstein died in April 1972.

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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GENESEE GATEWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak Neighborhood

The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood has its origins as a rural area which was located on the north-eastern fringe of the Buffalo settlement areas. The first landowner in the area was Major Andre Andrews. Born in Cornwall, Connecticut on July 8, 1792 and trained as a lawyer, Major Andrews relocated to Buffalo in 1820 at a time when the city was rapidly growing, where his likely business was investing and dealing in real estate. His arrival was well timed; Major Andrews arrived in Buffalo only about 16 years after Joseph Ellicott formally laid out the city streets. He arrived at a time when Buffalo was quickly emerging as both a commercial and economic powerhouse following the heated battle and ultimate victory over the neighboring community of Black Rock for the western terminus of the Erie Canal, and the subsequent construction of the canal between 1817 and 1825. Major Andrews' first known land purchases were lots 202 and 203 bought from the Holland Land Company at the intersection of Genesee and Huron Streets (site of the current General Electric Tower) made in 1821, where he constructed his residence. He also purchased lots 120 to 132 totaling 79 acres at the edge of the growing village of Buffalo, including lots 131 and 132, in the area known as the "Outer Lots" of Ellicott's original 1804 street plan which would develop into the site of the Genesee Gateway buildings (see maps). While Genesee Street was a primary road leading east at the time, the lack of any other notable intersecting roads indicates that this area was largely unsettled field and farmland during the early 1820s.⁸ Andrews likely realized the potential for dividing and selling this land in the future, as the growth of Buffalo pushed into this area. Major Andrews became a significant figure in early Buffalo history and was active as a lawyer in addition to his real estate dealings. In 1824 he served as a Presidential elector (one of the popularly elected representatives, or electors, who formally elect the President and Vice President of the United States), and in 1826 began his term as a Trustee for the Village of Buffalo, which had a population just over 5,000 people at the time. In 1833, Major Andrews was elected as Buffalo's second mayor, serving a one year term in office. Major Andre Andrews died in Buffalo on August 18, 1834 after a bout of cholera, and is thought to be buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery.⁹

As the settlement in Buffalo continued to increase and expand in the wake of the burning of Buffalo in 1813 during the War of 1812, the developing Genesee-

⁸ On August 18, 1821 Genesee Street (or Busti Avenue at the time) was recorded as being 99 feet wide to Oak Street at the edge of the current Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood, then narrowing to 66 feet to the village line which was at about Locust Street to the east. This change in street width is a good indication of where the settled village area ended and the rural, unpopulated areas began. Bureau of Engineering. *Index of Records of Streets, Public Grounds, Waterways, Railroads, Gas Companies, Waterworks etc. of the City of Buffalo from 1814-1896*. Buffalo: Wenborne Sumner Company, 1896: 285.

⁹ Rizzo, Michael. *Through The Mayor's Eyes: The Only Complete History of the Mayors of Buffalo*. Buffalo: People's History Union, 2001.

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Ellicott-Oak neighborhood began to be settled by primarily German immigrants. Initial German settlers came to Buffalo via Pennsylvania, including John Kuecherer who was the first German settler to arrive in Buffalo in 1821. By the late 1820s many Germans began arriving directly from Germany and German regions of France in greater numbers, such as Jacob Siebold who was Buffalo's second German settler, arriving from Württemberg in 1822. Many of Buffalo's earliest German immigrants were from the Alsace region; this region was in the early 1800s under French control, despite sharing close cultural ties with Germany. The Alsace region was frequently a hot-spot for tension, aggression and conflict due to several hundred years of changing political control. Because of this political and social tension in the region, many people chose to leave the Alsace region to immigrate to the United States and seek prosperity in a new county. A combination of a rapidly increasing population coupled with a troubled economy due to the loss of valuable trading routes through Alsace, bypassing the politically troubled region for seaports along the Atlantic or Mediterranean, meant food shortages, a lack of housing and a few employment opportunities for younger Alsatians. The emigration out of Alsace to the United States appears to have begun in the late 1820s, with the 1840s and 1850s seeing the peak of this activity. During this period an entire industry for emigration from Alsace flourished; agents traveled throughout the region encouraging people to make the move to America to seek peace and new opportunities. For a fee, Alsatian individuals or entire families could be transported to the coast to board ships bound for the New World. One of the most active ports for this activity was Le Havre in France, which became a primary departure point for many Alsatians bound for America. Aided and encouraged by the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the resulting economic boom, Buffalo became the destination of many Alsatians, and by 1828 the wide-spread settlement of Germans in Buffalo began in earnest.

On June 19, 1826 Genesee Street was declared a public highway by the Village of Buffalo, marking increased settlement and growth along this corridor.¹⁰ As a major route in and out of the village, connected the city core at Niagara Square to the rural eastern regions outside the village, Genesee Street would have been a natural location for commercial development to occur as it was more highly traveled and visible. It was a midway point between the rural farmland further east and the rapidly growing Buffalo population and this area became a natural location for the transfer of farm produced goods to the growing consumer base. An 1828 map of the Village of Buffalo reflects that the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood, while still being located on the north-east fringe of Buffalo, had notable settlement (see maps). Early settlement of Germans was located primarily along Broadway and on Genesee Street, occupying these peripheral regions. In the 1830s and 1840s, nearly one-third of Buffalo's population was German, becoming a politically, culturally and socially significant group.¹¹

¹⁰ *Index of Records of Streets*, 286.

¹¹ James, Isabel Vaughan. "Some Outstanding Germans in Buffalo." Manuscript, BECHS.

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By the 1850s, people of German ancestry numbered about 15,000 of the approximately 42,000 total residents in the City of Buffalo. The German population in Buffalo was quickly becoming active in a wide variety of social, religious and business institutions. *Der Weltbuerger*, the first German language newspaper, was published in Buffalo beginning in 1837. The German Young Men's Association of Buffalo formed as a cultural organization in 1841 with the goal of maintaining and preserving German literature.¹² Germans also established other cultural organizations including the Liedertafel singing group in 1848, the first of several German singing groups, and the "Walhalla" lodge of the Odd Fellows society in 1849. The Buffalo German Insurance Company was established in 1867. The German community founded several banks, including the German Bank of Buffalo in 1871 and the German American Bank in 1882. To serve their religious needs in Buffalo, the German community founded many churches of a variety of faiths including the St. Louis Roman Catholic Church in 1832 and St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in 1851 located just north of the Washington Market on Washington Street. As the prominent German community continued to rise socially and economically, a wide variety of social, cultural, political and business institutions were founded and created to support the needs and interests of the community.

During this period, there began to emerge from the uniformly working-class German population in Buffalo a rising group of merchants who had seemingly become successful and wealthy rather suddenly. This rising class of German businessmen had largely remained in their homeland until they had received an education and had learned a trade, arriving in Buffalo as highly skilled and intelligent workers. Many German immigrants brought their skills as butchers, bakers, millers, brewers, blacksmiths, tanners and grocers to the growing city and were able to forge successful and profitable businesses located in the heart of their ethnic neighborhoods, including along Genesee Street.¹³

It is in this climate that the growth and character of the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood developed by the 1840s into a self-sufficient commercial and residential center for many German immigrants. Spurred by the multitude of skilled tradesmen, retailers and producers coupled with the increasing needs of local residents, this neighborhood was a logical location for a public market. In 1856 the Washington Market (also referred to as the Chippewa Market) was established, located on the city block between Ellicott and Washington Streets at Chippewa Street just south of St. Michael's Church (original 1851, present

¹² The German Young Men's Association engaged architect August Esenwein to construct the first Buffalo Music Hall building in 1882 at Franklin and Edward Streets, which demonstrates the German community's engagement with the cultural and architectural realm.

¹³ German families in the buildings at 113-125 Genesee Street include the Urbans, the Datts, the Wagner family, and the Korn family, who were all among the early founders of businesses in this neighborhood. Louis Hagmeier and Ambrose Hertkorn on North Oak Street were also of German descent and among the area's earliest residents. Other prominent German residents included the Fischers on Genesee Street, and Peter Mesner and Lorenz Gillig on Ellicott Street. Goldman, Mark. *High hopes: the rise and decline of Buffalo*, New York: Albany: State University of New York, 1983: 76-77.

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building 1867).¹⁴ The market cleared what had been a sparsely-settled block which had contained a few assorted frame structures as well as the one-story Greek Revival-style Public School 13 (1838), which was subsequently relocated about a block south on Oak Street (1891-1915, NR 2005).¹⁵ This neighborhood over the span of two decades transformed from Major Andrews' greenfields to the pre-Civil War era "suburb" of lightly populated settlement into a post-Civil War commercial center for the expanding metropolitan zone of Buffalo. The large market, which covered over 2½ acres, was known as the largest market west of the Hudson River.

The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood became a more thriving commercial district based largely on its proximity to the Washington Market. The market was a significant center for life in Buffalo. Owned and operated by the City, it featured hundreds of vendors, selling a wide variety of produce, meats, cheeses, flowers and other products, most produced by the skilled local German community. The centerpiece of the market was a large brick Romanesque Revival market building which housed the stalls for dozens of Buffalo's finest butchers. Against the exterior walls of the building were housed stalls for poultry, butter, cheese, fruits and vegetable vendors, and stalls for merchants of crockery, tins, knit products, and other assorted products were arranged around the block. Overall, the market was a center of activity, noise and socializing, especially on the primary market days of Tuesdays, Thursdays and especially Saturdays, when the market was so crowded that moving around the more than 400 stalls was especially difficult.

Because of the significance of the Washington Market as a center for trade, commerce and business, buildings in close proximity to the retail area also reflect the commercial character of the market. The earliest settlement in the area appears to have been predominantly wood frame residential structures, which were adapted for use as commercial buildings, and quickly replaced by more substantial commercial buildings beginning in the mid-1800s. A majority of the buildings constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries adjacent to the Washington Market along Ellicott, Genesee and Washington Streets were brick commercial buildings which featured residential apartments above. One of the most notable buildings in this area is the Market Arcade Building (1892, E.B. Green, contributing to NPS-certified Theater Historic District)

¹⁴ St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church was founded in 1851 following a schism in the nearby St. Louis RC Church. Rev. Lucas Caveg and 19 other German-speaking families splintered from that church to form St. Michael's, constructing a small wood-frame church on the church's present site on Washington Street near Chippewa Street. Soon after, the parish founded a grammar school to educate the children of the local German community. Records indicate that the present church building was constructed in 1867, and in 1870 the parish established Canisius College, a Jesuit institution, to the north of the church. The college would relocate to its present location on Main Street in 1910. St. Michael's also founded Canisius High School. Following a devastating fire resulting from being struck by a lightning bolt in 1962, the parish rebuilt the building utilizing the remaining exterior shell, reconstructing the church's signature domed tower. Refer to Condren, Dave. "St. Michael's Church, Jesuits' original base in area, to mark 150th year with Mass." *Buffalo News*. 29 Sep 2001, A-7.

¹⁵ Refer to the State and National Register of Historic Places nomination for School 13 (03NR05199), section 8, page 1.

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which is a Beaux-Arts Classical style arcaded indoor commercial building which connected Main Street to the west with Washington Street and the Washington Market to the East. This neighborhood also featured streets which were lined by commercial buildings dating from the 1850s to the early twentieth-century, typically featuring additional commercial vendors. Businesses in the immediate Washington Market area include the McClure Bloesser & Eggert Boot and Shoe Factory, P. Messner's Chair Factory, and several saloons and boarding houses on Ellicott Street. In the same area were also located George Urban Jr.'s Urban Roller Mills (founded in 1881) and his father's retail flour shop on Oak Street. Genesee Street was also lined with commercial buildings and included businesses such as Frank Pfennig, retailer of tobacco products at 95 Genesee Street, cutler Gabriel Giesser at 99 Genesee Street and Henry Urban who ran a successful grocery store located at 123 Genesee Street for many decades. Because of the attraction of the Washington Market, this neighborhood around Genesee, Ellicott and Oak Streets was one of Buffalo's thriving commercial and retail centers throughout the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries.

By the late nineteenth-century, the stretch of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets became one of the most recognizable centers for photography in Buffalo. While Main Street had served as Buffalo's earliest hub of photography studios, and remained as such throughout the nineteenth-century, by the late nineteenth-century new buildings constructed along Genesee Street, with primary north-facing facades, were ideally situated for photography studios due to their orientation to the north-west and their proximity to the low, open space of the market. The Caulkins Building at 85-87-89 Genesee Street (partially extant) was the earliest, constructed in 1886 by master architect, F.W. Caulkins. Combining both utility and function with artistic design, the Caulkins Building's most identifiable feature was the convex "waterfall" skylight at the center of the building which brought additional north light into the upper studio spaces, advertising on its façade its unique interior function. In 1895 Mrs. Frederike Giesser commissioned Richard A. Waite, one of Buffalo's preeminent architects, to design the elegant Werner Photography Building at 101-103 Genesee Street (extant). Like the Caulkins Building, the Werner Building's signature feature is its expansive curving skylight. No other buildings like these are known to have been constructed elsewhere in Buffalo, and these buildings are the only known currently existing examples of specialized, high-style photography studio in the City of Buffalo. Besides the neighborhood's two most identifiable photography buildings, the area also hosted several smaller individual photographers as well. 110 Genesee Street (extant) contained a third-floor photography studio in 1916, photographer Frank Hillman resided at 123 Genesee Street (extant) in 1880, and the studio of Woodson & Wallace was listed at 99 Genesee Street (extant) in 1925. Not only was the neighborhood associated with the thriving market and commercial activity of the day, but it also can be identified as Buffalo's most elegant and sophisticated centers of late-nineteenth-century photography.

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Over the past few decades, this neighborhood has declined due to several factors. When the New York State Thruway opened in 1959, many traditional commercial neighborhoods in Buffalo saw the migration of stores and retailers following the population growth to the suburban regions. The opening of the Kensington Expressway (Route 33) in the 1960s which connected downtown Buffalo to the eastern suburbs also served to channel both residents and businesses out of the crowded urban core into the segregated, mono-use suburban world. Although thought to be the solution to a city's crowded, dense, dirty and busy city streets, communities like the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood suffered greatly both economically and culturally as a result of these new highways and with the opening of the Elm-Oak arterial of the Kensington Expressway in 1967/68. The neighborhood saw a dramatic loss of commercial tenants as a result of this trend, and the Washington Market itself closed in 1965, after several failed attempts to boost business and the construction of new, modern market buildings, as business dwindled.¹⁶ It was also generally an age which saw the transformation of commercialism, with the separation of manufacturing, sales and corporate headquarters to separate facilities. St. Michael's RC Church, one of the centerpoints of the traditionally German community, blames the "death" of the church directly on the construction of the neighboring Elm-Oak arterial, charging it with the removal of hundreds of houses, and therefore parishioners, from the church neighborhood.¹⁷ During the 1960s and 1970s, this area faced the Urban Renewal wrecking ball, and numerous historic buildings were demolished to make way for "shovel-ready" parking lots which dot this area of the city. The Washington Market itself was razed in 1965 shortly after it closed and now is a large parking area. As a result of demolitions and the construction of the Elm-Oak arterial, the blocks along the east of the neighborhood at Oak Street have been cleared of all historic fabric, with either vacant lots or new sterile, modern development being constructed. The downturn of commerce in the area as well as the increased vehicular traffic from the Kensington Expressway have also contributed to the general neglect and decay of the architecture of the neighborhood. The Genesee Gateway Historic District buildings along Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets, along with several key buildings along Ellicott and Oak just to the north on this block, constitute one of Buffalo's last remaining intact nineteenth- and early-twentieth century commercial streetscapes reflecting downtown's prominence when Buffalo was a major American city. Today, this contiguous row of historic commercial buildings marks the point at which the suburban fringe of the city accessed via the highway transforms into Buffalo's Downtown, a region quickly blossoming with new rehabilitation and development including new lofts along the Elm-Oak arterial and on Chippewa Street which are returning residential living to the neighborhood. In this capacity, they act as a "gateway" welcoming suburban travelers into Downtown.

¹⁶ "Washington Market to Close July 1, Banas Announces." *Buffalo Evening News*. 11 Jan 1965.

¹⁷ Today, the church has about 200 registered members. Refer to Condren, A-7.

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In the face of the decline of the neighborhood, the promise of the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood envisioned for the past two decades is now taking shape. Despite somewhat shabby exteriors, the buildings along the south side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets, known today as the Genesee Gateway Historic District, have been considered for rehabilitation projects dating back to the 1980s. Willard A. Genrich purchased the collection of buildings, hoping to transform them into “The Next Great Place” as part of a campaign to locate a new convention center in the neighborhood. In a failed attempt to save and transform the buildings at the eastern end of the block, Genrich replaced the existing structural systems with steel framing, attempting to stabilize and reuse the building and to bring their fire resistance to modern standards which unfortunately did not take the “first, do no harm” stance of current rehabilitation practices. Genrich posed concepts of turning the buildings into housing, offices and restaurants, with no success. Jessie Schnell Fisher of Triangle Development purchased the buildings at the western end of the block at 85-87-89 and 91-95 Genesee Street in an attempt to secure the buildings for what turned out to be a misguided attempt at rehabilitation. However before plans could develop and begin, the buildings were damaged in a November 2002 windstorm, halting any work. At that time, Genrich-owned buildings at the eastern end fared no better. He ended up in Buffalo Housing Court in 2006 where he was found guilty of three building code violations and fined after the City of Buffalo threatened to take the buildings by eminent domain in 2004 to demolish them.¹⁸ The vacant buildings stood as reminders of Buffalo’s once-great commercial heritage as well as symbols of the unsuccessful attempts at rehabilitation; the only potential future for these dead buildings appeared to be demolition, creating more vacant lots or stark, modern low-rise office buildings in the neighborhood.

Today, there is one last opportunity for the rehabilitation and revitalization of the once vibrant Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood. Purchased in 2007 by Genesee Gateway LLC, the collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century commercial buildings known as the Genesee Gateway is being developed into a multi-million dollar commercial and office complex which promises to bring new activity and business to the neglected neighborhood. Unlike previous attempts, the new design based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards gracefully respects the form, footprints and design of the original historic fabric, while once again transforming the buildings into viable new space which functions for today’s commercial and spatial needs.

The Genesee Gateway Historic District retains numerous significant examples of commercial architecture from a period which spans over 120 years. While this neighborhood features a wide variety of architectural styles from simple, builder-designed utilitarian Italianate examples to elegant architect-designed, highly styled Beaux-Arts examples, the district has a period of architectural significance which spans over 120 years between ca. 1840s and 1965. This significant period

¹⁸ Linstedt, Sharon. “Historic but vacant Genesee St. strip for sale.” *Buffalo News*. 7 July 2006; D-7. Also Linstedt, Sharon. “Purchase of 99 Genesee confirmed.” *Buffalo News*. 15 Aug 2007; B-2.

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of history for the City of Buffalo at the height of its national importance reflects dramatic changes in commercial trade and commercial architecture, shifting from small owner-occupied shops built for simple functionality, to larger shops which created ample glitzy showrooms. Several of the buildings, including the Schwinn-Mandel Building (111 Genesee Street) and the H. Seeberg Building (113-125 Genesee Street) also combined manufacturing with the retail shop. The proposed Genesee Gateway Historic District reflects a significant period of Buffalo's history, representing the city at the pinnacle of its international prominence. This district reflects a largely intact and contiguous collection of rare, remaining and highly threatened small-scale commercial buildings; buildings which are disappearing rapidly from Buffalo's urban center.

SIGNIFICANT BUSINESSES IN THE GENESEE GATEWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT

As a hub of trade, commerce and business in the City of Buffalo beginning in the 1850s and lasting for roughly a century, the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood had thousands of commercial enterprises. A majority of the businesses were small, specialized endeavors. Given the German background which predominated in the neighborhood, many of the businesses were owned and operated by people who brought their training to Buffalo which they had learned back in Germany and Eastern Europe. This neighborhood contained a wide range of trades and shops, and like many city neighborhoods at the time, provided all the necessities which consumers needed within walking distance.

The larger Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood contained several grain merchant businesses during this mid-1900s period as well, and the neighborhood seems to have been a center for milled grain, animal feeds and other food stuffs, supporting the business and merchants located in the Washington Market proper. The neighborhood also contained many grocery stores including those of Henry Urban at 123 Genesee Street which began in the 1840s and that of Joseph Weter who operated his business during the 1860s from 91 Genesee Street. August Adler ran a butcher shop from 103 Genesee Street in 1861. If sweets were what a customer desired, they need look no further than John Mesnard's confectionary shop located at 115 Genesee Street in 1864.

This area of the City also contained several cabinet and furniture makers. In an area before specialized furniture stores and mass-produced wares, specialized woodworkers and joiners crafted quality furniture such as storage cupboards and cabinets, chairs, upholstered furniture, tables, and beds- anything the nineteenth-century family needed. Since Buffalo had a thriving local lumber trade since the City's founding, ample local woods as well as even imported lumber, would have been available for craftsmen to work with. Peter Mesner established one of the neighborhood's earliest furniture and cabinetry factories and shops in the 1850s. William Denzinger also briefly operated a furniture shop from 91 Genesee Street from the 1870s until the late 1880s.

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This was a neighborhood where local residents and shoppers from throughout Buffalo could come to purchase nearly anything they needed in the 1900s. In addition to grocers and food markets, people could stop at John Armbruster's tin shop at 123 Genesee Street, try on the latest hats at August Datt's store at 113 Genesee Street next door, make a stop at August Holzhausen's blacksmith shop on the corner of Genesee and Oak Streets, or stop in for a drink at George Aigner's saloon located across the street from the Washington Market at 435 Ellicott Street. If you needed shoes or boots, patrons had a variety of choices from either Charles P. Korn's shop at 119 Genesee Street, Christoph Wagner's store at 121 Genesee Street or the McClure, Bloesser & Eggert boot and shoe manufactory located at 439 Ellicott Street (1880s). Customers could sample the latest styles of umbrellas and walking sticks crafted by Jacob J. Schwinn from his store at 111 Genesee Street in the 1870s. Shoppers had their choice when it came to purchasing or repairing their cutlery, knives and utensils, either patronizing Jonathan Sigwald's shop at 95 Genesee Street (1860s) or Gabriel Giesser's at 99 Genesee Street (1870s-80s).

Beyond simple necessities for daily life during nineteenth-century city life, customers could purchase a variety of luxury goods in the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood as well. The area boasted a wide variety of shops which specialized in cigars and tobacco products, including Charles Beck at 87 Genesee Street (1860s) and Frank Pfennig's shop located at 95 Genesee Street in the 1860s-80s. Watches and fine-quality jewelry could be purchased from Charles Worst at his shop at the corner of Genesee and Ellicott Street (1860s) or at the shop of Fred J. Dorn at 87 Genesee Street (1886-1950s). Merchant Gotthilf Buckenmaier specialized in "hair goods," or the elegant and often elaborate wigs and hairpieces fashionable for women, operating from his second-floor shop at 113 Genesee Street from the 1890s until the 1950s.

The neighborhood also contained several larger retailers in the twentieth-century. Their presence reflects the transition in commerce from small, specialized dealers who manufactured on-site their own products into larger retailers who sold a variety of good and products and often did manufacturing off-site in a specialized manufactory building. Perhaps an early example of this trend is the H. Seeberg company. In 1929, Harry Seeberg established the men's clothing company which would bear his name in the 119 Genesee Street commercial space. Born in Russia, Seeberg immigrated with his family at age 2. The son and brother of successful clothing retailers, each in their own right, Harry Seeberg founded his own store in Depew in 1910. Seeberg first appears to have opened his shop from 119 Genesee Street and quickly began expanding his operations. By 1937, Seeberg grew his factory and retail shop on Genesee Street, opening portions of the interior walls to allow access between the previous smaller buildings and creating one large commercial space located between 113-125 Genesee Street. A ca. 1940s photograph reflects this enlargement, and the building features large, 1930s/40s era storefront facades which largely modified any earlier nineteenth-century commercial storefronts. This storefront was likely

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installed in 1934 or 1935 to the 113-117 storefronts and to the 121 and possibly 123-125 storefronts in 1945 as noted in several building permits issued to Harry Seeberg. Some manner of darkly colored material, perhaps glass tile or even marble, ran the entire width of the Genesee Street storefront façade, with metal letters spelling out the Seeberg name. Long advertisement signboards were installed along the entire length of the building on upper floors, serving to visually unify the various earlier architectural components and presumably overcoming the previous quaint individual storefronts with massive signage signifying retail power in the 1930s. The elegant 1870s-era slate mansard roof with its round-headed dormer windows is also clearly visible, marking the location of both the Genesee Street-Oak Street corner and the location of the primary entrance as well.¹⁹ While the Seeberg company contained on-site clothing manufacturing on the upper levels, the Genesee Street location soon became the company's only factory and featured other satellite locations around Western New York which served as outlets for Seeberg products. The building itself also reflects the physical commercial transformation occurring in the 1930s-1950s era, where retailers required large, open showrooms to feature a wider variety of ready-made goods and products, rather than producing special, custom orders for each individual consumer.

NOTABLE FIGURES IN THE GENESEE GATEWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Like many neighborhoods in Buffalo, the Genesee Gateway Historic District featured a tightly-knit collection of long-term residents who shared close relationships. Since a majority of the families who originally settled in the neighborhood shared a common Alsatian and German background, culture and language, the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood developed as a center for Buffalo's emerging German population. Many of the characters who lived, worked, worshiped and played in the district were also some of Buffalo's leading citizens, businessmen, and politicians. Each building in the district reveals a fascinating glimpse into the lives of Buffalo's middle class merchants and tradesmen, and how their lives in business in the neighborhood contributed to their rise to prominence in the city-wide arena. Below are a few snapshots of the lives of some of the most noteworthy figures to emerge from the Genesee Gateway Historic District.

Fred J. Dorn, jeweler

One of Buffalo's leading figures who emerged first and early on from the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood was jeweler Frederick J. Dorn, who

¹⁹ At the time of his death in 1962, Harry Seeberg had expanded the H. Seeberg, Inc. company to include six retail locations at 1094 Broadway, 333 Main, 2231 Harlem Road in Cheektowaga, 3670 Delaware Avenue in the Town of Tonawanda, 1219 Abbot Road in Lackawanna and his flagship store on Genesee Street which also functioned as the company's factory. Seeberg also owned and operated Charlie Baker, Inc. men's clothing shops which had two locations- one being located in 101-103 Genesee Street just down the block from the H. Seeberg Building. Refer to "Harry Seeberg, 74, Head of Firm, Dies." Courier Express. 29 Oct 1962, 28. Also refer to 1960 and 1961 city directories.

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maintained a shop at 87 Genesee Street for over 40 years. Fred Dorn, as he was known, would become the longest occupying tenant of the Caulkins Building. Born February 24, 1856 to Philip and Mary Dorn who were originally from Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany, Fred Dorn was a prominent member of Buffalo's German/German-American community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Dorn was well educated, having attended the local St. Michael's School, City School 14, and St. Joseph's College. He studied watchmaking and repair, working for prominent local firms such as King & Eisele and Hiram Hotchkiss in Buffalo, before spending time in New York City at age 18 studying his craft. He also worked for six years in Philadelphia in the watch and jewelry business, and spent a year in Cincinnati before returning to Buffalo. In 1886, at the age of 25, Dorn established his own jewelry and watchmaking business in the newly constructed Caulkins Building at 87 Genesee Street in the central and largest commercial space of the building. Following the establishment of his own company Dorn continued to pursue his education in his career, visiting the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in order to view the mechanical displays. Dorn was well respected, and by many accounts was an honest and fair man with a pleasant demeanor and many friends throughout the city. He was a member of several organizations including the Order of Elks, the Eagles, the Moose Lodge, the Amicus Club, and other associations. Dorn was also active in the German community as a long time member of the Orpheus, the Sangerbund, the Teutonia Liederkrantz, and the Buffalo Gymnastics Club. It was also noted that Dorn took great pride in actively promoting the betterment of the German community. He ran his jewelry shop at 87 Genesee Street until his death on January 3, 1930, and the Fred J. Dorn jewelry shop continued on under his name in the same location until the 1950s. Dorn was such a beloved and significant figure in Buffalo at the time of his death that the honorary pall bearers at his funeral included the mayor of Buffalo at the time, Mayor Charles E. Roesch, former mayor Frank X. Schwab, Surrogate Judge Louis B. Hart, and Judge Louis Braunlein among other prominent men.²⁰

Jacob J. Schwinn, umbrella maker

For many years, Jacob J. Schwinn was one of Buffalo's only makers of fine umbrellas, parasols and walking sticks. Schwinn relocated his umbrella and parasol manufactory from 137 East Genesee Street into the elegant new building at 111 Genesee Street and appears in the 1878 Buffalo City Directory at this new address. Schwinn advertised as a manufacturer and repair shop for fine canes, umbrellas, parasols and walking sticks. He came from a family of German

²⁰ Mayors Schwab and Roesch, both emerging from Buffalo's German community, lived and worked nearby the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak district in eastern Buffalo and as a prominent brewer and butcher, would have been familiar figures in the market community. Mayors Louis P. Fuhmann and Philip Becker also grew up in the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood. Active pall bearers included Charles and Fred Denzinger, who appear to be related to William and Charles Denzinger who owned the neighboring 91 Genesee Street for many years at the end of the nineteenth-century. While the exact relationship is unknown, this seems to be an indication that Dorn was not only well known amongst a virtual "who's- who" of Buffalo's political sphere, but was also well regarded by his neighbors and local community.

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umbrella makers, which included his brothers and father John W. Schwinn who ran his own umbrella shop located at 521 Washington Street in Buffalo, and for a time Jacob and John Schwinn operated the only two umbrella manufactory and repair shops in the City of Buffalo. Jacob Schwinn was a prolific advertiser in the local newspapers and city directories, and he devised a unique logo which depicted a buffalo shielded by an umbrella. His advertisements appear in many sources and likely would have been familiar to many people since the use of parasols, umbrellas and walking sticks was commonplace in the 1800s. By 1883, Schwinn partnered with his brothers, Frank R. and Frederick E. Schwinn, in the firm of Jacob J. Schwinn and Bros. Jacob Schwinn died young in 1884 at the age of about 34, and it appears that his brothers took over the umbrella shop at 111 Genesee Street in 1885. The 1889 city directory notes that Frank R. Schwinn was operating an umbrella shop from the building, carrying on the family tradition.

Harry Seeberg, clothier

Harry Seeberg was one of the neighborhood's most successful twentieth-century merchants, specializing in the on-site manufacture and sales of fine men's clothing at the H. Seeberg, Inc. store at 113-125 Genesee Street and also under the Charlie Baker name at 101-103 Genesee Street. Born in Russia, Seeberg immigrated with his family to Buffalo at age 2. The son and brother of successful clothing retailers, each in their own right, Harry Seeberg founded his own store in Depew in 1910. Seeberg first appears to have opened his shop at 119 Genesee Street in 1929 and quickly began expanding his operations. By 1937, Seeberg grew his factory and retail shop on Genesee Street, opening portions of the interior walls to allow access between the previous smaller buildings and creating one large commercial space located between 113-125 Genesee Street. A ca. 1940s photograph reflects this enlargement, and the building features large, 1930s/40s era storefront facades which largely modified any earlier nineteenth-century commercial storefronts. This storefront was likely installed in 1934 or 1935 to the 113-117 storefronts and to the 121 and possibly 123-125 storefronts in 1945 as noted in several building permits issued to Harry Seeberg. Some manner of darkly colored material, perhaps glass tile or even marble, ran the entire width of the Genesee Street storefront façade, with metal letters spelling out the Seeberg name. Like many of his generation, Seeberg was involved in his local community, acting as treasurer for the Temple Beth El on Richmond Avenue, which he had joined in 1920. Acting in such a role, Seeberg spearheaded a fundraising effort to construct a \$500,000 school and activities center at Sheridan Drive and Eggert Road in 1960. He was also a member of the Montefiore Club, the Variety Club of Buffalo and the Allied Theater Owners Association. Harry Seeberg was also the proprietor of the Charlie Baker, Inc. men's clothing company which operated two retail locations, one being located at 101-103 Genesee Street in the Werner Photography Building. He was also an active speculator in real estate, and his extensive holdings included part ownership in two drive-in movie theaters in the 1960s, one on Sheridan Drive

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near the Thruway and the other on Transit Road in Lockport. At the time of his death in 1962, Harry Seeberg had expanded the H. Seeberg, Inc. company to include six retail locations at 1094 Broadway, 333 Main, 2231 Harlem Road in Cheektowaga, 3670 Delaware Avenue in the Town of Tonawanda, 1219 Abbot Road in Lackawanna and his flagship store on Genesee Street which also functioned as the company's factory.

The Urban Family, business scions

Perhaps one of the most prominent families in the neighborhood was the Urban family. Originally hailing from Alsace like so many of the residents of the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak area, the Urban family would emerge by the mid-1800s as one of Buffalo's most prominent grain and milling retailers. The family's success would position them to dominate the milling business in Buffalo by the turn of the twentieth-century and become one of the most influential and recognized families. Even today, George Urban Boulevard in neighboring Cheektowaga, NY just outside of Buffalo is a reminder of the prominence of the Urban family.

George Urban Sr. was born in Alsace on August 14th, 1820 in the city of Woerth, where the Urban family were farmers. When he was fifteen, George Urban and his family, including father Phillip and mother Katherine (nee Gass) immigrated to the United States and relocated in Buffalo in 1835. The family purchased lands in the north-eastern part of Buffalo, which extended from the present Fillmore Avenue to Moselle Street. George Urban Sr. attended Buffalo public schools, and upon graduation, took a position with Manly Colton's general merchandise store at the corner of Main and Genesee Streets. Urban remained with Colton until 1846 when he relocated to the corner of Genesee and Oak Streets, at a time when the neighborhood was emerging as a prominent mercantile area in Buffalo, to establish his own flour milling business. Known as the "Urban Block," the commercial building also served as the family home. The elder Urban was active in many aspects of social life in the City, serving as a member of the Buffalo Board of Trade and Vice-President of the Western Savings Bank. Urban also served as Park Commissioner and was instrumental in aiding the creation of Humboldt Parkway and the Parade/Humboldt Park/ Martin Luther King Jr. Park established (part of the Olmsted Parks System NR 1982). In fact it was said that these Frederick Law Olmsted-designed parks "owe their existence to his energetic and persistent efforts at the time the Buffalo park system was planned."²¹ In his spare time, Urban was said to enjoy gardening and growing orchids, which were said to have been the finest in the City. George Urban Sr. died in Buffalo on October 13, 1887 at the age of 67.

George Urban, Jr., perhaps the neighborhood's greatest success story, was one of the City of Buffalo's most prominent businessmen, specializing in the grain business, who got his start in the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood. Born in

²¹ Quoted from Genealogical Publishing Company (N.Y.). *Memorial and Family History of Erie County, New York*. New York: Genealogical Company, 1906-8; 121.

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Buffalo on July 12, 1850 to George Urban Sr. and his wife Marie (nee Kern), George Urban Jr. received an education in Buffalo's public schools. At age sixteen he joined his father's milling business and demonstrated a knack for business and the milling industry. In 1870 he was made a partner in his father's company, known then as Urban & Co. In 1881 under the leadership of George Urban Jr., the company established the Urban Roller Mill at 324 North Oak Street which augmented the family's grain wholesale business with a milling facility. The five-story brick Urban Roller Mill was the site of a significant technological step for Buffalo; the mill was the first facility west of Milwaukee and the first in Buffalo which utilized the new method of grinding grain between corrugated steel rollers, rather than using the stone grind wheel method which had been used for centuries. The mill was capable of producing 300 barrels of milled grain in a day. In a city which had a booming grain trade by the 1880s, this development was a notable step forward. In 1885, George Urban Sr. retired from the business, leaving his son George, E.G.S. Miller and youngest son William C. as partners in the firm. Eventually George Urban Jr. assumed the role of President of the George Urban Milling Company, which by the late 1800s became one of Buffalo's most prominent milling companies and whose myriad products were sold across the country. The mill was operated by the United States Flour Milling Company in 1899, and in 1901 passed to the ownership of the Standard Milling Company, although the Urban company retained their main office at 332 North Oak Street just north of the mill. In 1903 George Urban Jr. established a new larger, modern factory on Urban Street in Buffalo, which was another technologically advanced facility; the new mill was the first all-electrical powered mill in Buffalo. George Urban Jr., like his father, was extremely active in many groups around Buffalo including serving as First Vice-President of both the Buffalo General Electric Company and Cataract Power and Conduit Company. He also served as President of the Buffalo Loan, Trust and Safe Deposit Company, director of the Bank of Buffalo and Director of the Buffalo German Insurance Company. In 1892-1895, George Urban Jr. served as chairman of the Erie County Republican General Committee, and served as the Republican Presidential Elector from Erie County in 1896 and 1900.

Henry Urban's exact relationship to George Urban is unclear, but he was undoubtedly a member of the Urban clan. Very little information is available on Henry Urban as well as his son, Henry J. Urban, but both were active in the grocery business in the nineteenth-century. Henry Urban Sr. appears to have established a grocery business at the south-western corner of Genesee and Oak Streets, at 123 Genesee Street (extant), as early as 1845. Given the close proximity to George Urban Sr.'s flour mill shop on the opposing corner of the street, as well as to George Urban Jr.'s Urban Roller Mill just to the north on Oak Street, coupled with the fact that both the elder George and Henry hailed from Alsace, it seems that Henry Urban may have been a brother to George Urban Sr. It appears his son Henry J. Urban followed in his father's footsteps after his father's death. A young Henry J. turns up as living in the household of fellow-grocer Louis P. Adolf at 111 Genesee Street in 1860, and he may have been

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taken in as a ward and apprentice to Adolf following his father's death. Henry J. Urban returned to 123 Genesee Street shortly afterwards to carry on his father's legacy as a grocer at the south-western corner of Genesee and Oak Streets.

The Giesser Family, cutlers and patrons of the Arts

One of the more prominent families to emerge in the Genesee Gateway Historic District is the Giesser family. Born about 1825 in Württemberg, Germany, Gabriel Giesser and his family would be long-term residents and business owners in this portion of Genesee Street. Relatively little information is available about the family, but the Giesser family would reside and own property in the Genesee Gateway block between the 1870s and the 1930s and were likely prominent and well-known citizens in the local German and increasingly German-American community. Trained in the repair and maintenance of knives and cutlery, Giesser's sons Frederick and Charles also trained in the business. Business must have been successful for Gabriel Giesser, who appears to have eventually purchased the adjacent property owned by Frank Pfennig by about 1880. Gabriel Giesser would expand his business which was located at 99 Genesee Street, noted as making and repairing cutlery, barber and butcher supplies by the 1890s. Also during this period son Charles would join his father's operation, acting as manager for the business. In 1895, Fredericke Giesser, wife of Gabriel, hired prominent local and international architect Richard A. Waite to construct the elegant Werner Photography Building at 101-103 Genesee Street. At the time, their son Edward Giesser was working as a draftsman in the Waite office and may have potentially been responsible for its design. The building was specially designed to function as a day-light photography studio, and also served as the family home for at least a decade. In 1915, Charles Giesser, who had taken over his father's business around the turn of the twentieth-century hired local architect Edward G. Henrich to construct a modest brick commercial building to replace his father's old frame building at 99 Genesee Street. The Giesser family embodies the spirit that permeated the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood; that a German immigrant that left the hardships and strife of their homeland could build a solid life and live the "American Dream" of success and stability in Buffalo.

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name: The Denzinger-Sigwald Building (photo 2)
2. Address: 91-95 Genesee Street
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South-east corner of Genesee Street near Ellicott Street
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Genesee Gateway LLC
8. Present occupant (s): Vacant
9. Present Use: None

10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:

A four-story six-bay brick Second Empire style commercial building which is now three-stories due to a collapsed mansard roof. Building contains two commercial spaces which include storefronts with cast iron Corinthian pilasters and some original storefront bulkheads and transoms. Upper floors feature diaper-patterned yellow brickwork and round-headed windows with bracketed stone sills and prominent keystones. Building is missing its cornice and mansard roof, although these are well documented in photographs.

The building dates to the early 1870s as the stores of carpenter William Denzinger and cutler Jonathan Sigwald by 1872, although portions of the building may date to the early 1850s. Served as a commercial and boarding house building throughout its history and catered to the largely German neighborhood. It is an excellent example of post-Civil War era Second Empire architecture which is rare in Buffalo.

11. If known:

- Date of initial construction: ca. 1870s
Architect:
Original owner(s): William Denzinger & Jonathan Sigwald

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name: Eddie Brady's Tavern (photo 3)
2. Address: 97 Genesee Street
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South side of Genesee Street near Ellicott Street
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Edward P. Brady
8. Present occupant (s): Eddie Brady's Bar and Tavern
9. Present Use: Bar/ restaurant

10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:

A three-story, three rank brick Italianate commercial building which features a ground floor storefront (altered in the 1930s) with yellow brick surround and an entry door located at the eastern side. Upper floors feature round-headed modern vinyl replacement windows set in the historic openings; upper façade shows evidence of once being painted. Building retains a prominent bracketed cornice which is angled rather than square to the main façade to conform to the angled lot lines.

Appears to have been built as early as 1863 for Nicholas Losson, a harness maker and saddler. Nicholas Losson continued in business here until the 1880s when his sons Jonathan and Nicholas Jr. continued the business. In 1902 the building was John Lang's saloon, and later was a restaurant with residential above. Became known as Eddie Brady's Tavern in 1990.

11. If known:

Date of initial construction: ca. 1860s
Architect :
Original owner(s): Nicholas Losson

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name: The Giesser Building (photo 4)
2. Address: 99 Genesee Street
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South side of Genesee Street near Ellicott Street
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Genesee Gateway LLC
8. Present occupant (s): vacant
9. Present Use: none

10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:

A two-story two-part brick commercial building which features a first floor storefront. Storefront is modified and largely non-historic but does appear to retain two original wood and glass doors in recessed west entry porch. Second floor features four contiguous casement windows with a transom above, surrounded by a modest raised brick band with corner details. A pressed metal cornice of simple design tops the main façade with a parapet wall above.

Designed by local architect Edward G. Henrich, the Giesser Building was built for Charles P. Giesser around 1915 to house his cutlery and barber supplies shop business. One of the last buildings constructed in the neighborhood, this building replaced a wood-frame building on the site which dated to ca. 1850s. Building also housed Swerdloff-Bestry Co. tailors in the 1940s, before it became owned by the Charlie Baker Clothiers company in the 1940s until the 1980s.

11. If known:

Date of initial construction: ca. 1915
Architect : Edward G. Henrich
Original owner(s): Charles P. Giesser

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name: The Werner Photography Building (photo 5)
2. Address: 101-103 Genesee Street
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Genesee Gateway LLC
8. Present occupant (s): vacant
9. Present Use: none

10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:

A unique four-story, two-bay brick commercial and photography studio building of an exuberant Commercial Neoclassical and Italianate design. First floor modern copper storefront retains original center cast iron column; flanked by yellow brick corner piers with sandstone bases. Upper stories divided into two bays; the west bay features arcaded round arched 1/1 windows on second floor and a unique "photo light" concave copper and glass skylight on the third and fourth stories which is recessed into the mass of the building. Skylight is topped with a series of ocular windows in a verdigris copper band which are set behind the plane of the main building façade. The eastern bay features segmental arched windows on second and third floors and a set of three arcaded windows on the fourth story. The building is topped with a decorative verdigris copper cornice which is interrupted by the continuous line of the pilasters. Painted signage on west façade reads "The Werner Photographic Studio" and lends the building its name.

Constructed in 1895 for Mrs. Fredericke Giesser by internationally prominent architect Richard A. Waite, the Werner Photography Building is Buffalo's most architecturally significant photography studio building. While the building replaced an earlier wood framed ca. 1850s structure, the Werner Photography Building was built as a commercial, residential and studio building. The Giesser family resided in this building upon its completion, and the first known photographer to use the studio was Albert L. Werner who occupied the building from 1896 until 1899. The building housed other photographers including Chauncey Rykert, Jacob Ginther and Hernando Sickler. In the 1940s was occupied by the Charlie Baker Clothier company, which left ca. 1980.

11. If known:

Date of initial construction: 1895
Architect : Richard A. Waite; Nicholas Kenyss, builder
Original owner(s): Mrs. Fredericke Giesser

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name:
2. Address: 105-107 Genesee Street (photo 6)
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South side of Genesee Street between Ellicott and Oak Streets
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Genesee Gateway LLC
8. Present occupant (s): vacant
9. Present Use: none
10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:
Non-contributing infill building of modern design.

11. If known:

Date of initial construction: 2009-2010
Architect : Flynn Battaglia Architects
Original owner(s): Genesee Gateway LLC

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name: The Baldwin Building (photo 7)
2. Address: 109 Genesee Street
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South side of Genesee Street near Oak Street
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Genesee Gateway LLC
8. Present occupant (s): vacant
9. Present Use: none

10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:

A three-story, enframed window-wall commercial building with Commercial Neoclassical styling. Features first floor storefront with cast iron pilasters with paired corner brackets which support a simple cornice. Upper floors framed by brick corner pilasters and large segmental arch with raised voisoirs and prominent keystone. Second floor features Tripartite window, third floor features segmentally arched tripartite window with a band of corbelled brick beneath sill. Elaborate metal cornice with detailed brackets and a larger central bracket; brick parapet above.

Constructed for the Baldwin Specialty Company in 1903, company secretary Oliver J. Beyer engaged the prominent Buffalo firm of Esenwein and Johnson to design the elegant Neoclassical Building for their company. The company vacated the building in 1921 when it moved across the street to 120 Genesee Street. By 1929 the building was home to the Queen City Rubber Company, maker of automobile tires, who appear to have continued in business at this location until the 1940s. By the 1970s became a warehouse building used by the H. Seeberg company.

11. If known:

Date of initial construction: 1903
Architect : Esenwein and Johnson
Original owner(s): Baldwin Specialty Company/ Oliver J. Beyer

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name: The Schwinn-Mandel Building (photo 8)
2. Address: 111 Genesee Street
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South side of Genesee Street near Oak Street
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Genesee Gateway LLC
8. Present occupant (s): vacant
9. Present Use: none

10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:

A four-story, three-bay brick commercial building with Italianate details. First floor storefront largely removed with cast iron pilasters at ends. Second floor features central square headed window flanked by two bay window units which appear to be historic but not original. All three openings contain segmental brick arches with stone springers. Third and fourth floors feature continuous stone sills and segmental arched windows with detailed wood tympanum panel inset above window opening, topped with brick segmental arches with stone springers. Center pavilion of building projects slightly, as do the end pilasters, and the upper floor is surmounted by a segmental brick arch, enframing the end bays. Features elaborate cornice with large scrolled brackets at ends and smaller brackets.

Constructed circa 1878 for owner Louis P. Adolf who owned the previous ca. 1850 frame building. The first commercial tenant appears to have been Jacob J. Schwinn, an umbrella and cane maker, who occupied the building from 1878 until 1884. In 1893, Henry Mandel opened his own umbrella shop in the building, which closed in 1940. The building also hosted the Winter Costume Company in the 1930s. By 1950 the vacated building was used as a storage facility by the neighborhood H. Seeberg company.

11. If known:

Date of initial construction: ca. 1878
Architect :
Original owner(s): Louis P. Adolf

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HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

The Genesee Gateway Historic District

Identification:

1. Name: The H. Seeberg Building (photo 9)
2. Address: 113-125 Genesee Street
3. County: Erie
4. City: Buffalo
5. Street Location: South-west corner of Genesee Street at Oak Street
6. Ownership: Private
7. Present Owner: Genesee Gateway LLC
8. Present occupant (s): vacant
9. Present Use: none

10. Statement of Architectural, Historical, Geographical or Cultural Significance:

The H. Seeberg Building is a combined group of historic commercial buildings, united by the Seeberg company in the 1930s/40s. Overall it is a three-story brick commercial building with minimal exterior detail. Storefronts have largely been removed, although the western 113 unit retains two historic fluted cast iron columns. It is comprised of units with either segmental arched window voids (at western end) or square headed window openings (at eastern end of building), with simple stone sills and lintels. Cornices are removed, but buildings retain some detailed brickwork at parapet which includes contrasting rusticated stone, diamonds and small corbelling. 123-125 unit previously featured a fourth-story mansard roof, added ca. 1870s.

The H. Seeberg Building contains some remnants of the oldest pre-Civil War commercial architecture found in the entire City of Buffalo. The 123-125 unit at the corner was likely built and run as a grocery by Henry Urban. Buildings hosted a variety of commercial tenants including shoemaker Christoph Wagner (1860s-1880s) at 121, shoemaker Charles P. Korn (1860s-70s) at 119 and haberdasher August Datt (1860s-1890s) at 113. In the 1930s and 40s the buildings were transformed by the H. Seeberg clothing company, who took over much of the eastern end of the block for their retail shop and factory. The Seeberg company existed here until about 1980.

11. If known:

Date of initial construction: ca. 1840s-50s; ca. 1870s
Architect :
Original owner(s): Henry Urban (ca. 1840s); others

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CONCLUSION

The Genesee Gateway Historic District is a rare collection of some of Buffalo's only surviving nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial buildings. The buildings represent a wide variety of architectural styles from simple, builder-designed utilitarian pre-Civil War commercial buildings to high-style, architect-designed more modern commercial buildings. The neighborhood itself was once the center of Buffalo's German population; a group which was among the earliest immigrant communities to arrive in Buffalo in the 1820s and which rose to prominence as business, political and community leaders by the close of the nineteenth-century during the pinnacle of Buffalo's international prominence. The more immediate Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood was also home to the Washington Market, once the largest market west of the Hudson River, and the area was a center of commercial and industrial development in the City of Buffalo dating to the Erie Canal era of the 1830s until the mid-1900s. Like many areas in the City, the surrounding areas of the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood were architecturally devastated by Urban Renewal programs of the 1960s and 1970s, and the Kensington Expressway and Oak-Elm Arterials were constructed at the eastern boundary of the neighborhood. This highway project effectively demolished thousands of historic commercial and residential buildings- including the home of George Urban Sr.'s flour and feeds store- and aided in removing substantial numbers of people from the city neighborhood to the suburban eastern regions. As a result, what was once a thriving hub of commercial activity became a neglected, desolate area, isolated by empty lots, sterile modern development and busy highways.

The Genesee Gateway Historic District meets several of the criteria for becoming a local historic district, as previously outlined. It is an outstanding, largely intact collection of mixed-use commercial and residential buildings which date to between the 1840s and the early 1900s. This remarkably intact group contains some of Buffalo's earliest remaining commercial architecture examples, such as portions of the H. Seeberg Building, and also features rare examples by some of the area's most prominent architects such as F.W. Caulkins, Richard A. Waite and Esenwein and Johnson, making it eligible for its wide variety of architectural styles and trends. The neighborhood reflects many significant themes in the growth and development of the City of Buffalo. The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak area, exemplified by the Genesee Gateway Historic District, was integral to the rise in status of Buffalo's German population, acting as the home of several mayors and significant business leaders. The neighborhood is also connected to the growth and development of commercial activity in Buffalo during the height of its role as a port city and as a transfer point for goods and people.

While new hope is on the horizon for this long-neglected community due to projects such as the Genesee Gateway project and the recently rehabilitated Washington Market Building, the risk to one of Buffalo's last remaining collections

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of historic commercial buildings is still great. As the area becomes more attractive to developers, the small, shabby and run-down commercial buildings may face demolition for new, sterile commercial buildings. The Genesee Gateway Historic District represents one of Buffalo's last remaining largely intact, contiguous collections of small-scale historic commercial architecture, and has strong ties to Buffalo's prominent German community. The creation of the local Genesee Gateway Historic District can help to bring recognition and also stability to an otherwise uncertain and precarious commercial neighborhood.

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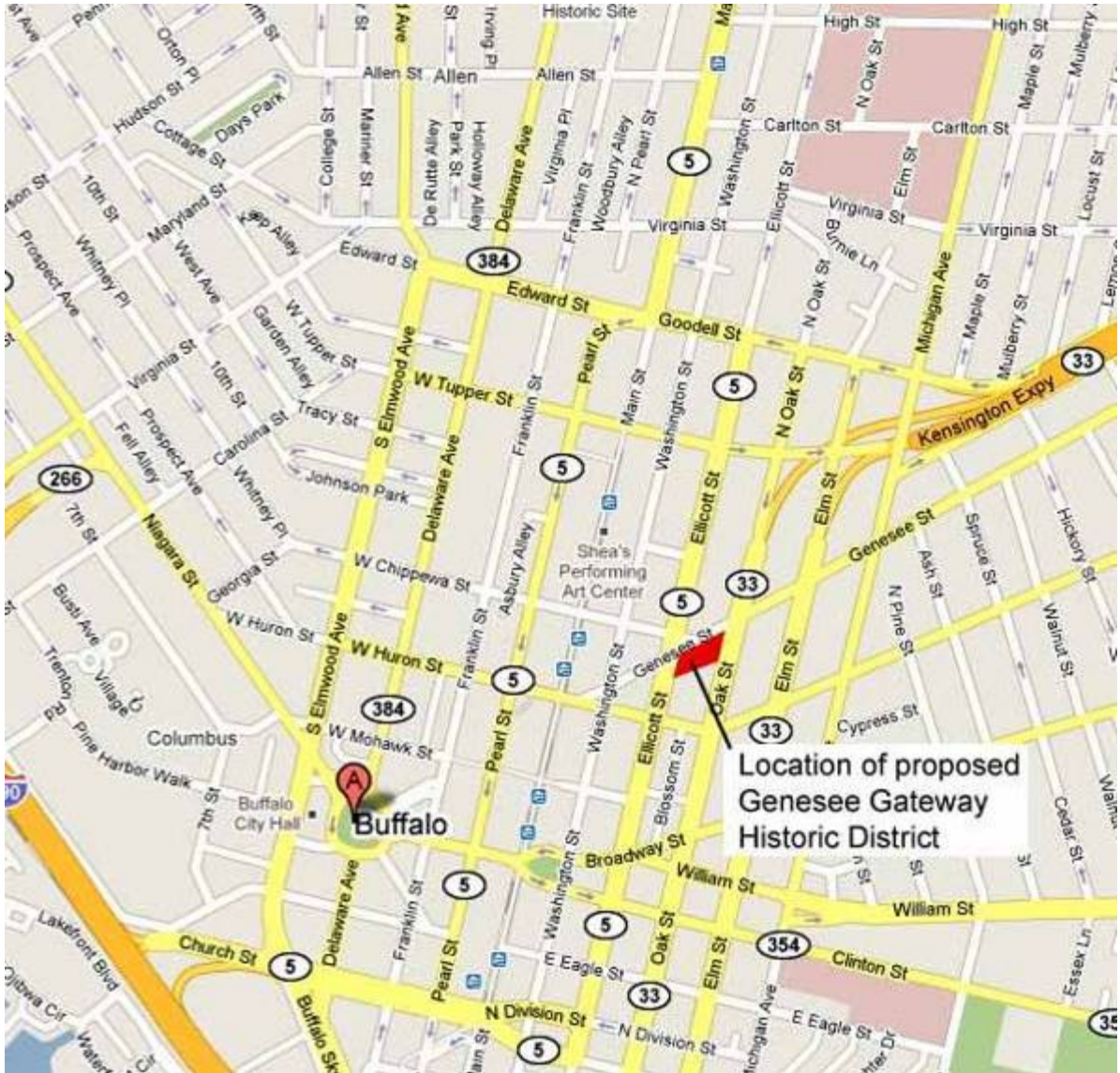
ALSO

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps- 1854, 1884, 1881-1889, 1889-1916, 1925, 1925-1951
- Buffalo City Atlases including- 1868, 1872, 1894, 1915
- Census Records for- 1880, 1900
- Buffalo City Directories
- American Institute of Architects digital architects database
- Building Permit records, Buffalo City Hall Permits Office
- Ancestry.com records
- The photographic files of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society
- Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Vertical Files- Architecture, Preservation
- Building-Structure Inventory Forms

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LOCATION OF PROPOSED GENESEE GATEWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT



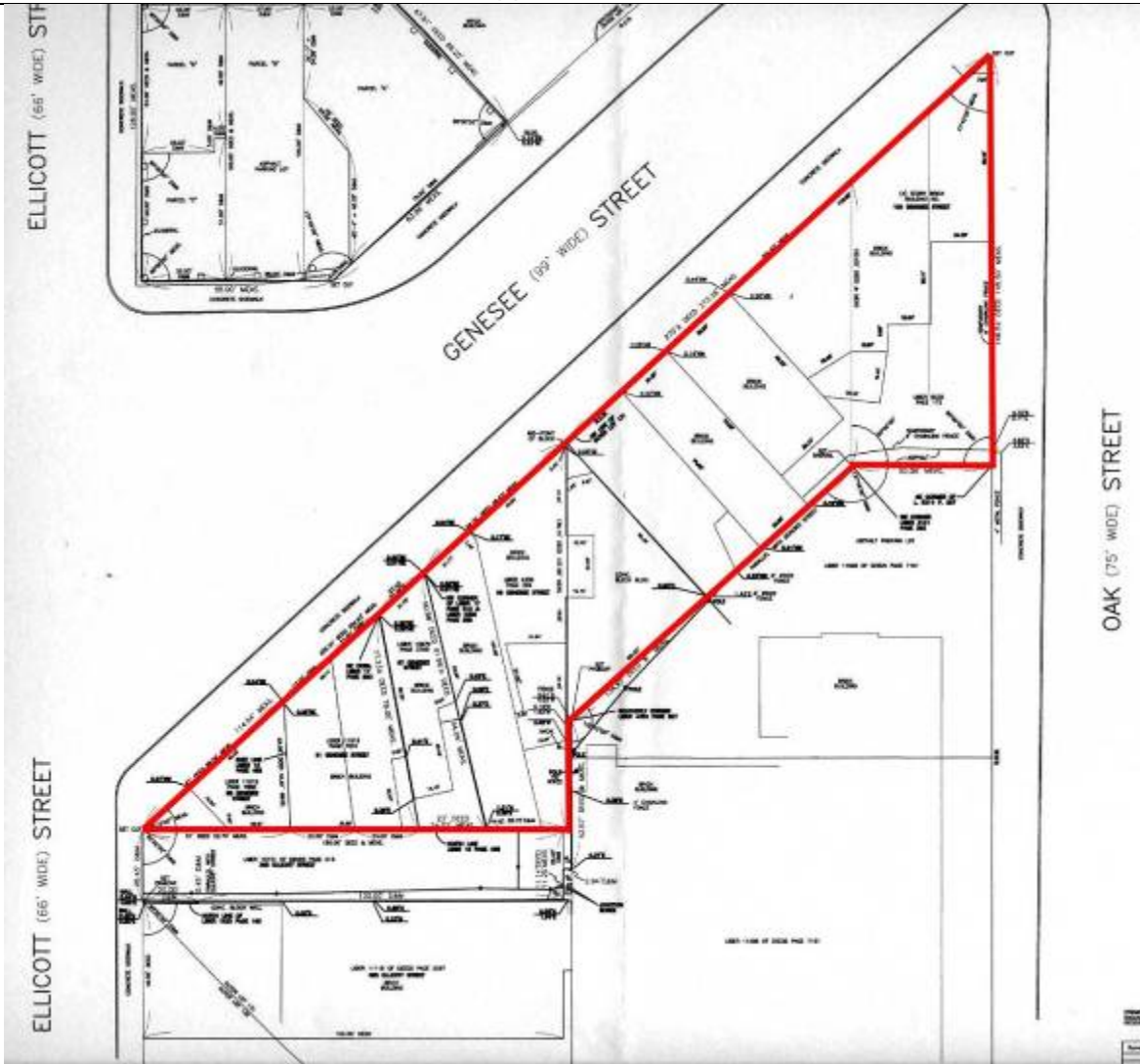
Location of Genesee Gateway Historic District
City of Buffalo, Erie County, NY 14203

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Location of Genesee Gateway Historic District
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2007 Survey, Boundaries of the Genesee Gateway Historic District

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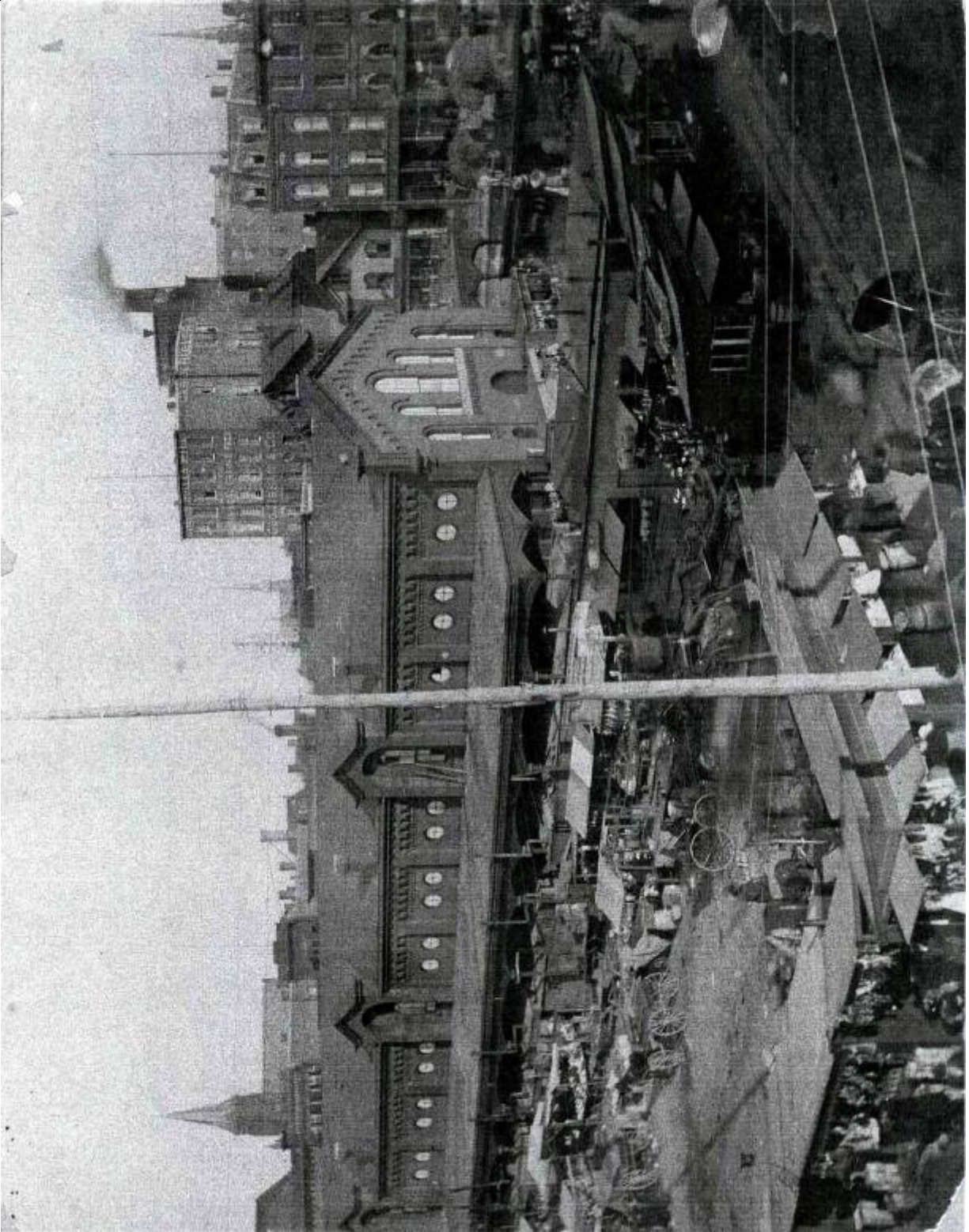
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HISTORIC PHOTOS- WASHINGTON MARKET



The Washington Market, ca. 1880s

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The Washington Market looking east towards Ellicott Street, 1890
Note the growth of other commercial buildings along Ellicott Street which developed as a relationship to the bustling market. The tall structure in the right background behind the market building is the Urban Roller Mills milling building in its original appearance.

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The Washington Market looking north-east along Ellicott Street, 1905
This view on a crowded market day shows the type of commercial neighborhood which had grown up around the Washington Market by the turn of the twentieth-century. The tall structure just visible in the upper right corner of the image is the Urban Roller Mills milling building.

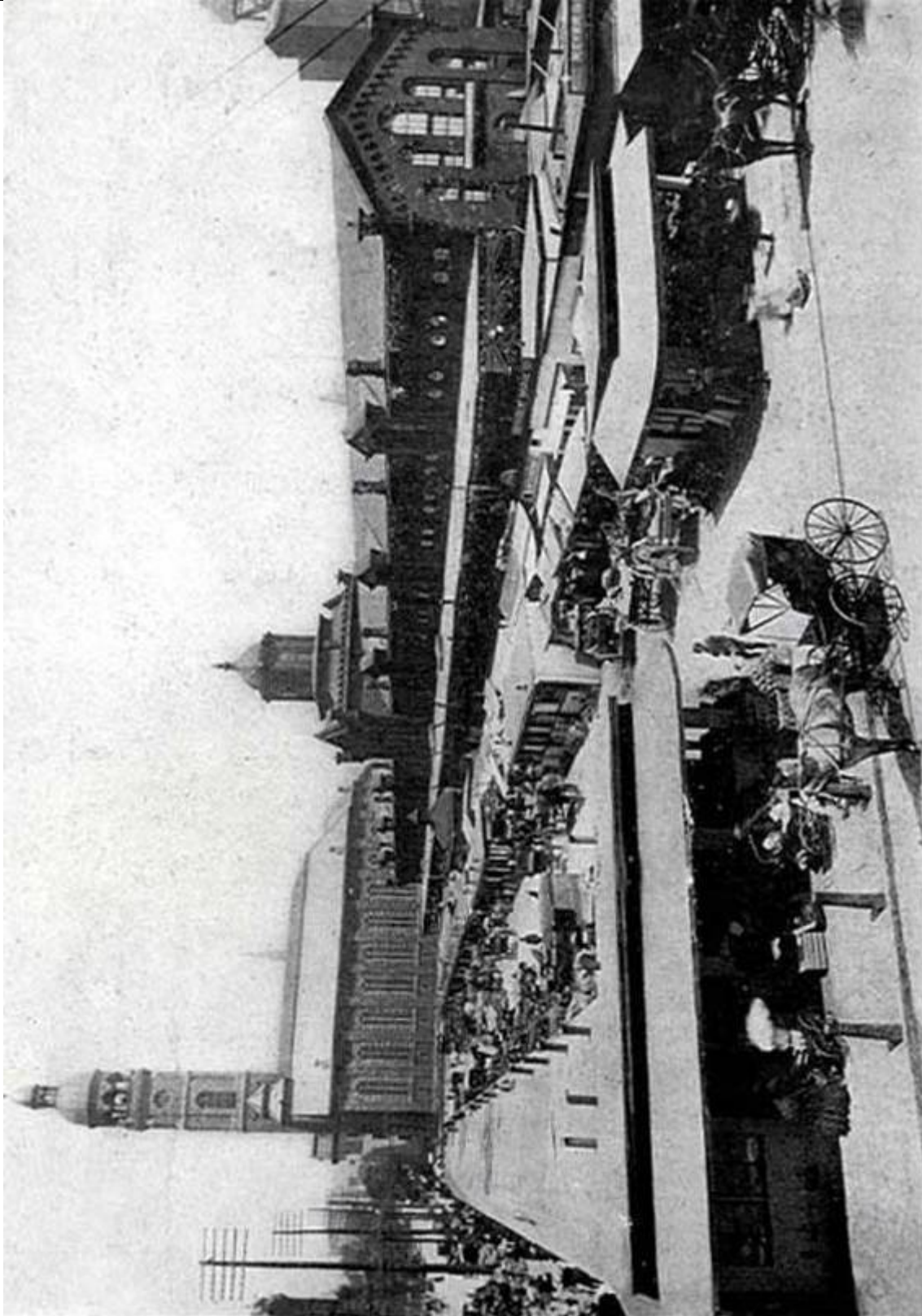
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View of the Chippewa/ Washington Market, ca. 1900

From the south-eastern corner of Genesee and Ellicott Street, looking north-west. The area acted as a sort of "square" at the confluence of Genesee, Chippewa and Ellicott Streets, creating a bustling open space filled with over-flow from the Market. At the turn of the century, the neighborhood was a bustling, chaotic, noisy market area, filled with pedestrians, carriages and peddlers. Note the market building at center middle ground and St. Michael's Church in the background. The commercial buildings at the left have since been demolished. The shadow in the foreground is that of the pediment of the Caulkins Building at 85-87-89 Genesee Street; its solid and unbroken appearance may further indicate that the photo light skylight was a later alteration to the building.

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The Washington Market, ca. 1900

A view of the market building looking from Washington Street east towards Ellicott Street. Note the structure at the right background- this is the Urban Roller Mills milling building.

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The Washington Market, postcard ca. early 1900s

This tinted postcard depicts the red-brick Romanesque market building. Note the structure in the background at the right- this is the Urban Roller Mill milling building, of which the warehouse building remains today.

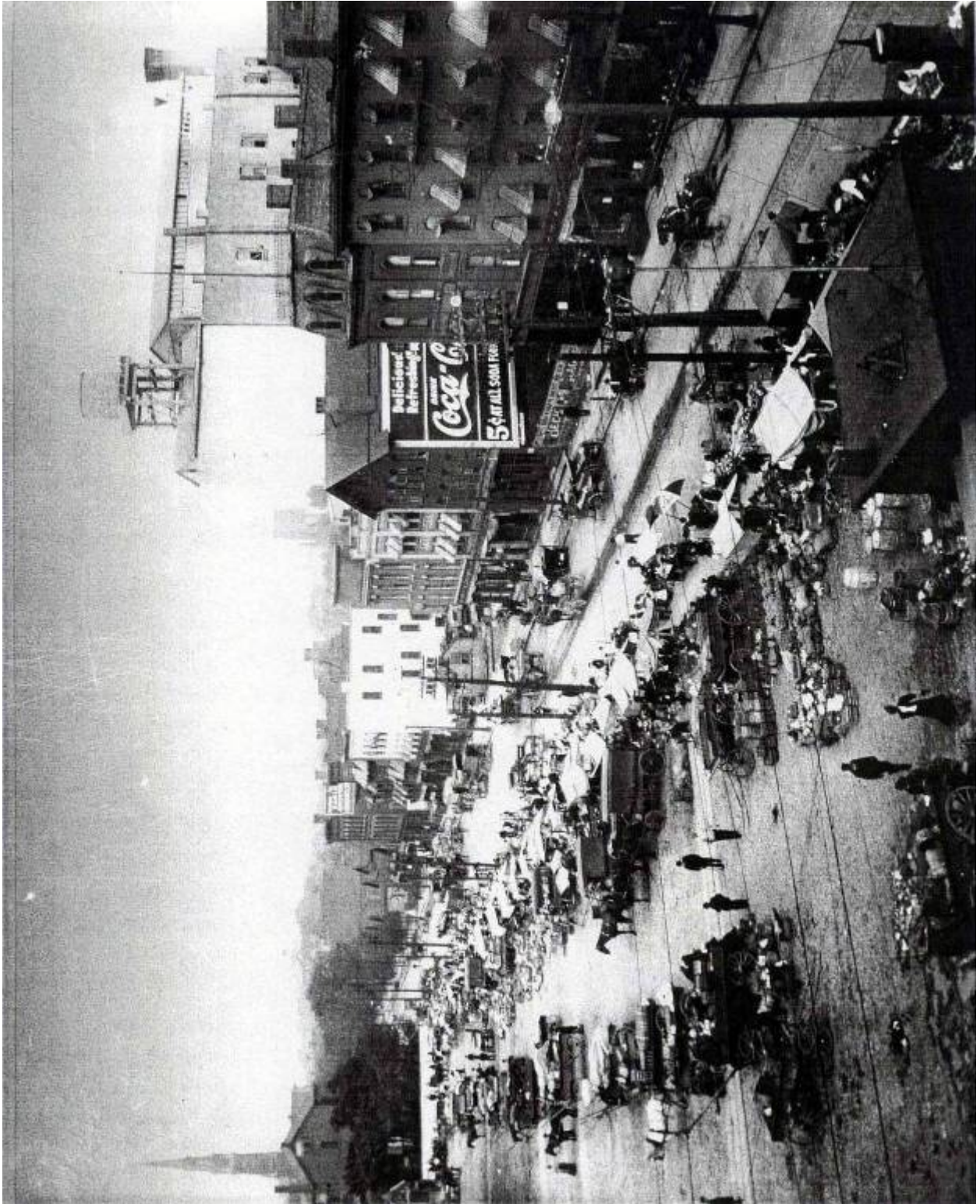
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At the Washington Market, postcard ca. 1900s

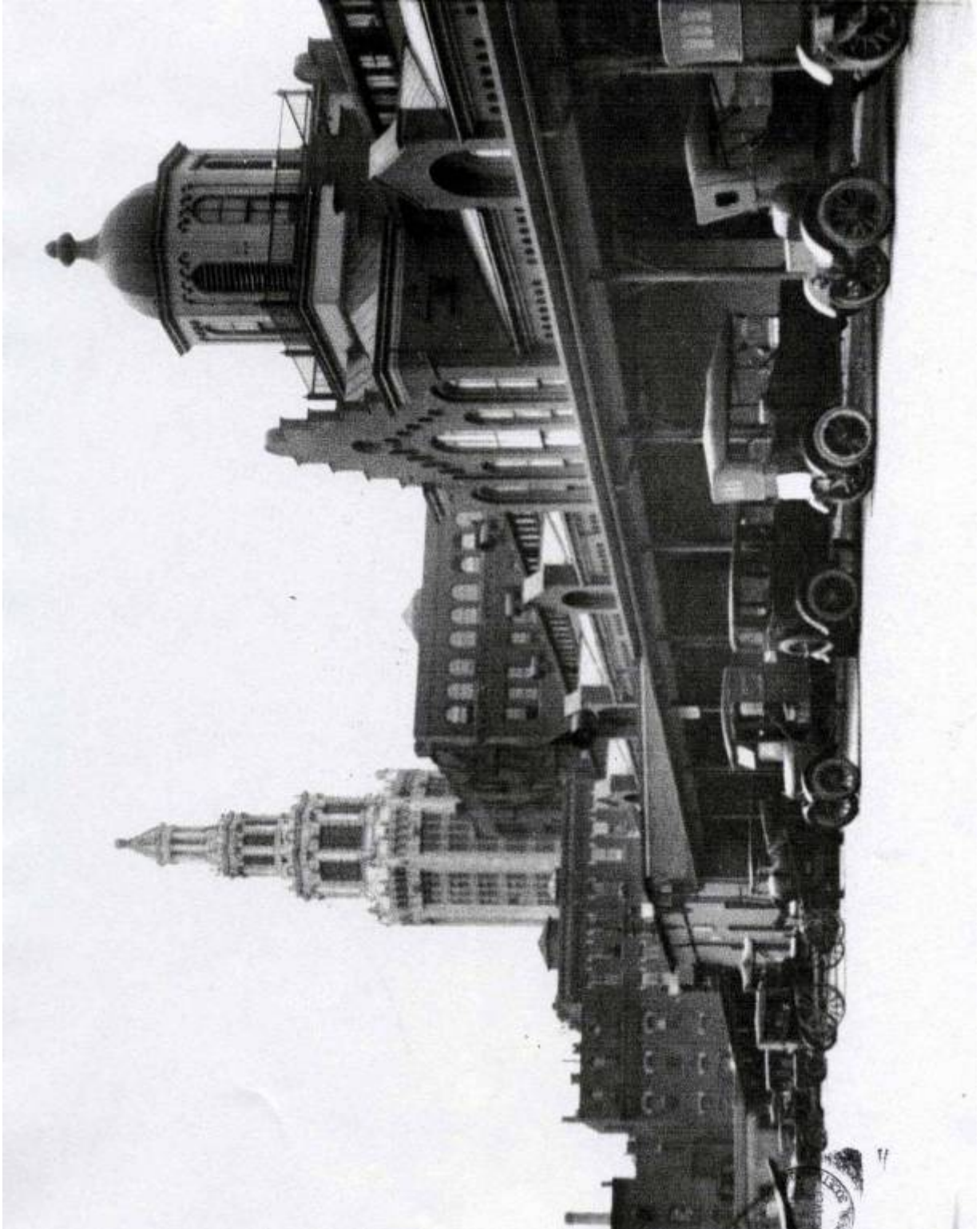
A street-level tinted postcard view of the market along Ellicott Street. Just visible in the background at right are the storefronts of 435, 437 and 439 Ellicott Street. Other buildings along Ellicott Street are identifiable as well. Of note is the open lot, towards the background center of the image, would have been used for wagons and carts to be loaded with milled grain from the Urban Roller Mill.

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The Washington Market looking north-east along Ellicott Street, 1912
A view of the fine collection of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century commercial architecture which characterized the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood at this period.

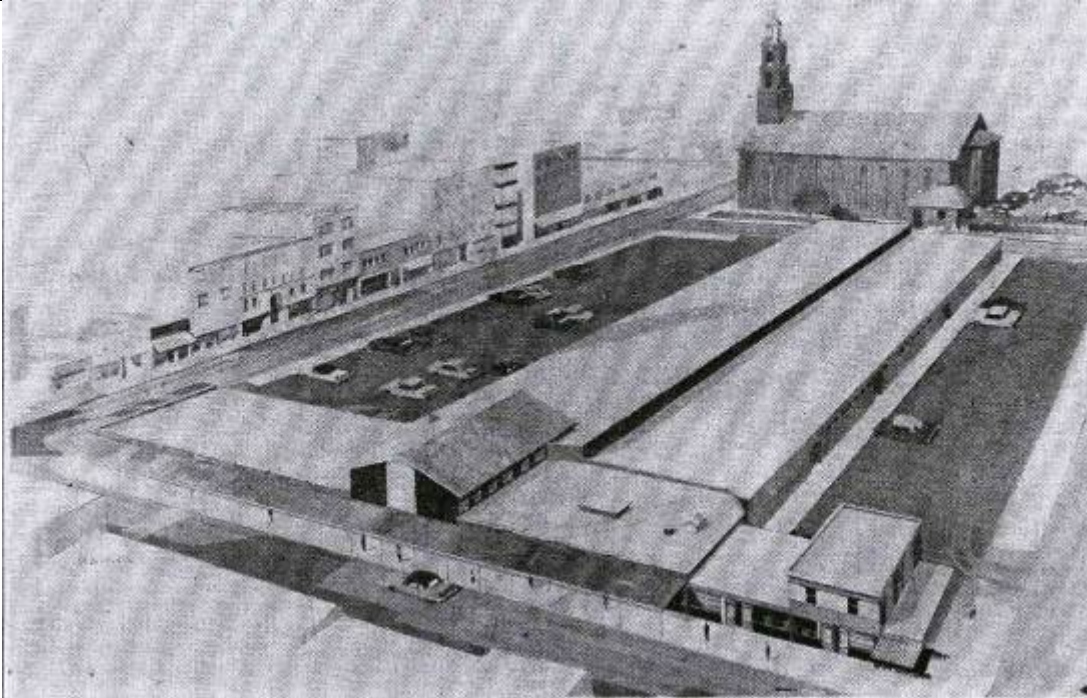
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The Washington Market, 1920

Automobiles may have replaced the horses and buggies at the market stalls, but the marketplace continued to be a thriving center for this area of the City. Note the presence of the Electric Tower behind the stately Romanesque Revival market building. The 3 and 4 story commercial buildings in the middle ground have all been cleared for a small parking lot.

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“Architects Sketch of New \$400,000 Washington Market”

This 1955 drawing done by the architecture firm of Backus, Crane and Love shows the new design for a modern, concrete block market which replaced the brick Romanesque market building.
Buffalo Evening News 4 Feb 1955.



The Washington Market in view from Ellicott and Chippewa Streets

With the neighborhood in decline, and dubbed “a losing proposition with no bright hopes in sight,” this 1963 image reflects the appearance of the market during its final days.

Buffalo Courier Express, 22 Sep 1963:1.

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“A New Downtown Parking Lot Opened Today.”

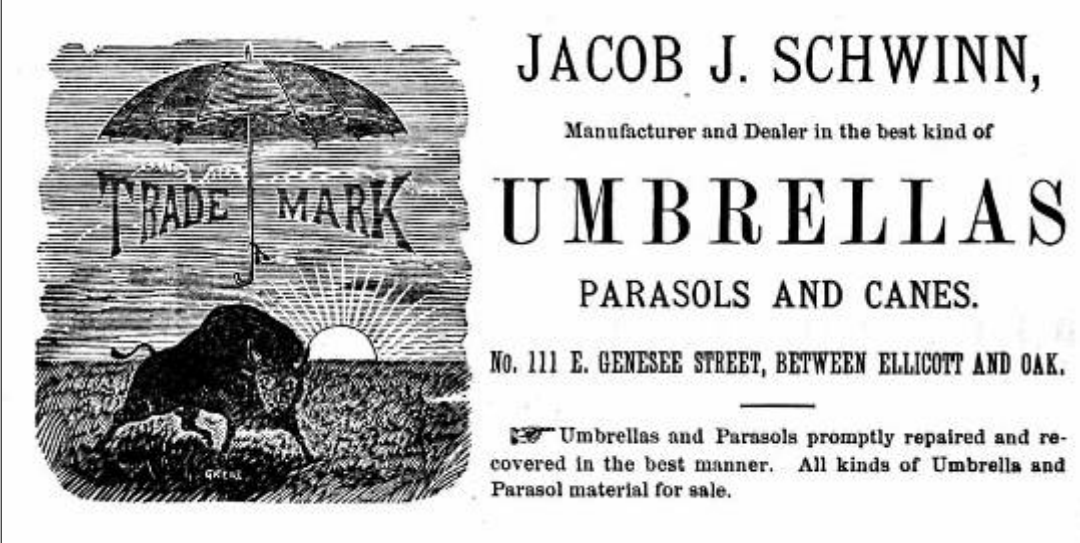
This 1965 photograph reflects the ultimate fate that has plagued much of the historic architecture in the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood. Here a new surface parking area is opened on the site of the then-recently demolished Washington Market site, marking the end of an era for Buffalo's commercial history. Today this is still a parking lot, and there are no reminders of the once-great market which was once located on this plot. St. Michael's RC Church stands in the center background.

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BUSINESS ADVERTISEMENTS

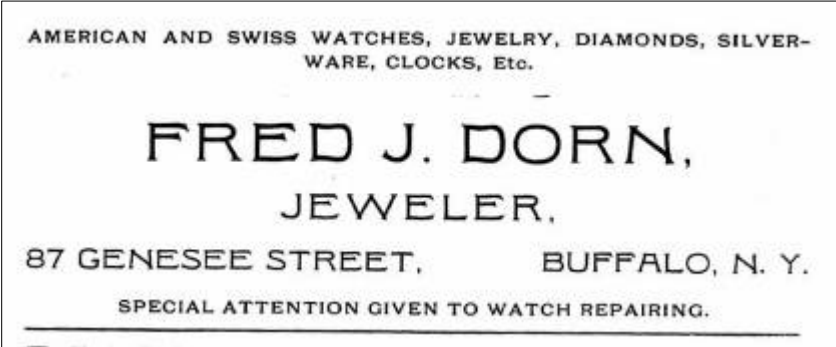
A few examples of the wide variety of merchants, manufacturers and shops which proliferated in the Genesee Gateway Historic District:



JACOB J. SCHWINN,
Manufacturer and Dealer in the best kind of
UMBRELLAS
PARASOLS AND CANES.
No. 111 E. GENESEE STREET, BETWEEN ELLICOTT AND OAK.
Umbrellas and Parasols promptly repaired and re-covered in the best manner. All kinds of Umbrella and Parasol material for sale.

1878, City Directory

Advertisement for Jacob J. Schwinn's umbrella manufactory and store



AMERICAN AND SWISS WATCHES, JEWELRY, DIAMONDS, SILVERWARE, CLOCKS, Etc.
FRED J. DORN,
JEWELER,
87 GENESEE STREET, BUFFALO, N. Y.
SPECIAL ATTENTION GIVEN TO WATCH REPAIRING.

1897, City Directory

Advertisement for Fred J. Dorn's jewelry and watch repair shop which ran from 1886-1950s from 87 Genesee Street.

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G. C. BUCKENMAIER,

111 E. Genesee Street.

Ladies' Hair-Dressing Parlor

Dealer in fine Human Hair Goods, all long Hair
Switches from \$1.00 to \$10.00. LADIES' and
GENT'S Wigs Made to Order.

1898, St. Michael's Church Bulletin
Advertisement for Gotthilf Buckenmaier's "hair goods" store, which he later relocated to
113 Genesee Street.

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FACES OF THE GENESEE GATEWAY HISTORIC DISTRICT



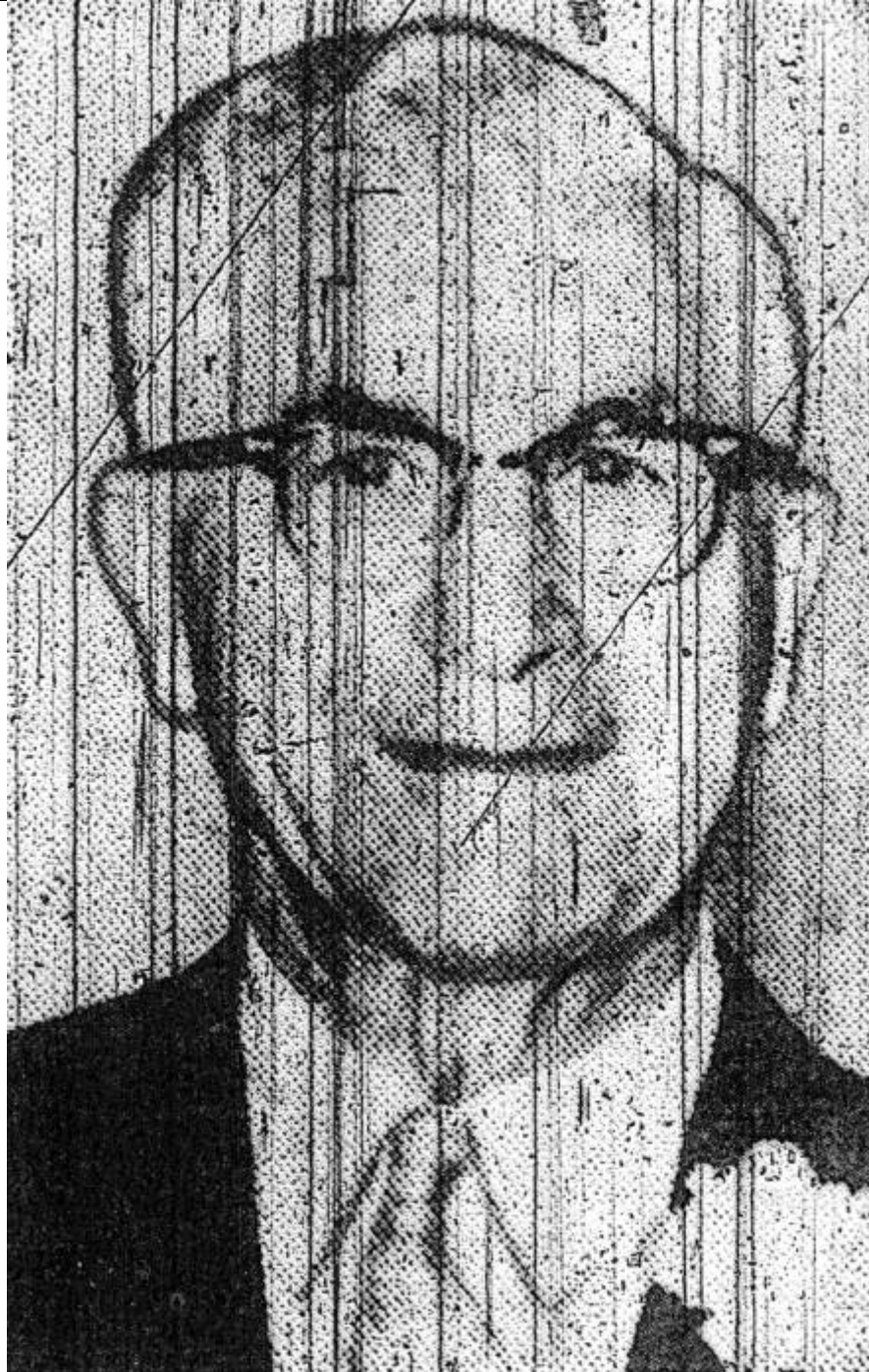
Fred J. Dorn, jeweler (ca.1898 image)
87 Genesee Street

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Jacob J. Schwinn, umbrella maker (undated image)
111 Genesee Street

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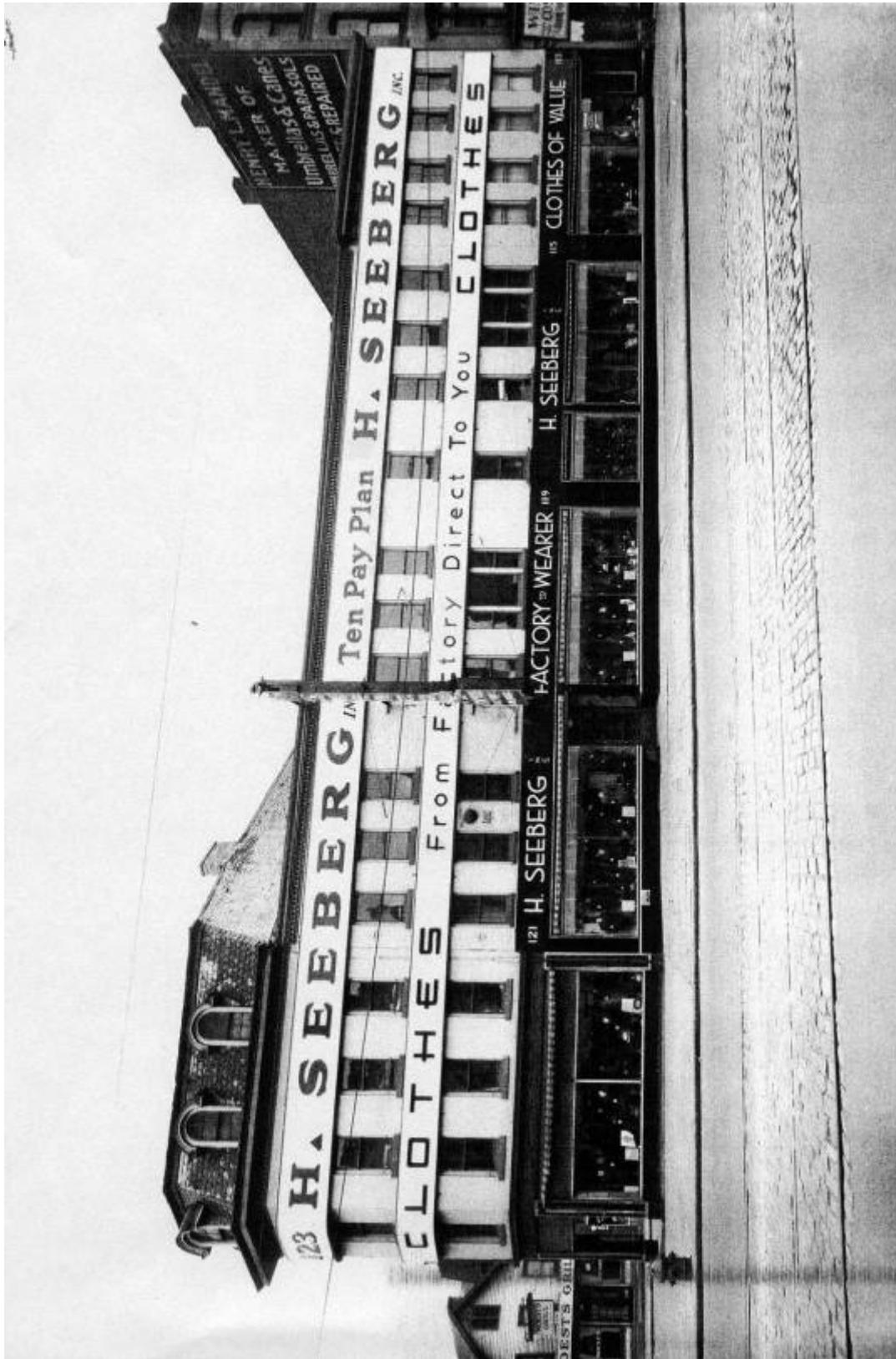


Harry Seeberg, clothier (ca. 1960s)
Owner, H. Seeberg, Inc and Charlie Baker clothing companies,
113-125 Genesee and 101-103 Genesee Street

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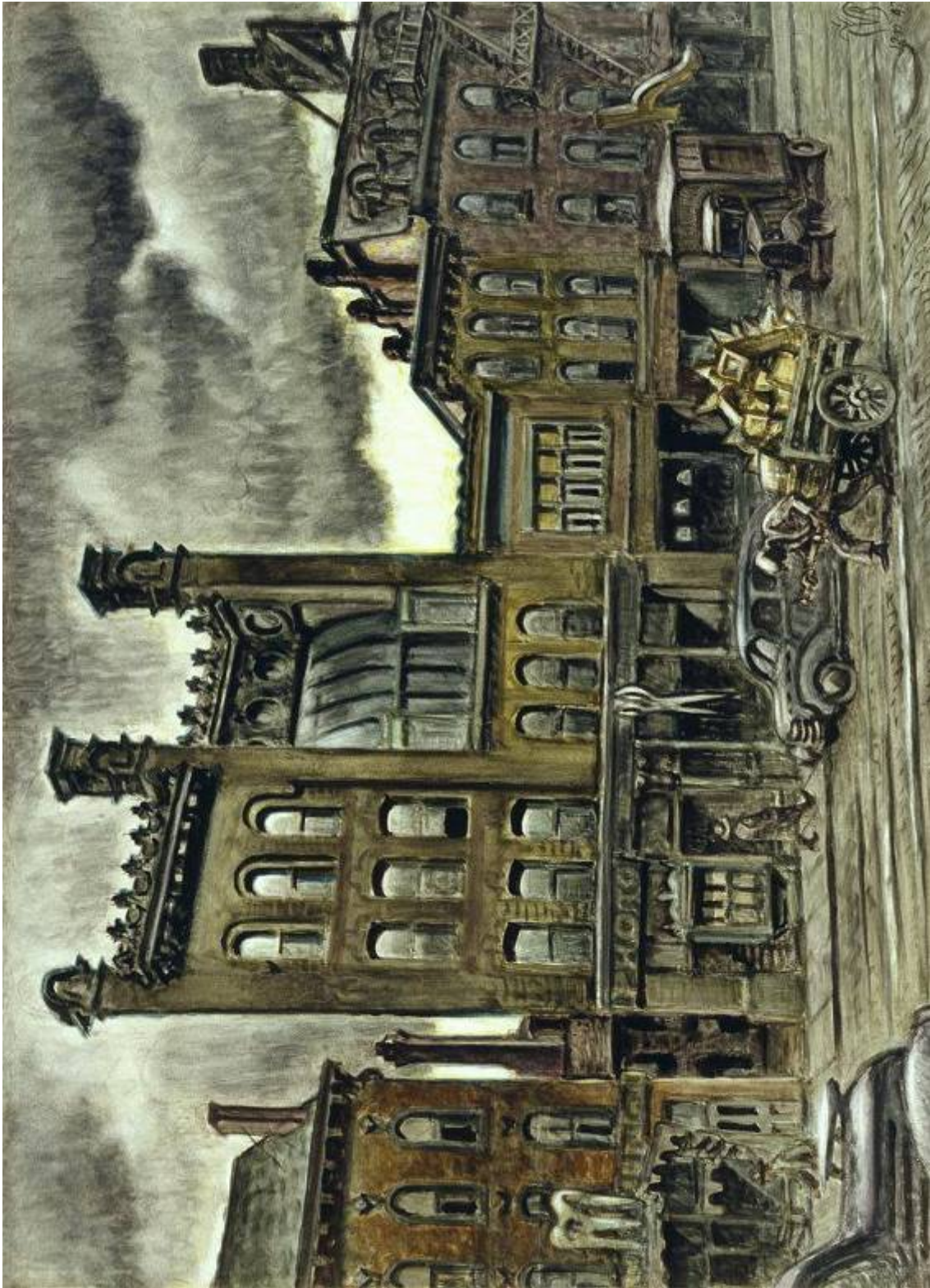
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HISTORICAL IMAGES- GENESEE-ELLCOTT-OAK ARCHITECTURE



The H. Seeberg Building, ca. early 1940s

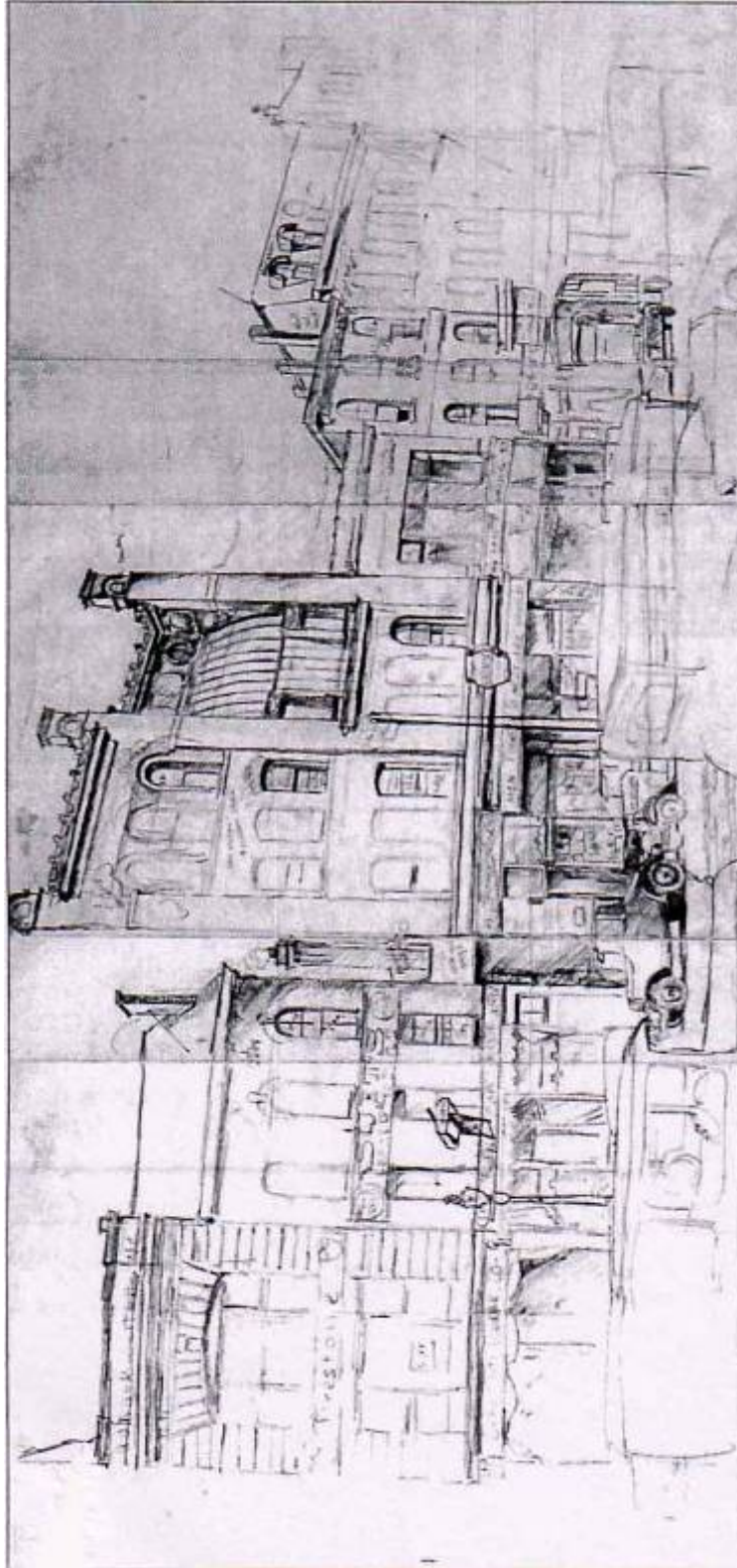
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“Street Scene” by Charles Burchfield, 1940-1947 (Watercolor on paper)

The earliest located image of several of the Genesee Gateway buildings, this painting captures the mix of high and low- style commercial buildings, some architect-designed and many others built by their owners. The Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood reflects one of Buffalo’s last remaining and most intact commercial neighborhoods with buildings spanning from the 1840s to the 1940s.

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“Study for Street Scene” pencil sketch by Charles Burchfield, 1940
The Werner Building, located at the center of the sketch, is highly detailed and plays a star role in Burchfield’s final painting.

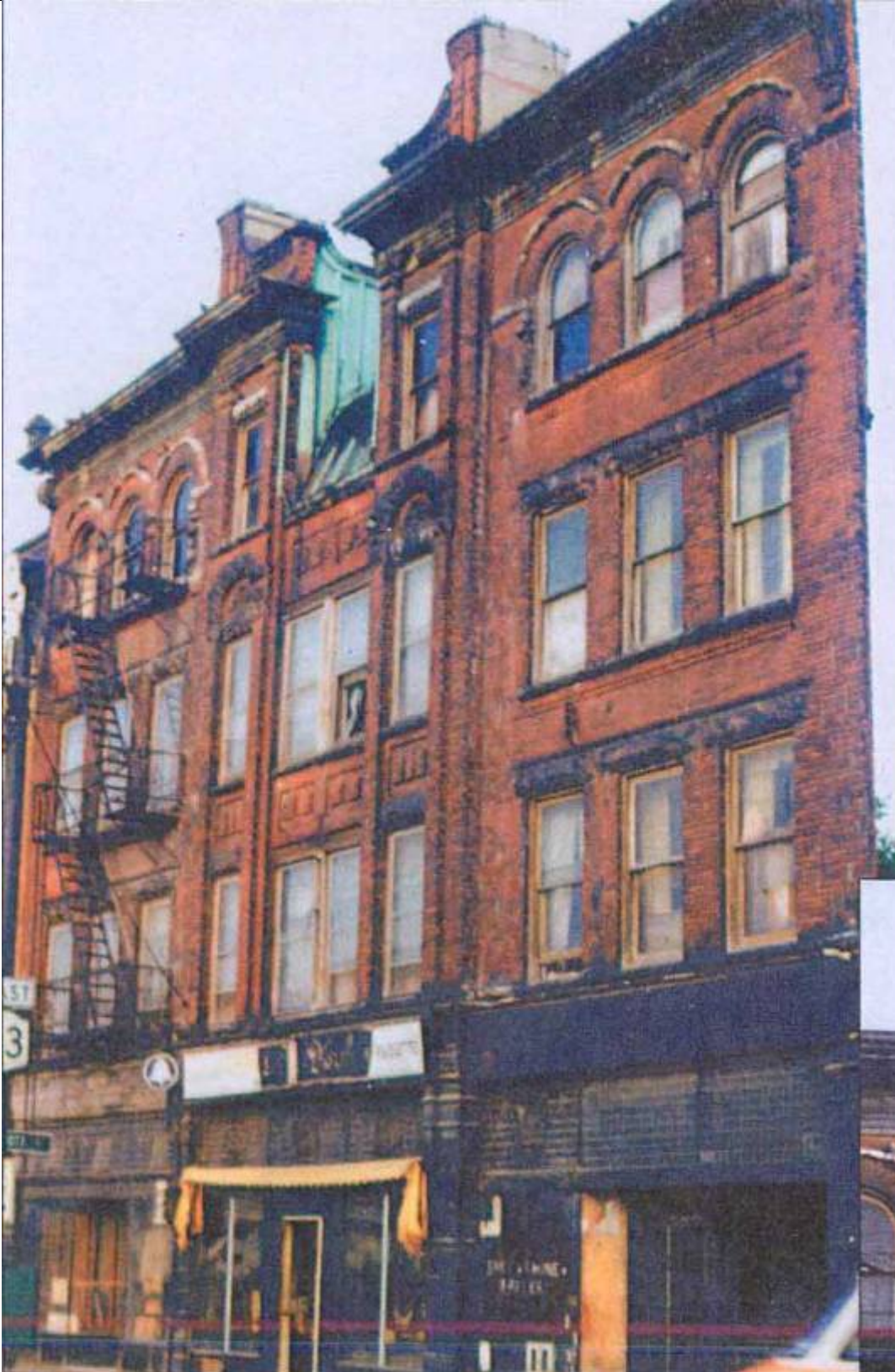
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The Caulkins Building, ca. early 1970s

While grainy, this photograph is the earliest known image of the Caulkins Building. Note that the neighboring 395 Ellicott Street commercial building was still in existence to the south, which was demolished in 1975.

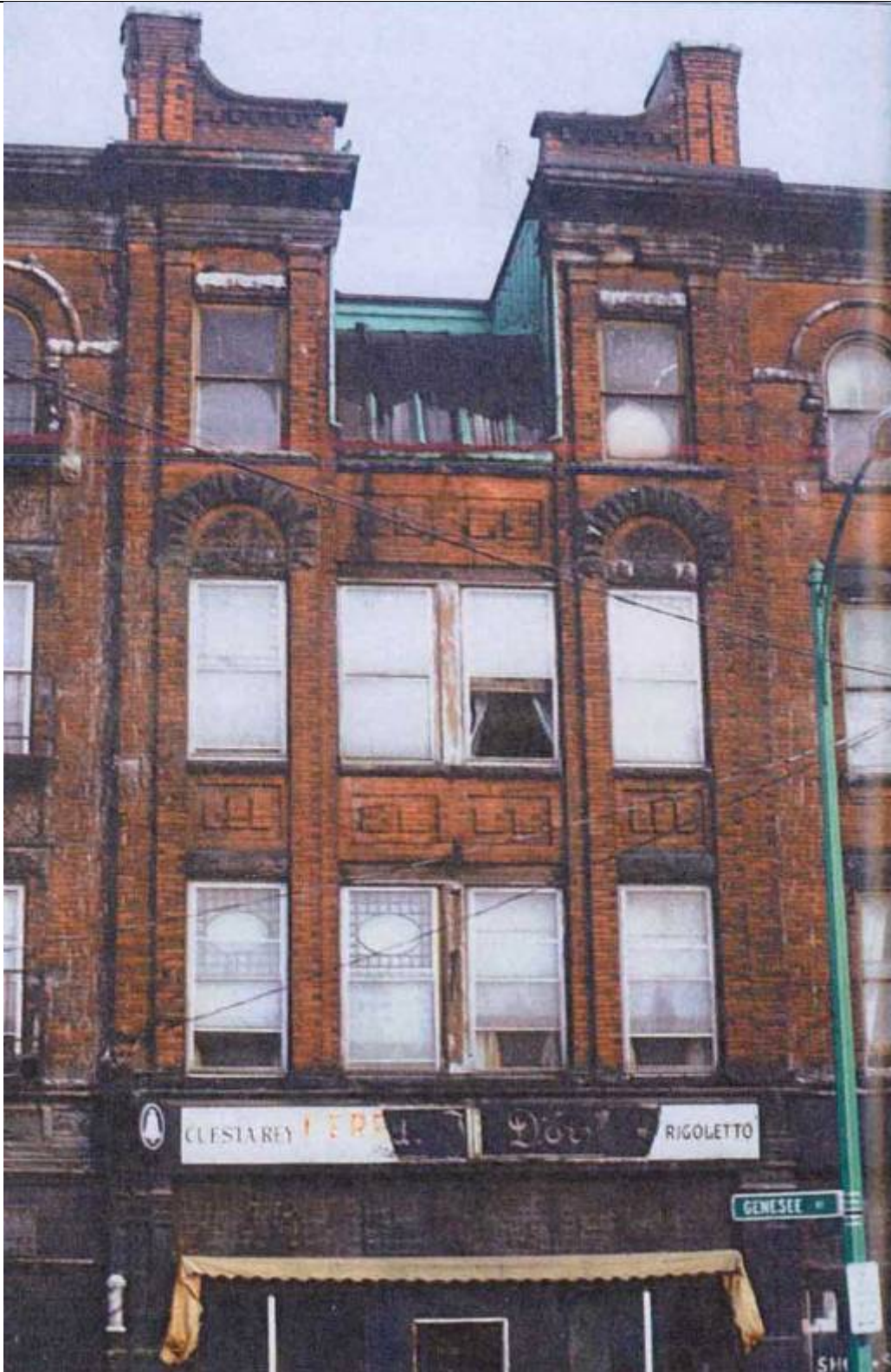
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The Caulkins Building, 1980 (John Conlin, photographer)

When viewed obliquely, the true design of the Caulkins Building is revealed. Note that the façade appears to resemble a sort of bill-board with its four-story knife-edge corner at the right of the photo.

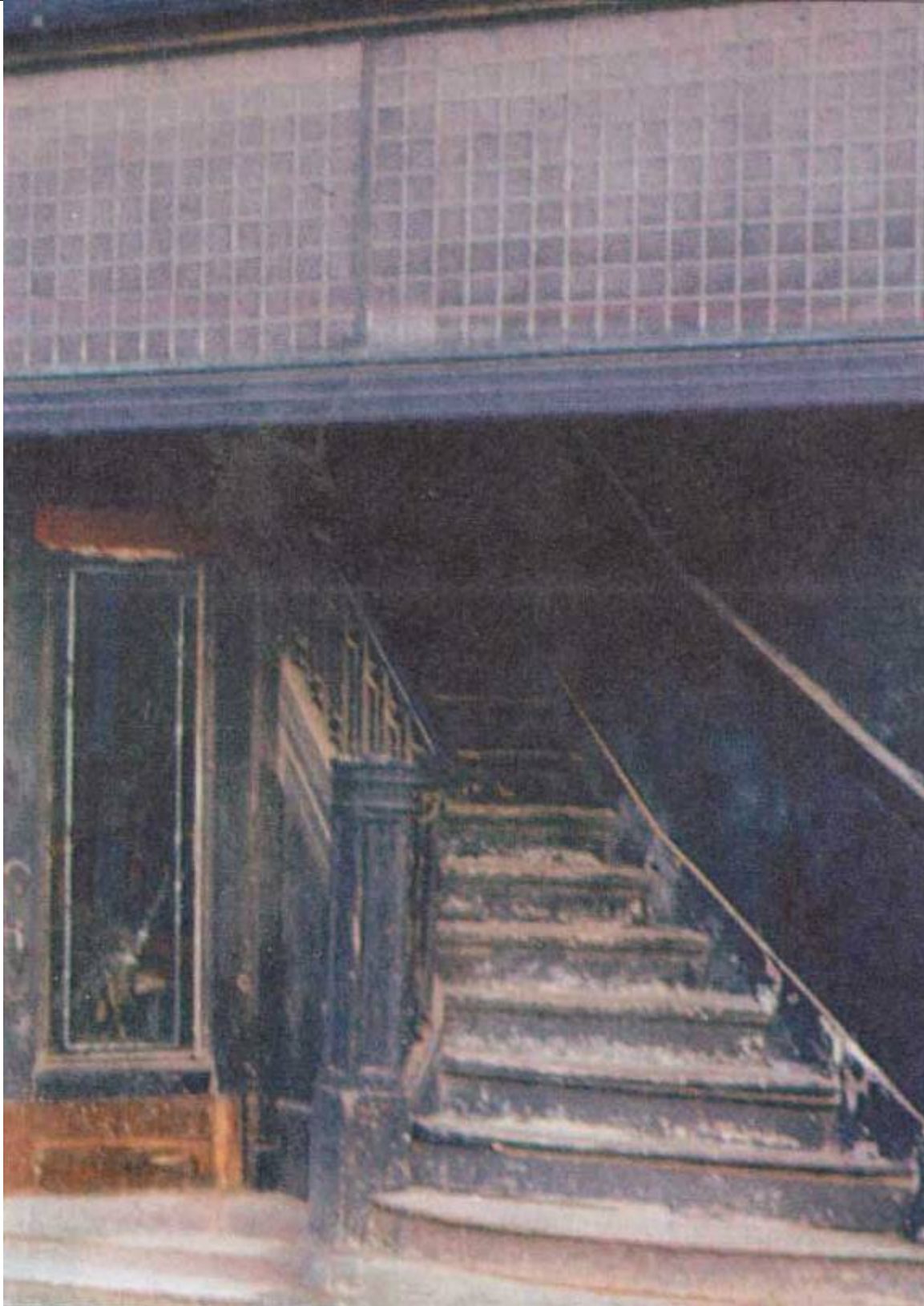
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The Caulkins Building, 1980 (John Conlin, photographer)

A detailed view of the center bay of the Caulkins Building. Note that Fred J. Dorn's signage is still partially visible above the 87 Genesee Street storefront. After over 60 years in business, the Dorn shop had apparently left its mark on the building.

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The Exterior Stair of the Caulkins Building, 1980

A close up view of the elegant and unique staircase, wedged into the triangular confines of the western 85 Genesee Street bay. Note the adjacent miniscule retail space located at left.

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Interior of 87 Genesee retail space, looking north, 1980 (John Conlin, photographer)
Notice how light-filled the commercial spaces were following the 1914 alterations done by Colson-Hudson. This image highlights the ample storefront display windows as well as the Luxfer prism transom above.

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The H. Seeberg Building, 1980
A symbol of the decaying urban neighborhood in the 1970s and 80s.

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The Caulkins Building, early 1980s (Karl R. Josker, photographer)

When viewed straight-on from the front, the Caulkins Building presents a deceptive façade. The building appears to be a typically, rectangular box building which extends far back to the south. In reality, this building occupies a small, triangular parcel. At the center storefront (#87) the signage of Fred J. Dorn is still partially visible, after many decades.

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The Werner Photography Building, ca. 1980 (Karl R. Josker, photographer)
Note the deterioration of the waterfall window, the missing pinnacles and the modified storefront.

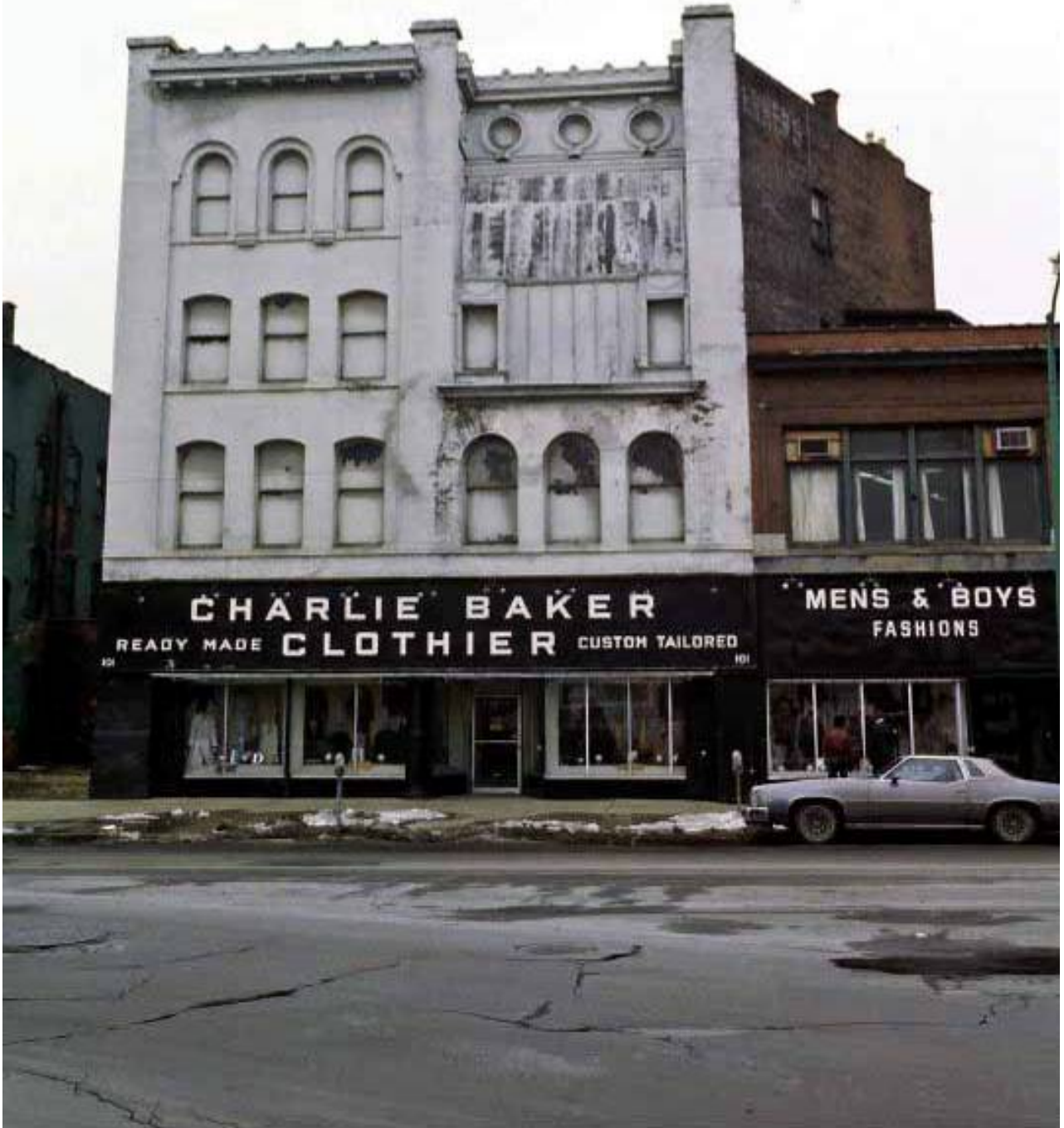
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The Caulkins Building, ca. 1986

An excellent color image of the Caulkins Building, this image highlights the dark recessed corner stair, the Luxfer prism transoms and the stately Romanesque Revival brick and stone façade. Also notable is the “waterfall” or “photo light” skylight.

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The Werner Photography Building, ca. 1986

Note the faded advertising mural to the right of the building's primary façade. The façade appears to have been painted white in the 1980s and the "waterfall" window was painted over and boarded up.

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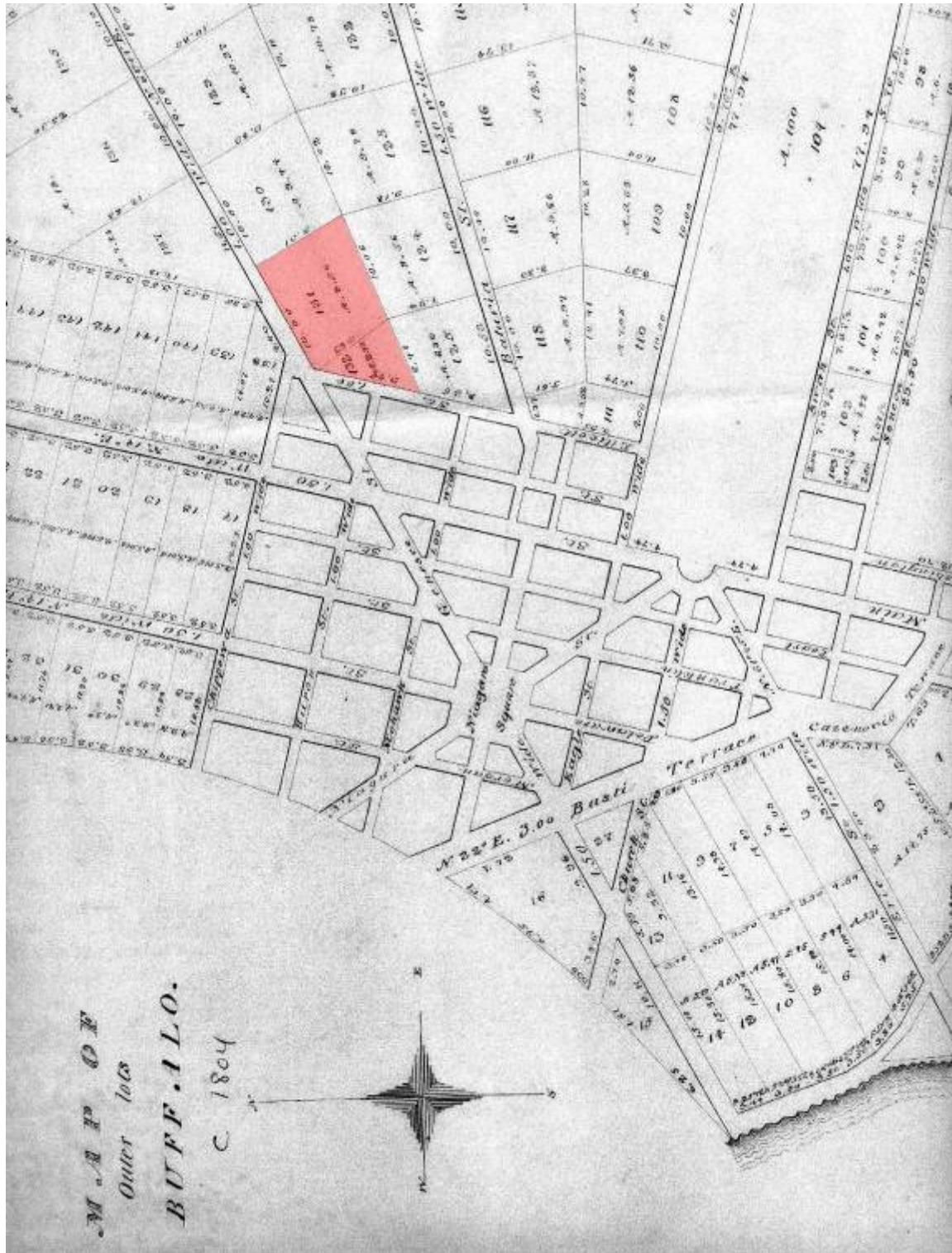


The Genesee Gateway Buildings, ca. 1986

Note the presence of the Caulkins Building and the mansarded Denzinger-Sigwald Buildings towards the image foreground, which were lost in 2002. The Werner Photography Building is located towards center and the H. Seeberg Building is at the background left.

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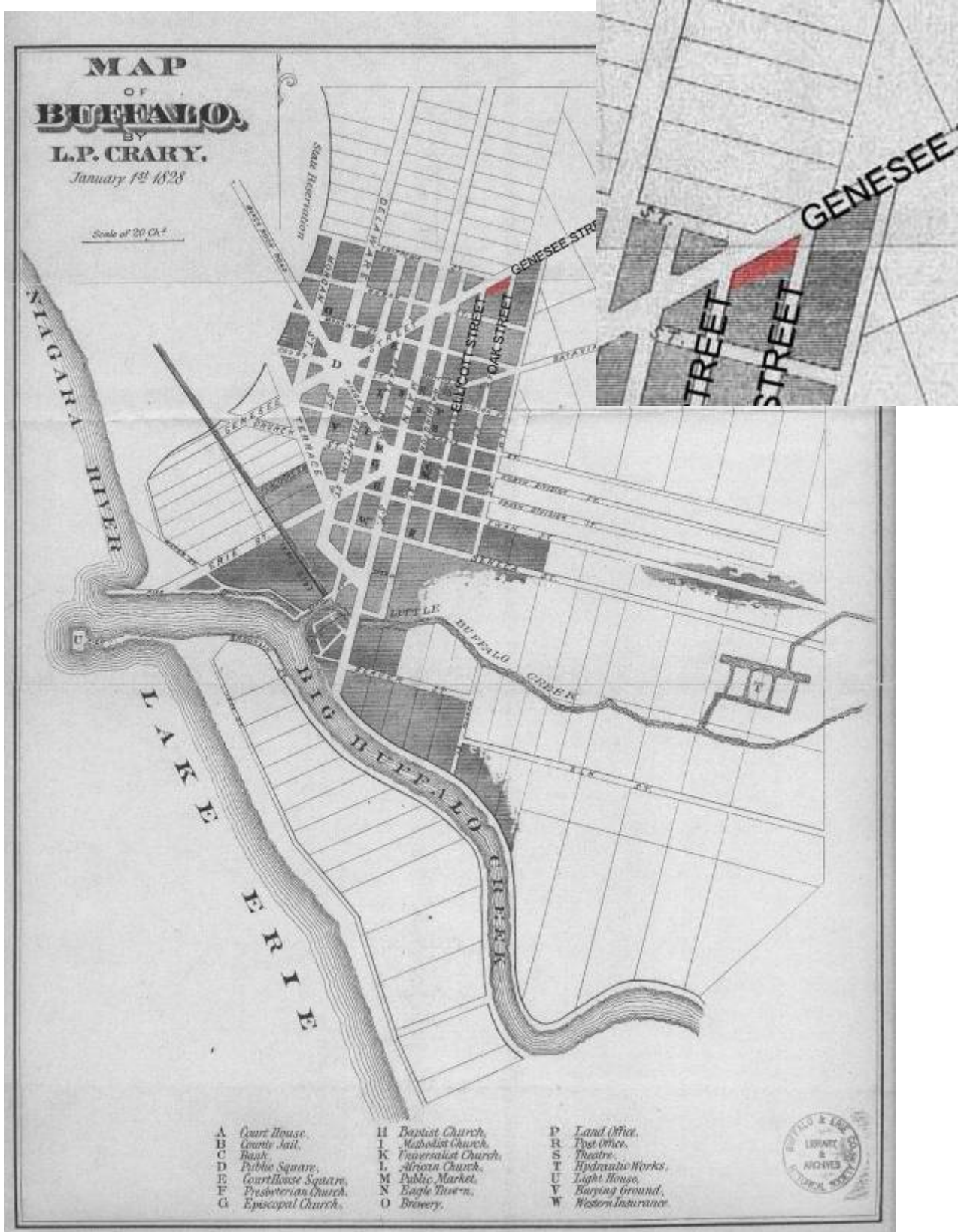
MAPS



Detail, Map of Buffalo Outer Lots, 1804/05

The red highlight indicates plots 131 and 132, purchased by Major Andre Andrews circa 1821 at the outer edge of Buffalo at the time, and current location of Genesee Gateway Historic District. Notice how the road narrows just past the corner of Ellicott and Genesee Street.

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1828 Map, Village of Buffalo

Inset shows location of Genesee Gateway Historic District highlighted in red. Note that buildings developed at the junction of developed areas and the rural fringe.

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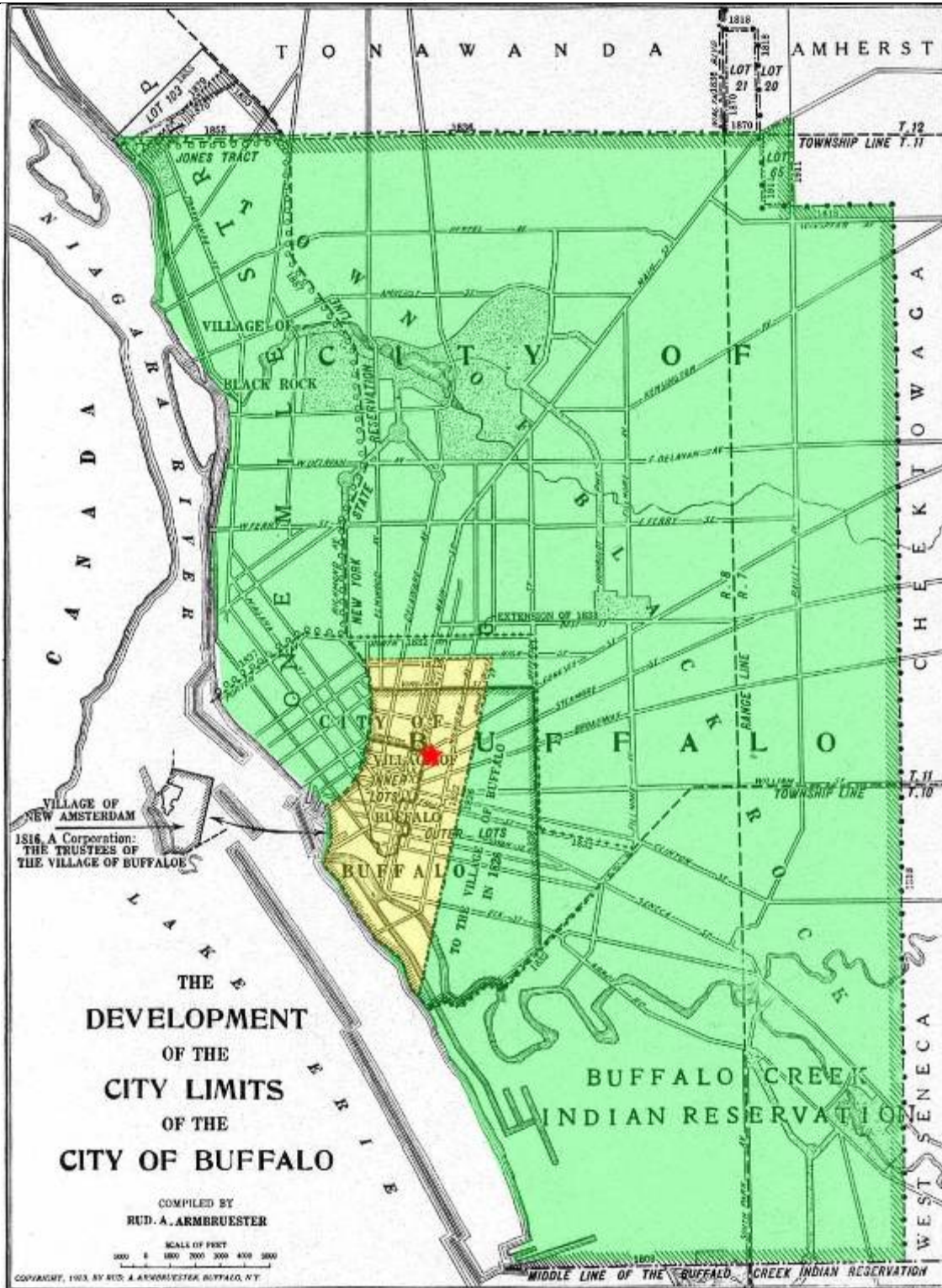


Pocket Map of the City of Buffalo, 1847

Enlarged map detail highlights the Genesee Gateway area as it appeared in the late 1840s. Note what appears to be a small street, called Blossom Street, which bisects the block north to south, possibly the reason why brick buildings aligned in continuous blocks or rows were constructed at the corners of the block and an assortment of oddly shaped frame buildings filled in the center, possibly as later urban development taking over the former right-of-way of the street. This configuration may also account for the configuration of individual lots on this block

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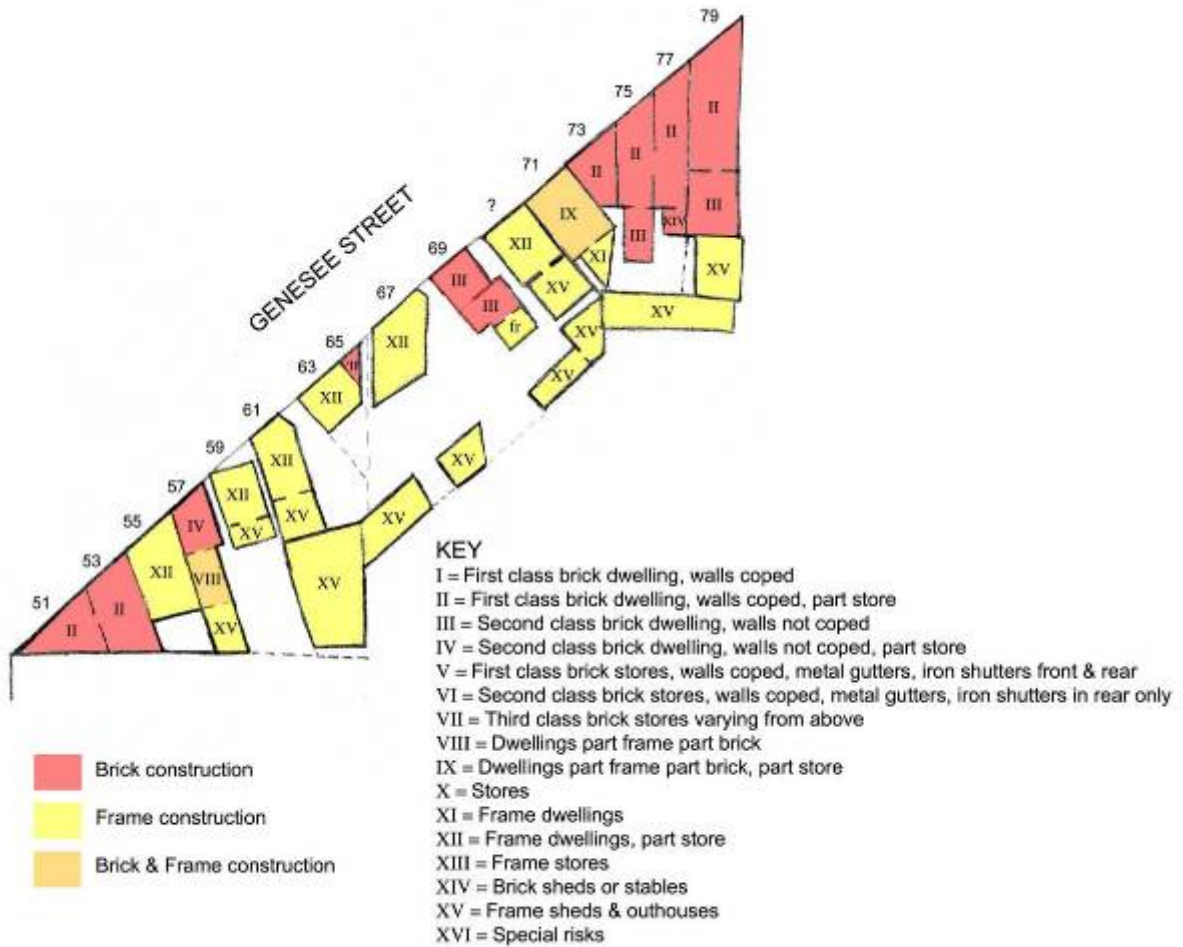
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The Development of the City Limits of the City of Buffalo (1923)

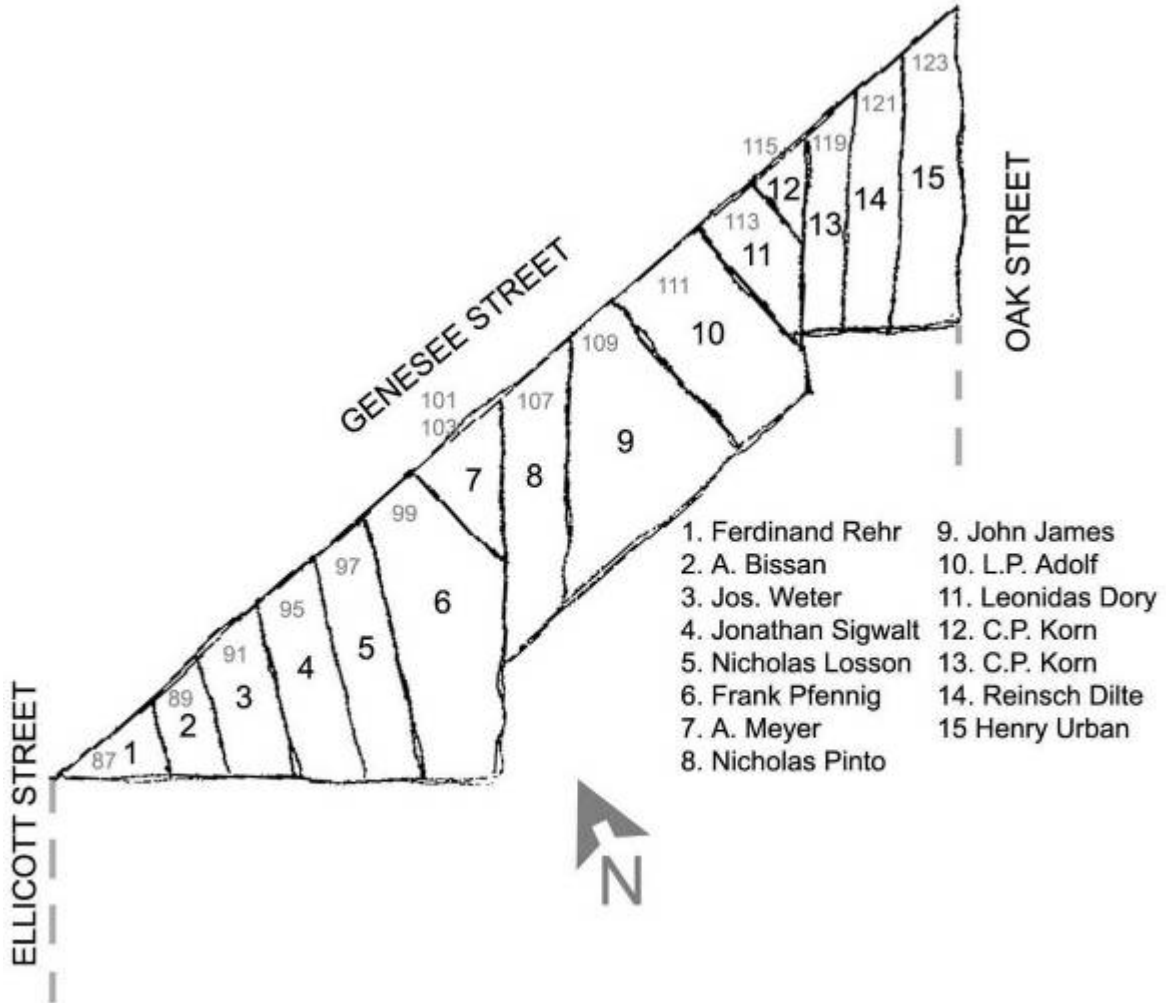
Yellow indicates the boundaries of the then Village of Buffalo in 1822 around the time the Genesee-Ellicott-Oak neighborhood was founded. The red star indicates the location of the Genesee Gateway buildings in relation to the overall size of the city at the time; compare to the green 1923 boundaries of the city.

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Sketch Map, 1854 Fire Insurance Map
Highlighting building type and construction of the buildings in the Genesee Gateway Historic District

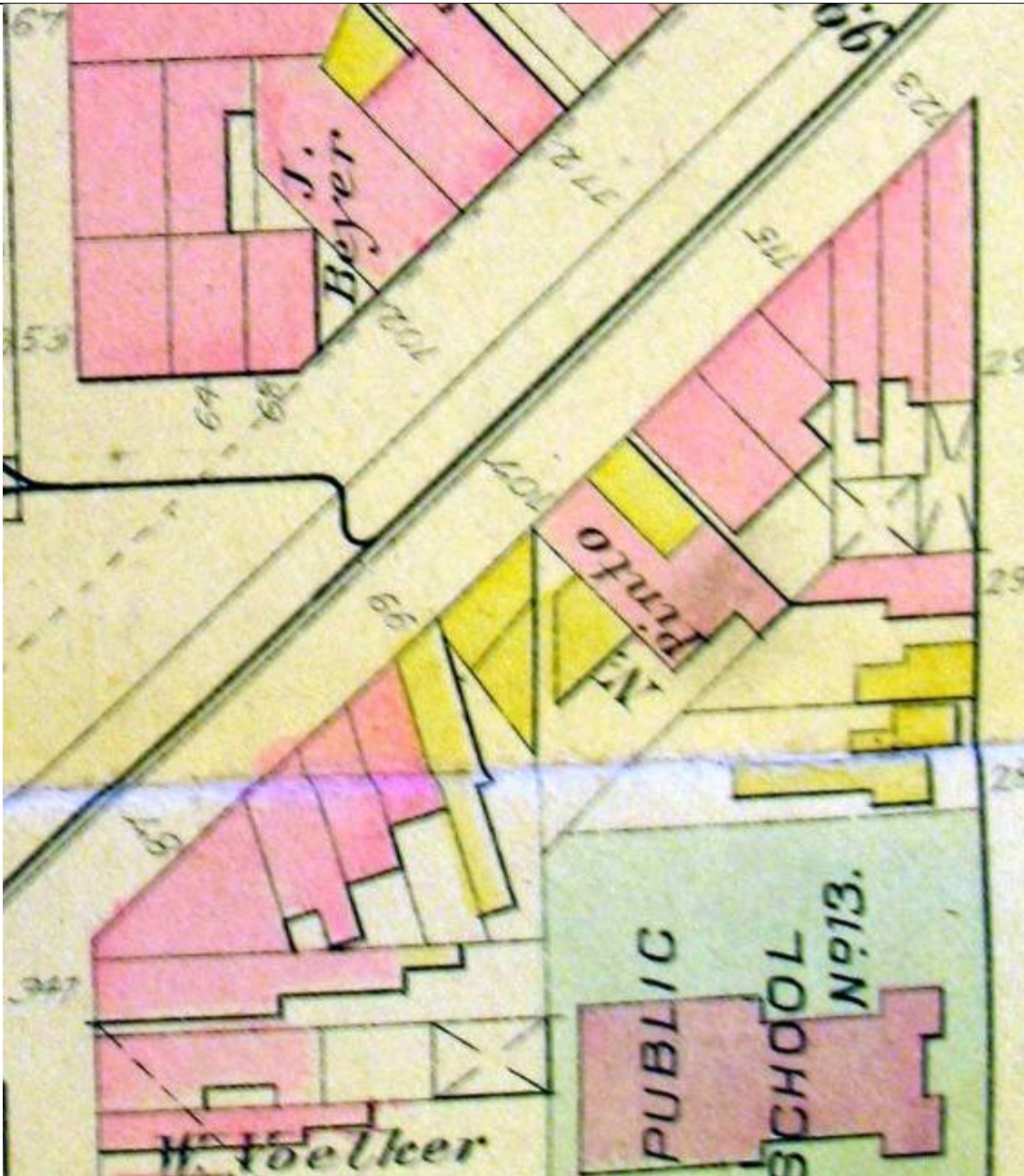
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Sketch Map, 1866 Deed Atlas
Showing the ownership of the Genesee Gateway Historic District buildings.

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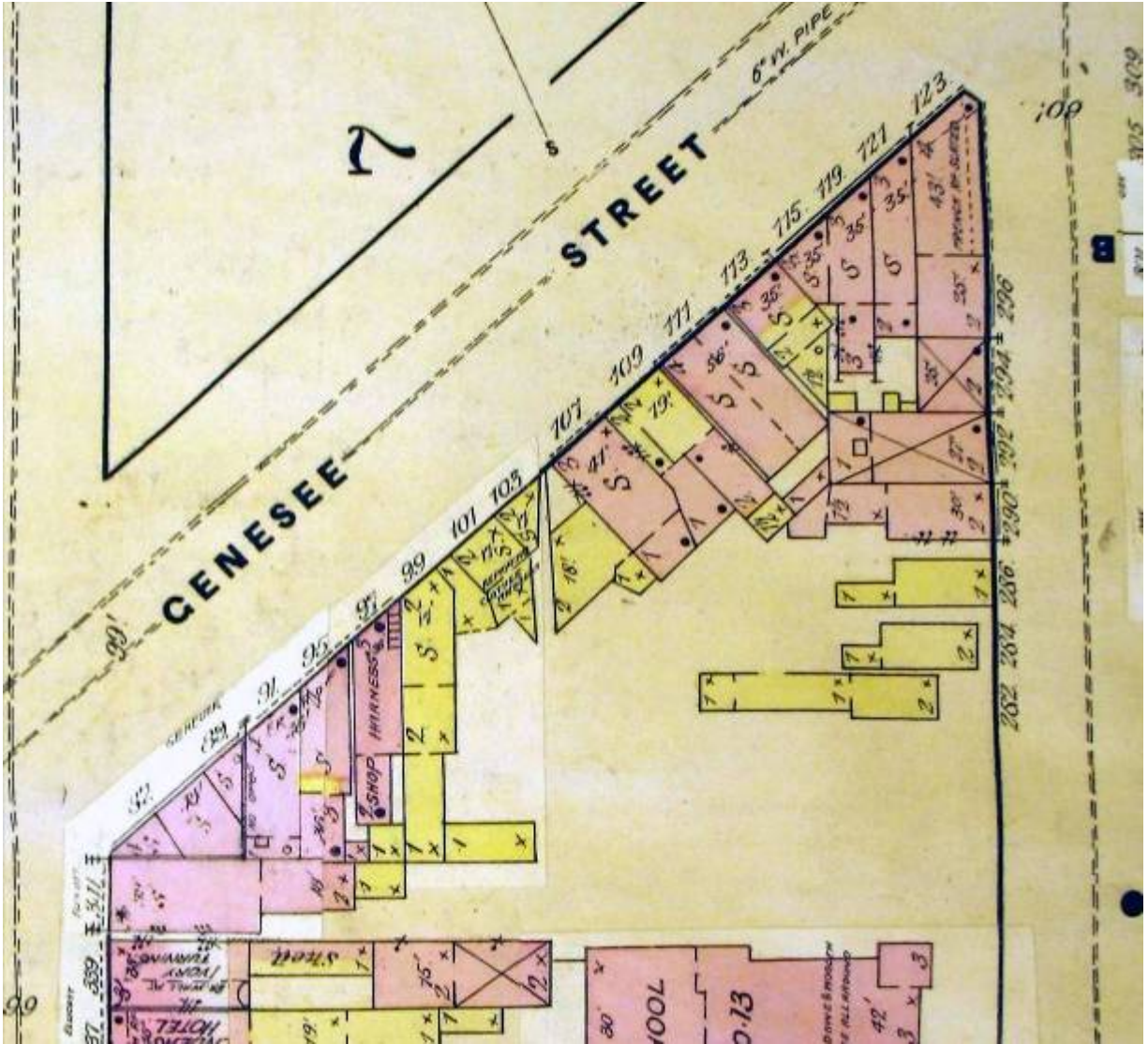
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Detail, 1884 City Atlas

Note the overall quantity of brick constructed, small-scale commercial and residential buildings in this area of Buffalo. Today, the relatively small boundaries of the Genesee Gateway Historic District reflect the erosion of this architectural fabric due to later construction and heavy demolition in the neighborhood.

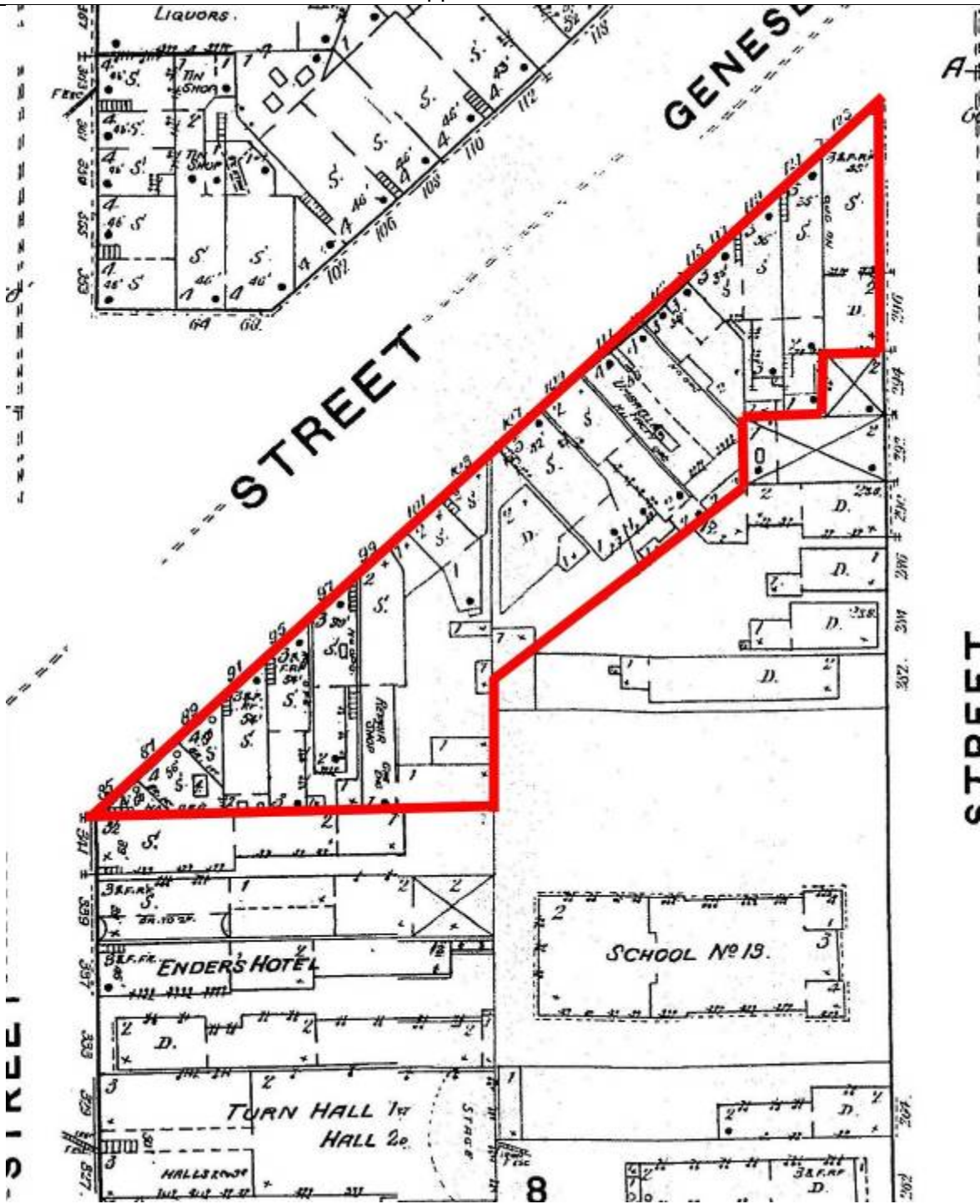
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Detail, 1881 Updated to 1888 Sanborn Map
A detailed view of the southern portion of the district boundaries.

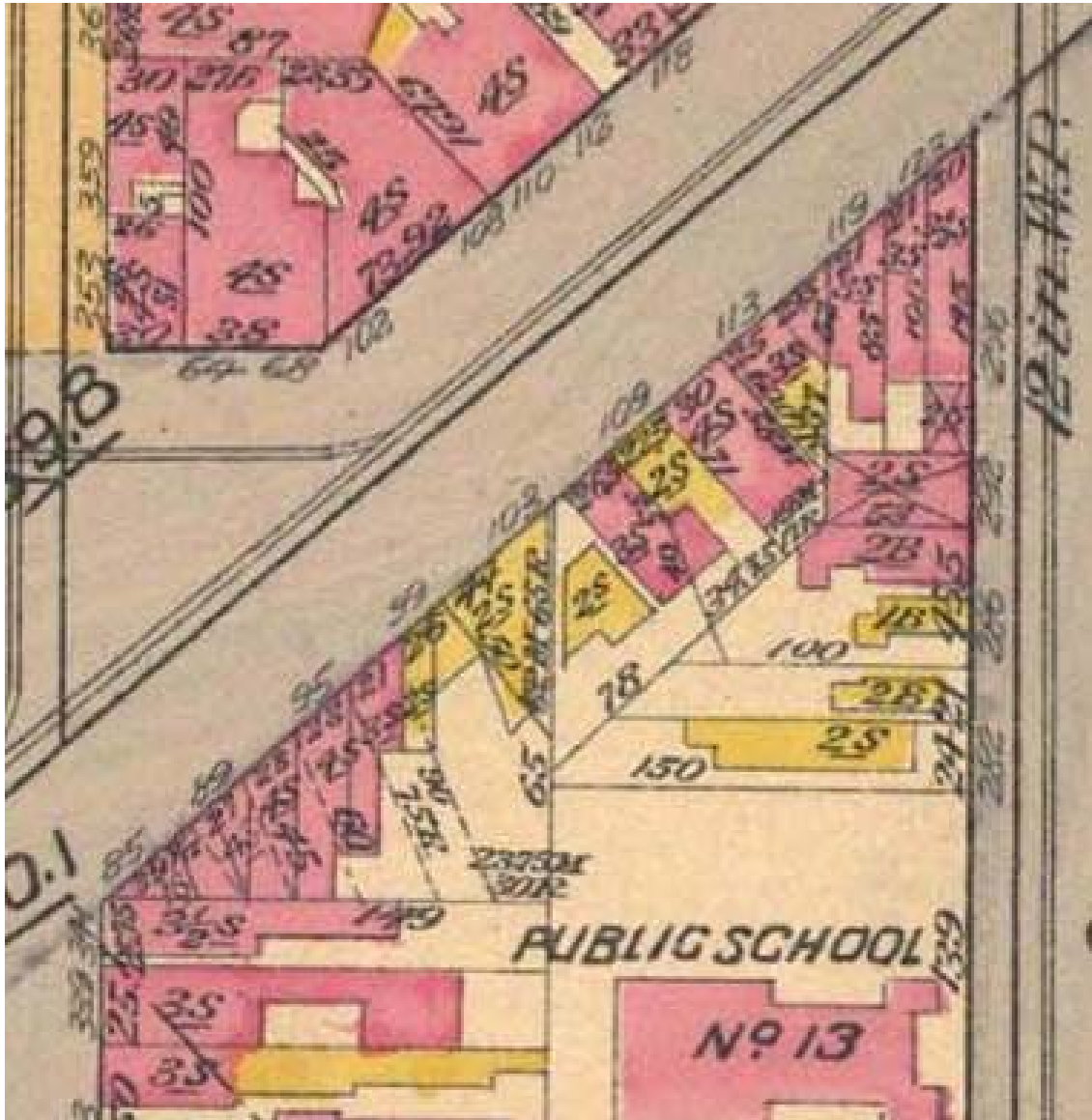
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1889 Sanborn Map

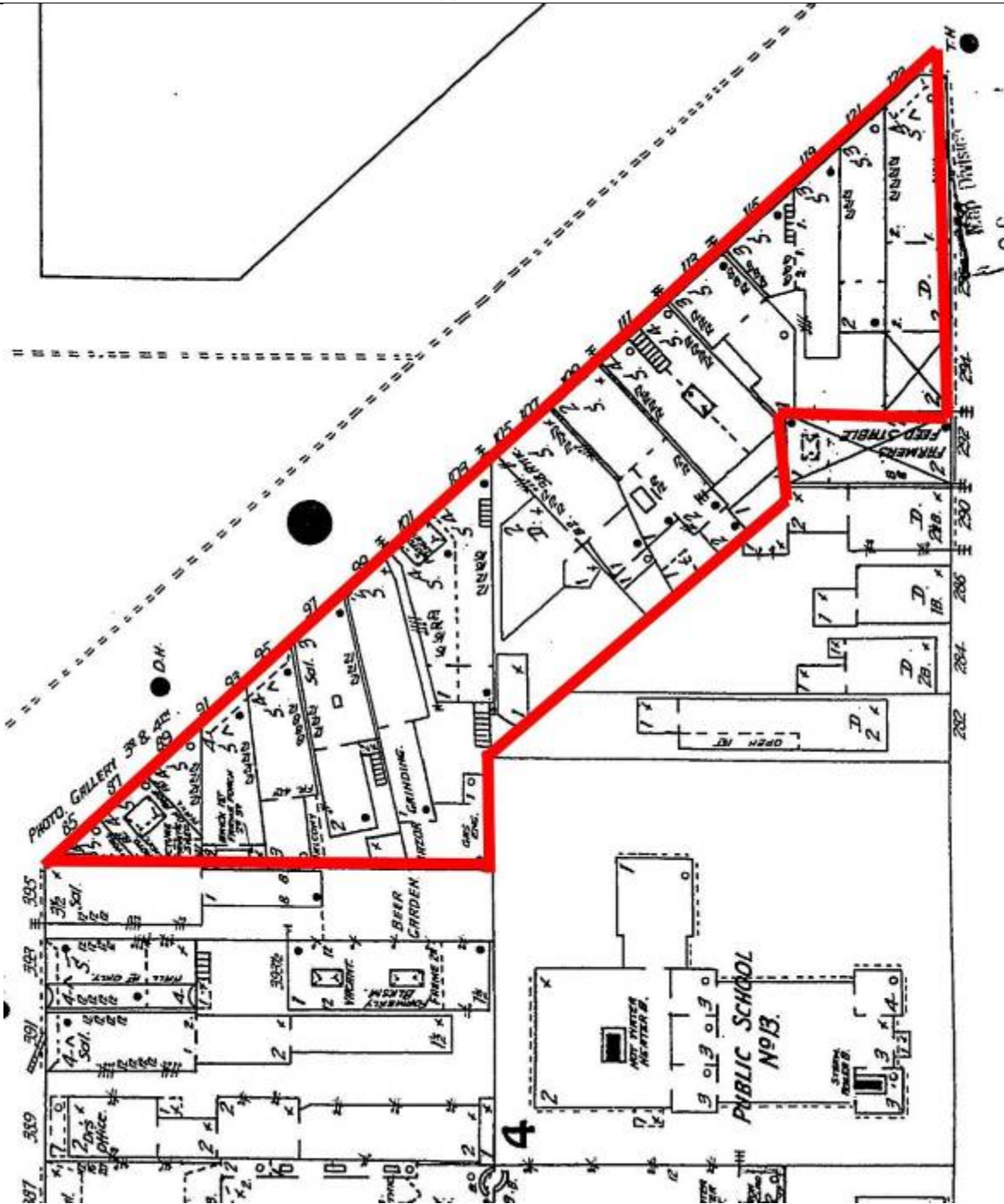
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Detail, 1894 City Atlas

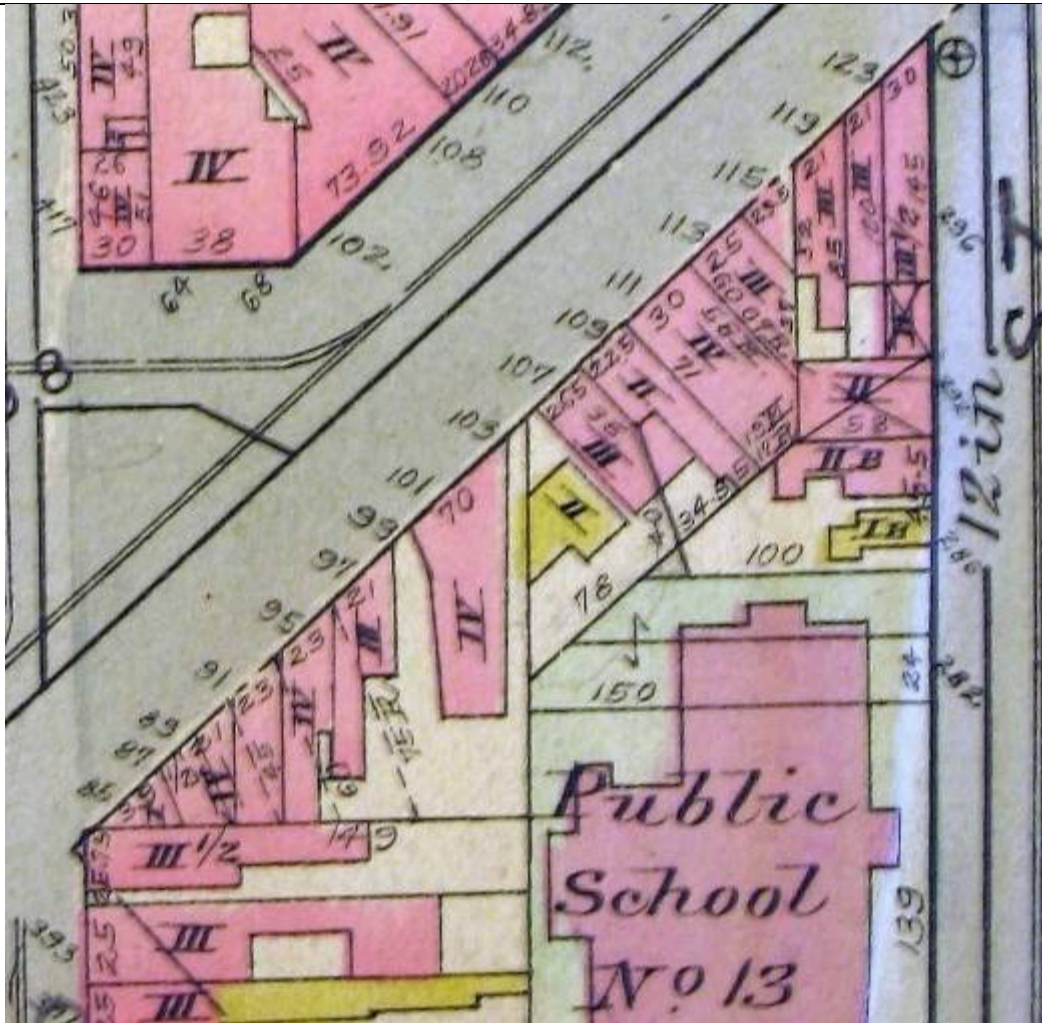
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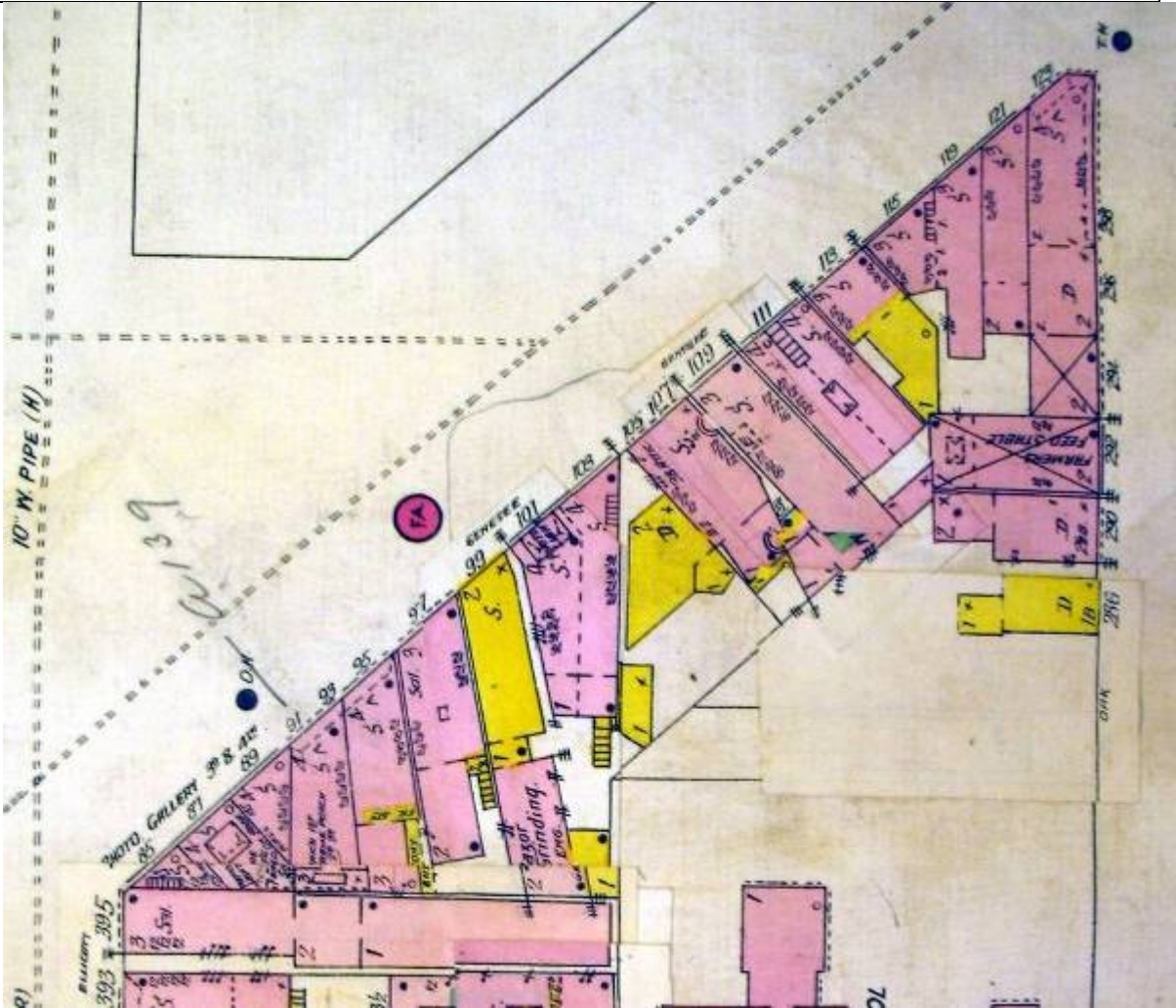


Detail, 1899 Sanborn Map

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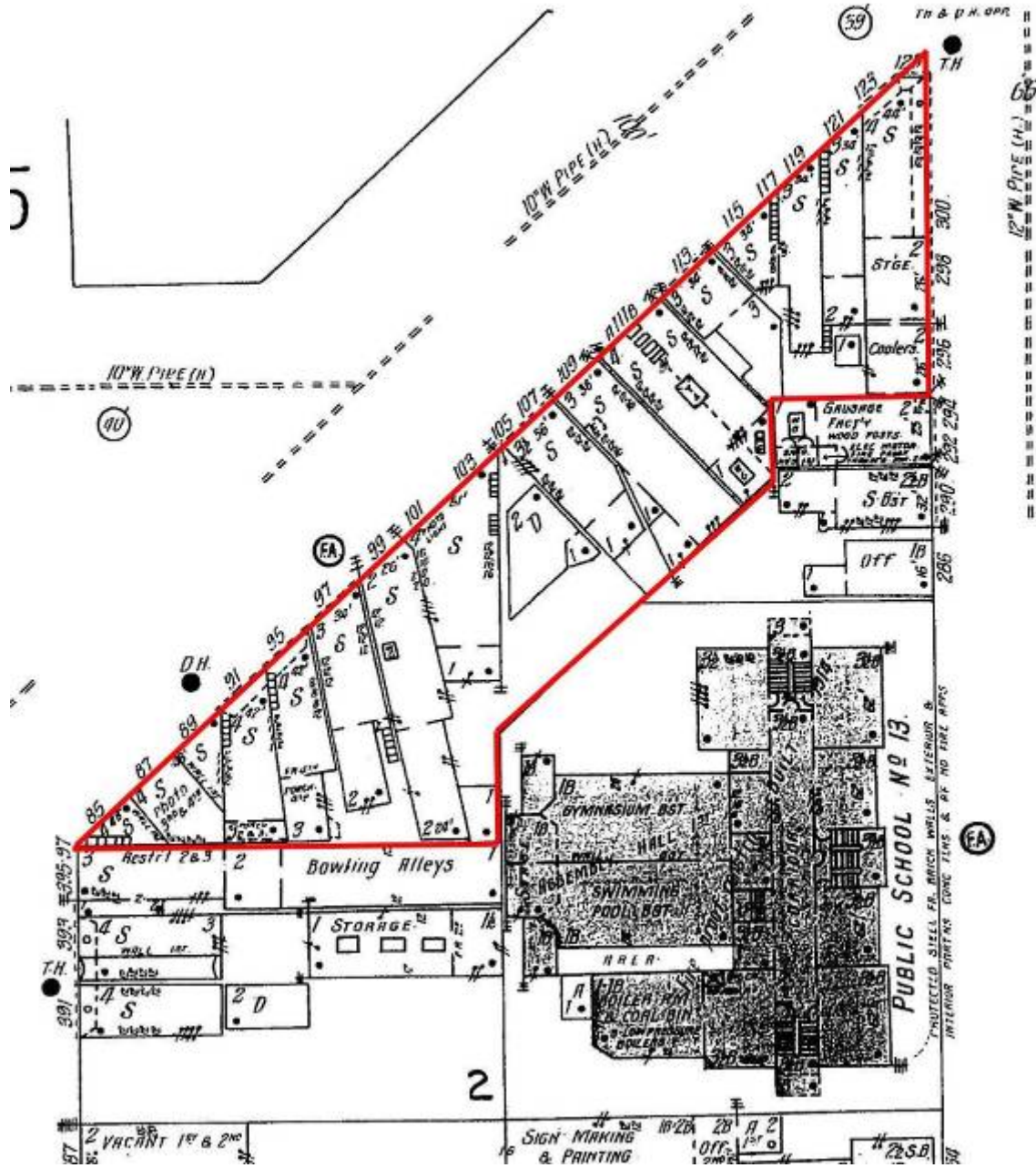


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Detail, 1899 Updated to 1916 Sanborn Map

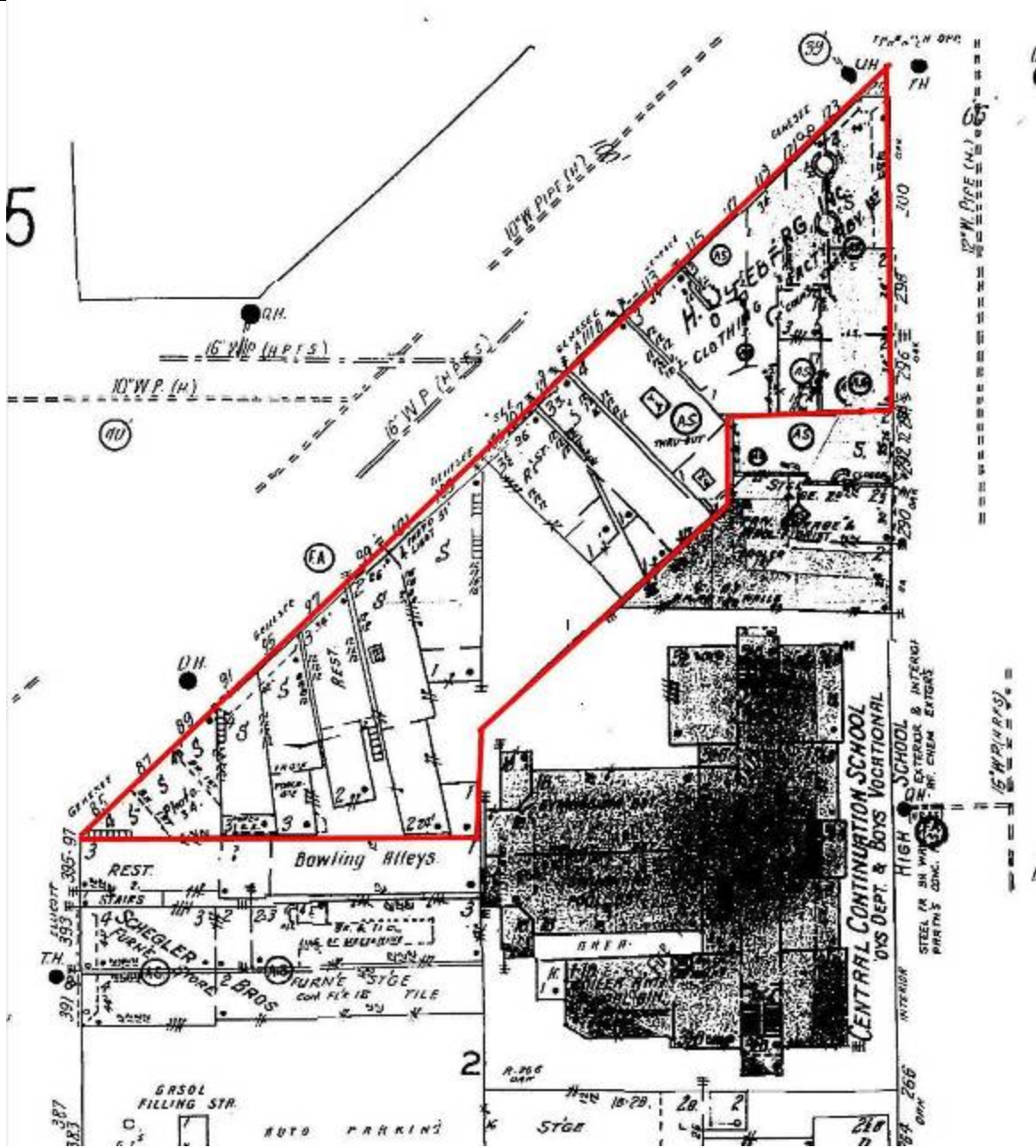
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Detail, 1925 Sanborn Map

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Detail, 1925 updated to 1951 Sanborn Map

Note that demolitions in and around the neighborhood are already beginning in the 1950s.

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PHOTOS



(1) 85-87-89 Genesee Street
The Caulkins Building, F.W. Caulkins architect, 1886
Contributing



(2) 91-95 Genesee Street
The Denzinger-Sigwald Building, ca. 1870s
Contributing

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(3) 97 Genesee Street
Eddie Brady's tavern, ca. 1850s
Contributing



(4) 99 Genesee Street
The Giesser Building, Edward G. Henrich architect, ca. 1915
Contributing

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(5) 101-103 Genesee Street
The Werner Photography Building, Richard A. Waite architect, 1895
Contributing



(6) 105-107 Genesee Street
New construction, Flynn Battaglia Architects, 2009-2010
Non-contributing

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(7) 109 Genesee Street
The Baldwin Building, Esenwein & Johnson, architects, 1903
Contributing



(8) 111 Genesee Street
The Schwinn- Mandel Building, ca. 1878
Contributing

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(9) 113-125 Genesee Street
The H. Seeberg Building, ca. 1840s-1870s
Contributing

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(10) 113-125 Genesee Street (south elevation)
The H. Seeberg Building, ca. 1840s-1870s

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(11) 109-111 Genesee Street (south elevation)

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(12) 85-87-89 Genesee Street (west elevation)