

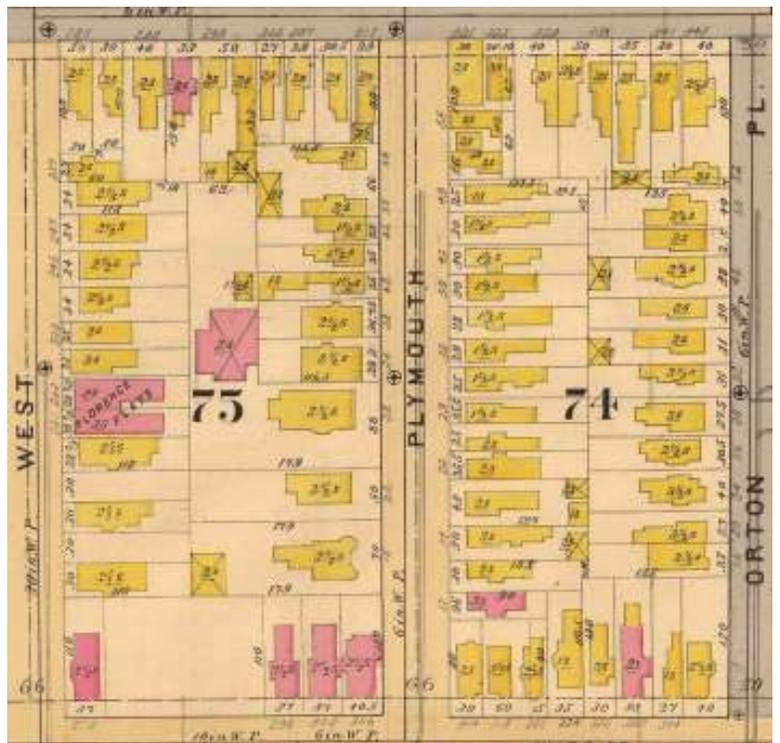
listing it for sale with real estate agents Hume and Sanford. In September 1890 they took an advertisement that read, "SIDWAY PROPERTY. The beautiful residence on the above property with 120 feet each on West and Plymouth Avenues will be sold at a low price. The Hudson Street front will be sold separately in lots."

Apparently there were no takers for the mansion, possibly because it was so big and didn't have the latest house technology such as gas heat, annunciators, electricity, etc. Consequently, Franklin razed the mansion in 1891 or early 1892. In January 1891, Hume and Sanford reported that it had sold five lots on Hudson Street from the Sidway estate. Three notable structures were built on the frontage: **288, 294 and 306 Hudson Street**. No. **288 Hudson Street** (extant) is a home with an eclectic mix of simple but dignified Shingle and Queen Anne style detailing. It was built for Mathias J. Hens and was his family's home from 1894 until 1914. Hens was the co-founder of Hens and Kelly Department Store in Buffalo, located at 478-488 Main St., near the site of the old St. John house. Mr. Hens was born in Germany about 1864 and moved to Buffalo about 1870 with his parents. He attended Canisius High School and Canisius College and began working as a bookkeeper for Kraus and Sheehan at Main and Mohawk Streets. In 1883, Hens accompanied buyers for the store to New York and there met Mr. Kelly who had arrived from Ireland the year before. They became friends. Kelly moved to Buffalo to work for Sheehan as a buyer. In 1892, Hens and Kelly formed a partnership and founded the store with Mr. Hens as president and Mr. Kelly as vice president. Hens' father-like management of the department store was legendary.⁴¹ Hens married Anna M. Schmitt in 1886 and together they had 11 children, so they needed a large house like **288 Hudson Street** for their growing family. Their children included: Norbert F., Rose M., Leo M., Bernard J., Margaret A., Lillian M., Edwin J., Francis F., Paul T., Julia, Cecilia, Theresa M. and Marie J. Other than Norbert, Rose and Leo, all the children were born during the period the family lived at **288 Hudson Street**. Hens' son Norbert was a sergeant in Co. H., 309th Infantry during WWI and was killed in Grand Pre' France on October 17, 1918.



Mathias J. Hens, owner of Hens and Kelly Department Store, his wife Anna and their eleven children lived at 288 Hudson Street for two decades. Courtesy of David Hens.

At **306 Hudson Street** (extant), a large brick and frame house designed in the Queen Anne style, was built about 1889 for Dr. Charles A. Wall. The building was constructed with two entrances, one of which was for his office. Dr. Wall, born in Buffalo on September 24, 1853, was the son of David and Alice (Allen) Wall. He attended public schools and graduated from Central High School in 1873. In 1876 he received the degree of B.S. from Syracuse University and graduated in 1879 from the medical department of the University of Buffalo. He



1894 Atlas of the first block of Plymouth Avenue, showing "L" shaped configuration that Franklin Sidway made of his new house at 30 Plymouth Avenue incorporating the barn from the original Sidway mansion.

wrote for various medical journals and for several years he was an assistant surgeon of the 74th Regiment, N.G. N.Y. In June 1880 he married Annie M. Powell, daughter of William Powell and they had four children; Annie P., Charles A. Jr., William Powell and Malcolm Coburn.⁴² Dr. Wall was killed in 1917 in an aviation accident. Wall's home and office at **306 Hudson Street** was extensively remodeled and enlarged in the late 1920s and the top two floors were covered with slate siding.

About 1895, at **294 Hudson St.** (the entrance to the original Sidway mansion) a beautiful and luxurious apartment building was constructed called "**The Valois.**" It was designed by architect Fred Harvey Loverin in the French Gothic style. Built of Roman-shaped buff brick trimmed with Ohio buff sandstone, the main entrance floor was finished with mosaic tile with marble trim and its halls were floored with white oak. It burned in 2001 and was demolished.⁴³

In 1892, two large and elegant homes were built at **18 and 22 Plymouth Avenue** on the site of the former Sidway mansion. William H. Harris, superintendent of the Standard Radiator Company, built **18 Plymouth Avenue** in 1892 to be his home, a stunningly beautiful high-Victorian Queen Anne style wood-frame house. It is a full 2½ stories with a hipped roof. The first floor and second floor bay window has a single light window with a leaded transom. The second story door has a shed style hood supported by brackets. The home's crowning glory is its two-story turret with polygonal tent roof and original iron finial. The pediment-like gable has an elliptical window with a bead balustrade. The polygonal dormer on the right side features a clipped gable roof.

Franklin Sidway built **22 Plymouth Avenue** in April 1892. It is a large, elegantly-designed home in the Shingle style and constructed of brick on the first floor and wood-frame above. The first floor has a porch recessed into the main body of the house and has flat-headed windows that are double hung with six-over-one lights. The second floor oriel has a window with eight-over-one lights. The roof is pierced by a large dormer with a pair of windows and a hipped roof.

Nearly a year after Franklin Sidway began construction of **22 Plymouth Avenue**, he sold it to Col. Charles Otis Shepard, a famous Civil War veteran. Shepard (1842-1928) was born in Arcade, NY and on May 9, 1861 enlisted in the 82nd regiment, New York infantry in Buffalo. Shepard was a private in Erie County's 21st NY Volunteers Company C from May 20, 1861 to February 28, 1862 and was commissioned a lieutenant after he was wounded in battle in June 1862. After the war, Shepard entered government service and was appointed U.S. Consul to Japan (1871-1872) and England (1877). While stationed at Yeddo, Japan in 1872, he seized a ship containing Portuguese slaves and was knighted by Portugal for obtaining the freedom of Portuguese citizens who had been doomed to slavery. There were also some Chinese citizens on the slave ship who were returned to China, for which he was awarded a large gold medal by the Chinese government. After Shepard returned to the U.S., he became the commandant of the soldiers' home at Bath, NY. He also wrote many articles and stories about the Civil War that appeared in *McClure's* magazine. Shepard had a varied and illustrious career and was at one time a judge in the division of Indian lands in Oklahoma. He was an avid historian and moved to California shortly before his death.⁴⁴

Charlotte, Franklin and the entire Sidway family lived in their new home at **30 Plymouth Avenue** next door to Charles Shepard for about 10 years, until 1899. Things began to change when on May 5, 1897, E. G. Spaulding died. Believed to have been the wealthiest citizen in Buffalo at the time of his death, his estate was valued at nearly \$3 million and just a year before, he gave \$1.5 million to his three children: Charlotte, Edward Rich and Samuel Strong. In accordance with Spaulding's last will and testament, his home on Main St. at Goodell St. was razed, yet Spaulding wished that "River Lawn," his Grand Island estate, would be retained by his family.

Lewis F. Allen, for whom Allentown is named, was the first notable Buffalonian to build a house on Grand Island. Spaulding followed soon thereafter, about 1870, when he purchased approximately 350 acres of land near the southern tip of Grand Island upon which he built an imposing mansion. In 1879, the prominent Falconwood Club built its clubhouse adjacent to the Spaulding property. Grand Island then became a fashionable place for Buffalo's social set and numerous large houses were built soon thereafter.

The family complied with E. G. Spaulding's wishes concerning River Lawn; the Sidways set up three households there. Clarence Sidway, the son of Charlotte and Franklin, moved into the original E. G. Spaulding mansion. In 1899, Charlotte and Franklin commissioned Buffalo architects Lansing & Beierl to build an even larger and more elaborate mansion on the estate, designed in the latest Colonial Revival style. In 1911, Charlotte and Franklin's youngest son Ralph also built a home on the property, designed by the architectural firm Lansing, Bley & Lyman.

For the rest of their lives, Charlotte and Franklin alternated living between River Lawn, the Lenox Hotel on North Street in Buffalo and winters in Florida. In 1933, just prior to Charlotte's death, the major part of River Lawn was acquired by the State of New York to be used for a park, now known as Beaver Island State Park. The original

E. G. Spaulding mansion and Charlotte's mansion built in 1899 were torn down; only Ralph's house is extant.

On the site of Charlotte's father's house at the corner of Main and Goodell Streets in Buffalo, the family built two four-story business blocks in 1906-1907, the Sidway Building and the Spaulding Building, forever linking the Sidway and Spaulding names in the same geographic space. McCreary, Wood & Bradney designed both buildings and Wood & Bradney designed a two-story addition to the Sidway Building in 1913.

Of the many legacies remaining in Buffalo from the Sidway and Spaulding families, **30 Plymouth Avenue** is the last remaining home built by Franklin and Charlotte in which they lived. The original Sidway mansion barn, which is now under separate ownership from the house, is also extant. A smaller home was built on the entrance to the barn at **24 Plymouth Avenue** in 1908.

Several other homes were modified or built during the late 1880s or early 1890s on the first block of Plymouth Avenue. No. **49 Plymouth Avenue**, originally built in 1872, was purchased and lived in by 1890 by Ira Rochester Amsden, Jr., (12/25/1867 - 8/3/1915) a clerk with Erie County Savings Bank. Amsden lived in the house with his wife Ada and their children. Amsden significantly remodeled **49 Plymouth Avenue** in 1893 and gave it a Colonial Revival appearance, yet the house still retains architectural clues that indicate its earlier origin. The 2½ story house features a pedimented front gable with paired windows, a Tuscan column support and shingles. Modillions are found under the projecting pediment. The second floor has a bay window and the main entrance door is made of paneled wood. Although the home generally has flat-headed windows, it does have an oval glass window, that was at one time leaded, to the left of the main entrance door. The front porch has turned posts, a pediment over the steps with shingles, bowed spindle balustrade and a shingled base. After living at **49 Plymouth Avenue** for several years, Amsden moved near the corner of Plymouth Avenue and Jersey Street to the larger home located at **321 Jersey Street** and remained there until his death.



Ada B. Amsden, VP of the Quota Club, lived with her husband, Ira R. Amsden, Jr. at 49 Plymouth Ave. Ira R. Amsden Sr., her husband's father, lived at 21 Plymouth Avenue in the same block.

Also in 1893, Ira Amsden's father, Ira Rochester Amsden, Sr., (6/29/1835 - 12/11/1901) moved to the same block as his son when he bought the home at **21 Plymouth Avenue**. Amsden was in the real estate business and moved to **21 Plymouth Avenue** with his second wife, Nannie J. (1/30/1844 - 8/22/1915) from their previous home at 546 Seventh Street. Ira Amsden Jr. was the son of Ira Amsden Sr. and his first wife, Mary M. Pitts Amsden (11/12/1833 - 8/12/1873), who died just a few weeks after the death of her daughter, Mary Jennie Amsden (d. 7/22/1873) at just six weeks old. **21 Plymouth Avenue** was the last home lived in by Ira Amsden, Sr. and Nannie; both of their funerals were held at the house.

On the former Shadrake-Baker barn/shop property, large homes were built in 1889 at **38 and 34 Plymouth Ave.**, the latter being an especially well-designed Queen Anne style house. The 2½ story home has a gable roof with an extended front slope that incorporates the front porch with square support columns and a pediment over the entrance stairs. The home has a large three-story turret with a polygonal tent roof and flat-headed windows. The home also has a pedimented dormer on its second floor and a smaller pedimented dormer above with a pair of windows. The fact that such a fine home as **34 Plymouth Ave.** was built by someone other than the Sidways showed that they had set a new and higher housing standard on the first block of Plymouth Ave. The house at **34 Plymouth Avenue** became the home of Robert Morris and his family who were living in the house by 1892.

1900-1985 Period

The turn of the twentieth century ushered in even more rapid change in the Plymouth Avenue neighborhood. A new twist came about in housing development when many large apartment buildings were constructed in Buffalo, while at the same time, larger homes began to be subdivided into apartment buildings. Some of these apartments were utilized to support housing demands for the Pan American Exposition held in 1901. One apartment building, "The Hudson," located at **313 Hudson Street** at the foot of **Plymouth Avenue** was leased by Martin Ebel of Brooklyn and made into a hotel for visitors from Brooklyn.⁴⁵

Another change in the neighborhood that took place during the twentieth century was its ethnic demographic. The neighborhood began to be inhabited by Italian-Americans during the first half of the twentieth century and Puerto Ricans during the second half. Ironically, some of the streets' nineteenth century residents helped to usher in changes that would be seen during the twentieth century. Frank St. John Sidway, son of Franklin and Charlotte Sidway, lived at **30 Plymouth Avenue** during the last decade of the nineteenth century. During the Spanish-American War, Frank Sidway was captain of Company C of the 202nd Regiment Infantry New York Volunteers and was in Cuba from December 1898 through April 1899.⁴⁶ Puerto Rico was one of the Spanish colonies that was ceded to the United States after the war. Its inhabitants became U.S. citizens in 1917, paving the way for mass internal migration into the Plymouth Avenue neighborhood in the decades that followed WW II, after Puerto Rico became a commonwealth of the United States in 1952.

While some changes in the neighborhood were dramatic, others were more mundane. Norman A. McLeod and his wife Blanche moved to **23 Plymouth Avenue** in 1891 after living the year before at **103 Plymouth Avenue**. Norman, who started his career as a salesman and office manager for a metal pipe company, in his later years became an interior decorator. The couple remained at 23 Plymouth Avenue for over half a century until the 1940s.

In 1903, Frank Newfield, of **47 Plymouth Avenue**, moved a building to the rear of the lot and adapted it for dwelling purposes. As it was a pre-existing building, it certainly predates 1903. The building appears to be a rear wing from a larger home.

In 1907, the Franklin Sidway house at **30 Plymouth Avenue** was sold to James B. Healy, a musician, who as early as 1908 obtained permits to alter the structure. He owned the building for a number of years, operating it as "The Plaza Hotel." The exact configuration of the changed Sidway house is not known, but in 1950 the building was described as a two-family dwelling and rooming house. Also in 1908, Healy built a structure in the rear of the lot at **24 Plymouth Avenue**.

Plymouth Avenue Becomes an Italian-American Neighborhood

By 1920, Buffalo's west side was a solid Italian-American enclave and many of Plymouth Avenue's residents were of Italian and Sicilian ancestry. One family's history on Plymouth Avenue is exemplary for many such families living in Buffalo. The Villa family bought **15 Plymouth Avenue** in 1920. The home, which had been built in 1879, had a number of owners and residents by that time. The Graves family lived in it until the early 1880s, and then it was owned by James Rardon's family. By 1888 the house was again sold and rented out for the next 20 years. In 1888, the home was occupied by Jesse Willard Smith, an assistant cashier with the Bank of Attica and his family. By the late 1890s, the house was rented to Berthold Block and his family, well-known wholesale jewelers in Buffalo. Finally, the home was rented for many years to the Fish family until the Villas purchased it in 1920.

Peter Villa, just a young boy when his parents bought the house, was encouraged to learn to be a cobbler from Carlo Campagna, an old-world Italian craftsman who lived around the corner at **289 Hudson Street** and operated a shoe repair shop at **281 Hudson Street**. Peter became Carlo's apprentice and eventually opened his own shoe repair business on Hudson Street at Tenth Street, within walking distance of the home.

As time went by, Peter married and started a family but never left **15 Plymouth Avenue**. After his parents passed away, Peter purchased the house from their estate. Through the decades of the twentieth century, the home stayed in the family, changing hands from Peter to his wife and finally to his son Charles. While an example of a house staying in the same family's ownership for nearly 80 years seems unusual, similar stories of residents growing up and staying in the Plymouth Avenue neighborhood for decades is a story heard time and time again.



Angelo, Barbara and Sam Brucklier. Their family operated a funeral home out of 18 Plymouth Avenue for many years. Courtesy of David F. Granville.



Peter Villa, long-time resident of 15 Plymouth Ave., at his cobbler shop on Hudson St. at Tenth St., circa 1940. Courtesy of Sandy Villa.

Another notable Italian-American resident of the first block of Plymouth Avenue was Angelo Bruno (1898-1964) who lived at **55 Plymouth Avenue** from 1950 until he died there on April 24, 1964. Bruno, a singer with a golden tenor voice, was born in Santa Caterina, Italy and immigrated with his family to the United States as a young boy. Bruno returned to Italy for voice study and his talent and hard work resulted in his becoming an opera star, performing operas at the prestigious La Scala Opera House in Milan as well as other leading opera houses in several European countries during the 1920s. Returning to the United States in the late 1920s, Bruno sang on programs broadcast over Buffalo radio stations WEBR and WBEN. Later, he sang in movies produced by First National-Warner Brothers Film Corporation. Bruno was also a soloist at Shea's Buffalo Theater from 1933 to 1936. In the late 1930s, he opened the "Bruno Vocal Studio," at 438 Delaware Avenue, but moved it to his home at **55 Plymouth Avenue** in 1953 where he operated it until his death.⁴⁷ Bruno was remembered by neighborhood residents as a handsome man with a commanding presence who was always in a happy mood. He was a very energetic man who sang opera all the time, even on the street. He was balding on top, with gray hair on the side, a suntanned head and face, and usually wore a shirt that seemed Hawaiian, with shorts and very muscular legs and wore sandals. He moved quickly, although almost stout in build. He had enormous energy and easily connected with everyone he met, even the neighborhood teenagers during the 1950s and 1960s.

From Servants to Boarders

Housing in Buffalo during the last half of the nineteenth century went through an extraordinary period of rapid technological and social change. In 1850, when Plymouth Avenue began to be settled by working-class families, homes had no running water, natural gas or electricity. Homes were heated with fireplaces and lit by oil lamps. By the 1870s, natural gas became available for lighting and heating, and homes began to have running water and indoor bathrooms. By the end of the nineteenth century, electricity became available for lighting and other uses.

Transportation also underwent rapid changes during the same period. Walking, riding horses or horse-driven carriages were the only modes of land-based transportation until the 1860s. At that time, horse-driven streetcars were introduced, allowing greater transportation options for the working-class. More choices for transportation became available during the 1870s and 1880s when bicycles became popular. By the early 1890s, electric streetcars replaced horse-driven streetcars and by the early twentieth century, automobiles made both horses and streetcars obsolete.

On a social level, families and their homes also witnessed dramatic changes. Prior to the Civil War, only very large estates had servants. For example, the Sidway household in 1860 had four servants: two female seamstresses, and a male coachman and his wife, who was a domestic servant. By 1870, the Sidway household had seven servants, including one gardener. The Sidways also had a coachman who lived on the estate with his wife and daughter.

Yet by the 1870s and 1880s, even relatively modest households had domestic help. On the first block of

Plymouth Avenue, the families who lived at **11, 15, 17, 21, 33, 38, 39, 47, 50 and 56 Plymouth Avenue** all had servants as did the Sidway mansion and **306 Hudson Street** at the corner of Plymouth Ave. In the stretch of Plymouth Avenue between Pennsylvania Street and Porter Avenue (described in detail in the next section), **91, 99, 104, 108, 112, and 118 Plymouth Avenue** along with **312 Pennsylvania Street** on the corner of Plymouth Avenue all had servants. In a period of just about 40 years, however, things changed dramatically. By 1920, on the first block of Plymouth Avenue, only the families at **306 Hudson Street** and **50 Plymouth Avenue** had servants. Today, most of these servants are invisible, lost to time. Only the names of some of them have been recorded as part of the census collection process. Other than these scant records, the domestic servants who lived and worked on the street have been long forgotten.

An examination of four representative properties over the decades gives an indication of how housing use evolved over the years:

44 Plymouth Avenue. From about 1853 until the mid-1890s, the house was the home of Thomas Bath and his family. It does not appear as though the home ever had any servants, but since Thomas had up to seven children living at the house, he probably didn't need any. In 1900, the home was lived in by Nellie Waliss, her mother Annie Ross and a lodger, Ruby Ruckdeschle. In 1910, the house was lived in by George Dawson, his wife Margaret, his brother-in-law and Robert N. Gibson, a boarder. In 1921, the house was purchased by Ida Partridge and enlarged. In 1930, besides Ida, Alexander Garril and his son, Alexander Garril, Jr. and Lena C. Herman were all "roomers" at the house. By the early 1940s **44 Plymouth Avenue** was converted into two apartments. The house was owned by Irene San George who lived in the lower apartment with her second husband. From 1943-1951 the upper unit was lived in by Cecil Rhodes Dwinell and his wife Freda Dwinell and their children Shirley Irene (Erwood) Dwinell, Marie Adele (Erwood) Dwinell and Waymen "Woody" D. Dwinell, who was born in 1949 while the family lived **44 Plymouth Avenue**. By the late 1940s, the house was sold to Carl Giglia who moved into the lower apartment.

303 Pennsylvania Street. The house started as a one-story cottage constructed in the mid-1850s by Charles Busher who lived there with his wife Mary and their daughter. By 1870, the family's fortunes must have increased because they hired a live-in servant, Kate Smith. The Frederickson family purchased the house in the early 1880s, expanded it in the mid-1880s turning it into a two-family home. Their residency spanned over forty years and two generations. Mary Frederickson lived there with her widower son George L. Frederickson and her grandson, G. Norman Frederickson. Norman grew up in the home, stayed and started his own family: his wife's name was Elsie and they had a son, Howard.

301 Pennsylvania Street. Built in 1868 and expanded to its present size in the mid-1880s, it was initially the home of the Byers family but was rented out by 1880. By 1910, there were already boarders living at the property. Indicative of the small businesses that entered into the neighborhood by the twentieth century, in 1930, the house was owned by Ida Morton, who ran the business, "Morton Music Studio" from the house.

17 Plymouth Avenue. Perhaps no other house is more reflective of changing neighborhood trends through the decades than 17 Plymouth Avenue. Built in 1872, the house was the long-time home of Frank Hammond, a successful jeweler. In 1880, seven members of the Hammond family were living in the house, assisted by two servants: Jennie Beyer and Nannie Bradbent. By 1900, the house had sold to James Jamison, his wife Catherine and their five sons: John, William, Albert, Arthur and Jesse M. They had one live-in servant, Ester McCie. By 1910 however, the house became a boarding/lodging house, with three boarders and two lodgers. The house was overseen by Robert Rohmer and his wife Ennie. Although the house continued to have lodgers and boarders for many decades thereafter, in 1930, Mrs. Clara Groom officially converted **17 Plymouth Avenue** into a rooming house. By the mid-twentieth century, the house had a long-term resident once more, Leonard Pollina who lived there over 40 years from the late 1940s through the 1980s. The house was then purchased by David Swift, who lived there a number of years and then rented it. The house was sold in 2007 to a new owner-occupant.

As witnessed by these examples, by the early 1920s, many of the large homes in the Allentown area began to be carved up into rooming houses or multiple unit properties. One of the first houses in the area to be converted to a rooming house was **361 Pennsylvania Street** near the corner of **Orton Place**. The large home designed and built by famous architect Richard A. Waite was converted to a rooming house in 1922.

Plymouth Avenue followed the neighborhood trend. No. **38 Plymouth Avenue**, for a number of years after the turn of the twentieth century, was used by the **Hudson Street Free Baptist Church** at **224 Hudson Street** near Fargo Ave., but the property was relinquished when the church disbanded in 1923. The home was then returned to private ownership and used as a rooming house. Many other homes were also converted to rooming houses at this time. For example, **33 Plymouth Avenue** was converted to a rooming house by George D. Gillson in 1928. That same year, Mrs. Dora Fernandez converted **34 Plymouth Avenue** into a rooming house. In 1930, several other improvements were made to several houses that were already well over 50 years old: Louis Palmer built a garage at **43 Plymouth Avenue** and a cellar was built underneath **42 Plymouth Avenue**. In 1932, A. Panino converted **22 Plymouth Avenue** into a rooming house. In 1935, George Puerner converted **46 Plymouth Avenue**, the old Shadrake homestead, from a single family house into a three-family home.

In 1936, Calvin Bishop, son-in-law of Joseph Allison, converted the old Allison properties at **50 and 54 Plymouth Avenue** into rooming houses. That same year, Augustine Ruggier built a cellar underneath **31 Plymouth Avenue**. In 1941, **29 Plymouth Avenue** was converted from a two-family to a three-family dwelling. In 1942, the longtime home of the Frame family at **35 Plymouth Avenue** was converted to a rooming house by I. Provenzano. In 1945, Martha Kingston converted **11 Plymouth Avenue** to a rooming house. In 1947, F. W. Wantzel converted **39 Plymouth Avenue** to a three-family dwelling.

Another reuse of homes as large as those built by Franklin Sidway was to utilize them for funeral homes. For many years after 1920, **18 Plymouth Avenue** served as the Brucklier and Aquilina Funeral Home.

The period following WW II was a major turning point for both Plymouth Avenue and most of the Allentown neighborhood. With the postwar migration to suburban locations, many of the properties began to slowly show signs of neglect. Other changes were more obvious, for example, streetcars were replaced with buses. Plymouth Avenue is one of the most heavily traveled routes in the city of Buffalo, being part of the Grant Street (No. 3) line. The Grant Street bus had its inaugural run on May 5, 1939, replacing the earlier streetcar line. The street is one-way, running northward so that buses move from downtown to the city line along Plymouth Avenue and on their return snake their way down West Avenue, one block to the west.

After World War II many of the largest Sidway-built homes on Plymouth Avenue began to be converted from rooming houses to apartment buildings. For example, in 1949, Mary Gugino converted the Sidway house at **30 Plymouth Avenue** into an 8-family dwelling. In 1958, **22 Plymouth Avenue**, the house that Sidway had built for Col. Shepard, was modified yet again from a rooming house to an 11-unit apartment building.

By the 1940s, housing density continued to increase as did the proliferation of small neighborhood businesses. For example, the houses at **42 and 46 Plymouth Avenue** had cottages in the rear. In the 1940s, **42 Plymouth Avenue** was owned by Augusteno Sodaro and his family, who lived in the whole front house at 42 Plymouth Ave. and rented the back cottage. The old Bargar Brothers Drug Store at **315 Pennsylvania Street** changed hands and was owned by Joseph Gullo and called Gullo's Drug Store. Across the street at **321 Pennsylvania Street** the former Wickser family homestead was still used as a grocery store and in the rear of the building (sometimes referred to as 57 Plymouth Avenue) was a storefront that was used as a dry cleaner, seamstress and shoe repair shop. Louis Monte and his family lived at **33 Plymouth Avenue** during that same period and sold coal and ice.

One of the most interesting adaptations of a Plymouth Ave. property is the original Sidway mansion barn, now known as **32 Plymouth Ave**. For nearly the last one hundred years, the structure has been used for architectural purposes. In 1916, the property was sold separately from **30 Plymouth Ave**. and was used for commercial purposes. For many years, the building housed C. H. Gill & Son, general plastering contractors who provided artistic plastering



1895 Victor Paving Company sidewalk marker located on Maryland St. east of Cottage St. C. Gill, H. Holder & H. Howell offered "Artificial Stone, Laundry Tubs, & C. at 312 Pennsylvania St., Buffalo N.Y."

services for some of Buffalo's finest residences and commercial buildings. Charles H. Gill and his son, Charles W. Gill, came to Buffalo from London about 1890. By the mid-1890s, Gill was involved in the Victor Paving Company in partnership with Harvey Howell of 312 Pennsylvania Street. Besides Victor concrete work, C. H. Gill & Son specialized in lathing, modeling work in plaster and Portland cement, plaster castings, as well as plain and ornamental plaster work. C. H. Gill & Son provided plaster for many important Buffalo buildings including the installation of all wire lathing and all plain and ornamental plaster work in the main auditorium of the Buffalo consistory on Delaware Ave. as well as the creation of all plaster diminished fluted columns, caps and bases in the building (now the site of Canisius College). The firm was also involved in construction of the Pan American Exposition buildings, the Albright (now Albright Knox) Art Gallery, the New York State building (now Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society) and the remodeling of County Hall. They were hired to perform plaster work for President McKinley's mausoleum in Canton, Ohio because of the fine quality of work performed on the Pan Am buildings. C. H. Gill retired in 1928 and his son in 1951.⁴⁸

By the late 1940s, behind the Sidway mansion barn was an old vacant lumber yard with sheds (remnants of out buildings from the Sidway estate). Neighborhood children played on the sheds and were never chased out.

After the Gill family left **32 Plymouth Avenue**, it was used by sculptor Milton H. Grossman (1908-1/20/1971) whose shop was formerly located at 289 Ellicott Street. Grossman was born in New Westminster, British Columbia. He studied art and design at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh and the Beaux Art School of Design in New York. He came to Buffalo in 1930 and began his work as a commercial sculptor in 1940. He also taught modeling to a ceramics class. His work appeared in restaurants, night clubs, hotels, taverns, stores and public buildings. One of his best known sculptures is the terra cotta frieze on the front of the former Rosa Coplon Nursing Home, now Grace Manor Nursing home on Symphony Circle, constructed in 1953. The frieze is of an elderly man and woman with the tree of life spreading its protective branches over them. Another piece that



Sculptor Milton H. Grossman, who operated his studio at 32 Plymouth Avenue in the 1950s. A model for the frieze he created for the Rosa Coplon Nursing Home (NR Listed) is on the table before him.

Grossman created was a study of folded hands before the cross that was installed in the gymnasium at St. Francis School at Athol Springs. Grossman also created an Old World organ grinder and fruit peddler for an Italian restaurant as well as a quartet of angels at the Amherst Lutheran Church in Snyder, a sun dial at Buffalo State College and the bronze altar railing ornamentation for a chapel at Canisius College. Other notable work included a griffon installed at Koessler physical education center at Canisius College, interior fountains at Buffalo Savings Bank Main Street office, and exterior decorations of Niagara Frontier Bank along with a bust of Sam Warner of Warner Brothers in Warner Brothers Theater in New York City along with the county emblem at Erie County Hall and city emblem in Lackawanna City Hall. When Grossman used **32 Plymouth Avenue** as his studio and work shop, work tables and stools were smeared with clay. Huge designs, drawn on heavy paper, hung from the walls. Scattered about the room were clay chests, gelatine molds and many tools. In the adjacent storeroom, there were tons of sculptured pieces ranging from mermaids to religious figures.⁴⁹ Many years after the barn served as the workshops for the Gill family and Milton Grossman, it was neglected and nearly demolished, but was rescued and currently serves as the historic window restoration shop of John A. Gulick. For more information, see page 87.



Photograph discovered during renovations of 117 Plymouth Ave. of woman lounging on chaise with pillow that proclaims: "To You Loved Friends A Hearty Welcome." *Courtesy of Scott Dunkle.*



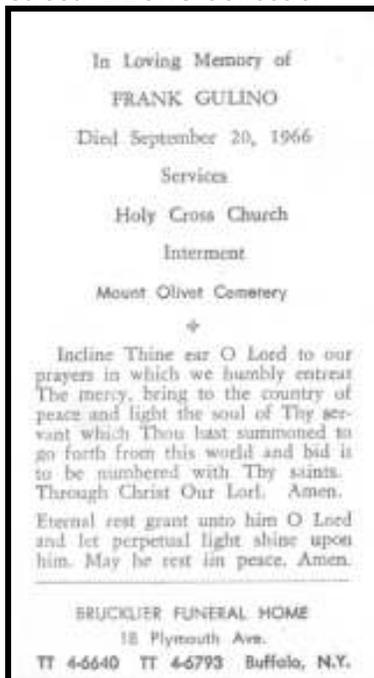
Scene from a bygone era: two girls wait for a streetcar on the afternoon of Feb. 6, 1902. The scene is taken from Hudson Street looking south toward Maryland Street on West Avenue. The streetcar was replaced by a bus in 1939 that travels north up Plymouth Avenue and south down West Avenue. *BECHS Collection.*



First block of Plymouth Ave. looking toward Hudson St. in the late 1950s. "The Hudson" apartment building can be seen at the head of the street. *BECHS Collection.*



Front of memorial card for Frank Gulino funeral held at 18 Plymouth Ave. in 1966.



Back of memorial card for Gulino, who lived at 288 Hudson, near 18 Plymouth.